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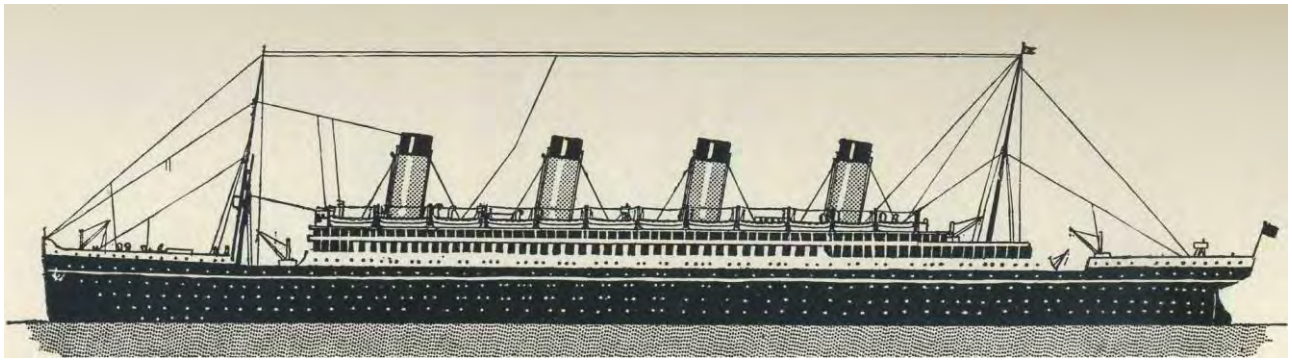

R.M.S. **Olympic**, 46,400grt, 1911 to 1935 See page 15

Berengaria model at Merseyside Maritime Museum Bill Ogle

and

the **Olympic** Suite at the White Star Hotel, Alnwick see page 14

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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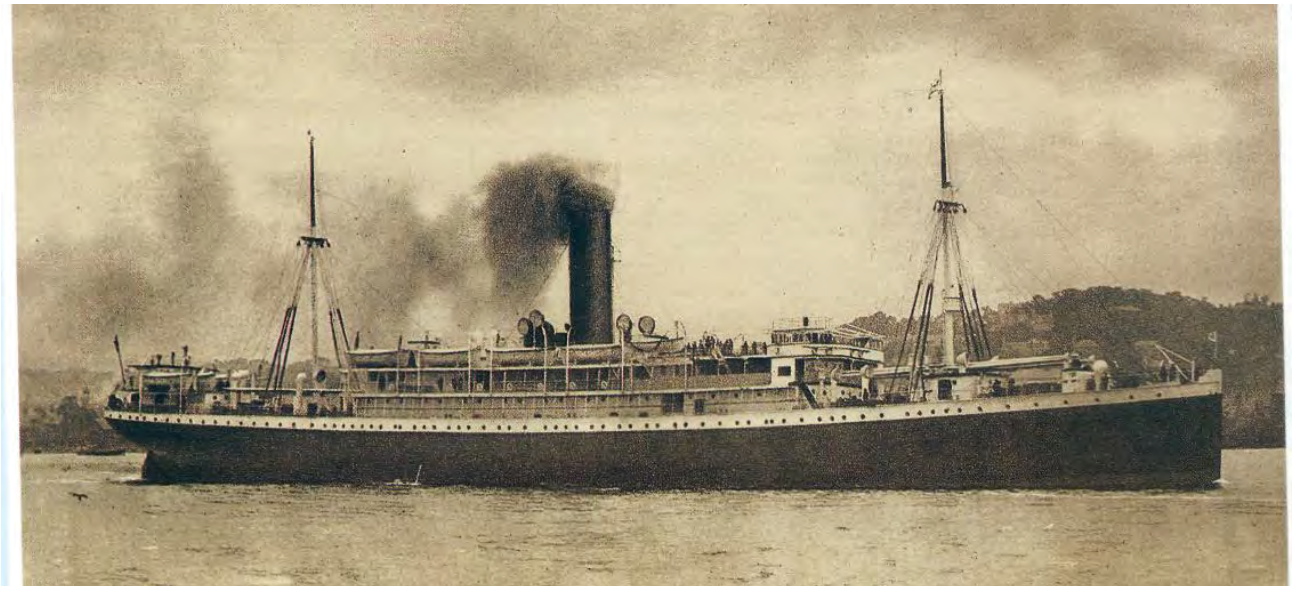
Hilary and the Monster

David Peate



ss **Hilary**

With the outbreak of the First World War, three of the Booth Steamship Company's passenger ships, **Ambrose, Hilary** and **Hildebrand**, were requisitioned by the Admiralty and, at the end of 1914, were commissioned as armed merchant cruisers. They were attached to the Cruiser Force 'B', 10th Cruiser Squadron (Grand Fleet), and were employed on the Northern Patrol.

Their area of operations ranged from Iceland to St Kilda and from Norway to longitude 20° W and their principal duties were 'to intercept and board all merchant shipping and to send neutral ships into a British port under an armed guard to be searched for contraband and enemy subjects; to unmask and bring to action any disguised German raider attempting to break out on the trade routes, and to ensure as thorough a blockade of Germany as circumstances permitted.'

The **Hilary** had been built in Dundee in 1908 and had a gross tonnage of 6328. She had accommodation for 210 saloon and 372 tourist passengers and had been a popular addition to the Line's passenger service. On commission, the vessel was equipped with six six-inch guns and two six-pounders (another six-pounder was probably added later) and she was placed under the command of Commander R H Bather, RN. All had gone as well as could have been expected during the ship's wartime patrols, until four fateful days in May 1917.

There had been a fine night and the sun had come out brilliantly on the morning of the 22nd, with hardly a cloud in the sky. The sea was perfectly smooth.

The peak of Oreafajokull in Iceland, some 70 miles to the north, was clearly visible when, at 0900 hours, a sighting was made. Captain F W Dean, RN, who seems to have been relieving Commander Bather on patrol, was sitting in his cabin when he heard a shout from the Officer on Watch: 'Object on the starboard quarter.' He rushed on deck and was told that it was not a periscope but that: 'It looks like a living thing but it is not a whale.'

The Captain's eyes followed the pointing finger and saw what looked like a stripped tree trunk with knobbly ends. 'A careful look through my glasses, however, made it clear that the thing was alive and that the knobbly ends were in fact its head and dorsal fin.'

His first reaction was to treat the being as a source of target practice and he ordered the first lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander Charles M Wray, RNR, to call up the three gun crews so that each could have some anti-submarine practice with the six-pounders.

However, before commencing the bombardment, Captain Dean decided to take a closer look at the 'stranger'. He told the navigator, Lieutenant F C P Harris (later a distinguished Booth Line master who was to receive the OBE for his services in the conflict a generation later), to head the ship in its direction. The **Hilary** came within 30 yards of the creature which was not in the slightest bit disturbed by her approach and continued basking on the surface. Captain Dean later reported that:

'The head was about the shape of, but somewhat larger than that of a cow, though with no observable protrusions such as horns and ears, and was black, except for the front of the face, which could be clearly seen to have a strip of whitish flesh, very like a cow has between its nostrils. As we passed, the head raised itself two or three times, apparently to get a good look at the ship.

The dorsal fin appeared like a black triangle and when the creature was end-on this fin was seen to be very thin and apparently flabby, as the upper part turned over sometimes like the top of a terrier's ear when cocked. The fin was estimated to be about four feet high when in the position highest out of the water.'

The captain and the three officers each made an estimate of the distance from the head to the dorsal fin of the monster. Dean said 20 feet, Harris thought not less than 15 feet and Wray, the Officer on Watch, settled on the length of 'one of our boats' — which was 28 feet.

Although Captain Dean's report is admirably clear and technical, it did not convey any fear or misgivings. There had been previous accounts, both factual and fictional, of encounters with monsters from the deep, but a first-hand experience would surely have been charged with anxiety. One correspondent recalls that 'a friend of my uncle... told my brother and me about the monster — all blood curdling to we small boys.'

Hilary had approached the creature at 12 knots and did not slacken speed. It was soon well astern of the ship, still basking and quite unperturbed. Captain Dean ordered the vessel about and, at an approximate distance of 1200 yards, the calm of the water was shattered by the discharge from the six-pounders.

The first gun's crew had been ordered to 'fire five rounds rapid'. The monster was quite oblivious to the shell splashes until the twelfth shot, which struck it. For a matter of a few seconds there was great commotion in the seas with the animal thrashing about in obvious distress. The disturbance quickly subsided and the monster sank, leaving the sea as calm and placid as it had been before the sighting.

A few days later, on 25 May, Commander Bather had resumed charge of the **Hilary**. Requiring bunkers, the vessel proceeded to the Shetland Islands from her position in the North Sea. On this occasion a dark protrusion which arose from the water was not the head of a sea-creature but the periscope of a U-boat.

It required a total of three torpedoes from the enemy submarine to sink the **Hilary**. Fortunately, the ship's complement was able to launch the boats in time and no lives were lost. One commentator has written that the sinking of the **Hilary** was revenge for the 'cruel sport and useless massacre' of the monster a few days earlier. But this was not quite the end.

The escaping men in the open boats watched the stricken ship slide into the sea. She exploded under the water with considerable force with 'presumably the boilers and/or ammunition exploding.' Shortly afterwards there appeared 'a monster from out of the sea, towering above the boats, and striking terror into the occupants.'

One report mentions that the U-boat commander brought the submarine to the surface in order to enquire the name of the vessel which had been torpedoed. He and his crew also witnessed the terrifying appearance of the animal, which caused horror and alarm. This latter report is extraordinarily similar to that of the story told by the commander of **U-28** which sank the British steamer **Iberian** off Fastnet on 30 July 1915 — and may possibly have been wrongly attributed to the **Hilary**.

The sighting of the creature from the **Hilary** was first recorded in Herbert Strang's Annual for 1920. It has since been included in investigations into Loch Ness-type monsters. The most notable published accounts are those by R T Gould, Gavin Maxwell and Bernard Heuvelsmans. Maxwell considered that the **Hilary** had merely stumbled across a basking shark, although Captain Dean told Gould that 'it was most certainly not a shark.' Heuvelmans concluded that the encounter of the **Hilary** was with our 'old friend the New England sea-serpent, caught once again basking on the surface.' Whatever it was 'it horrified the ship's company.'

A Ship's Graveyard

R H King

Empire Star had reached the end of the road. She had been laid down near the end of the war as **Empire Mercia**, a solid 12,000 ton standard model refrigerated carrier, reputedly based on a Shaw Savill design. Her twin double-acting H & W engines provided 17,500 shp. Blue Star bought her on the stocks at Harland & Wolff, Belfast, and she was launched in 1946 as **Empire Star**. Now, 25 years later, she was offered for sale along with her identical sisters. **Imperial Star** accompanied our ship to the breakers at Taiwan, and the third of the trio was sold to Greek owners for further trading.

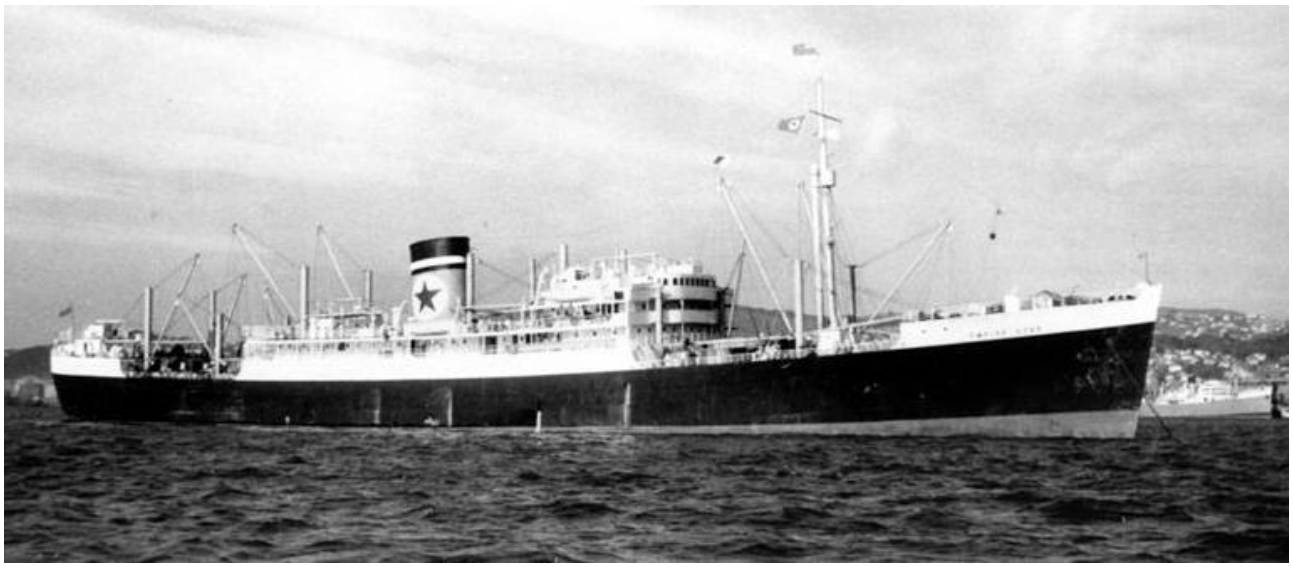
Fairly reliable sources put the purchase price at US$400,000. It seems strange that it should be more profitable to send ships half way around the world when there are plenty of scrap yards in Europe.

We arrived on 17 November 1971 and went straight into the breaker's, crowding around the harbour at Kaoshiung and right out to the two capes. There was nothing over a couple of hundred feet above sea level except rough hills and military installations. Taiwan was very much an island under siege and gun nozzles could clearly be seen pointing skyward here and there.

Contrary to usual practice we did not immediately leave the ship and go home, but lived on board for eight days and then in a hotel for six more. All this was because of a dispute between our owners and the lady who had bought the ship. So we stayed there, ready to take the ship away again if they couldn't agree. Being a standard design vessel, her weight would have been well known when she was launched and no doubt the lady bought her on this understanding. But in the course of the old ship's working life some alterations had been made and somehow the purchaser reached the conclusion that she had been 'done' for 500 tons. All this caused great consternation among our crew, who were 'runners', that is, employed at a fixed fee for the run out to Taiwan and then normally repatriated by air.

Some eight ships were in various stages of disintegration as we arrived, with 10 or 12 standing by awaiting their turn. We tied up outside a Victory ship on which the masts were just being cut down; by the time we left, the cutters were down to the double bottoms. **Ruth Lykes** lay astern of us—an American only six years old but supplanted by more efficient new tonnage. Then **Texas Bahrein**, a jumboised T2 tanker which had been completely burned out. She had been so hot that the remains of the lifeboats, still hanging in the davits, were big lumps of aluminium. Nearby, **Kampala** awaited her fate, still showing signs of her former elegance as a BI passenger liner.

The removal of derricks, samson posts, masts, and funnels were quite simple— just a matter of running a gas cutter around the base and letting them fall over. Don't bother about calling 'Timber-r-r' or anything; only watch it doesn't fall on yourself. Pick up the fallen bits with a derrick and hoist it ashore onto a motor truck, regardless of length. It was heartbreaking to an engineer to see the coldblooded manner in which Victory ship's turbines were being hacked up.



m.v. Empire Star Photo courtesy State Library of Queensland

Ship-breaking operations were conducted with the minimum of fuss or equipment. The foreshore was hard earth in which samson posts from long dead ships had been sunk. The attached derricks were rigged with old ships' ropes and driven by winches, whose power was transmitted by flat belts from ancient motor truck engines. Oil storage was also basic: two 35-foot diameter holes in the ground received bunker oil pumped from ships' double bottoms. From there it was pumped into tank trucks and taken away, to be refined I hope, if indeed they were going to sell it to anyone.

Harbour pollution control was another object lesson. Flat-bottomed boats about 15 feet long drifted around with a man or woman squatting at either end. Using a tray like their conical hats they skimmed oil from the water surface. Boats appeared to be divided into sections like a grease trap and the mixture was poured in at each end. Oil overflowed into the 'clean oil' compartment and water rose in the other, from which it was baled over the side again.

At any time you could see six to a dozen 'houseboats'—sampans, on which families lived, sculling around outside the ships. Although there was at least a quarter of an inch of oil on the water, their crews dived over to clamber onto the hulks to pilfer. They went for copper and brass parts, but anything saleable would

be 'lifted'. The yard employed armed guards who regarded the sampan people as their natural enemies and were always threatening to shoot them.

When our clearance came, a horde of workmen descended on the ship and took everything movable ashore—bedding, furniture, cutlery, and so on. Then another, larger gang came and ripped out the hold insulations. There seemed to be no attempt to salvage the material, although it was taken away in bags. The main aim of its removal was to allow clear access for the gas cutters to the hull plating.

Demolition now began in earnest. Gas cutters went around an approximately 15-foot cube and a derrick wire was then attached and pulled. It made your blood run cold to hear the resulting scraping and grinding noises. But no quarter was given and the jagged hunk of steel, festooned with all sorts of things, some of which you could recognize, was unceremoniously dumped on a decrepit motor truck.

I did not go to see the smoking furnace that the steel went on to, about half a mile away, along a road heavily used by trucks. It must have been extremely hazardous to pedestrians walking down it, but yard workers streamed along at times.

We were told it would take about nine days to wipe our ship completely—the extended time being taken up with removing the insulation. In the double-bottoms of some ships nearly down to water level children could be seen using oxy-cutters. If they weren't children they were mighty small men. They were in these confined spaces, squatting in oil residue, often with other men cutting overhead. Sometimes a ship would even catch fire: all hands would then hop out and play hoses on the flames until they went out.

Pieces of ship with salvageable parts adhering, such as copper pipes, pressure gauges, and non-ferrous valves, were swung onto a rough paddock behind the derricks. Here women toiled, chopping off the bits and throwing them onto segregated heaps. Then the main steel pieces were dumped on the truck for the furnace and the separated 'other metals' sent away, presumably to be melted down elsewhere.

The ship is rapidly cut down to water level, then the stern is hauled onto the 'beach'—a sort of dirt ramp. Removal of the propeller and shaft brings the rear end of the hull out of the water. The winch pulls until a 12-foot length is high and dry, and this is cut off in three sections thwartships. The process is repeated, with the pitiful remnant of the ship becoming 12 feet shorter each time. Finally, the derrick lifts the 'sharp end' of the fore peak from the water: end of ship.

Remember those days .....

From 1971 and also 1991, these are a sample of events selected from the archives, and published by kind permission of Sea Breezes.

April to June, 1971

Disposal of Furness Group vessels continues with the sale of four "Pacific" ships and the Royal Mail cargo liner **Loch Loyal**. Apart from **Pacific Reliance** the other four vessels **Pacific Envoy, Pacific Northwest** and **Pacific Stronghold** - together with the **Loch Loyal**, have gone to the Greek Aegis Group and have been renamed **Aegis Power, Aegis Strength, Aegis Honour** and **Aegis Loyal** respectively. But **Pacific Reliance**, completed in 1951 and eldest of the group, is being broken up at Ghent, Belgium. Thus at one sweep all the "Pacific" names have disappeared from the fleet. All were products of Vickers-Armstong Walker Naval Yard on the Tyne. All the ships, including the **Loch Loyal** (11,035 grt), completed by Harland & Wolff Ltd., Belfast in 1957, had accommodation for 12 passengers. Unlike the "Pacifics", **Loch Loyal** has a 7-cylinder Harland-B. and W. oil engine giving a speed of 16 knots.

Spanish shipbreakers at Burriana have taken the Spanish steamer **Nido** (5,533 grt), which dates from October, 1929, when William Gray and Co. Ltd., West Hartlepool completed her for Metcalfe & Son as the **Dunelmia**. After serving Metcalfs until 1951 she passed into the ownership of the Westralian Farmers Transport Ltd. and was renamed **Swan River**. In 1955, she was bought by her last owners, Antonio Garcia-Munte Nuno, of Barcelona and renamed **Nido**. Having survived for 42 years, including a world war, the **Nido** (ex **Swan River**, ex **Dunelmia**) has come to the end of a useful career and demolition is now in progress

Another wartime standard ship with 28 years of service behind her, the Yugoslav steamer **Zelengora** (7,052 grt) has now passed to Panamanian registry and the ownership of the Compania de Nav, Portland S.S., who have renamed her **Taras**. Built to the order of the Ministry of War Transport, the **Zelengora** was completed in 1943 by Wm. Gray and Co. Ltd., West Hartlepool, as the **Empire Nigel**. Upon delivery her management was placed in the hands of Muir Young Ltd., London. Some months after her completion the **Empire Nigel** was transferred on loan to the Soviet Union and took the name **Archangelsk**, but by 1946 she was back under the Red Ensign as the **Empire Nigel** once more. Then in 1947 she was sold by the Ministry to W. R. Carpenter Overseas Shipping Ltd. and, registered at Suva, traded under the new name of **Nandi**. This phase of her career lasted only until 1948 when she was bought by the Bristol City Line of Steamships Ltd., and renamed **Bristol City**. For the next eight years she sailed as a regular cargo-liner on their Canada service until her sale in 1956 to the Splosa Plovba, of Koper, Yugoslavia, when she became the **Zelengora**. As the **Taras** this old war horse of the seas has undergone her sixth name change and now seems set for another lease of life in the general tramping trade.

April to June, 1991

Some 20 years ago, owners of deep-sea cargo tonnage took the view that catering for fare-paying bodies was no longer a viable proposition. Purpose designed cruise ships were welcome to the business and passenger cabins in pre-container age cargo ships were turned over to crew use. However, owners who have recently taken steps to explore the market have found that it is very much alive with would-be travellers prepared to pay over the airlines' odds. Liverpool-based Thos & Jas Harrison Ltd is the latest to meet a demand of which *Sea Breezes* was well aware and the initial adaptation of their **Author** (27,994 grt) to carry six passengers proved so successful that in February the **Adviser** (27,867 grt) began to carry them too. Currently the company's ships sail to 13 destinations in the Caribbean and Latin America, including Barbados, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad, Curacao and Venezuela. Most passengers will embark from Liverpool. Facilities on the **Author** and **Adviser** include a lounge for the exclusive use of passengers, their own deck area, a small library and a small swimming pool, indoor on the **Author** and outdoor on the **Adviser**. During the round trip of approximately six weeks passengers will be able to meet the crew and see various elements of the ship in operation, something not always approved of by certain owners and/or shipmasters in the olden days.

The Four Sisters Project in New York is organising a race for the four near sister-ships built in Spain by Astilleros Y T alleres. The first of these barques was the **Gloria,** built for the Colombian Navy in 1968, which was 76m long and has a displacement of 1,100 tonnes. Almost a decade later came **Guayas** which is 80m long and also of 1,100 tonnes. She was built in 1977 for the Ecuadorian Navy. Next came the **Simon Bolivar** for the Venezuelan Navy which is 82.4m long and 1,200 tonnes. The last was the **Cuauhtemoc** built for the Mexican Navy in 1982 and the largest at 90m long and 1,800 tonnes. The race for these four sail training vessels is due to take place in June, 1994, over a 315-mile course on the eastern seaboard of the United States.

Not since the ill-starred **La Perla** venture of 1979/80 has a deep-sea cruise operation been programmed from the Mersey. For a variety of reasons the sailings made by the former cargo-passenger vessel **Ferdinand de Lesseps** of 1952 did not augure well and the two that she made from the river ended with the ship herself under arrest at Liverpool. It is looking a long way ahead but plans are now being made for the Russian purpose-built passenger carrier **Azerbaydzhan** (13,252 grt) to make two cruises from the port next year. The first sailing on September 14, 1992, will be to the Mediterranean and the second, leaving on September 29, to the Atlantic Islands and North Africa before returning to Southampton where the ship will dock on October 13. The **Azerbaydzhan** was built in 1975, accommodates 650 passengers and she was refitted at Bremerhaven in 1986

Operation Postmaster

by LNRS member David White

(*A summary of the presentation made to the Society on 16th February 2012*)

1941 was a bad year for the Merchant Navy. Though we tend to think in terms of the Battle of the Atlantic being the North Atlantic, heavy casualties were being incurred off West Africa. Freetown in particular was a major marshalling area for convoys from South America, South Africa, the Middle and Far East, and Australia and New Zealand. There was concern that the Vichy French colonial territories in West Africa were supporting and re-supplying the U-boats and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) had a substantial presence monitoring Vichy French, Spanish and Portuguese activities.

Major Gus March-Phillips, originally an Artillery officer, commanded the Small Scale Raiding Force (SSRF), also known as 62 Commando. The SSRF was a small unit, never more than 55 men, based at Wareham in Dorset. The Brixham trawler **Maid Honor**, a 65ft fishing vessel, was requisitioned by the SOE and on 9th August 1941 she sailed from Poole in Dorset bound for West Africa. On board was Major Gus March-Phillips SOE plus four of his SOE colleagues. Various references suggest that the SOE sailed the boat, but members of the Brixham Trawlers Heritage Association assure me that local fishermen actually sailed the vessel. Be that as it may, **Maid Honor** arrived in Freetown on 20th September 1941, an epic journey in its own right. There they were joined by Capt Geoffrey Appleyard (March-Phillips' second in command), Capt Graham Hayes and a party of Commandos who had come out to Freetown with an earlier convoy.

The SSRF duly investigated the various rivers and estuaries but found no sign of enemy activity. However, while they had been away, their SOE colleagues had found something of interest for them in the harbour of Santa Isabel on Bioko, formerly Fernando Po, a Spanish colony and therefore neutral. Moored up in the harbour of Santa Isabel was an 8,000grt Italian cargo/passenger vessel, **Duchessa d'Aosta**. Built in 1921 at Trieste, for Lloyd Triestino's Italy to North Pacific service via Panama and registered in Venice, when Italy joined the war she was on passage from Bari to Cotonou and, in common with all Italian shipping, was advised to seek refuge in a neutral port. She arrived in Santa Isabel in June 1940. She was moored with her two bow anchors out, plus stern chains/cables to the quay. She was supplied with shore power and effectively laid up but still with her crew on board.

Major March-Phillips was appointed as CO of a planned raid to cut out the **Duchessa d'Aosta**. Plans were for the raid to take place on a moonless night in the run-up to Christmas 1941, when it was believed that many of the Europeans would be at parties in the hills where the humidity was lower. However, the plans required

a force of 32 men. March-Phillips could muster only 15, made up of 4 SOE agents and 11 men of 62 Commando. It was the intention to top-up with 17 soldiers from the garrison but the GOC in West Africa (Gen Sir George Giffard) believed that the raid was an illegal act against a neutral port and refused to provide any manpower. The operation was postponed.

Duchessa d'Aosta

The Governor of Nigeria (Sir Bernard Bourdillon) was more sympathetic and nominated a group of civilians for interview. Seventeen were selected and volunteered for *"unknown duty of a hazardous, military nature on an unpaid basis*." The volunteers were described as "*the toughest individuals in the public service in Nigeria*". One of them was John Duffy, Principal Engineer with Nigerian Marine, the ports authority.

John was born in 1907 at the Tontine Vaults, 2 Hislop Street, off Hill Street, Liverpool 8. His family moved to Bootle and he attended St James School and went on to serve an engineering apprenticeship with Brown & Duncan, Hawthorn Road, Bootle. In 1928 he went to sea with Elder Dempster as an engineer. In 1934 he left the sea and joined the Air Ministry. Joining the Colonial Service in 1938 he was posted to Nigeria. When the RN started using West African ports for overhauls and repairs, John was given an honorary commission in the RN to allow him to deal with naval officers on an equal footing and by the end of the war he held the rank of Commander. John's contribution to the raid was multi-fold. He secured two tugs for the operation, selected the best skipper for the job, and then sailed as engineer on the bigger tug, together with another engineering colleague, Lt Cmdr Oldland.

With 4 SOE agents, 11 SSRF commandos, and 17 local volunteers, and with moonless nights in mid-January 1942, the job was back on.

The lead vessel was **Vulcan.** Built in 1919 at Chepstow by Finch & Co as the **Dandy** for Falmouth Docks Co, she was a twin-screw steam tug of 469grt. Her triple-expansion engines were by the North British Diesel Eng Co of Glasgow. In 1927 she went out to Nigeria for the Government of Nigeria. John Duffy arranged for Tom Coker to sail as her skipper. This was an inspired choice, not only because Tom Coker was considered to be the best towing skipper but also because he kept a detailed journal of events. This invaluable document now resides in the National Records Office at Kew.

The second vessel, **Nuneaton***,* was much smaller, only 42grt. Built by W J Yarwood at Northwich in 1935 for Elder Dempster. She was registered in Liverpool but worked around Lagos on harbour towing services. Her three-cylinder oil engine was by Widdops of Keighley.

Also carried were a number of Folbots, collapsible/folding canoes carried on board **Nuneaton**. These were originally designed and manufactured in London but the manufacturer moved to the USA after WW2 to benefit from the much larger leisure industry. They are still in use by Special Forces world-wide.

On Sunday 11th January 1942, **Vulcan** departed Apapa with **Nuneaton** in tow. What were they after? Primarily, the **Duchessa d'Aosta** but additionally there were two small German vessels in Santa Isabel, the coaster **Likomba** (119 tons) and a motorised barge **Bibundi** *(*80 tons).

On the Monday and Tuesday the group exercised tow-wire securing techniques, cleared away the Folbots and reboarded successfully. On the Wednesday, boiler tubes were cleaned and towing & boarding gear, small arms and explosive charges prepared. **Nuneaton** slipped her tow but remained in line astern, giving the appearance of being under tow if spotted from the air. Action Stations were ordered at 2350.

By 0005, **Vulcan** was alongside the **Duchessa d'Aosta** starboard bow and boarding party away. The tow wire was made fast in record time. Other explosions were heard as **Nuneaton's** crew got busy in their corner. By 0020 **Vulcan** was gathering speed out of the harbour with **Duchessa d'Aosta** in tow. **Nuneaton** followed with **Likomba** and **Bibundi** in tow.

A pre-arranged rendezvous for 1300 on the Thursday with HMS **Violet** failed to materialise, as she was aground in Akassa. The little convoy continued towards Lagos at a painfully-slow two knots.

On Tuesday 20th, HMS **Violet** (The Missing Link, as Tom Coker christened her) arrived and put an armed boarding party aboard the **Vulcan** and took Tom Coker prisoner in the name of His Britannic Majesty. "He asked me where I was bound and

as arranged I said from Bari to Kotonou. He remarked that I spoke very good English and enquired if I had lived in London!"

At 1315 Wednesday 21st, **Vulcan** entered the swept channel into Lagos. On arrival, the Commandos and SOE operatives disappeared, and the seventeen civilians went back to work.

The political fallout was initially very loud, with Germans and Spaniards complaining bitterly about breaches of international law. However, with the British continuing to insist that **Violet** had merely detained three enemy vessels at sea, and no evidence to the contrary, matters eventually settled back down

The **Duchessa d'Aosta** was found to be carrying :

1524 tons wool
400 tons copra
590 tons tanning extract
130 tons skins
245 tons asbestos
365 tons copper ingots

After boiler problems, she steamed from Lagos to Takoradi to Freetown and joined SL113 with an RN crew for the passage to UK. While discharging at Greenock on 14th July 1942 she caught fire and sank at her berth but was then raised & refitted. She was condemned by the Prize Court and managed by Canadian Pacific on behalf of the MoWT as **Empire Yukon**. In 1947 MoWT sold her to Petrinovic & Co as the **Petconnie** under the British flag. In 1951 she was purchased by an Italian company and as the **Liu-O** under the Italian flag went to the breakers in La Spezia in 1952.

Vulcan & **Nuneaton** both returned to service, **Nuneaton** being sold in 1957 to S Hadi Ltd, Bathurst, Gambia. **Likomba** had a name-change to **Malakal,** was managed by Elder Dempster then in July 1947 sold to Sammi Wahab, Monrovia. **Bibundi** had a name-change to **Kalomo** but as her engine (a 3-cylinder Gardener) appears to have been "liberated" by the Army on arrival at Lagos, she was declared unseaworthy and abandoned. **Maid Honor** stayed in West Africa as a fishing vessel but her unsheathed timber hull was badly affected by tropical marine life and she was scrapped. HMS **Violet** paid off in 1946 and sold to Spain for conversion to a fish carrier, being scrapped in Bilbao in 1970.

Major Gus March-Phillips was awarded the DSO but was killed in France on an SOE operation (Operation Aquatint) in September 1942. Capt Graham Hayes was awarded the MC. He survived the Aquatint raid and got across the border into Spain but was betrayed to the Germans and returned to Paris, where he was executed by firing squad in prison in July 1943. Capt Geoffrey Appleyard received a Bar to his MC, joined the SAS and was killed on reconnaissance duties during the invasion of Sicily.

Private Anders Lassen, first man to board the **Duchessa**, was given a Commission in the Field and an MC. Later he joined the SAS, was awarded two Bars to his MC, promoted Major, and awarded a posthumous VC in Italy in 1945.

Being a civilian volunteer in the 1942 operation, there were to be no military decorations for John Duffy and he continued working in Nigeria until 1954. However, he was invited to Buckingham Palace and presented with a silver ashtray by King George VI. On retirement, John returned to Merseyside and was an active member of the LNRS. Together with James Cowden, they wrote the definitive Elder Dempster Fleet History 1852-1985. John died in June 1993.

Refs: LNRS Bulletin Autumn 1993 and Winter 1994/95
Brixham Trawlers Heritage Association
National Archives

Mare Clausum

Mare Clausum (or closed sea) is the legal principle that certain bodies of water may be claimed as under the exclusive jurisdiction of a particular nation. The concept originated with the Roman Empire, which claimed control over the Mediterranean Sea. During the Age of Discovery, Portugal and Spain asserted authority over much of the oceans west and south of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as access to India and the Spice Islands. Their 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas drew a line of demarcation approximately half-way between the Portuguese Azores and the Spanish islands discovered by Christopher Columbus. The goal was to resolve the dispute between the two nations and also to freeze out other potential competitors. Dutch and English traders routinely ignored the claims. In 1609, the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius published *Mare Liberum* (Freedom of the Seas), asserting that the seas were incapable of domination and thus available for use by all seafarers. In 1635, the book *Mare Clausum* was published by the English jurist John Selden. He argued that the sea was virtually as capable of appropriation as the land. Another Dutch jurist, Cornelius Bynkershoek, compromised the disparate views in his essay *De Dominio Mar*is (Dominion of the sea) in 1702. There, he argued that a coastal nation could claim dominion over so much of the sea as it could effectively control and protect. His views rapidly coalesced into the cannon-shot or three mile rule, which prevailed for the most part until the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which expanded the principle of dominion – the territorial sea – to a distance of twelve nautical miles. Source: Maritime Musings by Dennis Bryant

ss Berengaria

by the Editor

Displayed at Merseyside Maritime Museum is a large model of the Cunard liner ss **Berengaria,** presented to the Museum by Cunard Line. She was launched in 1912 at the Vulcan Shipyards in Hamburg, Germany, as the **Imperator** for Hamburg America Line; and at 51,680 gross tons, was the then largest ship in the world.

After the war, she was briefly commissioned into the United States Navy and employed as a transport, returning American troops from Europe. Following her U.S. Navy service, **Imperator** was handed over to Cunard as part of war reparations, and she sailed as the flagship RMS **Berengaria** for the final decade of her career.

During her building, and to ensure that her length exceeded that of Cunard Lines **Acquitania**, she had a large emblem fitted on her bow. Following major storm damage the emblem was removed.

The Imperator pictured between 1910 and 1914 Courtesy loc/pp

The New York Times reported, following her arrival 24 hours late on March 20, 1914, that she was delayed by the hurricane she had passed through on March 13. The storm stripped her of four lifeboats, clipped the bronze eagle's wings off her figurehead, and smashed in the ports of three cabins on the port side of the "E" deck forward, letting in water.

Some details of the specification for RMS Berengaria:

Builders	Vulcan Werke (Blohm and Voss, Hamburg,
Launched	1912
Overall length	919 ft.
Machinery	4 x turbines, quadruple screw
	46 x water tube boilers, oil fired
	Bunker capacity, 9,000 tons
Cruising speed	23 knots
Complement	Passengers 2,500
	Crew 850

Berengaria served as flagship of the Cunard fleet until she was replaced by her sister ship, **Majestic** ex-**Bismarck**, in 1934 after the merger of Cunard with White Star Line. In later years, she was used for discounted prohibition-dodging cruises, which earned her the unfortunate nickname "Bargain-area".

Towards the end of her service life, she suffered several electrical fires caused by aging wiring, and Cunard-White Star opted to retire her in 1938. She was sold to Sir John Jarvis, who also purchased **Olympic**, to provide work for the Tyneside region. These two iconic ships were dismantled at the yard of Thomas Ward & Sons, Jarrow. This connection led to much salvaged panelling, mirrors, ceiling and stained glass from RMS **Olympic** being installed in the White Swan Hotel, Alnwick, Northumberland. The hotel also has the **Olympic**'s staircase which featured so prominently in the recent blockbusting film. She sailed for the River Tyne under the command of Captain George Gibbons and was scrapped down to the waterline. Final demolition took place in 1946.

L.N.R.S. Programme for 2012 – 2013

The programme for the coming year is being finalised and the full schedule will be published in the September Bulletin with your new membership card. However, to whet your appetite, and to begin booking our dates in your diary, the September meeting will be held at the usual Maritime Museum venue on Thursday, 20th September, 2012 at 1230 (coffee from 1200 hours). The subject is “Outward Bound“ and the speaker will be Dr. Angela Taylor

PIRACY

In the Gulf of Aden and Somalia

From an article published by the Master Mariner's Association in September, 2011 and based on a presentation by John Willy

While piracy does occur in hotspots around the world, "East Somalia & the Gulf of Aden" accounts for about 50% of global piracy activities. Pirates are generally more active in the Gulf of Aden than in East Somalia but vessels are more easily hijacked in East Somalia,

In 2009 there were 194 cases of piracy/attempted piracy in these two areas. So far in 2010 (up to the end of May 2010), there have been 87 cases. The Somali pirate is desperate, audacious and undeterred, even by death.

As well as the attacks becoming more frequent in the beginning of 2010, pirates have become more capable of attacking at further distances, e.g. more than 1000 nautical miles off the continent. From March to May 2010, armed attacks (e.g. RPG, automatic weapons etc.) increased more than 200% and the average chase time increased sharply (with the maximum being 3 hours).

At the same time, the response to these piracy activities has been faster and a great number of high-jacking cases have been avoided. From March to May 2010, more countries have sent or planned to send war ships/guards to the area. As of the beginning of June 2010, based on EU NAVFOR, there are currently around 35 international warships from about 20 countries patrolling the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.

The Iranian Navy dispatched a fifth fleet in Jan, 2010. A Turkish warship was sent out on 1 February 2010 to combat piracy for another year. As of 28 January 2010, China is involved with navies from the NATO, EU NAVFOR and US-led Combined Maritime Force groupings. It was reported that the Ukraine would contribute forces to the EU ATALANTA anti-piracy operation. Bulgaria was also intending to send a warship to Somalia.

Recently we looked at who the modern day pirates are and found out that they are usually a mixture of ex-fishermen, ex-militiamen and technical experts. Membership in pirate gangs rewards these young men who are usually unemployed with money and social status.

The pirates run sophisticated operations using the latest hi-tech equipment such as satellite and GPS. They are also heavily armed with rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47s. The pirates are known to receive tip-offs from contacts at ports in the Gulf of Aden. They use speedboats with very powerful outboard motors to approach their target. Sometimes the speedboats are launched from much larger "mother ships" on the high seas.

To actually hijack the ships, the pirates first use grappling hooks and irons, some of which are even rocket-propelled - and climb aboard using ropes and ladders. The pirates have also on occasion fired at the ships, to scare them into stopping, so it is easier for them to board the vessel.

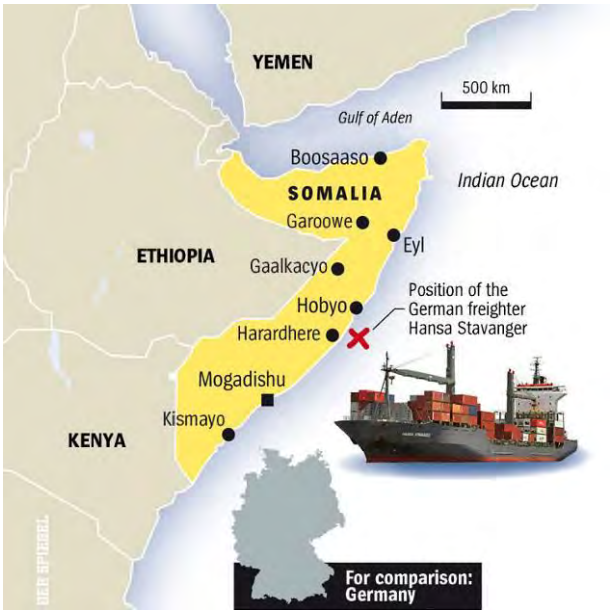
Typical pirate skiff

The pirates then sail the hijacked ship to the Somali pirate hub town, Eyl. There, more pirates board the ship and they normally take the hostages ashore where they are normally well looked after until a ransom is paid. Somali pirates are reported to have received 60 million dollars in 2009.

Some relevant quotations, made between March to May 2010, are:

- Eastern Somalia water is a broad concept including all water "east of the Somali country". Under such a broad concept, the route of our vessels is just inside Eastern Somalia water but still between 400 - 1000 nautical miles east of the country of Somali.
- We have more than 20 vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden every month and their average speed is 22.0 knots. Usually Pirates will only attack vessels with low freeboard. Our freeboard is high in comparison with tankers and loaded bulkers.
- Shipping is a demanding enough profession with ever-increasing regulations and faster turnaround times. The effect of the risk of piracy attacks makes this a potentially very dangerous job and has resulted in a shortage of experienced seafarers.
- In his column in the April 2010 edition of the Nautical Institute's magazine, *Seaways*, Captain Amol Deshmukh MNI (Member of the Nautical Institute) argues that such audacious piracy attacks will only compound the problem. He states that given the risk factors seafarers will also start to demand higher wages, which will add to Shipowners' woes. He also states that damage to the vessel itself and in impending environmental disaster if for example a fully loaded ULCC were to spill her cargo due to a piracy attack, are also potential effects. Captain Amol states that 'These fears will inevitably result in re-routing of vessels, greater insurance premiums and an overall increase in shipping costs."

There are many official recommendations in how to deal with pirates. These range from precautionary measures and use of intelligence, convoys and foreign warships to retaliation and the use of armed guards, something which is highly debatable. In addition to keeping these recommendations in mind, OOCL's Fleet Management Department has long had anti-piracy measures in force which are updated regularly.



The pirate bases and anchorages for captured ships

At the beginning of 2010, our Fleet Management Department reviewed and updated the anti-piracy measures. The key measures are:

- Double watch onboard during transit of GoA & defined Somalia coast
- Employ full speed when transiting the danger zone
- Take extra physical anti-piracy measures
- Masters provided with detailed recommendations and instructions
- Periodical experience sharing

Any suspicious sightings, movement or attempted attacks should also be reported to the IMB Piracy Report Centre. If pirates attack the ship it is mainly to capture it and its crew for ransom, but also for looting, or robbery of belongings and equipment on board. Any successful acts of piracy will inevitably result in a protracted period of captivity for the crew onboard. Somali pirates consider the act of piracy as a business, and recognize that unnecessary harm or injury to the crew is counter-productive and may harm their negotiations or the amount of ransom received. To date the level of violence against ships crews is relatively low when compared to other regions around Africa.

On April 14, 2010, U.S. President Barack Obama issued an executive order allowing the US to freeze the financial assets of Somali piracy groups. This will mean that officials need to consult with the U.S. Department of the Treasury when considering payment of ransom from a US source or in circumstances in which the Order might apply. The maritime industry is, however, concerned that such moves could take up substantive time when ransom demands are to be dealt with quickly, particularly since lives are at stake; and ship owners could face soaring insurance

premiums – with some insurers even become unwilling to provide cover for merchant vessels navigating through the region.

The international community is also coming together to help equip and train Coast Guards in the area. In April, 2010, the Yemeni Coast Guard received mechanical navigation equipment and modern technical sets from the French. And in May, 2010, Japan pledged to help train a new Somali Coast Guard to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa. The EU is also training Somali security forces in Uganda, as an essential step in the eradication of piracy from ashore.

There also appears to be a universal call for pirates to be prosecuted. In April, 2010, 'The Piracy & Sea Robbery Conference 2010' was held in Singapore. Speaking at the Conference, Robert Lorenz-Meyer, president of the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) stated that pirates caught by international anti-piracy forces need to be prosecuted if piracy off the Somali coast is to be curbed. He urged the international community to focus on prevention.

The UN has agreed to provide USD 2.1million to assist the prosecution of Somali pirates by strengthening prosecuting institutions in the Seychelles and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, Somalia. This will make these areas hubs for the prosecution of pirates. The instability in Somalia, inadequate institutions and legal training in regional countries, as well as the reluctance of many nations to finance the prosecutions had meant that many captured pirates had to be released.

In April 2010, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a Russian draft resolution calling for more intensive action against Somali pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. The resolution was favoured but some members stress the need to strengthen the central Somali Government and bring stability to the region in order to combat piracy. In May 2010, the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean was debated by the UN General Assembly for the first time.

Yemen is also clamping down harder on piracy cases, dishing out sentences ranging from ten years to life for pirates found guilty. In May 2010, there were two cases in one week where two separate groups of pirates were convicted of piracy-related crimes and given life sentences/time in prison. The Government of Puntland, Somalia, has also stated that it aims to eliminate piracy in the region. Meanwhile the Islamist rebel groups Hizbul Islam and Al-Shabaab, who are battling the Somali Central Government for control of the country, have stated that they will not tolerate the actions of the pirates and will release any hostages they find. However this remains to be seen. What is true is that the threat from piracy is still very real. The situation can only really change if security, law and order and economic opportunities ashore are improved with the help and support of the international community.

Society Visit - The Athenæum, Liverpool

by the Editor

A small group of members was recently privileged to enjoy a visit to Liverpool's renowned Athenaeum Club, kindly arranged and hosted by Liverpool Nautical Research Society President Mr A. S. Davidson.

The Athenæum is a haven that offers a distinguished setting and atmosphere unrivalled in the city of Liverpool. It was founded in 1797 to provide a meeting place where ideas and information could be exchanged in pleasant surroundings. The founders sent a document entitled 'Outlines of a Plan for a Library and Newsroom to potential subscribers in Liverpool' With typical late 18th century directness the first sentence read "*It has often been a matter of surprise to many of the inhabitants of this place, and still more so to strangers, that in a town of such commercial and national importance as Liverpool, the conveniences and accommodation for the acquisition of knowledge, both local and general, both ancient and modern, should be so imperfect are they most confessedly are".*

The proposal came at a time of spectacular growth in the importance of Liverpool as a port and a trading centre. By 1792 Liverpool had 17% of all trade through English ports. From 1760 to 1801, the population grew from 25,000 to 77,000. By the end of the 18th century the town and port not only supported sailors, merchants and manufacturers, but also a burgeoning professional class including attorneys, doctors and clergymen.

If Liverpool's merchants and other professionals were to carry on this trade and the port's growth, they were in vital need of commercial and political information. The need for such provision in a congenial setting was obvious and the prospectus proposed "*to procure a regular supply of newspapers, both town and country, all the periodical publications of any value, and all the pamphlets that have reference to subjects of local or general polity or commerce*". The writers of the prospectus went further. The Institution was to provide books for the acquisition of general knowledge and for entertainment. The existing Liverpool library, founded in 1758, was deemed to be failing in this respect by the writers of the prospectus.

The idea of such an institution seems to have originated in the provinces and not in London. Existing London clubs were political in nature or founded with gambling as their main activity. The more serious London clubs like the London Athenæum and the Garrick post-date the Liverpool Athenæum by some years.

Today, the Athenæum continues to provide this facility in the elegant building erected near the famous Bluecoat Chambers in Church Alley. It was necessary to relocate from the original Church Street site in 1928, to permit widening of that thoroughfare and fortunately the present building suffered very little damage due to bombing during World War 2.

Entrance from Church Alley

The heart of the Athenæum is its library, one of the greatest proprietary libraries in the United Kingdom. In 1848, Washington Irvine wrote in his sketchbook, "One of the first places to which a stranger is taken in Liverpool is the Athenæum: it contains a good library and a spacious reading room and is the great literary resource of the place." The 'good library' of 1848 has now grown considerably. Containing books, prints, maps and charts, it is one of the most important history resources in the country housing some 60,000 items.

One of the most important parts of the Library is the Roscoe Collection. William Roscoe was one of the founding proprietors. After his bankruptcy in 1815 and the forced sale of his library, his friends purchased certain volumes and presented them to the Athenæum, so ensuring that Roscoe had continued use of these books.

The Athenæum has a distinguished membership of Proprietors, drawn from every walk of life across the city of Liverpool and the North West of England. Early Proprietors played a major part in the national movement to end slavery. Past Proprietors have included Nobel Laureates. Today, the proprietorship is drawn, amongst others, from those engaged in commerce, the church, the law, the city's large academic community, public service and the armed forces.

The visitors enjoy lunch in the Reading Room

Ably guided by Librarian Joan Hanford we 21st century visitors were able to explore the Reading Room, Committee Room (where a wide range of nautical items had carefully been selected and displayed) and on to the magnificent library. The visit concluded with a pleasant lunch, see picture.

John Grantham, Pioneer Marine Engineer and Naval Architect

by LNRS Member Charles Dawson

John Grantham was born at Croydon in 1809 and died there in 1874 aged 65, 'deeply regretted by a large circle of friends, and universally respected for his exertions in support of the charitable and educational institutions of his native town.'[1] His father (also John) was a cavalry officer who pursued a second successful career as a civil engineer working for John Rennie, one of the great civil engineers of the early 19th century. John junior accompanied his father who was Rennie's resident engineer on a survey of the River Shannon to improve flood protection in the early 1820s. His father recognised the commercial possibilities of opening a steamer service on the Upper Shannon, and in 1824 he commissioned a small twin hulled paddle steamer, the **Marquis of Wellesley**. The venture was closely associated with Charles Wye Williams who had established the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company in 1823 to run a steamer service from Dublin to Liverpool. Wye Williams had trained as a lawyer and like Grantham had seen the commercial potential of steam ships.[2] In 1827 he bought out Grantham's interest in the **Marquis of Wellesley** and later expanded the Lough Dearg and Upper Shannon services by the introduction of iron-hulled paddle steamers, starting with the **Lady Lansdowne** in 1833. His father's and then Wye Williams' interest in steamers certainly influenced Grantham junior's choice of career. Wye Williams recommended him to the Liverpool engineering firm Mather and Dixon where he served an apprenticeship. He received a thorough grounding in mathematics which was taught by one of the principals for an hour during the middle of the working day in addition to the bench training. Mather and Dixon had founded their Bath Street ironworks at Liverpool in 1826 to build marine and stationary steam engines, sugar crushing mills and railway locomotives. By the time they had wound up the business in 1843 they had produced over 90 locomotives for British railway companies including the Great Western Railway and for export to France and Russia.[3] He completed his indentures and in 1836 he seems to have been responsible for the design and installation of a set of stationary steam engines at Edge Hill, Liverpool to haul trains from the new Lime Street station. These had high pressure boilers of 50-60 pounds per square inch and could haul a 55 ton train 2370 yards at 15mph up an average gradient of 1 in 92. By 1840, Grantham was chief draughtsman and in 1841 was elected an associate of the new Institute of Civil Engineers. He probably left Mather and Dixon in that year to work on his own as a consulting engineer and naval architect. Although his main work was to be in the maritime field, he continued to have an interest in railways. For example, he was consulted on building railways in Argentina in 1860 and on the design of tramways at Copenhagen in 1863 and Wantage, Berkshire in 1873.[4] He

exercised his talent on other projects: in 1849, for example he designed a prefabricated galvanized iron warehouse for rapid erection in California for James Starkey & Company, a Liverpool firm of merchants. The whole project including design and construction was completed in 23 days. This was at the height of the Californian Gold rush.[5] In 1851 he designed a model of the town and docks of Liverpool for display at the Great Exhibition. However Grantham's main work was in the marine field, and from 1842 until 1859 he was involved in the design and construction of iron hulls, screw propellers and marine boilers and engines. On 20th Jan 1842 he rented the south end of the Brunswick Graving Dock, Liverpool to rebuild the iron ship **John Garrow**, a 711 ton iron ship built at Aberdeen in 1841. Her owners consulted Grantham after a very slow initial voyage. He recommended rebuilding by making her two ends finer. His proposals were accepted and after he carried out the work he delivered a lecture based on this experience to the Liverpool Polytechnic Society. He published this as a pamphlet later in that year as *Iron as a Material for Shipbuilding.* He strongly advocated the use of iron instead of wood not only for the inherent advantages of strength and structural integrity but also on the astonishing grounds for 1842 that it was cheaper. He also implied that his experience went back further: 'My mind has been constantly directed to the subject and I have possessed the most favourable opportunities for examining timber and iron vessels of all descriptions having been engaged in building several of the latter, some of which were on a large scale'. He also mentioned that his (unnamed) partner had extensive practical experience of building iron canal boats. Iron deep-sea sailing vessels had been built in small numbers. The three-masted barque **Ironsides** was the first, launched at Liverpool in 1838. In 1840 three had been launched in Scotland including the **John Garrow**. After the success of the rebuilding he went on to design and supervise other iron vessels. The first was a humble iron-hulled beacon buoy for the Liverpool Docks Trust. His tender for £475 was accepted by the Trust on 17th March 1742. His most significant vessel was the small iron steamer the **Liverpool Screw** launched on May 11th 1843. This was a test bed for his later steamers. Very few screw steamers had been built. Grantham had visited the **Great Britain** at Bristol in 1843 just before the 'launch' and must have been convinced of the practicality of Brunel's decision to install a screw propeller in preference to paddles on this ocean-going vessel. He may have been influenced by a small wooden screw propelled steam yacht the **Daedalu***s* built by the foreman shipwright of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company for Wye Williams in March 1842. The **Liverpool Screw** was built as an experimental vessel for the Mersey and Irwell Navigation Company. They ran an extensive barge service between Liverpool and Manchester. They already employed paddle tugs and had been feeling the effects of railway competition. It had an iron hull, a high pressure boiler rated at 56 pounds per square

inch and to his own Patent and two cylinder oscillating engine (12" x !8" cylinders) driving a four bladed Bennet Woodcroft propeller and a separate condenser. All these items had been invented by other engineers: the oscillating engine had been patented by Joseph Maudslay in 1827 and used extensively in paddle steamers. Samuel Hall had patented his separate condenser in 1835 and Bennet Woodcroft his particular design of propeller in 1832. To Grantham progress was in the details; his design philosophy was summed up in a discussion at the Institute of Naval Architects in 1861: 'I am not fond of new plans and sudden innovations, I would rather go on with improvements'[6]**.** This approach characterised his subsequent steamer projects. The **Liverpool Screw** proved to be a successful tug on the Mersey & Irwell but for their own reasons they used an escape clause in their contract to hand her back. In 1845 she was sold to carriers to run between Chepstow and Gloucester and was hulked at Waterford in 1870.

His steamships became progressively bigger. In 1844, Cato & Co. of Liverpool built the **Emerald** and **Diamond,** two 300 ton cross channel ferries for the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company.[7] The following year, he was responsible for the **Antelope**, a 600 ton auxiliary steamer. Her 50 hp engines were designed to assist the sails and she was intended for the Liverpool – Brazil trade. The first voyage saw the fracture of part of the engine frame. This suggests that the scaling up of the layout of the **Liverpool Screw** was not without problems. Her successor, the **Sarah Sands** was another auxiliary steamer and at 300 tons was the second biggest steamer after the **Great Britain***.* Clearly Grantham was not only gaining experience, he was also giving confidence to hard-headed Liverpool entrepreneurs to invest in such new and expensive vessels.[8] Perhaps auxiliary sailing vessels were an expensive blind alley, but at the time they appeared the logical solution to deploying steam on long distance trades. Grantham in his sweeping review of Oceanic Navigation in 1862, acknowledged the real way forward was with high pressure steam and compounding.[9] Certainly the orders for auxiliary steamers did not pour in and there was in any case a general down-turn in shipbuilding, especially on the Mersey. Grantham had other consulting work and seemed to be in demand because of his scarce expertise on iron hulls and steam engines. In 1844 he was retained to advise on the stranded iron paddle steamer **Vanguard** and he also played a part in the successful salvage of the **Great Britain** from Dundrum Bay in 1847. He also acted as engineering superintendant for the Whitehaven Steamship Company.

One of his smaller projects, the design and construction of the auxiliary yacht **Vesta** in 1847, for Spencer Wynn, Lord Newborough of Glynllifon, provides more detail of his ways of working. Much of the correspondence about the building of the **Vesta** has survived in the Newborough Archive at Gwynedd Record Office.[10] Spencer had owned a small paddle steamer, the **Firefly** for use in the Menai Strait since

1837. Discussion with Assheton Smith, a neighbour and a pioneer of steam yachts furthered an ambition to build a sea-going steam yacht. It is not clear who recommended Grantham, but there is a clear implication of recommendation in the preliminary letters. He was retained some time in 1847 to design the vessel and produced both a plan and a model for his client's approval. The first surviving letter of 30 Sept 1847 stated that the model was made before the drawing and that he Grantham had left some of the lines in his pencil for his client to make any alterations. The design must have been approved because by December he was reporting on the tenders received and recommended that Tod and MacGregor of Partick on the Clyde be awarded the contract. At £7800 theirs was the lowest price and as they needed the work he thought he could negotiate the inclusion of furnishings in the price. He also recommended that the vessel should have a larger engine, 'but it was your Lordship's wish to have an engine as an auxiliary'. By 13th January 1848, he was working on the detailed plans and was ready to supervise its construction. His fee was 2.5% of the total cost of building plus travelling expenses for himself and his assistant when away from Liverpool. Further details on the shape of the hull had to be sorted out and on 17th January Grantham responded to Spencer Wynn's anxieties about the run aft. He pointed out that this was necessary to allow for opening for the propeller. By 7th February the hull details had been specified and the order had been confirmed with Tod & MacGregor who intended to complete the yacht in four and a half months. Grantham's subsequent letters show that he was not only keeping his client well informed about the building but was asking him about minor details of the kind that can annoy clients out of all proportion to their importance. For example, he sought Spencer Wynn's views on the position of the quarter badges, the exact angle of rake of the masts and the colour of the anti-fouling. By 19th May the vessel was framed and half plated and the deck planking had been cut. By 21st June the iron work had been finished and the letters moved on to the design of the accommodation including the position of the companion way, colour schemes and a recommendation for fitting one bath instead of two. The launch was preceded by discussions on the nature and type and ballast needed. By 21st July the date of launch was fixed as the 28th at 10.00 am. This was successfully carried out and fitting out proceeded with a recommendation to accept the tender of William Boyd of Glasgow of £635 for cabinet work and upholstery. Trials began at Greenock on 14th August and while the **Vesta** rigged as a two-masted topsail schooner sailed well, there were problems with the boiler and the engines .The latter were of the oscillating type that Grantham had used in his earlier steamers. The propeller was a two – bladed design which brought with it a demand for a fee of £35 from its patentee, Bennet Woodcroft. The manning of the engine room gave Grantham another problem to solve. Good engineers were in short

supply and had to be treated with consideration: 'As it is always the custom for the engineers to be provided with bedding, Mr. MacGregor desired us to put on board mattresses and bedding, as they would not go to sea without it'. Grantham did not receive any more commissions for yachts after the **Vesta.** He continued working on plans for a mixture for steamers and sailing ships. These included the **Pacific** built at John Scott Russell's works on the Thames in 1853. It is also known that Grantham supervised the building of the 1325 ton iron clipper **Sarah Palmer** built by Charles Tayleur & Company at Warrington in 1855. He published the specification for her iron work as well as specifications for two more vessels from the same yard.[11] He also served on the Liverpool Compass Committee set up after the loss of the largest iron ship completed, the **Tayleur** launched at Warrington in 1853. Together these facts suggest that he was involved in their design. Perhaps the most significant vessels he designed were the five steam colliers starting with the **Chester** of 1854 built by Cram on the Dee at Sandycroft. The **Chester** was not the first steam collier, and while he specified his tried and tested oscillating engines he also included features that were advanced for the time and that were incorporated in later colliers and bulk carriers .These included the positioning of the engines and boilers in the aft part of the hull to provide a clear cargo space of maximum size, the provision of water ballast tanks and wide hatches. Grantham's next career change at the age of 50 was to move to London in 1859. It is not clear why he decided to move at this time. He had just published his two volume work *Iron Ship-Building with Practical Illustrations* at London. It was a success and went through five editions by 1868. It included some of his own work over the preceding twenty years. He had already published a number of papers in the Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers as well as his pioneering pamphlet on iron shipbuilding of 1842. On his arrival in London he became involved in the founding of the Institute of Naval Architects in 1860 and was a member of its Council from its inception to his death. He produced a total of nine papers for the Institute's annual meetings besides numerous interventions in the discussions that took place after each paper. Several of these were quite brief and concerned past rather than current work which tends to suggest that he was in semi-retirement after 1859. He was one of the visionaries and who gave Victorian Britain a technological lead over the rest of the world. What is also striking is his versatility designing anything from steam trams to ocean going steamers and sailing ships. At the same time he was one of the pioneers of greater specialisation in his field and the development of a separate specialised profession - the Naval Architect.

[1] Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers vol. 266 – 298

[2] J Foster Petree 'Charles Wye Williams, a Pioneer of Steam Navigation' in *Transactions of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society* Vol.10, 14 – 15

[3] G. Mason, British Steam Locomotive Builders, Cambridge, 1975, 461 – 463

[4] Illustrated London News, 17th February, 1849

[6] Trans INA Vol 2 (1861), 74 discussion on fouling of iron hulls

[7] They proved successful in service, but the **Diamond** became notorious for the heavy death toll among Irish deck passengers in 1849

[8] She had a successful career which includes Atlantic, Pacific and Australian services and trooping for the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny. In 1857, she caught fire*, was salvaged and eventually was converted into a sailing vessel which suggests she had a well-made fine-lined hull.
* Rudyard Kipling wrote a story about her burning

[9] Trans INA to find

[10] GRO XD2/13396 -13436

[11] David MacGregor Fast Sailing Ships, Their Design and Construction, (2nd Edition) London, 1988, 198 - 201

Corrections

Despite using our normal strenuous checking routines, two printing errors did get through to the last edition of the Bulletin (Volume 55, No. 4, March, 2012).

On page two the line below the picture was suppressed and the full sentence should read:

A statue in a park in Vienna commemorates Ressel's achievement, chauvinistically and preposterously, as "the one and only inventor of the screw propeller and steam shipping" and even more preposterously as "the Austrian inventor of steam shipping".

Similarly on the inside front cover the caption to the lower pictures was suppressed and should have shown:

***Manxman** at Pallion Engineering, Sunderland, August 2011 See page 11 (Bill Ogle)*

We regret these errors occurred and apologise for the inconvenience they have caused.

Ed.

Behind the Scenes in the Museum Archives
by LNRS Secretary, John Stokoe

I can report that The Society is making full use of our website www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org and participation at local history society fairs by promoting a positive approach to preserving our maritime heritage.

Some of the Team at work

During the past year the Society has been kept busy responding to a regular flow of wide-ranging enquiries most of which have called for our small team of researchers to delve into the Maritime Museum Archives in the quest to either locate vessel histories or the records of ex-seafarers. At the last count in excess of two dozen requests for such information have been received during this period and in most instances we have been able to produce fairly constructive responses. This has been entirely thanks to the tireless efforts of David Eccles, Harry Hignett, Gordon Bodey and Gordon Wright, ably assisted from time to time by other Members of the Monday Archive Workshop. We were particularly intrigued to recently receive a package of some 350 black and white negatives of photos taken during the 1940s and 1950s and work is continuing to identify and summarise the histories of the ships concerned with a view to formulating a fascinating database.

Nautical Trivia Quiz

1. What did Port Line share with another shipping company?
2. Who made up the consortium of Associated Container Transport Ltd (ACT)?
3. Coral Reefs are living entities, how do they sustain themselves?
4. There is a plaque, in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, commemorating what?
5. Where is the worlds longest sea crossing bridge?
6. Where is the National Maritime College of Ireland located?
7. What is 365 or “Marines Breakfast”?
8. Ochlophobia is a morbid fear of a) Crowds; b) Snakes; c) Computers; d) Drowning

Answers on page 37.....

Cruise liners at Liverpool

by Bill Ogle

The number of liner visits continues to grow and the varied schedule of 19 visits for 2012 is shown below. Next year will see the planned re-introduction of cruises originating at the Pier Head although the first liner to be based at the terminal will be the 17,593 gross tons **Ocean Countess.** Now that the legal issues have been resolved her first, of the 13 cruises scheduled from Liverpool during 2012, is due to depart on May 29. Work is rapidly progressing on building new temporary baggage and Customs facilities at Princes Parade, opposite the Titanic Memorial, to meet this sailing date.

5 April	Balmoral	1340 passengers	operated by Fred Olsen
15 April	Marco Polo	848	Cruise & Maritime Services
16 April	Saga Pearl	512	Saga
17 May	Vision of the Seas	2416	Royal Caribbean
30 May	Caribbean Princess	3114	Princess
11 June	Caribbean Princess	3114	Princess
16 June	Aida Cara	1180	Aida
22 June	Arcadia	866	P&O
3 July	TBC	700	Saga
12 July	Caribbean Princess	3114	Princess
20 July	Prinsendam	766	Holland America
28 July	Quest for Adventure	450	Saga
3 August	Queen Elizabeth	2014	Cunard
8 August	Astor	590	TBC
9 August	Carribbean Princess	3114	Princess
10 August	Adonia	710	P&O
17 August	Prinsendam	766	Holland America
20 August	Aida Cara	1180	Aida
14 Sept.	Albatross	800	Phoenix Reisen

Resurgam – Part 2

Dr Eur-Ing E. S. Long Professor; Chartered Consulting Engineer

Resurgam 2 – Conceptual Design Configuration: In March 1879 a conceptual sketch was forwarded to Cochrans, of which I have referred to as **Resurgam 2**. The sketch indicated the basic hull profile and the internal power plant in outline. A letter accompanied the sketch, presumably giving far greater detail than the sketch displayed.

Resurgam 2 – Final Design Configuration: The order to build **Resurgam 2** was awarded to Cochrans on April 1879, constructed during the summer months and launched in November 1879 at a total cost of £1,538.00. The vessel was 40 ft long and 6.5 ft diameter, with a steam powered prime mover and central diving planes only – the former ballast tank arrangement now omitted.

Structural features included the wrought iron hull sheathed in wooden beams, 18 ins thick, faired into the hull fore and aft (which must have provided a degree of buoyancy), and a conning tower mounted within a free-flooding casing (which also shrouded the schnorkel type non-return valves for the air intake and smoke exhaust from the boiler).

Mechanical features included a coal-fired boiler complete with a wooden insulating jacket, and incorporating a furnace and ashpit with airtight doors, sized for stoking a 6 hp engine, and a smoke box. In addition to this there was an accumulator (reservoir) for the compressed steam, which incorporated a throttle valve at the outlet to the single cylinder steam engine – located in the transverse attitude to the propeller shaft. The power plant also comprised a condenser (heat exchanger cooled by circulating seawater) and a hotwell (tank for the condensate prior to returning to the boiler feed). Two reciprocating pumps operated directly from the engine crankshaft circulated both the seawater and condensate. There was also an air intake valve (referred to above), feeding fresh air to a Roots Blower, driven by a transmission belt from the propeller shaft, circulating air to the furnace. During surface operations in choppy seas, with the opening and closing of the schnorkel type non-return valve air intake, it would probably have been extremely uncomfortable for the occupants, with the Roots Blower operating against this, possibly causing variations in the internal air pressure.

It would probably have taken several days to heat up the boiler water sufficient to drive the steam engine. It is envisaged that it required some 30-40 psi to operate the engine directly from steam raised in the boiler during surface operations, and about 150 psi pressure prior to diving, with a possible engine efficiency at the time of only 10 per cent.

Precise details are not known about design of the 6 hp engine, but it is envisaged that there was some form of sliding valve arrangement, actuated from the piston rod, for steam delivery and exhausting the spent steam during the piston cycle. A large diameter piston/ cylinder would also have been required due to the low steam pressure – with the power plant operating normally when surfaced and under the latent heat of steam during submerged motion of the vessel.

Prime movers operated under the latent heat of steam (known as the Lamm Principle after the French Engineer that invented it) had been tried and developed both in England and America around this time with varying success rates. The most successful application of the principle was the operation of tramcars around the streets of New Orleans. Basically, the steam cycle comprises the generation of steam vapour under pressure from the boiler enters the accumulator, and at this point forces the molecules to separate and behave as a 'gas' containing stored heat energy (enthalpy) – note that it is not a perfect gas as it still contains water vapour. On closing off the boiler/furnace prior to diving, the throttle valve on the accumulator was opened and the release of the 'gas' into the lower pressure side of the system, flashes off as wet steam, converting the latent heat energy into potential mechanical work energy to drive the engine piston. The furnace/ boiler/ accumulator must be effectively sealed prior to diving. The process is also dependent upon adequate thermal insulation of the accumulator (something that the Final Design Configuration did not appear to have!).

Hand controls actuated the balanced hydroplanes mounted on the sides of the vessel at midships, with a vertically inline pair of rudders operating in tandem at the stern, and propelled by a 3-bladed propeller.

The Author has made some assumptions as to how the hydroplanes were controlled through a gear train and pulley system – diverting the control system from the handwheel in the conning tower on the longitudinal axis, out to the hydroplane fulcrums on the sides of the vessel at midships. As soon as the hydroplanes move from their central balanced position to dive mode, the vessel would slow down, and as the dive operation relies solely on the inclination of the hydroplanes – together with forward motion of the vessel – greater motive power would be required to compensate for this adverse effect. As the velocity of the vessel tends to zero, the vessel would tend to surface under its in-built positive/ reserve buoyancy (which is a built-in fail-safety feature of the vessel). In addition to this, the greater the vessel's buoyancy, the greater the resultant force required on the hydroplanes to submerge the vessel. The vessel has 100 lbs of positive buoyancy, but with the physical movement of the occupants, the variations due to the burning of the fuel, water content boiling off, the build-up of condensate in the hotwell, and the possible accumulation of bilge water – all of which could have had

an effect upon the reserve buoyancy and the trim of the vessel in the Author's opinion, affecting the ability to control the vessel when submerged.

Full scale replica of **Resurgam** at Birkenhead, Woodside ferry terminal. Photo Bill Ogle

Thinking of the internal environment, this must have been claustrophobic with the three occupants, humid and damp with condensation, extremely noisy, unbearably hot, with limited internal lighting. The breathable air would be foul, particularly when the Roots Blower providing a degree of fresh air, was shut down during diving operations. In the case of the latter, Garrett's so-called 'Pneumataphore' may have been employed. This was the subject of a completely separate invention, developed whilst he was studying chemistry at South Kensington Museum that allowed a person to breath whilst under water for a limited period of time.

On the face of it, **Resurgam 2** could have been deemed to be a resounding success:

1. it floated,
2. it submerged to a degree under the control of the hydroplanes,
3. it was driven by a power plant (conventionally on the surface and under latent heat when submerged (many previous designs had operated by physical energy),
4. it had self-closing schnorkel valves with a force-induced air supply, and
5. it was fail-safe with a reserve of positive buoyancy.

It must also be stated that George's ideas on an 'Internal Combustion Engine', whilst not progressed further by him at the time, were not far off being developed elsewhere in Europe.

The Royal Navy had shown a slight interest in the vessel and so the crew, comprising Capt. Jackson (Master Mariner), Mr. George Price (Engineer), and George Garrett himself set sail into the Irish Sea for Portsmouth at 10.00am on 10th December 1879 on the vessel's maiden voyage. George, whilst still in Liverpool Bay, and with his head out of the conning tower, had to enquire of the master of a fully rigged ship bound for Liverpool, which way to go. The master replied that they were the biggest fools he had ever met in his life – or words to that effect!!!

Some days later the vessel sailed into Rhyl, with a view to effecting repairs or modifications to the vessel – the actual reasons are unclear. Whatever the reasons, the Rhuddlan Foundry was engaged to carry out the work. In the meantime, George returned to Liverpool to purchase the steam yacht **Elphin**, and again the reasons are unclear. Following which, the **Elphin** with a full crew sailed to Rhyl, and the **Resurgam** recommenced the voyage at 10.00pm on 24th February 1880, accompanied by **Elphin**. Why they left Rhyl at such a late hour in the darkness is not known. The weather deteriorated and **Resurgam** was placed under tow. Soon afterwards the **Elphin** developed problems with her engines, and all the crew of **Resurgam** boarded **Elphin** in an attempt to resolve the problem. Again why all the crew saw fit to disembark **Resurgam** is not known, as it was probable that only the Engineer could have resolved **Elphin**'s problems.

One of the design faults with **Resurgam** was that the hatch cover could not be secured externally. As a result she shipped water, causing a loss of buoyancy, adding addition strain on the hawser, which subsequently failed, and **Resurgam** sunk in 15m of water – at coordinates 53deg. 23.78min. N, and 3deg. 33.18min. E.

Elphin took shelter on the Rive Dee, off Mostyn, where she was subsequently rammed by a tug boat that was coming to her assistance! **Elphin** was a total wreck as a consequence. George returned to Liverpool having lost two vessels in one single day! As if this was not bad enough, neither of the vessels were insured! George's prowess as a brilliant Engineer is unquestionable, but it seemed that his business acumen needed some further development!

After the loss of **Resurgam** George became Engineer to the Milford Haven Docks in South Wales. He later partnered with a Swedish Engineer entitled Thorsten Nordenfelt, and between 1882 and 1888 they built between them four submarines – for Greece, Turkey and Russia – two of which were constructed at the Naval Construction & Armament Company in Barrow in Furness. George influenced the designs of the vessels with his latent heat principle and the steam boiler/ accumulator, the incorporation of ballast tanks, and the hydroplanes. The Royal

Navy showed little interest in submarines at the time and eventually the relationship between George and Thorsten lost momentum.

In recognition of the work that George had carried out for the Turkish Navy, in terms of the training that he had given on the operation of the submarines to the young recruits, he was awarded the rank of Honorary Lieutenant.

In 1995 a fisherman discovered **Resurgam** and between 1996-97 several archaeological surveys of the site were carried out. **Resurgam** is now a protected site for a radius of 300m around the vessel, under the Receiver of Wrecks Act 1973 – which is enacted under the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and a licence has to be obtained from the Welsh Heritage Board (CADW) before diving on the site.

In November 1890 George and his family moved to New York, then to Florida, and in 1892 they moved back to New York, where George joined the US Revenue Service as an Ordinary Seaman. This must have been a low point in George's life, and after an injury he was discharged from the Service in 1893.

George returned to Europe and tried to contact Thorsten Nordenfelt, but by this time Thorsten, a Civil Engineer by training, had lost complete interest in submarines. George returned to America and enrolled with the US Volunteer Engineers. He was discharged in 1889 and for the last three years of his life he worked as a fireman in the New York Fire Service. George died in hospital in New York on 26th February 1902 from chronic respiratory problems and exhaustion. What a pity that George did not see fit to develop his notion of the 'Internal Spark Ignition Engine' instead of messing about in boats.

Admirals in the Royal Navy at the time levied much criticism about the submarine, some stating that the submarine was a 'weapon of the weaker powers' and that it was 'underwater, underhand and dammed un-English'. However, in 1901 the first of the Holland Class submarines was built at Vickers Sons & Maxim, the forerunner of Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering Company – the UK's lead submarine design and construction shipyard in Barrow in Furness (now BA Systems), and the rest is history as they say.

Warning

The International Maritime Pilots' Association's Bi-ennial Congress is to be held next September in London. It is expected that about 300 pilots and their wives will attend, an extensive programme of events is planned :

The organisers have thought it fit to produce the following warning: *Neither IMPA or UKMPA accept any responsibility for any excessive spending by any pilot's guest as a result of this visit to Harrods*

THE LOSS OF HMS THETIS

by Derek Arnold

(*A summary of the presentation made to the Society on 15th December 2011*)

Of all the shipping disasters that have occurred throughout history, why should the disaster that overtook the new submarine, HMS **Thetis**, rank as more significant than the others?

Consider four factors:

- firstly it took place on the doorstep of the shipyard that she had left for her diving trials, and she carried twice as many men as she was designed for. These extras were shipyard technicians, makers men, and commanding officers from sister ships still under construction.
- Secondly, this remains the worst peacetime submarine disaster suffered by the Royal Navy.
- Thirdly, the rescuers stood back and did nothing while the men inside **Thetis** slowly choked to death.
- Finally, those that were left behind were treated appallingly by the authorities. It was a story of secrets, scandals, skulduggery and stupidity.

Cammell Lairds were given a contract to build a new class of submarine, the 'T' class, **Thetis** being first to be completed. One of the last jobs to be done was to paint the interiors of the torpedo tubes. A gang of painters crawled inside the tubes to paint them. Before the rear door is opened it is necessary to determine if there is water inside. This is done by opening a test cock. If water comes out, the tube could be full and needs draining down, if nothing comes out, the tube is dry. Just to make sure that all is correct, a piece of round metal bar is attached to the test cock and prodding it through the hole removes any foreign matter. The chap painting 5 tube saw a little hole which he blocked up with a piece of rag to prevent the paint from clogging it up. He intended to return and remove it when the paint was dry but was whisked away to a new job elsewhere. So began a chain of minor events, individually insignificant but cumulatively fatal.

Thetis did her trials north of Llandudno. She arrived to find a tug, **Grebecock**, waiting as her escort. Aboard was a navy man, Lt Cultard, from one of the ships still under construction and who was there to warn off any vessels which might stray into the area.

Thetis had difficulty in diving and her commanding officer, Lt Cmdr Bolus ordered his officers to check the ship. Lt Woods in the torpedo room opened all the test cocks and as no water spurted out, deemed them to be empty. What he failed to do was to push the piece of metal bar through the test cock centres.

As they opened the door of No5 torpedo tube it swung back with a mighty clang and sea water rushed in at full bore. As **Thetis** flooded, Woods ordered the evacuation of the compartment and the closing of a watertight escape door. To do this required eighteen wing nuts to be screwed up tight. A man looked down into the rising water to see a wing nut had fallen into the door space, which meant that the door would never be able to be shut. With no time to reposition the door, Woods ordered the abandonment of the second compartment. **Thetis** hit the bottom at 160ft and settled on an even keel. Bolus called a hasty conference, and the priority was to rectify the situation. Woods suggested that the for'd escape chamber be used to go from the dry room through to the flooded one using breathing apparatus, swim through to the open torpedo tube rear door and close it. This would facilitate pumping out seawater using the ship's own equipment. Woods kitted up with breathing gear, but his attempt was unsuccessful because at 160ft down, the pressure of the water on his eardrums was too great. Bolus concluded that they would have to wait for outside rescue which would not come before the morning. Laird managers approached Bolus with a plan to lift the stern end of the ship by using sections of pipework from various areas and reconnecting them to valves that would enable water and fuel to be jettisoned. By the following morning the job was done. The aft escape hatch was only 20 ft below the surface and escapes could begin. Two men made a textbook exit but Bolus figured the process took far too long due to oxygen starvation and CO^2 poisoning. He ordered four men to make the next attempt. Time passed with no signs of escape, he ordered the chamber to be emptied. All four had drowned. Leading Stoker Arnold was asked to attempt it and take a civilian, Frank Shaw, with him. Both made a text book escape, shot to the surface and were taken to safety. Sadly, no more men followed and it was over.

The rescuers on the scene did nothing to secure the stern of the submarine and turned down all offers of assistance from outside agencies.

Ninety-nine families were affected. The widows of shipyard men were entitled to £350 Death in Service Benefit, which was paid into the Birkenhead Magistrates Court but had to be petitioned for to one of the sitting J.P.s, and most applications were refused. The bodies of the crew were removed when **Thetis** was eventually beached at Angelsey and laid in a mass grave as a result of the authorities stating that if the families wanted their loved ones back, they must pay for the transportation costs as well as any considerable funeral expenses.

The Royal Navy held an inquiry in which Bolus was blamed for the loss of life because he failed to transfer excess personnel to **Grebecock**, Woods, for opening the rear door without using the test cock correctly and Mr Grundy, an Admiralty overseer, for not checking the painting of the tubes. The report was given to Mr

Justice Bucknill who headed the public enquiry, but he waved it aside saying 'I do not wish to read this as it may cloud my judgement'. The result was that no-one was held to blame therefore no awards for compensation were made.

Thetis was raised and beached at Traith Bychan beach in Angelsey on September 3rd, the day war was declared. The victims were removed, identified and laid to rest at Holyhead. She was made seaworthy again and towed back to Cammell Laird where she was extensively modified and renamed **Thunderbolt**. She had an active war record until being depth-charged off Cape St Vito, north of Sicily.

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

June	Mondays	11th, 18th, 25th
July		2nd., 9th., 16th., 23rd; 30th
August		6th., 13th., 20th.,

Answers to Quiz

1. The funnel colours were the same as that of Cunard Shipping.
2. Port Line, Blue Star, Ben Line, T&J Harrison Ellermans.
3. They eat algae called zooplankton.
4. The occasion when HMS Rattler towed HMS Archimedes backwards at 2.8 knots, whilst, the HMS Archimedes was at full ahead on her side paddles.
5. Hangzhou Bay Bridge, 35 km long, six lane bridge, opened in 2008 between Shanghai and Ningpo.
6. In Ringaskiddy County Cork, about 18 Kms from Cork.
7. Bacon and Eggs available every day of the year.
8. a) Crowds.

CAPTAINS

(Written by a 10-year-old American schoolboy and published in the newsletter of the Society of Marine Port Engineers of New York NY)

I want to be a captain when I grow up because it's a funny job and easy to do. Captains don't need much school education; they just have to learn numbers so they can read the instruments. I guess they should be able to read maps so they don't get lost.

Captains have to be brave so they won't be scared if it's foggy and they can't see. If a propeller falls off they should stay calm so they will know what to do. Captains have to have eyes to see through the clouds and they can't be afraid of thunder and lightning because they are closer to them than we are.

The salary that captains make is another thing I like. They make more than they can spend. This is because most people think that captaining a ship is dangerous — except captains, because they know how easy it is.

There isn't much I don't like, except girls like captains and all the girls want to marry captains, so they always have to chase them away so they won't bother them. I hope I don't get seasick, because I get carsick and if I get seasick I could not be a captain and then I would have to go out to work.

M33/ Minerva

From Sea Breezes, 1991

All credit must go to the national press, who so often get their shipping stories wrong but who have now been proved right while it is *Ships in the News* and a *Sea Breezes* reader who were wrong! In the February edition, *Ships in the News* contradicted a story which had appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph* and put its faith in a reader who, it is fully admitted, did qualify his claim with the statement that he was only probably correct.

The point at issue was the location of the former monitor **Minerva** – whether she was to be taken from Hartlepool to Portsmouth, as the *Sunday Telegraph* contended, or whether she was at Portsmouth already and was to be taken to Hartlepool, as our reader suspected. *Ships in the News* plumped for Portsmouth but it should have known that the **Minerva** went from Portsmouth to Hartlepool at the same time as the **Foudroyant** in the summer of 1987.

Built as the monitor **M33** by Workman Clark in 1915 under a sub-contract from Harland & Wolff, the ship served at Gallipoli and in the Aegean until early 1919 when she was attached to the White Sea Squadron. Paid-off in 1920, she was re-activated in 1924 and went to Pembroke Dockyard for conversion into a coastal minelayer, the **Minerva**. In this role she was stationed at Portsmouth and was used as relief ship for her near sister **Medea** (ex-M22) which was attached to HMS **Vernon** for instructional purposes.

Offered for sale in 1937, she was restored to naval service on the outbreak of war and was used as a training and boom defence workshop at Portsmouth until December, 1944, when she was towed to the Clyde. She returned to Portsmouth after the war and in 1946 she became the stationary hulk **C23** in the Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, used as a Port Auxiliary Service workshop.

The Ministry of Defence again put her up for sale in 1987 and although a bid for her was made by Gosport Borough Council she was bought by the Hartlepool Ship Restoration Co. and taken to Hartlepool along with the **Foudroyant**, the intention being that both ships would be restored to their former appearance. Last year, however, the restorers advised Hampshire County Council that they intended selling her for scrap.

Hampshire County Council, to their eternal credit, promptly stepped in and bought the ship and made arrangements last autumn to have her towed back to Portsmouth. The weather prevented this but the County Council still seem determined to restore the **C23/ Minerva** as the M33 in her rightful home, either in the Portsmouth Naval Base Heritage Area linked with the Royal Naval Museum or at Priddy's Hard, Gosport, at the Royal Naval Ordnance Museum.

And the ship still at Portsmouth and believed by our reader to be the **Minerva**? This turns out to be what was formerly the **Handy**, built by Armstrongs on the Tyne in 1882 as a vessel aboard which various types of gun could be tested. She was purchased by the Admiralty in 1884 and renamed **Excellent** in 1891, **Calcutta** in 1916 and **Snapper** in 1917 (some say **Snapper II**)

In the early 1920s she was bought by Dover Harbour Board and converted into a floating crane, lasting in this role until 1971 when she was acquired by Pounds' Yard at Tipner, Portsmouth, where she was seen by our reader and mistaken for the **Minerva.** It is understood that Pounds Marine are currently restoring the hull, the engine (last in steam in 1946) and the gun.

Editor's Note: *Listed as part of the National Historic Fleet, Core Collection,* ***M33/ Minerva*** *is now located at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, close to HMS* ***Victory****.*

M33/ Minerva restored and returned to Portsmouth

Displacement	580 tons
Length	177 feet; Beam 31 feet; Draught 6 feet
Propulsion	Triple-expansion, steam, twin screw, 400 h.p.
Speed	9.6 knots Range 1,440 nautical miles
Complement	72
Armament	2 x BL 6inch guns
	1 x six pounder
	2 x Maxim

THE METAL MAN

Port of Sligo

The 'Metal Man', a larger than life-size figure of a seaman, has stood on a pedestal at the mouth of Sligo Harbour for well over a century and a half. As a guide to shipping it has been a familiar sight to successive generations of seafarers entering and leaving the Port.

The origin of this Impressive beacon dates from the early years of the 19th century. A sailing vessel entering the port passed on the wrong side of a reef and foundered with all hands. The Master's wife was so appalled by the tragedy that she petitioned the authorities to erect some kind of warning signal on the reef. When no action was taken this public spirited lady, who was apparently a person of some means, decided to do something about it herself. She commissioned the sculptor Thomas Kirk to model a pilot-light for ships entering the Port. A model of the "Metal Man" was exhibited by Kirk at an exhibition in 1817.

Two years later the Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, the Ballast Board, commissioned John Clarke to cast a metal figure from Kirk's model at a cost of £80.

In 1822 the Commissioners for the Improvement of the Town and Harbour of Sligo invited tenders for the erection of a "Suitable pillar on the Perch Rock, to be not less then ten feet high over high water mark, upon which Is to fixed a gigantic metal figure of a sailor, twelve feet tall and weighing five tons - now lying at the New Quay". After a lapse of two years the 'Metal Man' was eventually placed firmly on his perch, high above the ebb and flow of the tidal waters. The pedestal was built by Thomas Ham of Ballina who, a few years earlier, had erected a fifty-two foot high limestone beacon on the Black Rock further out in the Bay. In September, 1825 the Commissioners decided to have the statue painted in a smart nautical attire dressed as a seaman of that period with blue coat and white trousers.

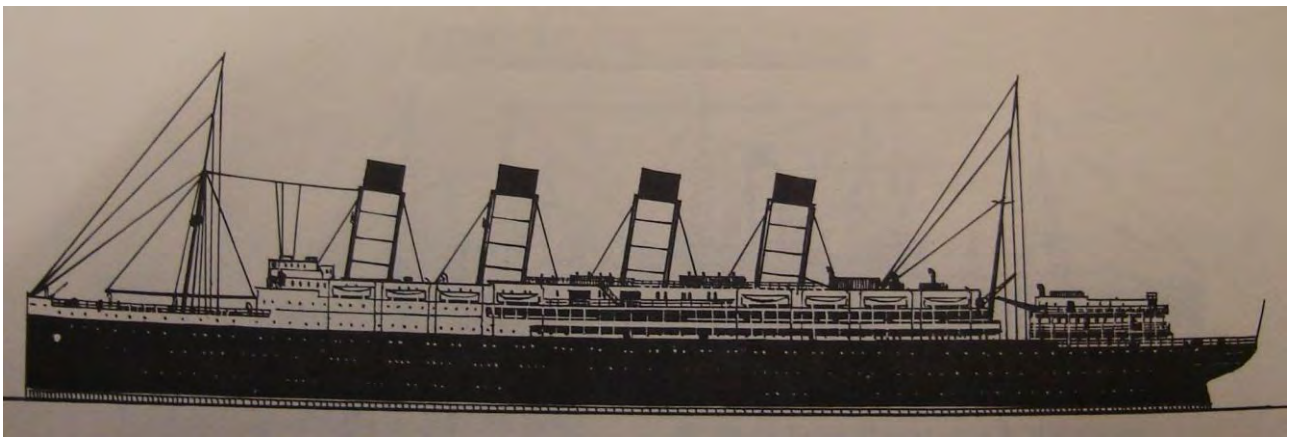
Today, as he has so faithfully done for a hundred and seventy years, the 'Metal Man', dressed in his familiar nautical garb, stands on his perch, with the outstretched hand, finger extended, as he points out the channel for ships to take on entering 'Memory Harbour'.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 56 No.2, September, 2012



R.M.S. **Lusitania,** 31,550 grt., 1907 to 1915 See page 27

City of Durban, seen passing Tilbury landing stage 11th February, 1968 heading for the Royal Docks
See page 5 Photograph by kind permission of Bob Scott

Oxfordshire approaching Southampton see page6

Copy of the painting and reproduced by kind permission of the artist, Harley Crossley

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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A Seaman and His Sleep

Captain WA Sparks

First published in Blue Star Line 'Gangway'

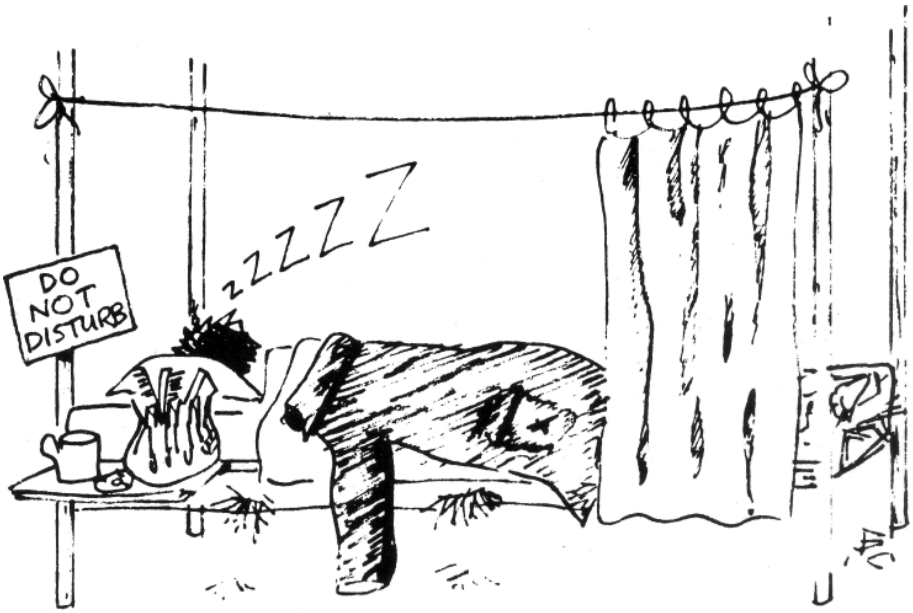
This essay is based on my personal observations and experiences during my time at sea between the years 1937 and 1983. The pieces are dedicated to the many good shipmates I sailed with during all those years, none of whom should be forgotten.

Bosuns, carpenters, donkeymen, greasers, sailors, firemen, trimmers, cooks, stewards, boy ratings, mates, engineers, electricians, radio officers, pursers, cadets, OTs and last, but not least, those who at one time were not classed as seamen at all by the Board of Trade, namely masters, apprentices and ships' cats.

Have I forgotten anyone? Only maybe some of the more exotic ratings found on passenger ships — and what about DBSs and stowaways?

My observations err on the lighter side of life and should not be taken too seriously. I hope they may raise a smile or two (if of self-recognition, so much the better) both in the crew mess and upstairs. It should be taken as read that each essay is prefaced by a statement along the following lines:

Any resemblance between persons living, dead or otherwise and those mentioned here is purely intentional.



'The best six feet in the ship' — that is the expression you will often hear from a seaman when describing his bunk. It epitomises the importance he attaches to it.

In a trampship of the thirties or forties it would probably be a support of thin steel strips interlaced under a 'donkey's breakfast' (straw mattress) and

covered by a couple of threadbare brown blankets, supplemented in cold weather by an old overcoat. The pillow, singular and also of straw, was usually raised by using a life-jacket.

This was the seaman's only place of real privacy in a fo'c's'le with a dozen or so other similar bunks. Many bunks would be rigged up with a curtain to keep out the light and to signal the well-known hotel room message — *Do Not Disturb.* Other refinements might include a small wooden tray clipped onto the side rail to hold an ash tray or a mug of tea and a 'tidy'.

The tidy was a sort of all purpose holdall made out of a piece of canvas, the ends being teased and knotted into fancy patterns. Its utility lay in its many slots and pockets which held combs, brushes, razors, letters, books and a picture of the family.

Sleep on board a ship when at sea varies with the rolling and pitching of the vessel, but is definitely in an inverse ratio. That is, the more movement the less sleep there will be. However, it must be admitted that this is a generalisation which does not apply to everyone, for there are those who can wedge themselves in and somehow drift off to sleep no matter how much the motion of the ship tries to dislodge them. These fortunates are indeed the envy of others who are greatly discomforted by the vessel's gyrations.

Other distractions to one's sleep depended on whether the crew quarters were for'd or aft. In the fo'c's'le there is the frequent slamming of the bow into a head sea, commonly known as 'hitting the mile stone'. The anchor cables which should have been lashed and haven't will be constantly banging away inside the spurling pipes. This will be drowned out when the piled up cables inside the chain lockers finally tumble over with a roar and a clatter.

Down aft is worse, especially if the ship is without cargo. First there is the ever present chatter of the steam steering gear, but worst of all is the vibration and shaking of the after end of the ship as the stern lifts and the propeller races out of the water. Then comes the drop, like being in an express lift. You instinctively grab the side of your bunk for fear of being left up in the air.

It used to be the rule, albeit unwritten, that noise was only allowed in the fo'c's'le during the evening 4-8 watch — noise being classified as general conversation at normal level, singing, and playing the mouth organ or sometimes a guitar or violin.

No one had radios in those days, and cassette players were not invented, so the unmusical thump thump pop rubbish was, thankfully, unheard of. A game of draughts or dominoes could be quite noisy but card schools were, in contrast, deadly quiet.

There were those who could sleep anywhere, anytime, and for as long as they were left undisturbed. These were the aspirants for the title of 'Horizontal Champion', the prize for which was a jar of 1894 vintage Board of Trade pickles.

Those who did not sleep too well would often say that there must have been a Horizontal Champion in their bunk on the last voyage and that consequently no sleep remained in it!

Fog at sea offered some small consolation for living in the poop or fo'c's'le. These places were furthest removed from the funnel, upon which was fixed the steam whistle in a steamship or the compressed air horn, if a motorship, and from which emanated the roaring blast of the regulation fog signal.

The officer of the watch, working on the principle that 'if I can't sleep then no one shall' caused this auditory assault by hanging on to the whistle lanyard with fiendish mirth, often for a second or two longer than was really necessary. The Board of Trade, in their wisdom, had decreed that the blast should be audible for distance of two miles. Draw your own conclusions!

If during fog (and especially if living for'd) one did manage to shut out the blasting of the stream whistle, there would come sneaking back into the mind memories of the topic of conversation at the last meal. It was invariably all about fog, ships and collisions. Pleasant dreams ...

In port, stevedores, local tugboats, steam winches and railway wagons shunting up and down the quay all night, worked ceaselessly in their efforts to produce chatterings, hangings, hootings and clankings to disrupt the slumber of ships' crews.

And we made our own noise too. In order to work winches, steam had to be turned onto the deck steam pipes. When this was done it was as if someone was trying to smash the pipes with a sledge hammer. The phenomenon was aptly called Steam Hammer. This hammering shattered the early morning stillness quite violently in port when the duty engineer put his wheel spanner to the steam valve and put the steam on deck. Of course, with the change to electric winches this problem is no more.

Opening hatches was another noisy business. Steel beams and steel tipped wooden hatch boards were thrown down onto the steel deck at all hours, making not only a fearful row but also sending shock waves through the ship's fabric. I think the modern ship with steel hatch covers that roll on and off is, if anything, noisier in this respect.

So there it is: sleep. I once read somewhere that the amount of sleep varies — seven hours for a man, eight for a woman and nine for a fool. The implied moral is not to sleep one's life away.

Don't forget the watch below.

Tsunami Escape (MARS 200516)

I was serving as an officer on board a yacht. Boxing Day, December 2004, was a normal day for us with charter guests on board. We were quietly lying to our port anchor in approximately eight metres of water in a bay off the coast of Thailand. Our day started at 0800 and I went ashore to refill the jerry cans with petrol for the jet skis. Arriving back at the pontoon, I radioed the vessel and a tender was sent to pick me up. Three other crew members came in on the tender to get rid of some garbage. The tender came in almost all the way to the beach as the tide was high. The moon was full, hence the tides were larger than normal.

We all returned to the vessel and once aboard I did some minor tasks but within the next 25 minutes I noticed that the tide had gone out. I mean, I was almost looking up at the pontoon on the shore where we were standing a short time before. How could this be? I also noticed that we had a wake coming off the stern of our tenders which were lying alongside. I immediately went to the bridge and discussed my concern with the chief officer as to what was happening with the tide. I then I looked at the depth sounder – it said 2.8 metres! The captain came on to the bridge to hear our concerns and I went to the foredeck to heave in the anchor. The anchor cable was almost horizontal and literally bouncing with a lot of tension.

Once the engines were running, I began heaving in our port anchor but it was slow going at the start, especially as we were dragging at a fast rate backwards towards the beach. Once the snubber was on deck, it was cut and the anchor was now leading directly aft as we were going ahead on the engines in order to get into deeper water. We got the anchor on board and the swim platform doors shut just in time as the first backwash swell was heading back towards our stern. It pushed us sideways, one of our tenders had snapped its bowline but quick action by a deckhand kept it from getting lost or further damaged. Viewed later, on our chart plotter, the track history showed that we dragged the anchor some 654 metres in a seven minute time frame, that's almost 6.5 knots backwards! The surge and sheer water movement in the bay was amazing. We headed out to sea as quickly as possible with many other boats and jet skis following. The sound of the waves hitting the shore was like explosions as cars, buses and hotels were smashed, dislodged and sent on their way. Boats were being thrown high and dry leaning on their sides on the street. A series of waves struck but our quick action put us into safe water with no time to spare. We watched in awe as the sea unleashed its fury on the coastline as we safely navigated into safe water. We spent a very vigilant night at anchor in deep water off the coast.

Remember Those Days .....

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

July to September, 1971

Many will be saddened that Ellerman and Bucknall Steamship Co. Ltd. have withdrawn their four fine passenger liners, which for the last 17 years or so have maintained a monthly service between the UK-Continental ports and South Africa. Of considerably over 13,000 gross tons, they are the **City of Port Elizabeth, City of Exeter, City of Durban** and **City of York.** All made their appearance between 1952 and 1954 from Vickers Armstrongs Ltd. on the Tyne, their twin-screw Doxford oil engines giving a service speed of 16½ knots. Accommodation of the highest class is provided for 107 passengers, with spacious public rooms. The reason given is recent and unprecedented rises in operating costs in all aspects and it is likely that all four will be purchased as cruise ships, gutted and refitted to carry considerably more passengers. But whatever happens, we shall be witnessing the passing of the last of the ultra-luxury passenger-cargo vessels, certainly under the British flag.

Floating whale oil refineries do not often come into the news and most of the industry, once so prominent under the Norwegian flag, is now concentrated in Japanese hands. The last Norwegian factory ship **Kosmos IV** (14,869 grt) has just been sold to Japanese buyers and will be renamed **Polar Star**; somewhat unusually she will not carry the "Maru" suffix.

For the first time in nine years the houseflag of the former Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Co. Ltd. flew from the masthead of a passenger ship leaving Liverpool Landing Stage for North Wales when, on May 15, a special charter cruise on P & A Campbell's Balmoral (688 grt) left for Llandudno and Menai Straits. Two anniversaries were commemorated; firstly the 150th of the first steamer sailing between Liverpool and North Wales, and secondly the 80th anniversary of the formation of the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Co. Ltd.

The container ship **Euroliner**, of 23,100 dw tons, has entered service on the North Atlantic. Built by Rheinstahl Nordseewerke GmbH of Emden she is owned by the Scarsdale Shipping Co. Ltd. of Glasgow, managed by J & J Denholm (Management) Ltd. and time-chartered to Seatrain International S.A. The **Euroliner** has an overall length of 798ft. 6in., moulded breadth of 98ft. 5in. and loaded draft of 32ft.6in. Propulsion is by two Pratt and Whitney FT4A-12 marine gas turbines with an output of 29,710 b.h.p. linked to a Lips variable pitch propeller through a De Schelde locked train reduction gear. During manoeuvring each turbine runs at a constant idling speed of 2,000 r.p.m. rising to 3,600 r.p.m. for a service speed of 25 knots.

July to September, 1991

In what has been described as one of the biggest refinancing deals in British shipping, P&O have sold to subsidiaries of banks 33 of the 76 ships which fly their house-flag. Twenty-one are being leased back and the other twelve bought back on hire-purchase. Involved are four passenger vessels, 12 container ships and 17 ferries acquired through acquisition four years ago of the European Ferries Group. The banks concerned are National Westminster, Barclays, Abbey National and others not disclosed in a consortium, Howell Shipping. P&O have emphasised that the ships will continue under company management and operation, with no change in manning.

From now to the end of the year a "Liverpool Liners" exhibition is being mounted at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, sponsored by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co. As well as models – many having histories as interesting as the ships they represent – there is an assortment of memorabilia from the port's liner trades from 1840 to the present day comprising documents, menus, promotional material, photographs and publicity postcards. The models have been purposefully selected but the total on display in the whole museum – models of all classes of craft – represents only a third of the number salvaged from the Liverpool Corporation's collection after the city-centre building housing them was wrecked in the air-raids of May, 1941. The remainder are in storage pending the availability of space. An "outsider" in the current exhibition is the model of the **Lady of Mann** (1930) which for many years was a familiar sight to holidaymakers passing through the railway station at Rhyl, North Wales.

Late in June the cruise ship **Fairstar** (21,619 grt), broke down off the coast of Vietnam with some 1,130 passengers on board who had embarked at Sydney. *Lloyd's List* reported that these people spent five days and four nights in sweltering tropical heat, sleeping on the decks (when it was not raining) and going without fresh water for long periods. P&O Sitmar, the cruise operator said that on the first evening from departure from Sydney a generator failed, reducing the capacity of the air-conditioning plant and leaving parts of the vessel in darkness. Later, there was contamination from a burst sea-water pipe which caused power failure and the ship was immobilised. During this time a crew member died but this had been kept secret so that passengers' relatives would not become alarmed. The ship was fresh from a $5mn refit at Singapore. Passengers were ferried ashore at Ho Chi Minh City and flown back to Australia at the expense of P&O Sitmar who refunded their fares and promised a 25% discount on a future cruise. Formerly the British troopship **Oxfordshire** and launched in 1957 from the Govan yard of Glasgow's Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd. She was originally operated by Bibby Line and has experienced a varied 34 years to date.

Bowaters' Deep-Sea Ships Part 1

LNRS Member Roy Fenton

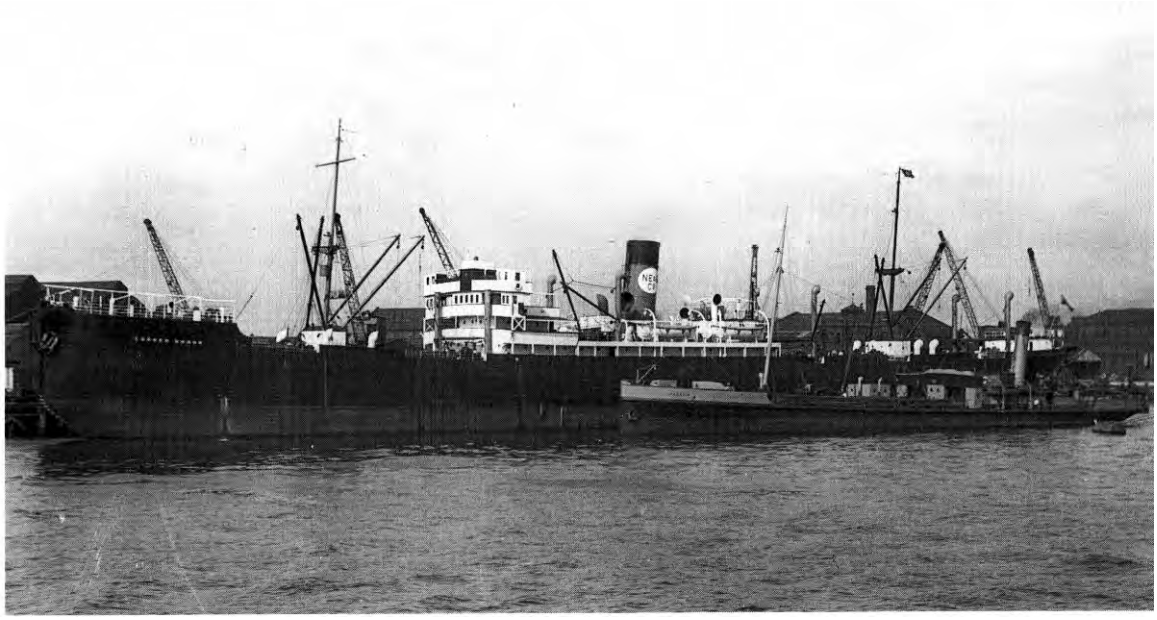
Although Bowaters was not a local shipping company, its ships were frequent visitors to the Mersey to discharge at the paper mills of Ellesmere Port. There was a further connection in that a number of its ships had 'Liverpool' as part of their name and as their port of registry, although it was not the same Liverpool as that of the LNRS. Excuse enough, however, to offer a brief account of Bowaters' history as owners of deep-sea ships and full details of the ocean-going vessels identified as owned by or associated with this paper maker. The story is a complex one involving a number of owning companies and several distinct phases of ship owning, and is best told in three parts.

The Bowater company began in an unspectacular, indeed slightly disreputable, fashion. In 1881 William Vansittart Bowater (1838-1907) was dismissed by a Manchester papermaker who had tired of his hard-drinking and bad temper. Bowater moved to London and set up in business as agent, selling the produce of paper mills to printers. What transformed this modest family company into a global manufacturing corporation was the arrival on the board of the founder's grandson, Eric Vansittart Bowater (1894-1962).

Eric Bowater sought to move from agent to manufacturer, and in 1926 opened his own mill at Northfleet on the Thames, well-placed for the import of Scandinavian or Canadian woodpulp. Within four years, Bowaters had opened another mill at Ellesmere Port, a joint venture with Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook who wanted newsprint for their Manchester works which printed northern editions of the Daily Mail and Daily Express. Like Northfleet, the Mersey Mill had excellent access for ships via the Manchester Ship Canal. However, Eric Bowaters's major coup was the acquisition in 1936 of an interest in the mills at Kemsley and Sittingbourne in Kent owned by Edward Lloyd Ltd. These large mills provided much of the newsprint for the London daily and weekly papers and had their own facilities for importing pulp at Ridham Dock. The consortium of newspaper proprietors who owned these mills was impressed with Eric Bowater's abilities and decided that he should run the mills, which he did under the title Bowater Lloyd Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd. In little more than a decade, Eric Bowater had built up a business which controlled 60% of the UK's newsprint.

Bowaters became owners of deep-sea ships almost incidentally to other acquisitions. Eric Bowater was convinced that his company needed to control the source of its raw materials, being suspicious of his wood pulp suppliers in Scandinavia. In the 1930s he began discussion with the Government of

Newfoundland about building his own pulp mill amidst abundant sources of timber at Gander. However, during negotiations Bowater was offered an existing Newfoundland mill, the Corner Brook operation of the International Power and Paper Co. of Newfoundland Ltd. The mill had been built in 1922 but had yet to make a profit, and Bowater realised he could secure his raw material supplies much more economically and quickly by buying the Corner Brook operation than by building his own mill: 7,000 square miles of virgin forest came with the mill. In May 1938 Corner Brook passed to Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., and with it came two ocean-going steamers, the **Humber Arm** and **Corner Brook**. These had been built by Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd. in 1928, and their original owners, the Newfoundland Power and Paper Utilities Corporation Ltd., becoming in 1928 the International Power and Paper Co. of Newfoundland Ltd. These ships were managed by Furness Withy and ran between the mill, east coast ports in the United States and the UK, they unloaded at Northfleet on the Thames.



SS **Corner Brook**, 1938-1954, 5,767gross tons, built by Armstrong, Whitworth and Co., Newcastle-upon-Tyne

In July 1940, **Humber Arm** was crossing the Atlantic with a cargo which included pulp for Ellesmere Port, plus newsprint and steel when torpedoed by the infamous **U99**. Fortunately, being in convoy probably saved her crew and passengers who were all rescued. The loss of **Humber Arm**, and the threat of a shortage of ships as the British Government hastened to control shipping capacity for its war effort, persuaded Bowaters to obtain more ships to maintain supplies to its mills. Ships were in desperately short supply in 1940, and it proved impossible to buy anything British owned. However, a motley fleet was somehow assembled, including two US-built steamers bought from China, one former Elder Dempster steamer acquired from Argentina, and two from a Canadian owner that, by their

dimensions, were lakers. Only one of these acquisitions was to survive the war, and Bowaters did not even take delivery of the **Betty**, which had loaded a cargo of rice in Saigon for Liverpool, only to be torpedoed off Tory Island within a day of her destination. The ageing ex-Elder Dempster steamer which had been renamed **Kitty's Brook** was torpedoed in May 1942 and **Waterton** in November of that year, both in Canadian waters whilst on voyages to or from the USA. **Livingston, Waterton's** sister laker/canaller, succumbed in the same waters during September 1944 in what was a late attack by the not-quite defeated U-boat arm. Only the pioneering **Corner Brook** and the US-built **North Brook** survived to the end of the conflict, after which the latter returned to Shanghai register. **Corner Brook** soldiered on alone, the sole vessel of Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., until scrapped at Hamburg in 1954.

To complete the story of this very mixed fleet, we also need to mention the steamer **R.J. Cullen**, bought in 1940 by the Atlantic Transportation Co. Ltd. and managed by the International Power and Paper Co. of Newfoundland Ltd. She had an origin equally as exotic as the Bowaters' distress purchases, having been completed in Japan in 1919 for the United States Shipping Board. Her fate was to be just as dismal as the Bowaters' ships, however, as in January 1942 she was wrecked on the island of Barra in the Outer Hebrides whilst on ballast passage from Liverpool to Sydney, Nova Scotia. Details and careers of all these ships appear below.

Fleet of Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Co. Ltd.

Notes on the ships' histories

The notation '1', '2' etc. in brackets after a ship's name indicates that she is the first, second etc ship of that name in the fleet where the name has been used more than once. The dates following the name are those of entering and leaving the company ownership or management. Hulls are made of steel unless otherwise stated.

On the second line is given the ship's Official Number in the British registry. This is followed by her tonnages, gross (g), net (n), at the time of acquisition. Dimensions given on the third line are the overall length x breadth x draft expressed in decimal feet. Tonnages and dimensions following any rebuild are quoted on subsequent lines.

On the next line begin descriptions of the engine at the time of acquisition with the following abbreviations: 2-cyl. two-cylinder simple, C.2-cyl. for compound two-cylinder, T.3-cyl. triple-expansion, Q.4-cyl. quadruple expansion, 4SC four-stroke cycle, 2SC two-stroke cycle, SA single-acting and DA double-acting. Then follows the name and location of the engine builder, dimensions of the cylinders, horse powers

and speed as recorded in registration documents. If the vessel was re-engined at some point in its career, the new engine details are given on the next line.

Subsequent lines give the completion date, name and location of the builder and yard number followed by details of the ship's full career, including wherever possible dates of UK registration and port numbers. The city indicated after the title of the owning company is where it was domiciled, and not necessarily the port of registry. Unless otherwise stated, the vessel flies the national flag of the owning company's domicile.

The ships' histories have been corrected to information published in 2011.

1. **Humber Arm** 1938-1940 O.N. 151649 5,758g 3,504n 439.0 x 56.3 x 28.6 feet
T. 3-cyl. by Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne;
621 NHP, 3,000 IHP, 12 knots.
26.1.1925: Launched by Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Yard No. 1000).
7.1925: Completed.
4.8.1925: Registered in the ownership of Newfoundland Power and Paper Co. Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland as **Humber Arm**.
23.4.1926: Transferred to the Newfoundland Power and Paper Utilities Corporation Ltd., Corner Brook
24.1.1928: Transferred to the International Power and Paper Co. of Newfoundland Ltd., Corner Brook.
14.9.1938: Transferred to Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook.
8.7.1940: Torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U 99 in convoy HX 53 in position 50.36 north, 09.24 west whilst on a voyage from Corner Brook to the Mersey with a cargo of newsprint, steel, lumber and pulp. The crew of 42 and one passenger were saved.
11.9.1940: Register closed.

2. **Corner Brook** 1938-1954 O.N. 152301 5,767g 3,528n 439.0 x 56.3 x 28.6 feet
T. 3-cyl. by Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne; 620 NHP, 3,000 IHP, 12 knots.
8.6.1925: Launched by Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Yard No. 1001).
9.1925: Completed.
10.5.1926: Registered in the ownership of Newfoundland Power and Paper Co. Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland as **Corner Brook**.
12.5.1926: Transferred to the Newfoundland Power and Paper Utilities Corporation Ltd., Corner Brook.
24.1.1928: Transferred to the International Power and Paper Co. of Newfoundland Ltd., Corner Brook.

14.9.1938: Transferred to Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook.
31.7.1954: Arrived at Hamburg to be broken up by Eisen und Metall K.G. Lehr & Co.
18.8.1954: Register closed.

3**. North Brook** 1940-1946 O.N. 172683 2,373g 1,425n 251.0 x 43.7 x 22.2 feet
T. 3-cyl. by McDougall-Duluth Co., Duluth, Minnesota, USA.
6.1919: Completed by McDougall-Duluth Co., Duluth, Minnesota, USA (Yard No. 1336) for the United States Shipping Board, Washington, USA as **Chautauqua**.
11.1925: Sold to the Baltimore and Carolina Steamship Co. Inc., Baltimore, USA and renamed **Frances Weems**.
1932: Sold to A.H. Bull and Co. Ltd., Baltimore and renamed **Frances**.
8.1937: Sold to the Hunt Steamship Corporation (China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, Hong Kong).
4.1938: Owners became the China Foreign Steamship Corporation (William Hunt and Co., Shanghai, managers).
13.11.1940: Registered in the ownership of Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland (George T. Shaw, St. John's, manager) as **North Brook**.
27.11.1944: Transferred to George T. Shaw, St. John's, Newfoundland.
28.10.1946: Register closed on sale to the West China Development Corporation, Shanghai, China and renamed **Pei Chuen**.
20.5.1948: Ashore on Chiengtien Rocks near Nantung, Lower Yangtse whilst on a voyage from Nanking to Tsingtao with a cargo of coal.
Refloated but later stranded again and sank.

4. **Betty** 1940 2,339g 1,420n 261.0 x 43.7 x 22.2 ft
T. 3-cyl. by Nordberg Manufacturing Co., Milwaukee, USA; 10 knots.
10.1918: Completed by the Superior Shipbuilding Co., Superior, Wisconsin, USA (Yard No. 536) for the United States Shipping Board, Washington, USA as **Lake Agomak**.
1924: Sold to the Baltimore and Carolina Steamship Co. Inc., Baltimore, USA and renamed **Betty Weems**.
1932: Sold to A.H. Bull and Co. Ltd., Baltimore and renamed **Betty**
1937: Sold to the Hunt Steamship Corporation (China Merchants Steam Navigation Co., Hong Kong).
4.1938: Owners became the China Foreign Steamship Corporation (William Hunt and Co., Shanghai, managers).
1940: Acquired by Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland.
14.8.1940: Torpedoed by the German submarine **U 59**, 260º and 35 miles from Tory Island whilst on a voyage from Saigon to Liverpool with a cargo of rice. She sank in two minutes and 30 of the 34 crew were lost.

5. **Kitty's Brook** 1941-1942 O.N. 124076 4,031g 2,973n 324.7 x 45.9 x 30.7 ft
T. 3-cyl. by Richardsons, Westgarth and Co. Ltd., Sunderland; 312 NHP, 1,800 IHP, 9 knots.

27.5.1907: Launched by Irvine's Shipbuilding and Dry Docks Co. Ltd., West Hartlepool (Yard No. 157).
29.6.1907: Registered in the ownership of Sir Alfred L. Jones, Liverpool and Sir Christopher Furness, West Hartlepool (joint owners) as **Abonaema**.
10.1907: Completed.
24.4.1908: Transferred to the British and African Steam Navigation Co. (1900) Ltd. (Elder, Dempster and Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool.
17.2.1909: Owners became the British and African Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. (Elder, Dempster and Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool.
4.11.1920: Renamed **Sapele**.
6.8.1929: Register closed on sale to Weigel, Bohnen & Cia. Ltda. S.A. Commercial, Buenos Aires, Argentina and renamed **San George**
1931: Sold to Delgado & Compania, Buenos Aires.
1934: Sold to Compania Argentina de Navigation Mihanovich Ltda., Buenos Aires and renamed **Santa Catharina**.
1941: Renamed **Sirio**.
12.4.1941: Registered in the ownership of Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland as **Kitty's Brook**.
10.5.1942: Torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine **U 588** off the US east coast in position 42.56 N by 63.59 W whilst carrying US Government stores from New York to Argentia, Newfoundland. Nine lives were lost.
28.9.1942: Register closed.

6. **Livingston** 1941-1944 O.N. 149470 2,115g 1,286n 253.0 x 43.7 x 19.3 ft
T. 3-cyl. by Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., High Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; 190 NHP, 1,000 IHP, 8.75 knots.
3.4.1928: Launched by Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., High Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Yard No. 1042).
3.5.1928: Registered in the ownership of Matthews Steamship Co. Ltd. (Alfred E. Matthews, manager), Toronto, Canada as **Livingston.**
10.2.1931: Transferred to Frederick C. Clarkson, Toronto on bankruptcy of owners.
31.3.1934: Transferred to the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Toronto.
3.5.1934: Sold to McKellar Steamships Ltd. (Robert Scott Misener, manager), Port Colborne, Ontario.
2.5.1941: Acquired by Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland.
3.9.1944: Torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine **U 541** in position 46.15 north by 58.05 west whilst on a voyage from Boston and Halifax to St. John's, Newfoundland with general cargo. Of the crew of 26, 13 were lost plus one of the two DEMS gunners.
9.10.1944: Register closed.

7**. Waterton** 1941-1942 O.N. 149472 2,115g 1,286n 253.0 x 43.7 x 19.3 ft

T. 3-cyl. by Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., High Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; 190 NHP, 1,000 IHP, 8.75 knots.
23.4.1928: Launched by Sir W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. Ltd., High Walker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Yard No. 1043).
21.5.1928: Registered in the ownership of Matthews Steamship Co. Ltd. (Alfred E. Matthews, manager), Toronto, Canada as **Waterton**.
10.2.1931: Transferred to Frederick C. Clarkson, Toronto (accountant) on bankruptcy of owners.
31.3.1934: Transferred to the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Toronto.
3.5.1934: Sold to McKellar Steamships Ltd. (Robert Scott Misener, manager), Port Colborne, Ontario.
2.5.1941: Acquired by Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland.
11.10.1942: Torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine **U 106** in Cabot Strait in position 47.07 north by 59.54 west whilst on a voyage from Corner Brook to Cleveland with a cargo of wood, newsprint and sulphate. The crew of 25 and two DEMS gunners were saved.
9.10.1944: Register closed.

Fleet of the Atlantic Transportation Co. Ltd. - managed by the International Power and Paper Co. of Newfoundland Ltd.

1. **R.J. Cullen** 1940-1942 O.N. 170827 6,993g 4,435n 415.1 x 55.7 x 32.0 fet
T.3-cyl. by the Osaka Iron Works Ltd., Osaka, Japan; 281 NHP, 3,200 IHP, 10½ knots.
11.1919: Completed by the Osaka Iron Works Ltd., Osaka, Japan (Yard No. 953) for the United States Shipping Board, Washington, USA as **Eastern Knight**.
1924: Sold to the Columbia Pacific Shipping Company (States Steamship Company, managers), Portland, Oregon, USA.
1930: Transferred to the Pacific-Atlantic Steam Ship Company (States Steamship Company, managers), Portland, Oregon and renamed **San Lucas**
6.2.1940: Registered in the ownership of the Atlantic Transportation Co. Ltd. (S.L. de Carteret), St. John, New Brunswick as **R.J. Cullen**.
15.1.1942: Wrecked two miles north of Leinish, Castlebay, Barra whilst on ballast passage from Liverpool to Sydney, Nova Scotia. Abandoned as constructive total loss.
23.2.1942: Register closed.

The tugs owned by the company and used in Canada and Ridham Dock are not covered in these articles.

To be continued.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Bill Ogle

The Liverpool Nautical Research Bulletin of March 2008 featured an article by A.H. Joyce which described the cruising days of the Lamport and Holt vessels **Vandyck** and **Voltaire**, entitled Cruising the Med. for 15 Guineas. Information has come to light about the ship's bell from **Vandyck**.

For her bell now rings from the church steeple in Bleik on Andoya in North Norway and the story of how the ship's bell ended up in a church steeple in a remote part of Norway is a fascinating one.

Vandyck was built by William Clarke & Co in Belfast in 1921 for Lamport & Holt Line and registered in Liverpool that same year. She was of 13,000 gross tonnes with four main decks and a speed of 14.5 knots and was intended for the first class mail and passenger services from New York to the British West Indies, Brazil and the River Plate.

Occasionally she also carried well-heeled passengers on cruises to the Middle East, Egypt and Palestine and the Norwegian fjords. No expense had been spared in making **Vandyck** a byword for 'travelling in style'.


SS Vandyck

With cabins for 533 passengers, the owners restricted the total to 450 to give everyone more room. The ship boasted a number of deluxe cabins with private bathrooms, together with sumptuous public rooms such as the Louis XV style music salon. Passengers could exercise in the gymnasium, play table tennis, swim in two separate pools, visit several onboard shops and, of course, wine and dine in style.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 **Vandyck** was requisitioned and fitted out for employment on contraband control duties as an armed boarding vessel. For a period she was the headquarters and accommodation ship for the Mediterranean Contraband Control Service. On 25 May 1940 **Vandyck** was re-classified as a

personnel ship and sent to Harkstad in North Norway to act as a spare troopship for the evacuation of the allied expeditionary force.

Owing to a misunderstanding of orders, she closed in near the coast instead of joining the rest of the fleet at a prearranged rendezvous further out. On 10 June German aircraft spotted her close to Andoya Island and sunk her.

The rescue operation was led by a remarkable Norwegian, Sigurd Jacobsen, who before the war had been an MP for a small and rather obscure party whose political philosophy few understood. Despite that, he was of a practical turn of mind, famous for having constructed his own private power station, and under his leadership the villagers from Bleik saved 161 of the 168 men on board the stricken vessel.

The dead were buried in the village churchyard and for a while the survivors spent a relatively peaceful time with their friendly Norwegian hosts, beating them at football. One man even had time to marry a local girl before German troops arrived and marched the British away to POW camps in the Third Reich.

View of Bleik today

Vandyck's bell was salvaged, together with the safe, a top lantern, various china wash basins, a gun aiming device and some revolvers. The paper money in the safe had been burned to ashes during the air attack, but a number of coins had melted together in the intense heat to form abstract sculptures that are collectors' items today. The lantern can still be seen, mounted outside a village house, whilst cutlery engraved with the ship's proud name remains in daily use. The aiming device is employed as a field glass.

In June 1972 **HMS Lalestone** came to Bleik to bring back to British soil the remains of **Vandyck's** seven dead crewmen. The old bell was hung in the church steeple and **HMS Lalestone's** youngest rating rang it for the first time at a combined Anglo-Norwegian service to commemorate the men from **Vandyck** -the men for whom the bell still tolls today.

Source: Report in shipping gazette *TradeWinds.*

A coincidental B.I. experience

By Member James Pottinger

Whilst deck officers on joining the Merchant Navy had the benefit of some appropriate pre-sea training in one of the preparatory establishments, marine engineers were more likely to be pitched aboard, often having served an apprenticeship of a type and environment often far divorced from the rough and tumble of what was likely to be encountered on board ship.

The British India Steam Navigation Company was an umbrella organisation which included a wide variety of interests, and whilst the name suggested a concentration on the Indian sub continent in fact the company encompassed a number of areas of the antipodes, middle and Far East.

To satisfy the multifarious cargo and passenger requirements of these diverse trade routes a large variety of types of ships of all sizes was employed in the fleet. Whilst the majority were built in Britain the majority would never return to these shores, except in very few instances where they came back for scrapping.

Manning of officers could be a problem on these ships. Whilst the standard term of engagement in the Merchant Navy on signing on was two and half years during the 1950 and 60's, which could mean regular leave after a relatively short time measured in months when sailing on the direct UK- Australia-New Zealand routes for example, it could also equally mean that a transfer within the terms of the contract could be effected from these ships to vessels trading exclusively on the Indian based routes for the duration of the statutory contract.

This long spell abroad obviously did not suit many, the result was that officers sailing on the Eastern route often tended to serve for one "spell" only, or alternatively, there were those who in common parlance "went native", often having permanent liaisons with Oriental members of the fair sex which offered an attraction to stay permanently on the Indian coast or on Far East trades.

My connection with the above scenario was that the approaching end of my five year apprenticeship as marine engineer with Scotts' Shipbuilding & Engineering Company at Greenock in 1957 coincided with the completion of British India cargo liner **Nyanza** at the yard. And I had spent a considerable period on the manufacture and installation of her propelling machinery, including an earlier spell measuring up the ship's turbine casings on the engine works surface marking off table.

At that time with shipping companies replacing war lost tonnage and re-establishing trade routes disrupted by the aftermath of WWII there was a boom in the number of ships being built, thus applicants could pick and choose which shipping company to join.

Whilst the standard apprenticeship was for five years Scotts' had an unwritten agreement that they would issue a certificate of completion of satisfactory apprenticeship after four years nine months provided that the lad joined a ship being built by the company.

The standby Chief Engineer and other senior engineers were naturally keen to recruit people with background knowledge of the installation, albeit as a first tripper, and encouraged me to apply for entrance to the company.

My application to the London office was duly acknowledged, with an enclosed railway warrant to proceed to Skelmorlie station, in Ayrshire.

As the upper Greenock railway line terminated at Wemyss Bay, some distance short of Skelmorlie, and was not connected by a railway, I chose the bus!

Duly presenting myself to the address in a nice bungalow, sited high above the coastal road with an enviable view of river traffic on the broad reaches of the lower Clyde, I was interviewed by the retired Chief Engineer Officer from the company, Mr J Caskies's conclusion being that I was a proper and suitable candidate for entry to the august B.I. company, and available to join the ship nearing completion which would be engaged on the UK-New Zealand-Australian route.

Concurrently with the above discussions I was taking soundings with a number of ex- seagoing engineers in Scotts' who had had experience of the company, and warned me of the possibility of being transferred to the Indian coast at any time despite signing on a ship on the regular UK outward route.

Another factor to be considered was a burgeoning courtship with a local lass, who obviously, and understandably, would not be keen on such a long separation, all of which considerations in the end led me to decline this offer, and apply to Clan Line instead which offered the possibility of a regular call at nearby Glasgow.

At that time Greenock had their own equivalent of Gieves the well known marine outfitters. In this case it was Gilchrists, who could supply a made to measure doeskin uniform complete with the appropriate braid, Clan Line sporting their own impressive curly looped arm band instead of the usual diamond shape.

As I recall the first stop was to the Merchant Navy establishment at the Broomilaw, then to the august Clan Line offices at Hope Street in Glasgow, who determined the suitability or otherwise of this raw entrant. Given the demand for bodies at this time it would be indeed be something of a calamity if one could not satisfy the most basic of requirements. All was well and I was sent to the MV **Clan Macinnes**, then lying in the Glasgow King George Dock, and being the most junior to come up the gangway was greeted with "great, you can do nights!"

MV **Clan Macinnes**, Photo James Pottinger

Thus found myself in solitary splendour in the engine room from 1800-0600 hours each day. The only instruction I recall was to watch the exhaust and cooling water temperatures on the diesel generator.

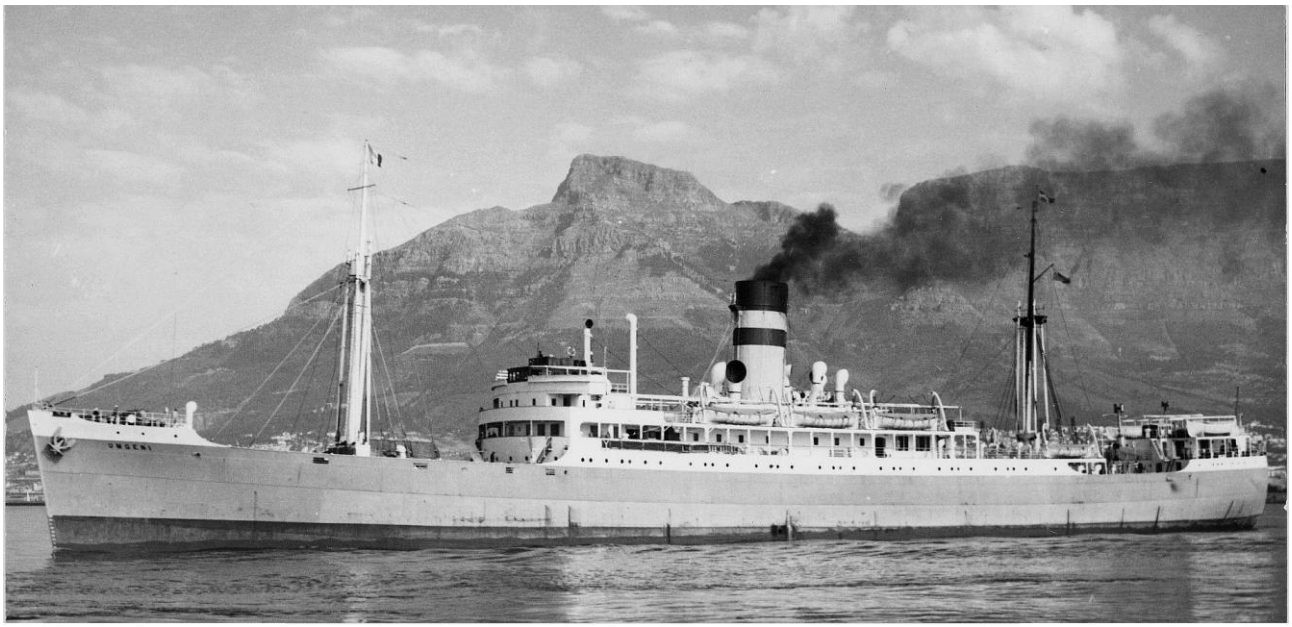
Having been built as late as 1952 everything on board was bright and new, and I duly sounded out the possibility of a permanent posting aboard, but alas all the roster had already been agreed for next voyage.

Next ship to standby in Glasgow was in complete contrast, the war built SS **Clan Urquhart.** Apart from her twin screw triple expansion engines with Bauer Wach exhaust turbines and Scotch boilers I also recall the bare steel floor in my cabin.

This sojourn was to be brief, and soon I was instructed to make my way to West Indian Docks in London to join the TSS **Umgeni**, I was well aware that this could not have been a Clan ship, but in fact belonged to Bullard King, a Union Castle subsidiary, and now part of the Clan Line/Union Castle/British & Commonwealth conglomerate, but being fed up with hanging around in port jumped at the chance to go deep sea.

Another time another story, but one trip was enough, and let's say I soon realised the possible reasons for the difficulty they were having in recruiting engine room staff. At the end of my voyage leave I was requested to join another Clan ship of similar vintage and machinery as the **Clan Urquhart** but respectfully declined and then joined the venerable T. & J. Brocklebank company.

Getting back to B.I, it was when in port on SS **Manipur** some years later on returning to the ship after a run ashore we chanced to pass the SS **Nyanza** in the same dock. "Come on, I said, let's go aboard and see a real engine room"



TSS **Umgeni** Photo James Pottinger

We duly trooped aboard and after I explained my interest we were kindly shown around the engine room by the helpful night duty engineer; in fact I was taking as much pride in the immaculate machinery as he was!

Passing through their engineers' accommodation on our way ashore we passed the doorway of a good going party and were duly invited in, at the end of which we naturally extended our invitation to our hosts to visit us on SS **Manipur** next evening. Among the visiting party was a lad with a guitar which among his repertoire was a tune and song which to us was obviously a foreign language.

To our amazement our clearly very emotional Polish 3rd Engineer jumped up and embraced the singer and joined in. The explanation was that the singer was from Perthshire, and had lived near a camp for displaced Polish personnel during and after World War 11 where he had picked up a Polish folk song, coincidentally native to the locality of our 3rd Engineer Ted Wezdeki. His emotion was not surprising as he had been a child of the traumas of World War 11 and all the horrors of the Nazi invasion of Poland. Losing trace of his parents he had somehow made his way across Europe to finally end up in the UK.

The experiences had scarred him such that he always slept on his settee in his cabin and would not spread the carpet on the deck. In answer to my query for reasons he said that he had learned to be able to waken and jump immediately and not be hindered by climbing out of his bunk, and that there was a danger of the carpet slipping under his feet to hinder his getaway in an emergency, an ingrained fear from his horrific experiences in the past. There was not a day from then until we paid off that he did not embrace me and thank me for being responsible for that fortuitous meeting.

The Ocean Group and Confrontation with Indonesia.

Summary of paper presented to the Liverpool Nautical Research Society,
15 March 2012 By Dr. Nick White

Reader in Imperial & Commonwealth History and Co-Director, Centre for Port & Maritime History,
Liverpool John Moores University

Introduction

Liverpool's Blue Funnel Line or Ocean Steam Ship Company (OSSCo) was the largest UK cargo line serving the Far East. This is the story of its experiences in Indonesia during two periods of Confrontation (*Konfrontasi*): the first, from 1957 to 1962 between Indonesia and The Netherlands over the future of Irian Jaya (West New Guinea); the second, between 1963 and 1966 with British-backed Malaysia.

This is the view from 'the Quarterdeck', the executive board, in India Buildings. It is the 'high policy' narrative of Blue Funnel and Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s, based upon the excellent records in the Maritime Archives and Library at the Merseyside Maritime Museum (and, particularly, the recently catalogued papers of Lindsay Alexander).

The background to Confrontation

Blue Funnel had broken into Indonesia, then known as the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), from the inception of Alfred & Company in the 1860s/1870s. But the Liverpudlians had been forced to formalise this trade through the formation of an Amsterdam-registered subsidiary in 1891, the NSMO (Nederlandsche Stoomvaart Maatschappij Oceaan). The context was growing Dutch protectionism in the Indies (notwithstanding Anglo-Dutch free trade treaties dating from the early-nineteenth century). A series of agreements with the Dutch Mails evolved into the Europe-Indonesia Freight Conference (EIFC) of the post-colonial period. The NEI proved increasingly important for Blue Funnel in the 1920s and 1930s given political turbulence in China plus the explosion of the Indonesian export industry: rubber, tobacco, palm oil etc., particularly from the east-coast plantation belt of Sumatra. The deep-sea port of Belawan (near Medan) had been constructed by the inter-war years. According to the Managers' Report in 1928, the NEI trade accounted for one-quarter of the total earnings of OSSCo and China Mutual. On top of cargo, there was also the lucrative pilgrim trade to Jeddah (one-third of this Blue Funnel passenger traffic originated in Java by 1930). The decline in commodity prices after the Great Depression was a serious dampener, therefore, on the Ocean Group's overall profit margin.

During the Japanese Occupation of 1942-5, Blue Funnel was obviously expelled from the archipelago. At the end of the Pacific War, however, there was a determination

on the part of Ocean to restore the Indies trade; so much so, that George Palmer Holt, nephew of Richard Durning Holt, in turn nephew of founding father Alfred Holt, was posted to Indonesia for eighteen months to revive Blue Funnel fortunes as an Assistant Manager (or 'Crown Prince'). As a full-blown Manager (i.e. director) in India Buildings from 1949-71, George Holt would be recognised as the Group's Indonesia expert.

In the late-1940s, George Palmer was thus caught in middle of the war between the Indonesian Republic and the returning Dutch. Holt even attended a Republican congress in Java in 1947. Back in Liverpool, Sir John Hobhouse, senior manager or chief executive of the Ocean Group was sympathetic towards the Dutch 'police actions' against the Indonesian nationalists, especially as the Dutch seemed to be promoting decolonisation through federalism. Hobhouse regretted United Nations interference to curb this Dutch scheme of 'managed decolonisation'. But 'on the spot' in Java and Sumatra, George Palmer was increasingly sympathetic – or pragmatic – towards the Republican cause and would build up links with the emerging Indonesian political elite. Such connections would prove invaluable to Blue Funnel in the post-colonial period. In the 1950s, for example, Holt was involved in the re-organisation of the pilgrimage service from Java to Jeddah, as well as the training of Djarkata Lloyd (Indonesian national line) officers.

During 1949-50 the formal transfer of power from the Dutch colonials to the Indonesian nationalists took place. Mansfields, Blue Funnel's agents in Singapore, were hopeful that the revolutionaries would now settle down to the realities of government. Indeed, until the late-1950s, parliamentary government prevailed in Jakarta in which moderate, pragmatic socialists dominated the various cabinets, and remained tolerant of western business activity. In 1952, Hobhouse, after a tour of Pacific Asia, declared that:

> *If the Indonesians can maintain law and order, in which they have been fairly successful in all but a few critical districts, and behave sensibly towards foreigners, the chances of success are good. Inflation is the danger, but, if this is held in check, their currency might even become hard. The Communists are doing their best to disrupt the programme through their control of the trades unions, but the odds are against them in a Moslem [sic.] country…*[1]

[1] Mersyside Maritme Museum (hereafter MMM), OA/671, 'British Interests in Eastern Asia': A Lecture Delivered in the Arts Theatre of the University of Liverpool, 26 May 1952 by Sir John Hobhouse (Liverpool University Press, 1952).

By 1958, the revival of Blue Funnel's position was such that about 30 per cent of European cargo was carried by Ocean Group vessels from Belawan-Deli (i.e. the east Sumatra plantation belt), compared to 65 per cent relayed by the two Dutch Mails, 4 per cent by the German line, HAPAG, and just 0.4 per cent by P&O.

Nevertheless, Blue Funnel managers were increasingly preoccupied by declining law and order in the archipelago's ports and plantations. This reflected the growing influence of a radical undertow in the Indonesian body politic, and particularly the re-emergence of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Radical left-wing and ex-military groups were disaffected with the compromises of independence, and especially the special privileges given to Dutch enterprises combined with Holland's continued occupation of West New Guinea.

MV **Memnon** Photo by courtesy of Malcolm Cranfield

The knock-on effect for Blue Funnel was inconvenience and suspicion on the part of the Indonesian authorities. For example, in a voyage of the **Memnon** during 1955, at Pladju (Sumatra), Palembang's port, Captain E. W. Studley was detained by police on 28 October because (allegedly) his ship was carrying firearms without a permit. Studley finally rejoined the **Memnon** on 12 November at Surabaya (Java).[2] Mounting anti-western feeling in Indonesia was indicated during the Suez Crisis of 1956. Sir John Nicholson, soon to be chairman of the Ocean Group, was pleased that George Palmer Holt was on the spot at the time as a reminder for George's 'circle of genuine friends in Indonesia that Great Britain is not exclusively populated by old-fashioned imperialists'.[3] But, sympathies towards Nasser's Egypt, meant that Blue Funnel suffered boycotts of UK shipping, unofficially engineered by communist-affiliated dock workers unions.

[2] MMM, OSSCo Ships Journal no. 69. I am grateful to Ian Morris for this reference.
[3] MMM, OA/1696, 'Suez Canal', Nicholson to Holt, 8 November 1956.

Konfrontasi Round One

Much bigger problems began, however, during 1957-8 with the take-over of Dutch enterprises in the context of the West New Guinea dispute. The growing power of the PKI was manifest here, as was that of President Sukarno who had scrapped parliamentary pluralism in favour of Guided Democracy and Guided Economy.

The knocking out of Dutch enterprise, quite literally overnight, meant some potential new opportunities for Ocean. An increasing proportion of Indonesian produce came through the UK and Liverpool particularly. NSMO ships were replaced by British flag vessels in Indonesian waters; and NSMO's wharf properties at Surabaya, Jakarta (Tanjong Priok) and Makassar were taken over by OSSCo. It was suddenly worth stressing Ocean's 'Britishness' rather than its 'Dutchness' (as had formerly been the case under the colonial regime).

Even so, there were losses of valued Dutch personnel and agencies (e.g. at Palembang). Moreover, accusations of dirty tricks on the part of Ocean by the Dutch Mails, led to the latter being generously compensated elsewhere in the Far East (and at Blue Funnel's expense). Moreover, the Indonesians now invited Ben Line to their ports. For Ocean, this was unwelcome competition given the long-standing antipathy towards Ben amongst the Liverpool Managers. Ben had expanded considerably in the Far East after the Second World War, and, inter alia, there had already been a resented intrusion of Ben vessels into Ocean's timber trade from British Borneo.

At the expense of KPM, the Dutch inter-island shipping group, Straits Steamship – the coastal feeder business in which Ocean held a 35 per cent controlling share – was able to expand its regional services into Indonesia from Malaya/Singapore. Yet, the nationalisation of Dutch firms was accompanied by an increasing role for state-owned enterprises in Sukarno's Guided Economy. Djakarta Lloyd continued its rise in the liner trade post-1960, while a new Indonesian Freight Organisation (Bipalindo) emerged to book and channel the carriage of overseas trade. Increasing links with Japanese and Communist Bloc shipping were forged.

Konfrontasi Round Two

Blue Funnel survived the first Confrontation by emphasising its 'Britishness' and disguising its Dutch links. Yet, from 1962, the West New Guinea dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia was solved, following US intervention on Indonesia's behalf. From September 1963, Sukarno's regime launched a new round of Confrontation against recently created Malaysia. The expansion of the Malayan federation to encompass Sabah (North Borneo) and Sarawak, plus Singapore to August 1965, was regarded by Sukarno as a 'neo-colonial plot'. Sukarno increasingly

fell into line with the PKI on foreign policy matters in an attempt to balance power with the military.

The Indonesia-Malaysia struggle involved very limited warfare (although it did require the stationing of some 60,000 UK troops in Singapore and other military bases in Southeast Asia). The cessation of British trade and commerce with Indonesia was not immediate, emphasising that 1960s Indonesia was not a dictatorship and that pragmatic administrators continued to maintain influence in Jakarta. Indeed, the technocrats wished that George Palmer Holt continue as head of the EIFC (even if the British flag was completely ousted from the archipelago).

Even so, the British business position was increasingly difficult: somewhat comically, Dutch-flag ships had to be re-introduced to Indonesian ports from the autumn of 1963, and, in 1964, Ocean's wharf properties were sold back to NSMO! By January 1965, the British flag was out of Indonesian waters entirely, despite Holt vigorously arguing with Indonesian policy-makers that this would leave a big gap in the transport of Belawan liquids (e.g. palm oil and latex) to Europe. Given the good relations which George Palmer had built up with Indonesian policy-makers, there was some regret here on the Indonesian side. The Ambassador in London passed on a message from Subandrio, *de facto* vice-president, in December 1964:

> *George Palmer Holt, who knows Subandrio well, would understand that it was becoming politically impossible for British ships to continue to call at Indonesian ports. Political pressure from the left, to which in the interests of the balancing act on which the Indonesian Government depends, they had to bow, was bringing this to a head. Therefore would British ships please quietly withdraw? Subandrio undertook that as soon as confrontation was over they would be allowed back without any sort of discrimination. ... To show that the Government were not pushing it to extremes, or being vindictive, British or partly British interests who had Dutch or foreign affiliates, e.g. Blue Funnel and Shell, were being encouraged to reintroduce them to Indonesia, where they would be permitted to operate.*[4]

Moderate Indonesian opinion was anxious that NSMO carry on as a 'Dutch' concern (although in reality it was overwhelmingly owned by OSSCo in the UK). The alternative scenario was a full-blown return of the Dutch Mails, exposing the archipelago to a 'Trojan Horse' for Dutch economic re-colonisation. Yet, NSMO's fleet was only seven ships, and the expulsion of the red ensign was highly disruptive

[4] MMM, OA/JLA/BOX 20/1, Holt to R. H. Hobhouse, 12 December 1964.

to Blue Funnel operations since OSSCo ships frequently called at Indonesian ports to and from Australia.

Konfrontasi II also involved further opportunities for the expansion of Djakarta Lloyd – three French ships were taken delivery by the Indonesian state line in early 1965, and Norwegian ships were hire-purchased. George Holt withdrew as EIFC chair (although he was still welcome to attend Conference meetings). Djakarta Lloyd took over the chairing of the conference in Jakarta, and its headquarters was moved out of Maclaine Watson's building (Maclaine Watson having been Ocean's long-standing agents in Jakarta).

Indeed, there was further state expansion into the Indonesian economy, which would not necessarily be reversed after the rise of General Suharto in 1967. Bipalindo was increasingly arranging and handling shipments from Europe. George Holt deplored this development, since it exposed shippers to the 'amateurish methods of D[jarkarta] L[loyd] and their ramshackle fleet'.[5]

Additionally, much effort had to be expended persuading Malaysia and Singapore not to impose trade embargoes (beyond merely restricting military stores and/or explosives). Moreover, the Singapore separation from Malaysia in August 1965 was regarded as disastrous in Liverpool by Chairman Nicholson who started to seek out ways and means of divesting from Southeast Asia – the containerisation project was accelerated and the **Priam** ship-building programme focussed towards Australian ports.

The Aftermath

George Palmer Holt returned to Indonesia in 1967 and 1969 after the brutal purge of the PKI, the reduction of Sukarno's power and the rise of Suharto, representing the ascendancy of the military in political and economic life. Suharto had ended Confrontation with Malaysia in 1966, and Holt reported positively on the pro-western orientation of the new regime, and its disillusion with the Communist bloc. There remains a danger, however, of assuming that all was plain sailing for western shipping interests under the 'New Order'. There remained remarkable continuities. Ali Sadikin, former Minister of Sea Communications, who had done so much to advance Djarkata Lloyd during *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia, was resurrected in Suharto's Indonesia as the Governor of Jakarta. Meanwhile, there remained deep antipathies towards western enterprise amongst Indonesian officialdom, while in 1973 an Ocean board report appreciated that corruption and red tape had not

[5] Ibid., Holt to Gleichman, Amsterdam, 2 March 1965.

disappeared. There were fears, at the same time, that limited economic development would lead to another bout of political instability.

The expansion of Djakarta Lloyd had also led to Ocean's complement of seven pre-Confrontation Indonesian ships being reduced to five. Port delays and restrictions on cargo hardly made Indonesia an attractive destination, even after the archipelago's return to the 'western fold' bolstered by massive US support in the Cold War. Blue Funnel's trade with Indonesia was never an easy business. Indeed, instability and uncertainty in Indonesia had contributed significantly to a reorientation of the Ocean Group's business activity by the 1970s and 1980s (away from the sea and away from Liverpool). This diversification is usually assumed to be the result of the loss of core business activity in Communist China. But let us not forget the contribution of post-colonial South East Asia to this reconfiguration as well. It is perhaps a hard truth to accept but decolonisation, and the general retreat of European influence from Asia, had profound, if not immediately obvious, consequences for the Port of Liverpool.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Ian Morris and Barry Groombridge of LNRS for their particular help with the research and writing of this paper. For further reading on Blue Funnel and Indonesia see Malcolm Falkus, *The Blue Funnel Legend: A History of the Ocean Steam Ship Company, 1865-1973* (Macmillan, 1990); Nicholas J. White, 'Liverpool Shipping and the End of Empire: the Ocean Group in East and Southeast Asia, c. 1945-73' in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas J. White (eds.), *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester University Press, 2008); Nicholas J. White, 'Surviving Sukarno: British Business in Post-Colonial Indonesia, 1950-1967', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 46 part 5 (2012).

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

September	Mondays	3rd., 10th., 17th., 24th
October		1st., 8th., 15th., 22nd., 29th
November		5th., 12th., 19th., 26th.

Attempting to Solve an RMS Lusitania Mystery

By LNRS Member James Scannell

On 8 May 1915 the Cunard Co. liner RMS **Lusitania** was nearing Queenstown, now known as Cobh, Co. Cork, to land mail and passengers before concluding its voyage in Liverpool, having departed New York on 1 May. Just after 2 p.m. when the liner was about 20 kms off the Old Head of Kinsale, she was struck by a single torpedo fired from the German submarine **U-20.** Almost immediately after the initial torpedo, a second internal explosion rendered a fatal blow to this famous liner which sank in less that 18 minutes with the loss of 1,198 passengers and crew, most of whom died from hyperthermia as the result of prolonged sea immersion as it was several hours before the rescue flotilla reached them. Capt. Walter Schweiger, commander of U-20 described the sinking thus - "*The torpedo hit the starboard side behind the bridge. An unusually heavy detonation took place with a very strong explosive sound* "

What caused the second explosion has been the subject of numerous debates by historians and speculated on by authors of various books on this great First World War maritime tragedy. While it is known that the liner was carrying 4.2million rounds of rifle ammunitions, shrapnel shells, shell fuses, and chemicals for use in munitions, it is now generally accepted that that the detonation of these items could not have caused an explosion of any significance. The most widely known cause of this explosion is attributed to the belief that the liner was carrying a concealed undeclared cargo of munitions which was detonated by the torpedo strike. Other views expressed by authors of various books on the RMS **Lusitania's** final voyage and sinking include a chemical dust explosion, the explosion of coal dust in empty coal bunkers and seawater coming into contact with hot boilers. While the former two causes have been dismissed by some experts, many engineers believe the latter is the more acceptable one, but debate and speculation still continues.

On Saturday 6 August 2011, divers wearing hi-tech high pressure diving suits developed by Nuytco, which enable wearers to remain submerged for three-hour shifts, began cutting into the hull of the RMS **Lusitania** which lies in 90 metres of water some 20 kms off the Old Head of Kinsale on the Irish south coast. The aim of the operation was to remove a section of the hull after which ROVs (Remotely Operated Vehicles) fitted with cameras will search its interior for the tell-tales in an attempt to discover why this luxury Cunard Co. liner sank so quickly in 1915.

The 2011 expedition is being mounted by 83-year old multi-millionaire Greg Bemis, who became co-owner of the RMS **Lusitania** in 1968 and bought it outright in 1982. Having gone to the Irish courts over the years several times to assert his rights over the wreck arising from various attempts by the Irish government under its National

Monuments Act to restrict his activity and access to objects on the wreck, Bemis won his appeal and obtained a licence to dive on it. In an interview about the current expedition Bemis said that the RMS **Lusitania** was an extraordinary historic vessel, and that since his involvement with it in the 1960s, has always wanted to find out about what caused the second explosion. The problem facing Bemis and this expedition is that the RMS **Lustania** currently lies on its starboard side on the seabed so there is no easy way of examining the area where the torpedo struck as that area is totally concealed and the expedition has no means of digging down. The solution, according to Bemis, is to gain entry to the interior of the wreck through the port side and then by using ROVs to find evidence of what caused the explosion there.

Bemis believes that it is a job that needs to be done as, if there were munitions on board, it was a total violation of the rules of war and good sense as this practice must be exposed and nations recognise that they cannot do things that may be illegal or inappropriate. According to Bemis, this is just not an important historical lesson but is also one for the world that we live in today and, in his opinion, is worth pursuing.

However, critics of Bemis have questioned his motives for the current expedition maintaining he is only interested in finding valuables that were on this liner. These include the Hugh Lane paintings stored in sealed lead cylinders which may have remained intact if made sufficiently watertight in 1915. Bemis denies this, as he believes the chances of finding anything of value are very slim and that although he is allowed to retain anything he retrieves that relates to the ship or its previous owners, he is not allowed recovery of anything that belonged to passengers, with the Lane paintings coming under this heading.

Part of the expedition costs were met by the National Geographic Channel which produced a 2-hour documentary 'The Dark Secret of the **Lusitania**' which was screened in early 2012. The documentary also sought to discover/reveal why the RMS **Lusitania** sank so quickly.

Prior to commencing diving, the expedition team held a memorial service for all the victims, as they wanted to acknowledge the tragedy of what happened and to do the work in a respectful way. According to Bemis, the relatives of the victims are very supportive of this expedition and divers and ROV operators will be careful not to disturb any remains they find.

The diving operation, which is lasted several weeks, was conducted under special licence and overseen by conservation experts.

Editor's note: the programme was recently broadcast and no clear evidence was found to substantiate the theory of a major internal explosion other than the probability that one or more boilers in the forward boiler room did in fact explode.

Operation Pedestal

From the MNA Circular

An exhibition to commemorate the part played by the Merchant Navy in the relief of Malta, organised by the Wellington Trust, the charity which owns **Wellington**, will be open to the public from 11.00am to 5.00pm on Sundays and Mondays from 19 August to 17 September. The individual ships will be covered in detail, as will some of the Merchant Navy personnel who were in those ships, such as Captain Dudley Mason of **Ohio**, who was awarded the George Cross for his part in getting his ship into Malta. Original artefacts from **Ohio** will be on display. Entrance will cost £3 per person, with all proceeds going to the Wellington Trust Education Fund for the furtherance of knowledge about the history of the Merchant Navy and sea trade amongst the British public and young people in particular.

For further details contact: info@thewellingtontrust.com
HQS Wellington, Temple Stairs, Victoria Embankment, London WC2R 2PN – 0207 836 8179

Nautical Trivia Quiz

1. In the 1920s a cargo of frozen apples from Tasmania arrived in Europe and had to be condemned, why?
2. The Fly River in PNG got its name how?
3. Why were sea shanties popular and useful on sailing ships?
4. There were at least six privateers/buccaneers/pirates who were rewarded by the State, the majority in Elizabeth I's reign, how many can you name?
5. "Walking the plank", true or false?
6. Where was the Barbary Coast?
7. In Tramp ship operations, what would be the most contentious part of the voyage?
8. In Nelson's day, when, at what time was the main meal of the day on board ship?

Answers on page 38 .....

A Hell Ship For A Disastrous African Project

By LNRS Member W.G.Williamson

An ambitious scheme to ship hopeful emigrants from the UK to ports in East Africa began in 1947 using a converted luxury yacht and ended in a humiliating failure. The plan was for passengers to travel overland from London to Marseilles where they would embark on the mv **Comando** for Mombasa and Beira. A combination of poor management, insufficient maintenance, unfortunate weather conditions in the Mediterranean and adverse publicity put paid to the project after only two voyages.

In December 1946 the **Comando'**s previous owners, the Comando Compañia de Navigaziones of 8 – 10 Bridge Street, New York, had put the vessel up for sale. On the 30th December 1946 she was sold to British buyers namely, Minster Steamship Co, 22 Old Broad Street, London EC2 but managed by Mitchell Cotts and Co. The vessel sailed from Genoa arriving at Piraeus 27th May 1947 where she was surveyed. Lloyds Index reported that she was to be renamed the **Westminster.** Advertisements announcing the creation of the new service were placed in various UK newspapers.

Research has shown that the **Comando** had experienced serious engine problems before being bought by the Minster Steamship Company who must have been aware of her condition. She had left Genoa on 22nd December 1946 with passengers and cargo bound for Pireaus. During this voyage she developed engine trouble on the 27th December when off Cape Spathi. A report from Alexandria stated that she sent out an SOS and a Victory ship, the **Park Victory** was going to her assistance. Subsequently the **Park Victory** deviated from her voyage to Candia and took the **Comando** in tow to Pireaus arriving there on the 28th December. The **Comando** remained in Pireaus till 27th May 1947 when she sailed for Marseilles.

The ship arrived at Marseilles on 5th June 1947 still under the Panamanian flag and preparations were made to receive her passengers, but once again severe engine troubles delayed departure. Packed in as tightly as the proverbial sardines in a tin, the one hundred odd British passengers quickly became frustrated by the delay. However, hardened by years of war-induced austerity, they made the best of the severe discomfort and limited facilities. They endured midsummer heat of Marseilles for day after day while they waited for the engines to be repaired.

Finally with her compliment of thoroughly fed up passengers she eventually sailed for Port Said and Mombasa on the 22nd August 1947. Trouble started almost immediately and four days later, Lloyds reported that she limped into Malta on the afternoon of 26th August 1947 with engine trouble. An item from the "Times of

Malta" dated September 25th 1947 and written by a staff reporter, outlined the difficulties encountered on this voyage.

Comando's" Misfortune May be Malta's Gain

*For sheer out and out misfortune the circumstances surrounding the present voyage of J. Pierpoint Morgan's * former luxury yacht on a commercial basis are outstanding.*

* [The claim in the "Times of Malta" story that **Camargo** was owned by J. Pierpoint Morgan Jnr cannot be substantiated, he had four yachts all named Corsair]

Bought since the war while lying in a Greek port by a man who made a success of trading east of Suez in the pre-war era, this trim-looking 1,000-ton vessel launched in 1928, attracted the attention of the Minster Steamship Company, with offices in London and, with the owner's consent, it was arranged to operate the yacht as a regular passenger-carrying vessel between Marseilles and Mombasa.

The **Comando** *as the ship is named, met with mechanical trouble from the moment she was sailed from Greece for Marseilles, and extensive repairs were carried out at the French port before she embarked her first 120 passengers, transported overland from London.*

Comando *sailed for Mombasa on August 22 but first one engine then the other developed defects and she limped into Malta four days later to send her passengers on by air or by sea at the company's expense. Now, she lies under repair again, a loss to her company so far of thousands of pounds sterling.*

Star of Malta, ex **Comando,** ex **Westminster**

But what has been **Comando** *misfortune to date may, ultimately, turn out to be Malta's good fortune. The* **Comando** *limped into Malta with a company director taking passage with the owner, a wartime naval officer. So impressed have they been with the Admiralty's willingness and ability to effect the necessary repairs: with shipping facilities in general and with the goodwill accorded them, that they are seriously contemplating substituting Malta for Marseilles as a base, although the island was not included in the original schedule. "Though we have suffered a heavy loss, we intend to continue with the service", the owner said, adding that Malta would suit admirably as a base."*

After a week in Malta, alternative travel arrangements were made to get the unfortunate and now thoroughly disgruntled passengers to their destinations in Africa. It was shortly after this time that stories about "A Hell Ship" appeared in the

British tabloid press and threats to write to MPs about a scandalous ship. The main complaints centred on the poor accommodation and the unreliability of the ship's engines. From information taken from Lloyds Register it can be ascertained that she remained in Malta with engine trouble until the 23rd October 1947.

During this extensive period of repair work the owners changed the registry of the vessel from the Panamanian to the Maltese flag and renamed her **Westminster**. It is possible they did this in face of the adverse "Hell ship" publicity they had received in the British tabloid press. On completion of the repair work she returned to Marseilles to pick up her next load of passengers. The forty odd passengers were no doubt looking forward to their voyage to Mombasa and could not have envisaged the horrendous trip they were about to endure. The following entries from Lloyds give a terse but graphic account of their experiences.

Westminster sailed from Marseilles on 28th October 1947 for Mombasa; but a report from Ajaccio stated *British motor vessel* ***Westminster*** *put in here on October 30th for repairs to damage sustained in heavy weather*. The Journal de la Marine Maarchande, Paris recorded on November 6th 1947 *Advice received from Ajaccio states that after experiencing heavy weather on the night of October 29/30 the British motor vessel* **Westminster** *put into port with 40 passengers for Malta and Madagascar. Some cabin doors were torn away and the engine was in bad condition she will have to affect repairs.*

The Radio Officer on this trip was a Mr. Tom Bermingham and in an e-mail he stated, *departing from Marseilles sometime in October I think, we ran into a storm which nearly sank us and after a severe battering we ran into Ajaccio in Corsica to sort ourselves out*. He expanded this account of the storm.

"On the 28th October, the **Westminster** sailed from Malta to Marseilles, picked up 40 passengers from the U.K. and headed out to sea. A gale was blowing, nothing much to begin with but an unfortunate initiation for weary travellers experiencing life on the ocean wave perhaps for the first time in their lives. And it got worse. For the next thirty-six hours the **Westminster** didn't have a moment's repose; it reared high and dug deep, it rolled, it wallowed, it could do nothing to comfort or sustain its human cargo apart from simply remaining afloat. At times even that seemed too much to hope for when cabin doors burst open and tore themselves from their hinges and when the sea invaded the lower accommodation deck and salt water rolled menacingly along alleyways and lapped around bunk legs. Adjoining compartments were occupied by our Chief Officer, his wife and their two daughters and were inundated. He was busy elsewhere and I was called to the rescue. The two girls, aged on either side of twenty were sick, miserable and frightened. I transferred them to my cabin which was above the current water line

and installed them in my bunk where they lay side by side awaiting death (if not dishonour). I invited the mate's wife to occupy my chair in the radio cubicle. She was a laconic lady with a sense of humour who liked a cigarette and a gin-and-lime. Who better with whom to while away the seemingly endless and tumultuous vigil, she clinging to the chair, me squatting on the yellow-jacketed Mae West beside her, while the vessel bucked and bowed madly like a frantic horse.

A day into our ordeal, devoid of food and drink, I ventured below on a mission to find something liquid. It would have been suicidal to try an outside route. Inboard the way aft from the bridge area was via the pantry, kitchen and dining saloon. That way was blocked by a toppled refrigerator until I discovered I could crawl underneath the unit, which I did. I was then thrown *up* the staircase leading *down* to the saloon, a measure of the storm's violence, and propelled the length of the lounge, ending up crashing into the bar. Behind the bar was a sorry sight. Our popular French ex-dancer-cum-barman and his raddled partner lay together on the deck in a jumble of debris, their wan smiles a greeting and what I'm sure they thought was a final farewell. I found a few bottles of water and made it back to the bridge."

Note. *Attempts to source weather reports for this area of the Mediterranean for October 1947 have so far proved unsuccessful.*

Reports from Lloyds agents per the Salvage Association indicate that:

- She had left Ajaccio on 10th November, returning to Malta to complete repairs. She arrived in Malta on 12th November 1947 and sailed on the 7th December for Mombasa; arriving in Port Said on 12th December 1947.
- On departure from Port Said on 20th December 1947 numerous efforts to start the port engine were unsuccessful. Starboard engine seemed to be working satisfactorily when leaving port today, and certificate granted by Classification surveyor to proceed to Malta where repairs to port engine can be effected. Spare piston now being flown to London for duplicating. Exhaust pipe expansion gland was repacked in the event of port engine being started with vessel under way.
- Vessel arrived Malta on 25/12/1947 for extensive repairs to the port engine.

Once again the passengers on this second voyage had to be flown or shipped to their destinations by other means at the expense of the Minster Steamship Co. It proved an expense too far for the company and the scheme was wound up. Radio Officer Bermingham recalls that out of about the 12 months he spent on the

Westminster at least ten were spent in port with engine problems, which didn't bother him one bit. It was not the end of an eventful life for this vessel however.

In May 1952 she became the **Star of Malta** under the Maltese flag and kept the same call sign (VSMW). Her owner was a Mr. Paul M. Laferla of 577 St Joseph High Street, Hamrun, Malta. Mr. Laferla used her as a passenger ferry and to carry mail between Malta and Syracuse on a schedule of three trips a week. In general the ship had uneventful passages at this time, although RO Bermingham had this to say,

"I was employed on her for six months in 1950s when she was ferrying between Malta and Syracuse. Apart from losing our steering once in Valleta harbour and almost creating havoc amongst the RN vessels at anchor there, it was an uneventful tour of duty." The uneventful label was not to last as this further extract from "Times of Malta" shows.

"On July 29, 1955 at about 8 am while returning from Syracuse, the **Star of Malta** ran aground in thick early mist on the Mercanti Reef some 200 feet off Dragonara Point and capsized. The ship, under the command of Commodore S.G. Kent, OBE, was carrying 57 passengers. Some passengers were on deck at the time while others were preparing to go to breakfast. Some passengers and crew swam ashore or were picked up by a fleet of small boats that came to their assistance.

The Second Cook, A Grech, drowned and a passenger, Miss Mary Borg, was unaccounted for. Malta had now lost its only link with Sicily. The RN sent the destroyer HMS **Scorpion** to pick up stranded passengers in Sicily. In August that year the **Star of Malta** was re-floated and towed to Messina, where she was repaired. Two months later she returned Malta in much the same foggy conditions as when she went aground. She was under the command of Captain Velkjo Hajiia, a Yugoslav.

On September 1959, assessors from the maritime inquiry into the circumstances that led to the grounding of the **Star of Malta**, found that the responsibility for the accident rested squarely on the master of the vessel, Commodore S.G. Kent. However, Commodore Kent's blameless record as a master was taken into full consideration by the assessors, who felt they could do no less than recommend that his master's ticket be suspended from the date of the grounding.

An interesting comment from Saviour Brignano on a website gives a more personal aspect to this unfortunate grounding. "I would like to thank you for the information on the **Star of Malta**, it gave me a lot of memories for the woman who died, Mary Borg was my grandmother. She was coming over to see us from Tunisia and was getting me a bird as a present. I was six years old when this happened and I remember I went with my mother to see her when they got her in after the ship sank."

A slightly more humorous posting on the website from Sr. Celia Agius – Vadala reveals how the young Maltese boys used the sinking to their advantage.

"I remember waking up on the morning of the July 29th and hearing my grandmother say she thought she saw an iceberg near the "Mercanti"!! Through the mist we saw a shape and soon we realized it was a ship that had run aground. We children got into our rowing boat and spent the morning eating the fruit that was floating in Balluta Bay. I think it was peaches. We saw some enterprising boys come down to the seashore with their carts onto which they loaded all the fruit they could gather. To us children it seemed quite an adventure."

It is worth noting that the **Star of Malta** was salvaged and repaired and continued her career. Philip E. Tortell had this to say, "After she was repaired, she carried out a number of 10 day cruises starting from Monte Carol/Nice and visiting a number of ports in Italy, Sicily, Malta, Sardinia and Corsica. I was the Radio Officer during those cruises, perhaps a forerunner to the 'cruising boom' that is happening now.

From records it appears that her surveys became overdue in 1959 and her Lloyds Registration class was withdrawn in January 1963. The **Star of Malta** was sold in March 1966 to Cantieri Navali delle Crazie, of La Spezia, Italy where she was broken up.

Earlier career of the "**Camargo**"

It seems the ship had originally been built for A Mr. Julius Feischmann of Cincinatti in 1928 by George Lawley and Sons, Corp at Neponset Mass. USA (Yard No. 1033) and given the name **Camargo**. Lloyds Register of Yachts for 1931 certainly shows Feischmann as the owner of the **Camargo**, official No 227897. Her signal letters were MGWV and she was classified A1 at Lloyds. Feischmann came from a wealthy background, his grandfather had set up a yeast company that eventually became Standard Brands. Julius had many interests including botany and he set up the Camargo Hunt Club in 1925 where the rules allowed the hunt to chase foxes and coyotes but not kill them.

Fleischmann was a keen botanist and an accomplished yachtsman who did extensive cruising in the Pacific. In the 1930s he received a commission from the United States Department of Agriculture to survey plants of the South Seas. His wife, their two small children and three friends accompanied him on this two-year voyage and he wrote a book called, "Footsteps in the Sea" about their experiences. When recapturing some Pacific Islands in World War II the US Navy allegedly used maps that Fleischmann had secretly surveyed and drawn up with the help of his children during this trip.

In 1938 Fleischmann put the **Camargo** up for sale and it was bought by the high-living and despotic President of the Dominican Republic, Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo. He renamed the yacht **Ramfis** after his son, who in later life was known for excessive lifestyle and playboy image. It is known that the **Ramfis** was sent across the Atlantic to Cannes in the summer of 1939.

Camargo on wartime service

In December 1941 German U-boats began operating on the east coast of America creating havoc by sinking many unescorted ships. The US Navy were desperate to get hold of suitable craft to use for anti-submarine patrol work. It was in this way the **Ramfis** was acquired by the US Navy on the 2nd February 1942 and converted for naval service at the Tampa Shipbuilding Co., Tampa, Florida. She was fitted with two 3"/50 gun mounts and one depth charge projector or Y-gun. Her diesel propulsion gave her a speed of 12 knots and she was commissioned as USS **Marcasite** (PY-28) call sign NAGY. With a complement of 120 men she commenced her naval career under the command of Lt. Cdr. Leander Jeffrey USN.

After her conversion she underwent naval trials and as the USS **Marcasite** she left Tampa on the 22nd May 1942. The ship was assigned for duty in the Pacific theatre around the Hawaii Islands. However, she was ordered to escort a convoy en route for the Panama Canal. During this duty, on the 9th June 1942, the patrol yacht made an attack by depth charge against a suspected submarine in the Caribbean Sea. She left Balboa on the 20th June 1942 and arrived in San Diego ten days later. A month later she departed San Diego for Pearl Harbour where she arrived in August. Operating from Bishops Point, her duties included patrolling the approaches to Pearl Harbour as well as acting as escort for merchant ships operating between the Hawaiian Islands. From time to time she would also act as escort for ships supplying the American base at Midway. In June 1943 she was ordered back to the US arriving in Seattle on the 9th August 1943.

From her base in Seattle she was used as a patrol and weather observation ship for the northwest Pacific area, carrying out three week patrols at sea. She continued with such duties until June 1944. The USS **Marcasite** was put into "reduced commission" status on the 28th June 1944 at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, WA and decommissioned on the 5th October 1944. Thereafter she was struck from the Naval Register on the 14th October 1944. She was transferred to the Maritime Commission for disposal and sold on the 5th December 1944. No further record of her movement can be obtained but Lloyds Register of 1947/48 shows her owners as being the Comando Compañia de Navigaziones of 8 – 10 Bridge Street,

New York. They renamed the vessel **Comando** and registered her under the Panama flag with the call sign HOBL.

For a short video clip of the Star of Malta aground, shot from a helicopter, have a look at www.britishpathe.com

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A special thanks to Tom Bermingham for his account of the great storm.

A Rare Sight on the Mersey
By Bill Ogle

A 1961 built U.S. Mariner Class C4-1u freighter has recently visited the Mersey, and surely warrants a mention. She arrived on 20 July 2012, berthed on the cruise terminal stage and departed 24 July for New York.

SS **Empire State** (see picture page 40) was built by the Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., launched February, 1962 and named **Oregon** for the States Steamship Company. Sold to Moore McCormack Line in 1977 she was renamed **Mormactide** and then acquired by United States Lines in1983.

In 1986 on the bankruptcy of US Lines she was handed over to the Federal Government fleet and laid up in the James River Reserve Fleet. However in 1988/ 89 she was converted to a training ship and allocated to her present duty with the State University of New York Maritime College at Fort Schuyler.

In 1994 she was activated by MARAD to support the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Mogadishu, Somalia and again in 2005 to provide housing and support in Louisiana following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Her outline specification is:

Length 565 ft. Beam 76 ft. Draft 25 ft.
Propulsion 2 x Foster Wheeler 'D' Type boilers, steam turbine, single screw
Speed 22 knots
Complement 684 cadets, 107 officers/ crew

Answers to quiz...

1. It was discovered that fruit breathes, and this load of apples had been suffocated. The solution was the introduction of forced draught variable temperature air conditioning.
2. It was named by Richard Pym whilst survey in the pinnace **Midge** in 1845 after HMS **Fly** its parent ship.
3. A sea shanty had a definite rhythm, which made the men co-ordinate their efforts when pulling on ropes or lines.
4. Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins and his son Sir Richard Hawkins, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Richard Grenville, plus in the following century, Sir Henry Morgan.
5. False. There are no recorded cases of this ever having occurred – except in books or films.
6. North Africa, along the coast of Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia.
7. The calculation of laytime, either before loading or arrival to discharge, or during weather halted operations.
8. The main meal of the day was at midday, the period extending for 1 1/2 hours, this was the most substantial meal of the day, breakfast at around 8 am and supper at around 8 pm.

The George Anson and Francis Drake

LNRS Member Captain Stephen Roscoe

It came as a nice surprise for me recently to see the piece on **George Anson** and **Francis Drake**, plus a superb photo of **Francis Drake**. I recall seeing these ships in both hemispheres of the world, albeit with different names and companies. One of their outstanding noticeable features was their wonderfully toned triple bell steam whistles. Once heard never to be forgotten and I am sure their sound is remembered fondly by all associated with these splendid ships of yesteryear. While reading about their demise in the recent Log, my mind went back to reading about their conception and so called birth. This was when I was growing up in Liverpool, and interested in all t h i n g s that floated down the Mersey, well nearly all things!

Nova Scotia and **Newfoundland** were ordered by Johnston Warren Lines from the builders Messrs. Vickers-Armstrong Ltd. They were to replace the war loss of their previous two ships of the same name.

During the first year of WWII these two ships had continued on their usual run from Liverpool to St. John's, Halifax and Boston. At that time their passenger accommodation was utilised to the full to bring over to the UK large contingents of Newfoundlanders who volunteered for service overseas, many of whom served in the mine-sweepers and others in the armed forces and the Forestry Corps. The two ships and their wartime service up until their loss had fought many a battle with the enemy. Their brave story is well documented. The gallantry of **Newfoundland**'s crew during her last action was recognised by the award of the OBE to the master, whilst the second officer received the British Empire Medal and four members of the crew were mentioned in the London Gazette. On VE-Day, (Victory in Europe) Johnston Warren Lines had one ship left in commission out of their fleet of eight. Their replacement programme commenced with an order for two passenger and cargo liners namely **Newfoundland** and **Nova Scotia**.

The following is taken in part from an interview given at the time of their building by Sir Ernest Murrant, chairman of the company:

"On completion they will recommence the only regular passenger and cargo service between this country and its oldest colony, Newfoundland; it has been maintained by the company for many years. In addition, the vessels will serve Halifax, N.S., and Boston, Mass. The two new ships will bear the same name as the ships they are to replace. The people of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia were so proud of the association of their names with the ships that a continuance of the compliment was a foregone conclusion.

They will carry 75 first-class and 80 tourist passengers each, and special attention has been given to the provision of roomy and comfortable passenger accommodation. The kitchen arrangements are designed to provide speedy service. A large number of cabins will be provided with shower baths and toilets. The ventilation of passenger accommodation has also been carefully studied, and the ventilation system will be of the very latest type for the North Atlantic. The accommodation for the officers and crews has also received special attention and will be far ahead of statutory pre-war requirements. Strong-rooms for the carriage of mail, specie, etc., will be provided. These ships will be specially equipped with refrigerated space, amounting to 50,000 to 60,000 cubic feet, capable of maintaining the temperature of -5 deg. Fahrenheit. In addition to general cargo, they will carry frozen fish, although of course the refrigerated chambers will be available for other commodities, including those requiring the quick hard frozen process, general cargo will be carried outwards. In every way these two new ships will carry on the traditions which have been built up in the past to provide Newfoundland and Nova Scotia with up-to-date and fully efficient transport facilities for passenger and cargo."

Reference: Sea Breezes January-June, 1947

Editor's note: *Both ships were purchased in October, 1962 by the Dominion Navigation Co Ltd., Nassau, Bahamas but were to be managed in Australia by H.C. Sleigh Ltd. They were rebuilt and fully refitted to suit their new roles; with the superstructure extended further forward, full air-conditioning and a swimming pool. They operated the route: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville (optional), Cairns (optional), Manila, Hong Kong, Keelung, Kobe, Yokohama, Guam, Rabaul, Sydney, Melbourne.*
Inevitably competition increased as passenger numbers dwindled until the service was terminated in 1971. Both ships were sold to breakers and they departed for Kaohsiung, being broken up that same year.

N e w f o u n d l a n d (7,437/1948) at Boston See page 39 Photo R.A.Priest

Empire State at the Pier Head (22 July, 2012) See page 37 Photo Bill Ogle

Let Battle Commence

Submitted by LNRS Member Glyn L. Evans

In April 1845 a strange battle took place between two ships of Her Majesty's Royal Navy. Both were steam-powered sailing ships: HMS **Alecto** propelled by side paddle wheels; HMS **Rattler** propelled by a single screw that could be un-shipped and hauled aboard to cut down on the drag effect when under sail.

The following is an interpretation, to the tune of "When I was a lad", the solo sung by The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, KCB, First Lord of the Admiralty, in the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera "HMS Pinafore", first performed on 25th May 1878.

When I was a lad I went to sea
As a Fo'c'sle boy in the Queen's Navee
We'd hoist the sails on the fore and main
And the mizzen too, come the sun or rain.
But when the wind no longer blew
There was nothing left for us tars to do
But bob about on the ocean wide
Adrift at the mercy of the current and tide.

And then came along Messrs. Stephenson and Watt
With their piston rods and their boilers hot.
Steam power was here and the sparks they flew
And it mattered not if the wind she blew.
The Admirals all held different views
On the best propulsion means to use.
For some the screw had most appeal.
The others all voted for the paddle wheel.

No compromise, let's chose the best.
Put the screw and the paddle wheel to test.
Then one must win and one must lose
And the Admirals would know which one they had to choose.

They chose two ships of equal size
To see which one would win the prize.
Alecto had her paddle wheels abeam.
From **Rattler's** stern her single screw did gleam.

The year was 1845
And how those two did both contrive
To show the admirals their speed.
T'was the **Rattler's** screw by a bowsprit's lead.
But of proof the Admirals wanted more
So **Alecto** and **Rattler** had a tug of war.
Stern to stern by a rope held tight
They huffed and they puffed with all their might.

Then inch by inch did screw succeed.
The paddle wheeled **Alecto** must concede.
Through all the trials the screw had won,
And **Rattler's** *work in proving it was finally done.*

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

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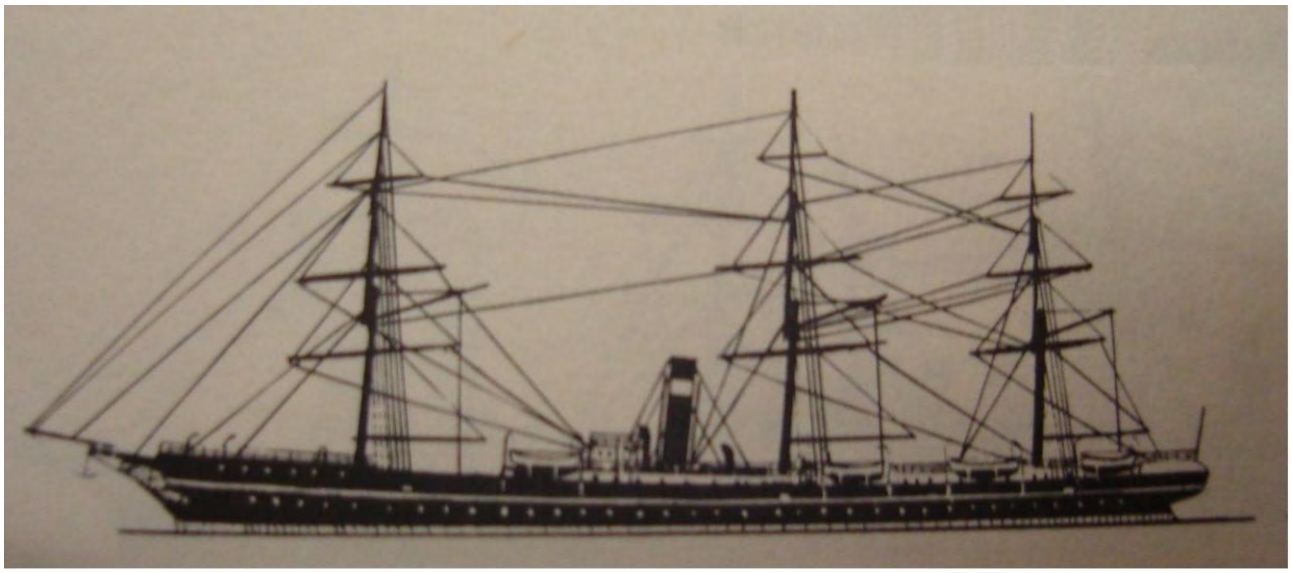
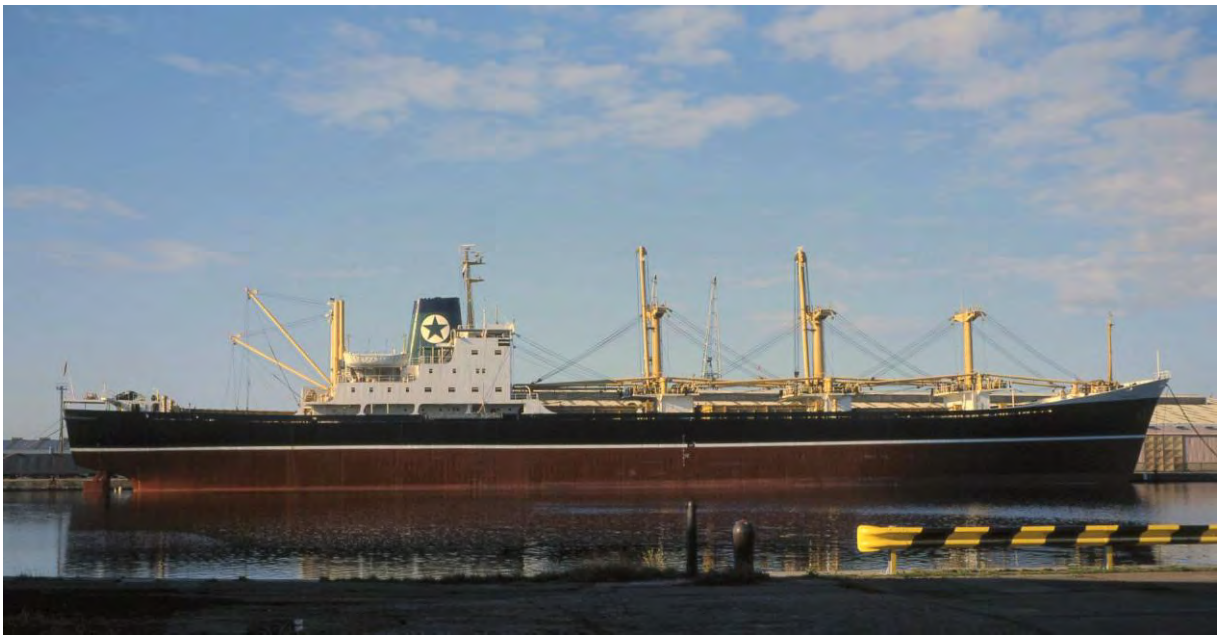


SS **City of Brussels**, as launched, 3081 grt, 1869 to 1883 See page 1



The **Tamamina** (see page 11) Photo courtesy Malcolm Cranfield

She was built at Pallion Yard, Sunderland in 1978 for Bank Line and operated as **Crestbank** until her sale in 1986, and is seen here at Birkenhead at that time. Initially renamed **Tamathai** she was laid up, and then quickly sold (in 1987) to Greek operators and renamed **Northman**, but bought back the following year and renamed **Tamamina**. Subsequently she was laid up at Falmouth for several years until being sold and renamed **Berga** (2005) then **Novanoor** (2006). She arrived at Gadani Beach in February 2010 to be broken up.

THPV **Bembridge** at Szczecin (see page 12) Photo Rafal Zahorski

In March, 2010 being towed to her new berth for restoration to be completed.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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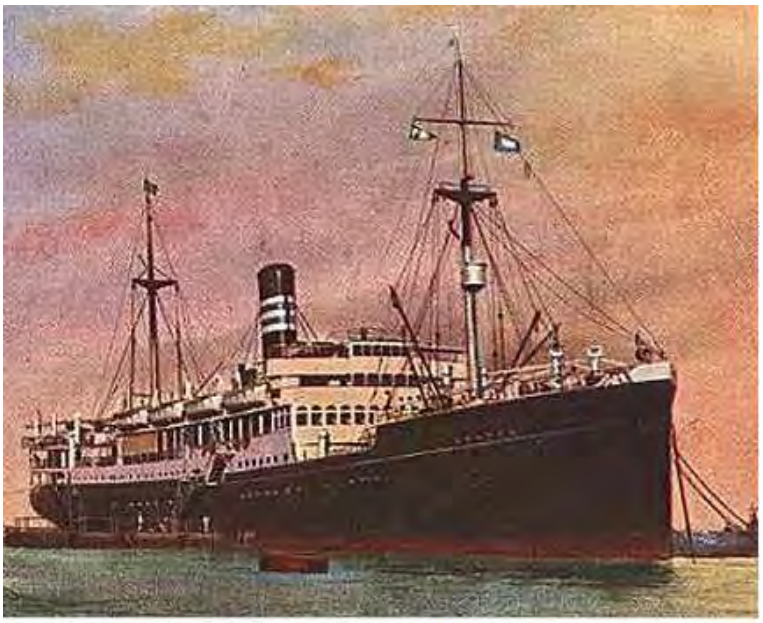
Terrible Collision in the Mersey

First published in the Timaru Herald, 3 March 1883,
and published by permission of Library of New Zealand
Submitted by Bill Ogle

On Sunday night, January 7th, 1883, the new steamer **Kirby Hall**, belonging to the Hall Line of steamers, trading between the Mersey and India, arrived at Liverpool with the news of a terrible collision which had occurred at the estuary of the Mersey between her and the Inman steamer **City of Brussels**, involving the almost immediate foundering of the latter vessel and the loss of eight of her crew and two of her passengers. A dense fog had prevailed for several days, not only in the immediate vicinity of Liverpool, but in the Channel, and it was due to this circumstance that the collision between the two vessels occurred. The **City of Brussels** sailed from New York for Liverpool about ten days before, crossed the Atlantic in safety, reached Queenstown in due course, and sailed thence for Liverpool, where, under ordinary conditions, she should have arrived that same evening. Everything went on smoothly with the **City of Brussels** on the passage up Channel until the vicinity of the North-West Lightship, the outer mark of the Mersey, situated twenty miles outside of Liverpool, was reached. The fog, which before had been slight, now became dense and impenetrable, and as it came rolling over the waves from the landward it enveloped the whole scene in darkness.



1897 **Kirby Hall** was sold to Austro-Americana S.S. Co. (Cosulich), Trieste and renamed **Aquileja** as shown here

It is said that it was impossible to see further than six or eight yards ahead. In these circumstances Captain Land, of the **City of Brussels**, decided not to attempt to make any headway, but to lie under steam in the neighbourhood of the North-West Lightship. A sharp and careful look-out was kept, the captain and the second and fourth officers being on the bridge. The pilot who had charge of the navigation was also looking out. Every other precaution usual in dense fog was adopted; bells were kept ringing and the foghorns of the engines very frequently sounded. For some time the vessel lay in this position in safety, and no danger seemed to threaten; but the precautions were not relaxed, and extra lookout men were posted in every part of the vessel. These measures had a reassuring effect on the passengers, of whom

there were a considerable number on board, and no apprehension of peril was excited. Suddenly the low gurgling sound of a vessel approaching was heard. A large steamer, only a few yards distant, moving quickly through the water, loomed out of the fog, and almost instantly, before any steps could be taken to avert it, a tremendous collision was seen to be inevitable. The bow of the strange steamer struck the starboard bow of the **City of Brussels** with terrific force, cutting her down to the water's edge and almost half through. The vessel which had thus suddenly made her presence felt proved to be the Hall Liner **Kirby Hall**, which is stated to have been on her maiden voyage. She left Glasgow only a few hours before, and was calling at Liverpool to complete her loading and to embark passengers for the East. The moment that the collision was seen to be inevitable everything possible was done aboard the **City of Brussels** to protect the lives of the passengers and crew and all those on board bear testimony. Indeed, even after the presence of mind and coolness displayed by Captain Land and his officers after the collision the passengers seemed to be unconscious of the gravity of the situation and the terrible gap which had been made in the forward part of the vessel. She was known to be leaking very rapidly, and all the passengers were marshalled into appointed places so that there was no hurry or confusion. Lifebuoys and other appliances were served out, the boats swung on the davits, and every preparation was made for the emergency. This proved to be more critical and immediate than was anticipated. The passengers had been put into the boats, and some of the crew were told off to each of these craft, the Captain and remainder of his men continuing on board until after the safety of the rest had been assured. The vessel got visibly lower in the water, and those of the crew who had not escaped in the boats climbed the rigging and awaited the result. "It was the coolest thing you'd ever see in this world," was the remark of a weather-beaten sailor, in narrating the catastrophe.

In about twenty minutes after the collision the huge vessel gave a tremendous lurch, flinging off those who were in the rigging and plunging into the depths with a fearful swirl. The scene that ensued was heartrending in the extreme. The people in the boats were enveloped in darkness, and those in the water were without help. The **Kirby Hall**, which immediately after the collision had rebounded through the violence of the blow, and was soon obscured in the fog, was unable to lower boats or render any active assistance. The boats of the **City of Brussels** picked up all who could be recovered from the water, but this was no easy matter, owing to the difficulty of seeing what was going on around. The fog lifting, all the people were taken on board the **Kirby Hall**, which had not left the vicinity, and when they were mustered on board of her it was found that two of the passengers had been drowned, besides eight of the crew of the **City of Brussels.** The **Kirby Hall**, after searching about the scene of the disaster for several hours, proceeded to Liverpool, where she landed the survivors of the calamity.

The **City of Brussels** was an iron screw steamer built on the Clyde, and was of 3,747 tons, with engines of 600 horse power nominal. The **Kirby Hall** was a new vessel, belonging to the Hall Line, which carries cargo and passengers between Liverpool and Bombay, via the Suez Canal. One of the crew in describing the calamity, says : — " About a quarter to seven o'clock, some eight miles to the east of the North- West Lightship, so far as could be judged in the thick fog which then prevailed, a large vessel suddenly loomed in sight, and before any measures could be adopted on board the **City of Brussels** to avert a collision the strange steamer ran stem on against our vessel, striking her on the starboard side a few yards abaft the bow." The collision caused much alarm among the saloon and steerage passengers on board, and also among the crew, but there was no semblance of disorder. Captain Land at once called out to the strange vessel to ascertain her name, and found that she was the **Kirby Hall** on her trial trip. At the desire of Captain Land she stood-by us. Meanwhile our captain had from his position on the bridge ascertained that his vessel had sustained very serious damage, the water pouring through the great hole which the **Kirby Hall** had made in the side of our vessel. All this occupied but a moment or so, and Captain Land immediately after gave orders for the boats to be lowered into the water. The passengers were hurried into the boats as fast as possible, with just sufficient members of the crew to man them. When the boats were thus filled to their utmost capacity, the men pulled their hardest for the **Kirby Hall**. Meanwhile the **City of Brussels** was fast settling down in the water, with such of the passengers and crew, as well as the captain, who remained on board. Some of the boats returned to the **City of Brussels** before she sank, and pulled about close to her, so as to give those on board an opportunity of saving themselves. The men dared not go actually alongside of the rapidly sinking vessel for fear that their boats would be sucked down with her. Thus a number who jumped into the water were rescued, and among them was the Captain, who was floating on a spar. While the boats were still being rowed about in hope of rescuing others, the vessel suddenly plunged down, bow first, in about

City of Brussels drydocked in New York
Courtesy Clydesite at www.clydesite.co.uk

fourteen fathoms of water, leaving only the tops of her masts visible, so far as one could judge in the thick atmosphere. The boats rowed for a time about the spot where the **City of Brussels** had gone down, to make sure that there were no other sailors or passengers in need of help, and, after a time, the boats pulled to the **Kirby Hall**, which stood by until the fog lifted. The second officer of the **City of Brussels** (Mr Young) and the carpenter (Mr Woods) were taken on board the **Kirby Hall** apparently lifeless, and all efforts to restore animation proved fruitless. The **Kirby Hall** was on a trial trip, and did not appear to be fully manned as for an ordinary voyage. When the first or second boat had reached her from the sinking steamer, the purser shouted out as they pulled up alongside to send some boats at once. The captain of the **Kirby Hall** replied that this was impossible, as he had only four or five seamen on board, and all that he could do was to stand by.

Captain Land, the captain of the **City of Brussels**, describing the calamity, says: All the way from Queenstown until we got abreast of the Orme's Head it was beautifully fine and clear, but when we reached the latter point a haze set in. We considered it necessary to reduce the ship's speed, and as it was getting thicker we went quite slow. We then heard the sound of the bell on the North-West Lightship, whereupon we turned round and faced again to the westward, after which we stopped the steamer and allowed her to drift slowly stern first up to the Bar Lightship, We had stopped forty-one minutes, and were blowing our steam whistles every half or quarter of a minute, as the case might be — and certainly at not more than half a minute intervals — when we heard a steamer's whistle on our starboard side and also on the port side. Naturally concluding, as we were heading, that they would pass us in parallel position, we never moved our engines. We suddenly saw a white light on the starboard bow a minute and a half afterwards, and immediately a large vessel ran into us, stem first, making a gash about eight feet in width, and penetrating the side of the **City of Brussels** about three foot. I at once gave orders for one gang to clear away the boats, for the chief officer and another gang to get a Spar sail and place it over the hole made by the collision, and for the carpenter to sound the wells and report the amount of water in the ship. Before the sail could be got off the carpenter had reported fourteen foot of water in the forehold, and the engineer reported that water was making fast in the stokehold, and that the fires would be out in about a minute. I thereupon ordered all hands to leave the sail, and get the boats out, the steward to marshal the passengers on deck without luggage or encumbrance, and the purser to see all the women in the boats first, which orders were coolly and skilfully carried out by the purser and stewards. I also instructed the chief officer to take the port lifeboat, get as many as he could in it, and hang off for the ship. The vessel was by this time filling fast as the other boats were filled promiscuously by the men without orders, and they pushed away from the side, leaving myself, the chief engineer, the doctor, the second officer, the carpenter, and about six or seven other men on board. As they were not able to get

the boats to approach us again, when the ship had sunk as far as the bridge I sang out for every one to save himself, and then sprang off the bulwarks head first into the water. The chief engineer and the others ran up the mizzen rigging, and as the **City of Brussels** sank deeper and the water reached them they floated off, seizing hold of any wreckage or spar that might be about. I got hold of a spar, on which I floated and swam with two or three others. We were buoyed up until the boats took us in and put us on board the **Kirby Hall**. We afterwards returned and cruised round the wreck for an hour, picking up the insensible forms of the second officer and the carpenter. We used every effort to restore animation to their bodies, but without avail. The total number lost was ten, consisting of eight of the crew (including second officer and carpenter) and two Italian steerage passengers. When on board the **Kirby Hall** the utmost attention was shown to us by the captain and officers, and we fared well considering their limited means, for they were only poorly provided, as the steamer was coming round on her trial trip with runners from Glasgow. We remained in the vicinity of the wreck until the next evening, when the weather cleared, and we proceeded to take a pilot from the station boat at the Bar Lightship. From the pilot we got some beefsteak and other food, which we cooked, serving it to the ladies and the steerage passengers. We then steamed up the Channel, and landed in the Morpeth Dock, after which we crossed the river to Liverpool. I may say that every passenger was landed dry from the **City of Brussels**, and there was not a wet garment on any of them. All the passengers were safely got out of the steamer before the members of the crew went into the boats without orders. The owners of the Inman **City of Brussels** have lodged a claim for £160,000 as the value of the steamer, but this is exclusive of claims for cargo and lives lost. The owners of the **Kirby Hall** claim £6,000 damages to their steamer.

Captain Hambury of the **Kirby Hall** states that for some time before the collision his vessel had been going dead slow, the intention being to come immediately to an anchor in consequence of the density of the fog. While going dead slow, feeling their way to an anchorage, they heard the steam whistles, but no bell. The **Kirby Hall** also kept her steam whistle going continuously up to the time of the collision. She struck the **City of Brussels** on the starboard side, both vessels being at the time, he says, under way, the **City of Brussels** trying to cross the bows of the **Kirby Hall.** The Kirby Hall was heading for the North-west Lightship, and the head of the **City of Brussels** was about south to south-west. As soon as the captain of the **Kirby Hall** found that a collision was inevitable he ordered the engines to be reversed full speed, and that was being done when the collision occurred. After the collision every means was used to render assistance. At the time of the collision the captain and the chief officer were on the bridge, and the third officer and some seamen were on the forecastle, keeping a sharp look-out.

The **Kirby Hall** lies in the Morpeth Dock, moored to the ordinary berth of the Bombay steamers, very high in the water. The principal damage, which carried away

the cutwater over a foot into her stem, is above water. She draws 18ft forward and 18ft aft, and there is a large rent in the iron plate from the 18ft mark to the 24ft mark, the cutwater being entirely carried away, and the iron plates curled up. There is also a large indentation above the 24ft mark. Beyond this the vessel appears to have suffered no damage whatever, no other plates except those by her cutwater being started. Her port anchor is hanging over ready for letting go, and was so when she came in. This goes to confirm the captain's statement that they were feeling their way to an anchorage at the time of the collision.

Editor's note, the subsequent enquiry reported: "The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances of the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons annexed, that the said collision was due to the master of the "Kirby Hall" not having stopped his engines directly he heard the first whistle from the "City of Brussels," instead of only slowing them down.
The Court is further of opinion that no blame is attributable to the master of the "City of Brussels," and that every possible effort was afterwards made on board both vessels to save life. Under the circumstances the Court will not deal with the certificate of the master of the "Kirby Hall." The Court is not asked to make any order as to costs."

70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic

The longest, largest and most complex naval battle in history.

2013 sees the commemoration of World War II's Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous military campaign in history. Events to mark the occasion will be based in Liverpool, the UK centre of operations for much of the campaign; these will include:

Friday 24th May, 2013	Receptions and VIP tours of visiting ships from UK, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Poland and Russia.
Saturday 25th May 2013	Charity Concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, featuring the Royal Marine Concert Band
	Visiting ships open to the general public
	Maritime related displays at the waterfront
Sunday 26th May 2013	Cathedral Service and March/Fly Past (Royal attendance)
	V.I.P. Lunch at Liverpool Town Hall

REMEMBER THOSE DAYS .....

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

October to December, 1971

After operating for 114 years, the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board ceased to exist at midnight on July 31. In its place is a statutory company, the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company, headed by Mr J G Cuckney, who took over as chairman in December, 1970, after the port had revealed that it was in serious financial difficulty. Among priorities for the new company will be the commissioning of the new Seaforth Dock complex, and closing down of the South Docks. The original Board came into being by means of an Act of Parliament dated August 25, 1857, "for consolidating the docks at Liverpool and Birkenhead into one estate, and for vesting the control and management of them in one public trust". The board took over from the old Liverpool Dock Committee, which administered the Liverpool Docks and, in 1855, had acquired the property of the Trustees of the Birkenhead Docks and the Birkenhead Dock Company.

After a 12 month, £2million refit, the Shaw Savill liner **Ocean Monarch** (24,467 gross tons) – the former Canadian Pacific liner **Empress of England** – sailed from Southampton on her first cruise on October 16. The refit was carried out at the Birkenhead yard of Cammell Laird and Co. (Shiprepairers) Ltd. The liner left the Mersey on September 17 showing little external change. But internally much alteration has taken place, with cargo spaces removed and new public rooms and stateroom accommodation, so that the **Ocean Monarch** can now serve the dual roles of passenger liner in the New Zealand service and cruising liner. However, just as the refit was being completed the company announced an estimated loss for this year of £1,250,000, and stated that the main cause of this huge deficit was a serious miscalculation in the amount of work involved in the **Ocean Monarch** contract. In future the yard will not seek long-term refit, but will concentrate their repair activities on short term work such as voyage repairs and dry-dockings where a quick re-delivery of the vessel to her owners can be effected.

On September 3 the cruiser H.M.S. **Belfast** arrived in the Thames from Portsmouth in tow of the tugs **Sun XXVI** and **Vanquisher** and was berthed temporarily in Tilbury Docks. She has since been brought to her permanent mooring off Symon's Wharf, opposite the Tower of London, and was opened to the public from Trafalgar Day, October 21. She has been saved for the nation by the H.M.S. Belfast Trust; negotiations for berthing facilities and for dredging by the Port of London Authority to accommodate the cruiser were conducted by Rear-Admiral Morgan Giles, who was once captain of the **Belfast**.

October to December, 1991

Recently the themes of shipping and music became entwined when *Sea Breezes* received a request from BBC Television for a picture of the Booth Line passenger steamer **Hildebrand**. Sir Edward Elgar had made a round voyage in the ship in the late 1920s from Liverpool to Brazil and up the Amazon to Manáus; and the first of the season's Henry Wood Promenade Concerts was due to open with Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius.* During the 20 minute interval BBC2 viewers were to be treated to a short film featuring that holiday, hence the need for a picture.

A recent scuttling in the U.K. was that of the steamer **Glen Strathallan**. Built at Selby in 1928 as a trawler, she was bought on the stocks by the Isle of Man millionaire Mr R. A. Colby Cubbin and completed as his private yacht. The vessel was little used, spending most of her time laid-up at Douglas. Mr Cubbin died in 1954, his estate passing to his mother who died a year later. In turn, she bequeathed the **Glen Strathallan** to the Shaftesbury Homes, together with money for her maintenance. A condition was that she should be sunk when her useful life was over. In 1960 she was chartered from Shaftesbury Homes by the King Edward Nautical Training College and made training voyages on the Thames and Medway. In 1969 boiler defects developed and it was decided that the time had arrived to implement Mrs Cubbin's final instructions. She was scuttled off Plymouth and took up her duties as a target for divers and marine archaeologists.

The twin-screw steamer **St Elian**, formerly of the Liverpool & North Wales Steamship Co. is now a static restaurant ship at Salerno, Italy and named **Bucaniero**. She was laid down by J. C. Tecklenborg of Geestemünde, as the minesweeper **M140** for the German Navy but was sold to the Hamburg Amerika Line to be rebuilt as a passenger steamer. In January 1920, renamed **Hörnum**, she inaugurated the Swinemunde – Pillau route of the German Government's ferry link to East Prussia, part of a through rail-sea Berlin-Königsberg route which did not cross Polish soil. She proved inadequate for winter work there and was soon replaced, but continued running summer excursion work on Germany's Baltic coast. In 1922 she was sold to Liverpool & North Wales Co. and operated their normal routes for 5 years before being sold to Naples owners. Firstly renamed **Partenope** and, in 1947 after post war refurbishment and conversion to oil firing, she became **Ischia**. She operated from Naples to Ischia and Capri, was withdrawn in 1972 and has been at Salerno since, her upper deck having been built over to provide covered accommodation.

MV **Tamamina** (see inside front cover page) was chartered at Oakland, USA, for a voyage to Muscat, leaving on February 14. On March 14 she was ordered back to San Francisco and on March 21 she was again ordered to turn round and head for Damman, arriving on March 30. She was at sea for 43 days, travelling 16,781 miles. During this period she did not enter port but had three main engine stops for mechanical adjustments, totalling eight hours. Is this a record for a merchant ship in the present day?

Outward Bound

The diary of Samuel Harborne Belcher
This article by the Editor summarises the presentation made to the Society
on 20th September, 2012 by Dr. Angela Taylor

Samuel Belcher was the three times Great Uncle of the speaker. He was born in Sheffield 1835 and in the census of 1851 he was reported as living in Sheffield and, at the young age of sixteen, was described as an assistant teacher.

He studied at Trinity College, Dublin graduating in Classics and by 1856 he was living in Bristol and teaching at a local school. He married Frances Cramp on New Years' Eve 1856 at a church in Middlesex, and the following year she emigrated to Australia with her parents. [*there was some conjecture regarding this early departure and it was felt that perhaps the couple could both benefit from the then assisted passage scheme by travelling separately, Frances taking the opportunity to travel with her parents rather than as a single woman*]. They took up residence in Ipswich, Queensland which although some twenty miles inland from Brisbane is now a part of that conurbation.

Some six years after his wife had emigrated he followed her to Australia in 1863, sailing from Liverpool on the **Bucton Castle**, (Captain William Ridley). Departing from Queens Dock, Liverpool on February 4th 1863 and arriving at Sydney 18th May 1863, she made a passage of 102 days duration. A typical passage for that period.

Bucton Castle was a wooden ship, 886 tons and built at Bideford in 1857 for the Liverpool shipowner Mr John Leech (and thought to be the owner of cotton spinning mills at Stalybridge). She was 182 ft. long, 34 ft. in the beam and with a draft of 21.5 ft.

Throughout the voyage Belcher maintained a hand- written daily diary which described all aspects of life aboard a sailing ship. He was the only saloon passenger and soon became friends with Captain Ridley who taught him the basics of how to take a noon sight in order to determine the ship's position; whenever time and weather allowed they also played shuffle board, quoits, cribbage and enjoyed target practice at shooting passing birds,. He found difficulty in dealing with the other officers.

The other twenty passengers were located in steerage and comprised either single men, mostly British, or family groups, mainly European. One Irishman had emigrated to Australia some years earlier, had become a very successful gold digger and earned some £2,000. He had returned to Ireland and was now resuming life in Australia together with his brother and his wife's relatives, having paid all their expenses.

The diary gives the daily chart positions and describes the frustrating conditions when becalmed, particularly in the earlier stages of the voyage, and equally when they are subjected to violent storms in the Southern Ocean, and of the resultant damage. He tells of a dangerous situation when a sudden squall caught the ship, when one seaman was particularly effective and agile whilst up aloft and subsequently rewarded with a jar of tobacco from a grateful Captain. He graphically describes two cases of serious

accidents to sailors, involving head injuries in both cases, and how he had assisted the Captain stitch the major wound in one case. He eloquently describes the variety of birds and wildlife to be seen.


Samuel Harborne Belcher

Samuel gives a full description of his cabin as so conveniently small that he could reach everything from the position of his bunk, and that the mattress was very uncomfortable being filled with seaweed. Travelling on a Liverpool ship really obliged the passenger to bring his own bedding. The food provided was plentiful and varied with fresh bread baked every other day, although the tinned milk was tasteless and the tinned meat described as "stringy". Stews and pies seemed to be the staple diet but nonetheless he affirms that if he has to cross the seas again he will either find an overland route or travel on one of the more comfortable Greek ships!

He again married Frances Harriett Cramp (c1836 – 1929) on 29 October 1863 at the Church of St Johns in Darlinghurst, NSW. [*the conjecture continues; perhaps, again in order to claim assisted passages, the then convention dictated that they "marry" after an appropriate length of time in Australia*].

Samuel continued in the profession of school teacher and by 1875 had founded the Samuel Harborne Belcher School for gentlemen's sons at Garroorigang in the township of Goulburn, NSW which is some 120 miles south-east of Sydney, and 60 miles from Canberra. The building was originated in 1857 as the home of the Hume family, descendants of Hamilton Hume who was an early explorer of the present-day Australian states of New South Wales and Victoria. The house still survives as a rare example of Victorian living and nowadays as the Garroorigang Historic Home provides luxurious hotel accommodation, with guided tours of the homestead and gardens by a member of the Hume family.

Samuel clearly prospered because he became a Founding Member of the Goulburn Club, also at the inaugural meeting on 1st February, 1877 were: L. G. Davidson, Medical Practitioner; F. Deacon, Manager of the Bank of N.S.W.; A.G. Finlay, Auctioneer, etc.; J.T. Gannon, Solicitor; J. S. Hayes, Flourmill Proprietor; P. H. Gentle, Medical Practitioner; W. F. Hayley, Medical Practitioner; J. G. King, Commissioner for Crown Lands; A. McKellar, independent; E.Twynam, District Surveyor; Captain Zouch, Superintendent of Police. This array of the "great and good" were the foundation members and became the first committee.

In 1883 Belcher closed the school but retained Garroorigang as his residence until his death in 1920, aged 85 years.

Mersey Developments

Submitted by LNRS Member Harry Hignett

From June, 2012 Peel Ports has boosted capability on its Liverpool-Manchester barge service, and port infrastructure at its Irlam Container Terminal, through the introduction of a new coaster vessel and a new harbour mobile crane.

The arrival of the **Monica** and a 40 tonne Liebherr mobile crane follows strong growth in Peel Ports barge service operating from the Port of Liverpool to Manchester via the Manchester Ship Canal.

The original pusher-tug

....and the Monica

Originally operated by a pusher-tug and 160 teu capacity barge, the service has grown from handling 3,000 containers in 2009 to an expected 15,000 this year – a five-fold increase.

The **Monica** will be deployed on the existing thrice weekly service between Liverpool and Irlam Container Terminal, on the outskirts of Manchester. Additionally, the vessel will enable the service to call more regularly at Ellesmere Port, which was added as a new destination to the service earlier this year.

The new Liebherr crane, complete with two spreader frames, arrived from Austria and was constructed at Irlam Container Terminal.

Happy Days?

It was 25th December 1945, Christmas Day, on board the **Empire MacMahon**: A day of peace and goodwill to all men. This is the diary entry for that day written by Radio Officer Simon Dennis and held in the Maritime Museum Archives.

In the afternoon Concorcen one of the firemen attacks two others – McLean and Knight. He bites various pieces off them. Knight has his nose bitten off. We have to proceed to Algiers to drop them ashore. An RN sick bay PO comes aboard to see these fellows. They are taken ashore in a French naval launch.

A Baltic Resurrection

Bill Ogle

What is thought to be the oldest existing British pilot cutter THPV **Bembridge** was built in 1938 by Smith's Dock Company Ltd., South Bank Yard on the Tees and is now being restored and preserved on the Baltic

She was designed by Sir William Reed for Trinity House as their first purpose built twin-screw diesel-engined pilot cutter and was built by Smith's Dock Company Co. Ltd., Middlesbrough from where she was launched on 14th July 1938.

Initially she was used as a cruising pilot cutter for Isle of Wight/Southampton District operating at the Nab and the Needles stations where she served throughout the war. In 1941 she received a direct hit from a bomb but fortunately it failed to explode and passed harmlessly through the bow. In 1947 she was transferred to the London district where she again worked as the cruising cutter, alternating service between the Dungeness and Sunk boarding grounds.

In 1968 a launch service operating out of a new, purpose built, pilot station at Folkestone replaced the cruising cutter and she returned to the Solent operating as a mother ship and communications vessel until finally being withdrawn from Trinity House service in 1970.

In 1971 she was purchased by Arundel Priory for use as a training ship preparing under-privileged children for a seagoing career. That project was short lived and in 1972 she was bought by Cosag Marine Services and fitted out as a survey ship for North Sea oil exploration. Much of her accommodation was removed for this work which she continued to undertake successfully until 1976 when she was sold to the Essex Yacht Club for use as their clubhouse at Leigh on Sea. The conversion to a clubhouse saw the removal of the engines, generators, funnel and deck machinery and other alterations resulted in very little of the interior remaining recognisable.

In 2004 the Essex Yacht Club purchased the GRP minehunter HMS **Wilton** and **Bembridge** was towed to the Medway where plans to convert her to a floating restaurant failed to materialise.

Awaiting restoration

and.....at her permanent berth at Szczecin

The Polish shipping logistics group Magemar, based in Szczecin, had been unable to locate a suitable riverside property for use as the head office and

museum. Fortunately Magemar Manager, and shipping enthusiast, Rafal Zahorski became aware of her existence in 2006 after widening his search area and was able to purchase her in February 2009. This was achieved just a few weeks before she was due to be broken up.

The restoration started immediately after her arrival in Szczecin, after a lengthy tow, and the search began to source appropriate replacements for the masses of equipment no longer on board, with strenuous efforts to retain authenticity.

Most shell plating and external decks were replaced when she was dry on a slipway, with every new plate receiving artificial rivets to maintain the appearance. With a new after upper deck, funnel and mast a new wooden deck was laid down to look as it did in 1938. Simultaneously, **Bembridge'**s wooden wheelhouse was removed, restored and remounted. In the same way every single piece of wood from the ship's inside was taken out and returned to its original place after proper restoration works.

A major concern was that her two boarding boats had disappeared, as had the Columbus type davits which launched them. Fortunately both issues have been resolved:

- Thanks to a former Trinity House Pilot two boats were found on a field in Wales, one marked "Trinity House, London No. 44." And the second from another vessel (No. 46). They didn't look brand new! Grass was growing on them and the engines full of water. Eventually the sale was agreed and the boats carefully transported to Poland, where it took an entire year for restoration. Both Lister-Petter engines now work perfectly and the boats look like new (including the Trinity House crests on their bows). They cannot be traced back to **Bembridge** as in service the boarding boats, generally known as 'punts', often transferred between cutters as part of normal operations.

- Rafal also discovered the Manxman Steamship Company web site and made contact with Pallion Engineering where the former Isle of Man Steam Packet vessel was lying, also awaiting dismantling. After lengthy negotiations Magemar were able to purchase and ship to Poland not only the davits (being the two forward ones which were different from the other raised-gravity type) but a whole range of other items including: the davit winches, control gear, blocks, cables, chocks etc.; the after funnel ladder; guard rails ex-promenade deck around third class "double" staircase; former first class single staircase from the promenade deck; engine room telephone; lifering brackets; a selection of switching panels from wheelhouse bulkhead; and the chart table "anglepoise" type light. All of these items are now being carefully restored. In fact the davits, winches and associated equipment have recently been re-installed on-board their new home:

A restored boarding boat together with the former **Manxman's** davits.

Currently the THPV **Bembridge** is berthed at the Egyptian Quay in the Port of Szczecin, very appropriate for a ship built in 1938 as the surrounding buildings are also from the beginning of the 20th century. During daytime she is very crowded and busy. The Magemar office is on the main deck starting from the midships Officer's Mess-room to the stern. The conference centre is located in three separate areas; in her former engine room (the motors were removed in 1976), in the Master's and Officer's cabins (all destroyed during the same year) and at the end of the Pilot's Saloon. The latter is fully restored using original furniture except armchairs.

There were almost 300 people involved in the restoration project as well as retracing the vessel's forgotten history. Most of them were from the U.K., some were former Trinity House Pilots, crew members, previous owners, but many helped just because they are maritime enthusiasts. Rafal is very clear that, without their support and encouragement for the restoration team during the worst periods, the whole project would never have been completed. The story is graphically told by (to date) more than 1,300 messages posted under the name *THPV Bembridge – 1938* on the web site: http://www.shipsnostalgia.com

The next major event which **Bembridge** will celebrate is the visit to Szczecin of The Tall Ships Races in 2013. The plan is to position **Bembridge** in the middle of the channel and demonstrate the launching and then recovery of the boarding boats. It will be the first time for 44 years! Perhaps Society members will be visiting the event and can report on these happenings?

Bowaters' Deep-Sea Ships Part 2

LNRS Member Roy Fenton

Following the scrapping of **Corner Brook** in 1954, Bowaters were without deep-sea vessels for just seven months. The high cost of chartering during the Korean War gave Sir Eric Bowater an excuse to buy ships, but a clue to his real motive was a remark of a successor that 'every great man wishes to own a newspaper or own ships.' But having made his decision, Bowater consulted widely.

In anticipation of the scrapping of **Corner Brook**, two ships had been ordered from Dennys of Dumbarton. A detailed analysis of Bowater Paper Corporation's use of sea transport concluded that it needed to ship over one million tons of raw material each year, serving its mills in Scandinavia, Canada and one which was soon to open at Calhoun in Tennessee. It was calculated that this required not merely two ships, but a total of three medium size and five smaller ships (six smaller ships were eventually built). It was also decided that a subsidiary should be set up to own this fleet. In January 1955 the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. was formed in London with one million pounds of capital subscribed by the Bowater Paper Corporation, the rest of the four million needed being borrowed. The first two ships were actually ordered by, and launched for, Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland but were transferred to the new London-based company before delivery. Bowaters did not want to do its own management, and left this to Furness, Withy who had managed the **Corner Brook** and **Humber Arm**. This arrangement lasted until 1957 when Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd. - later the British and Commonwealth Shipping Co. Ltd. - were appointed managers.

On 21st February 1955 the turbine-driven **Margaret Bowater** was delivered. She and her sister, **Sarah Bowater**, were designed primarily as newsprint carriers, for use on the Atlantic coast of North America from Corner Brook down to the Gulf of Mexico and across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom. As anyone who has seen newsprint being handled will appreciate, a roll is large and heavy, but also very vulnerable to damage. Crews were told that a one inch tear in a roll could make a mile of paper unusable. To avoid damage pillars were eliminated from the holds of **Margaret Bowater** and her sisters, and where possible other obstructions avoided. Sparring in the holds was covered with rubber to help protect the paper rolls.

In winter the ships had to steam through ice which could be eighteen inches thick for about twenty miles on a voyage to Corner Brook, and so they were ice strengthened and had well-rounded forefoots. **Margaret Bowater** had accommodation for six or eight guests, and **Sarah Bowater** also had an owner's suite. Sir Eric had a reputation for lavish entertaining, and the accommodation was designed with this in mind. On one occasion he used one of the ships, probably the **Sarah Bowater**, for a private cruise in the Caribbean.

The choice of the Denny yard to build the first of Bowater's newsprint carriers is interesting, as in 1952 the Dumbarton builders had completed what was described as the first ship designed entirely for carrying newsprint. This was the **Markland** of the Vinland Shipping Co. Ltd., a company owned ultimately by the Mersey Paper Co. Ltd. of Liverpool, Halifax. The story of this company's ship owning converges with that of Bowaters, and will be dealt with in part 3.

Smaller ships

The 1954 review of Bowaters' sea transport needs envisaged five smaller ships, suitable for the pulp trade from Scandinavia to the UK, although they would also be able to serve the Newfoundland and Tennessee mills. They were to be capable of carrying baled pulp or newsprint.

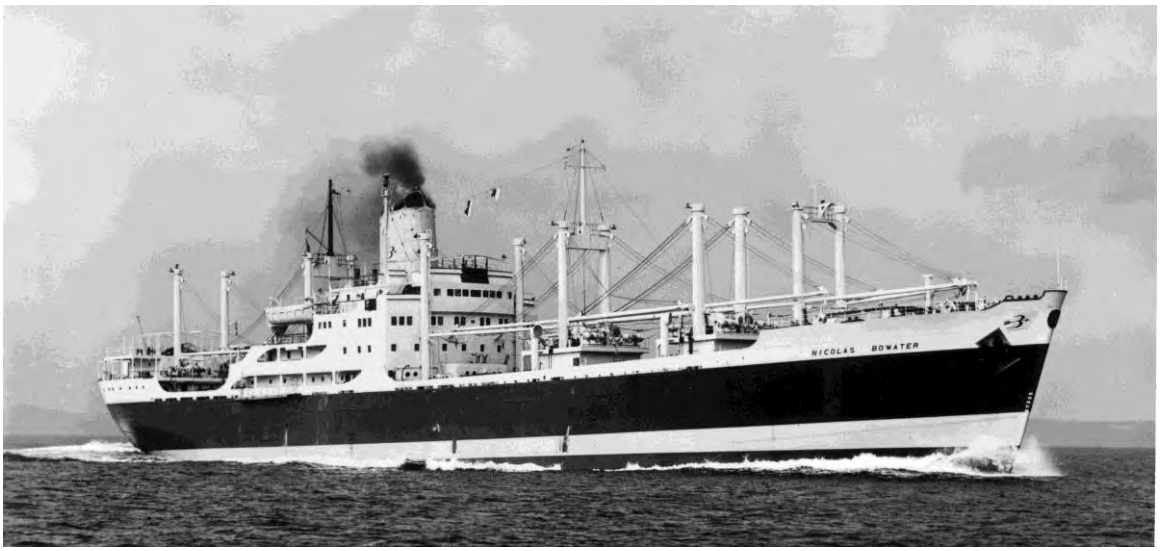
To aid manoeuvrability in restricted waters, the new ships were fitted with Pleuger Activ rudders, and **Elizabeth Bowater** was to be the first British ship to be built with this equipment. On the rudder blade was a pear-shaped housing incorporating a 150 hp electric motor which drove a small propeller. The operation of this gave enough steering torque even when the vessel had very little way on.

The pioneer, **Elizabeth Bowater**, came from Caledon's yard at Dundee, but Denny's could take the credit for most of the design work, including lines, machinery arrangements and general arrangement. Dennys actually built two of the six ships which were eventually completed to this design, three coming from Caledon (who prepared the steelwork plans) and one from Cammell Laird who were allowed to draw up piping and other fitting plans. Such co-operation between yards ostensibly in competition seems to have been not uncommon, but building of just six ships in three yards over three and a half years suggests that little importance was placed on the savings achievable with series construction. However, Dennys did build all but one of the Sulzer engines, the exception coming from Werkspoor in Amsterdam. All were six-cylinder, single-acting, two-stroke engines giving a modest 12 knots.

Decline and fall

On the delivery of the last of the small pulpwood carriers, **Nina Bowater**, in 1961 the Bowater Steamship fleet reached its all-time peak of twelve ships, including three survivors of the Mersey Paper fleet (to be dealt with in part three). However, it was then downhill all the way. The first two of the big newsprint carriers were sold after just 13 years' service. Turbine-driven general cargo ships became unpopular as oil prices increased, and this pair only managed a pathetic 15 to 16 years' total service before being broken up in Taiwan, although **Nicolas Bowater** was to do slightly better. By 1973 inroads had also been made into the motor ships, with the Werkspoor-engined **Alice Bowater** managing only ten years in the fleet. The last ship to remain with Bowaters was also the last built, **Nina Bowater**, sold in 1977. However, the motor ships have survived much better than the turbine ships, and two survived into the 21st century. Several had interesting

later careers. **Elizabeth Bowater** became a drill ship, which contributed to her outliving all her sisters, although much of her later years were spent laid up. **Alice Bowater** was bought for use as a cadet training ship by the Maritime College of Quebec, and as **Quebec** made at least one return visit to the Mersey. Perhaps the best known survivor was the former **Phyllis Bowater**, which spent 18-years under the Turkish flag as **Naz-K**, and completed a total of 40 years' service.



NICHOLAS BOWATER 1958-1973, 7,136gross tons, built by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton.

In seeking reasons for Bowaters to run down their fleet one can cite the increasing costs of operating under the British flag and the attraction of being able to charter in ships as needed, making savings by employing ships at prevailing market rates. When the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. fleet was being planned, too many cargoes were chasing too few ships, a situation which has not often prevailed since. However, Bowater's fortunes have also declined, especially since the death of Eric Bowater in 1962. His organisation's rapid growth was funded (as was his fleet) by heavy borrowing, and a world over-capacity for newsprint meant the debt-laden Corporation had to shed many of its assets to make ends meet. With their mills in Kent and Cheshire sold, Bowaters are no longer the force they once were in paper, and their remaining UK operations are limited to tissue production (Bowater Scott), packaging, and an interest in building materials. The North American operation is much more vibrant, however, and Bowaters are the major producer of newsprint in the US, with mills in Tennessee, South Carolina, Maine and Nova Scotia. Bowater's shipping operations – which ended over 30 years ago - should be remembered as a bold and perhaps somewhat flamboyant venture of an entrepreneur who was never afraid to take risks.

Fleet of the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London

1. Margaret Bowater 1954-1968

O.N. 186187 6,481g 3,532n 419.3 x 58.8 x 26.6 feet. Three steam turbines single reduction geared to screw, by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton.

14.9.1954: Launched by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton (Yard No. 1471) for the Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland as **Margaret Bowater**.

21.2.1955: Completed for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd., London.

1968: Sold to Jacques Pierot junior and Sons.

1968: Sold to Jeronimo Corporation, Monrovia, Liberia (Auxiliary Power Corporation, New York, USA) and renamed **John W. Hill**.

22.12.1969: Laid-up at Willemstad.

1970: Sold to Hope Navigation Corporation, Monrovia, Liberia (Sea King Corporation (James Chen), New York, USA) and renamed **Grand State**.

6 1971: Arrived at Kaohsiung for demolition.

2. **Sarah Bowater** 1955-1968

O.N. 186287 6,471g 3,530n 419.4 x 58.8 x 26.6 feet. Three steam turbines single reduction geared to shaft by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton.

6.5.1955: Launched by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton (Yard No. 1477) for the Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd., Corner Brook, Newfoundland as **Sarah Bowater**.

7.9.1955: Completed for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.

1968: Sold to Caribbean Trust Inc., Monrovia, Liberia (Auxiliary Power Corporation, New York, USA) and renamed **Vainqueuer Jose**.

2.12.1969: Laid-up at Willemstad, West Indies.

1970: Sold to State Navigation Corporation, Monrovia, Liberia (Sea King Corporation (James Chen), New York, USA) and renamed **Grand Trader**.

8.1971: Arrived at Kaohsiung for demolition.

3. **Nicholas Bowater** 1958-1973

O.N. 187806 7,136g 3,946n 419.0 x 60.3 x 26.6 feet. Two steam turbines double reduction geared to shaft by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton.

7.1.1957: Keel laid by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton (Yard No.1491).

18.2.1958: Launched for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Nicholas Bowater**.

26.7.1958: Completed.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.

1973: Sold to Vall Cargoships Ltd., Monrovia, (Intrafina Ltd., London), renamed **Vall Comet**.

10.1977: Arrived at Gadani Beach for demolition. *5.1978:* Work began.

4. **Elizabeth Bowater** 1963-1972

O.N. 187784 4,045g 2,071n 325.2 x 50.2 x 24.1 feet. Sulzer 6RD60-type 6-cyl. 2SCSA oil engine by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton; 2,700 BHP, 12 knots.

10.10.1956: Keel laid

21.1.1958: Launched by the Caledon Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Dundee (Yard No. 517) for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Elizabeth Bowater**.

14.6.1958: Completed.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.

1972: Sold to Wimpey (Marine) Ltd., London, converted into a drilling ship and subsequently renamed **Wimpey Sealab**.

1974: Fitted with four retractable thrust units.

1980: Sold to Coe Metcalf Shipping Co. Ltd., Liverpool and renamed **Pholas**.

1995: Sold to DSND Survey K/S (DSND Offshore A/S) Det Sondenfjelds-Norske D/S, managers), Oslo, Norway; renamed **Norskald** under the Bahamas flag.

1996: Managers became Siem Offshore A/S, Kristiansand, Norway.

3.2000: Laid up at Haugesund, her final job being a geological drilling in the straits of Gibraltar for a planned tunnel to link Africa and Europe.

2002: Sold to Fugro N.V. (Fugro Engineers B.V.), Leidschendam, Netherlands.

11.2002: Resold to Morten Smedegaarden and towed to Esjberg for demolition.

6.6.2003: Left Esbjerg for Liepaja, Latvia having been resold to Liepaja Metalurgs, Liepaja.

17.6.2003: Breaking up began.

5. **Constance Bowater** 1963-1972

O.N. 300756 4,045g 2,071n 325.2 x 50.3 x 24.1 feet. Sulzer 6RD60-type 6-cyl. 2SCSA oil engine by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton; 2,700 BHP, 12 knots.

2.4.1958: Launched by the Caledon Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Dundee (Yard No. 513) for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Constance Bowater**.

25.8.1958: Completed.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.

1972: Sold to Maria Victoria Naviera S.A., Panama (Emmanuel Markakis) (Seamaster Shipping Inc, New York, USA, managers) and renamed **Kretan Spirit** under the Greek flag.

1.4.1985: Arrived at Cartagena, Colombia for demolition by SIPSA, Sociedad Industrial de Cartagena des Indias, Cartagena. *15.10.1985:* Work began.

6. Alice Bowater 1958-1969

O.N. 300810 4,045g, 2,070n 325.2 x 50.2 x 24.1 feet. Sulzer-type 6RD60 6-cyl. 2SCSA oil engine by N. V. Werkspoor Diesel, Amsterdam; 2,700 BHP, 12 knots.

8.10.1957: Keel laid.

28.10.1958: Launched by Cammell Laird and Company (Shipbuilders and Engineers) Ltd., Birkenhead (Yard No.1282) for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Alice Bowater**.

22.12.1958: Completed.

3.1.1959: Delivered.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.

1969: Sold to Messabec Ltee. (Joseph R. Bouchard, manager), Montreal, Canada for $350,000 and renamed **Quebec** for use as a cadet training ship for the Maritime College of Quebec.

1976: Sold to Gregal Compania Naviera S.A., Panama (George Frangistas, Piraeus, Greece) and renamed **George F** under the Greek flag.

1981: Sold to Blue Sea Shipping Corporation, Monrovia, Liberia (George Michaelides, Piraeus, Greece) and renamed **Blue Sea** under the Greek flag.

8.4.1982: Engine room explosion and fire near Kerkenna Islands in position 34.50 north by 11.35 east whilst on a voyage to Gabes.

12.4.1982: Arrived in tow at Sfax. Subsequently declared a constructive total loss.

7.7.1984: Arrived in tow at Bizerta for demolition.

7. **Gladys Bowater** 1963-1972

O.N. 300820 4,045g 2,081n 325.0 x 50.3 x 24.0 feet Sulzer 6RD60-type 6-cyl. 2SCSA oil engine by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton; 2,700 BHP, 12 knots.

19.8.1957: Keel laid

27.8.1958: Launched by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton (Yard No. 1494) for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Gladys Bowater**.

9.1.1959: Completed.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.

1972: Sold to Taurus Enterprises Corporation, Monrovia, Liberia (Kalimbes Management Inc., New York, USA) and renamed **Gigi**.

2.1976: Sold to Aginor Shipping Corporation, Monrovia (S. and C. Besi Ltd., Piraeus, Greece) and renamed **Aginor**.

6.1.1977: Abandoned on fire off North Africa in position 37.00 north, 13.05 east whilst on a voyage to Algiers with a cargo of cement.

7.1.1977: Taken in tow, fire extinguished, and declared constructive total loss. However, repaired and returned to service.

1977: Sold to Landami Compania Naviera S.A., Panama (Dionissios A. Stavrou Shipping Enterprises, Piraeus, Greece managers) and renamed **Alexandra** under the Greek flag.

1985: Sold to Likaab Trading Company, Dubai and renamed LAMYAA under the Honduras flag.

10.10.1985: Arrived at Gadani Beach for demolition by Capricorn Entreprises Ltd..

8. **Phyllis Bowater** 1963-1973

O.N. 301121 4,083g 2,049n 325.2 x 50.2 x 24.1 feet. Sulzer 6RD60-type 6-cyl. 2SCSA oil engine by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton; 2,700 BHP, 12 knots.

18.9.1958: Keel laid.

17.11.1959: Launched by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton (Yard No.1495) for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Phyllis Bowater**.

8.4.1960: Completed.

1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.
1973: Sold to Dodone Navigation Co. Ltd., Famagusta, Cyprus (Dimitrios Carapanis, Piraeus, Greece) and renamed **Charlotte**.
1976: Transferred to Eldeco Compania Naviera S.A. (Dimitrios Carapanis, Piraeus, Greece).
1978: Sold to Massis Hope Shipping Company S.A., Panama (Kapship Maritime Company S.A. (J.G. Kapranis) managers, Piraeus, Greece) and renamed **Tassos K** under the Greek flag.
1982: Sold to Transmarina Chartering and Trading Co. Ltd., Panama (Marti Shipping and Trading Co. Inc, Istanbbul, Turkey) and renamed **Maleron I**.
1983: Transferred to Denmar Denizcilik ve Ticaret A.S. (Marti Denizcilik ve Ticaret A.O. (Marti Shipping and Trading Company Inc.), managers), Istanbul, Turkey and renamed **Naz K**.
1988: Sold to Kalkavan Denizcilik ve Ticaret A.S., Istanbul, Turkey.
19.2.2001: Arrived at Alang to be broken up.
8.3.2001: Work began.

9. **Nina Bowater** 1963-1977
O.N. 302821 4,017g 2,024n 325.3 x 50.2 x 24.1 feet. Sulzer 6RD60-type 6-cyl. 2SCSA oil engine by Sulzer Brothers Ltd., Winterthur, Switzerland; 3,000 BHP, 12 knots.
29.11.1960: Keel laid.
29.6.1961: Launched by the Caledon Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Dundee (Yard No. 530) for the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. (Furness Withy and Co. Ltd., managers), London as **Nina Bowater**.
1.11.1961: Completed.
1963: Managers became Cayzer, Irvine and Co. Ltd.
1977: Sold to Andreas Markakis, New York, USA and renamed **Kretan Glory**.
1977: Transferred to Maritima Kretan Glory S.A, Panama (Alliedmar International Corporation (Andreas Markakis), New York) still under the Greek flag.
1982: Sold to Admiralty International Shipping Ltd. Monrovia, Liberia (Seatrans Brokerage Inc., New York, USA, managers), and renamed **Prometheus V** (Panama flag).
9.1986: For sale at Monfalcone, Italy.
4.9.1986: Arrived at Porto Nogaro for demolition by Acciaieria di Porto Nogaro.
10.1986: Demolition complete.

To be concluded.

Just a thought….

The essence of all our work is that nationality is of no importance to a ship caught in a gale - it is the fitness of a ship which is all important

Sir Wescott Abell, Professor of Naval Archiecture, Liverpool University 1910-14

Brain teaser

As an alternative to the normal Trivia Quiz you might like to see if you can solve these anagrams of famous British and German warships. Answers on page 28

1. AIM RED CHARLES
2. CHILL SEA
3. GENIUS, ENA
4. HARM A.B.
5. HER CLUB
6. HORN'S CHARTS
7. IT'S RIO'S LULU
8. MAIL PIPER HARD
9. MIK'S BAR
10. NO LENS
11. OH, DO!
12. ONE DRY
13. ONNAS
14. OWEN, R.N.
15. PLACES FOR WINE
16. PURE LES
17. EX TREE
18. RORY ALKA
19. TIE WRAPS
20. UN ZIP GREEN

A crew of just .....

Bill Ogle

The size of our largest container ships appeared to have stabilised in 2006 with the **Emma Maersk** class at 170,974 gross tons on a length of 1,302ft., beam of 184ft. and draft of 51ft. They can carry 14,770 TEU plus 1,000 reefers at a cruising speed of 25.5 knots. However in February 2011, Maersk ordered a family of ten even larger ships from Daewoo, with a capacity of 18,000 containers. A further ten ships were ordered in June 2011. The first is to be delivered in 2014. Instead of the normal anti-fouling a special silicone-based paint is used, which reduces drag and saves 1200 tons of fuel per year.

Emma Maersk (2006) Photo Harley Crossley

They are reported to operate with a crew of just thirteen. (Master, Chief Officer, Second Officer, Third Officer; Chief Engineer, Second Engineer, Third Engineer, Cook, Stewards (2) and A.B.s (3)

This prompted your Editor to recall the crew details of a typical Brocklebank steamer of the 1960's, such as the **Matra**. So with apologies for failing memory and spelling errors the amazing total was 94:-

Master	1	Chief Cook	1	Engine Room Serang	1
Chief Officer	1	Second Cook	1	Tindal, Senior Fireman	3
Second Officer	1	Third Cook	1	Ag Wallah, Fireman	9
Third Officer	1	Captain's Steward	1	Tal Wallah, Greaser	3
Fourth Officer	1	Steward	7	Cassab, Storekeeper	1
Deck Apprentice	4	Topass (Cleaner)	2	Donkeyman	2
Chief Engineer	1	Sub total catering	13	Batti Wallah, assist elect	1
Second Engineer	1			Coal Trimmer, day work	6
Senior Third Engineer	1	Deck Serang (Bo'sun)	1	Bhandari, Cook	1
Third Engineer	1	Tindal (Watch leader)	2	Sub total engine room	27
Senior Fourth Engineer	1	Cassab (Storekeeper)	1		
Fourth Engineer	1	Lascar 1 (Leading)	11		
Fifth Engineer	1	Lascar 2 (Able)	4		
Chief Electrician	1	Lascar 3 (Ordinary)	3		
Second Electrician	1	Lascar 4	2		
Chief Radio Officer	1	Bhandari (Cook)	1		
Second R O	1	Topass (Cleaner)	2		
Purser/ Chief Steward	1	Sub total deck	27		
Asst. Purser/ Steward	1				
Carpenter	1				
Quartermaster	4				
Sub total European	27			**Grand Total**	**94**

Brocklebank's **Matra** (1949) Photo Malcolm Cranfield

Bureau Veritas simplifies ship certification system

Reported in the MNA Circular

Leading international classification society Bureau Veritas has put in place a completely new IT-based certification and ship status system. It is aimed at reducing the workload of shipowners and operators and simplifying access to ship information and status.

“In a world where so much is now done online ships’ certificates are the last great area of outdated paperwork,” explains Claude Maillot, Ships in Service Director, Bureau Veritas. “We have seen the ship’s classification certificate grow from one simple page into a document with many pages and annexes which are built up of both printed and handwritten entries. It has become unwieldy, error-prone, open to confusion and difficult to maintain. Bureau Veritas’ new certification system once more makes the ship’s Certificate of Classification a simple one page document. Everything else is online in a standardised and easy to access format. That cuts down the chances of error, confusion and fraud and enables us to add new services to make life more efficient for ship owners and operators.”

The new Bureau Veritas Certificate of Classification contains only the key identity of the ship and notation information. It is printed on recycled paper embossed with a logo to prevent fraudulent copies. All the other information which used to be attached as annexes is now updated electronically and can be accessed by owners and by charterers and port authorities if given access by the owner.

“Authorised users can go to www.veristar.com and print off what they need on Ship Status. It can be tailored to be as detailed or a simple as they require. The new Ship Status is made up of a number of sections (ship particulars, owner/manager information, cargo and ballast capacities, class and statutory status, planned inspection items, 1-year survey planner, continuous and/or PMS lists, regulatory information, BV contacts) and the shipowner may decide to print each of these sections separately according to the information needed. The section Class and Statutory Status contains all certificates, which is what most authorities and charterers need, surveys, audits, recommendations, non-conformities and memoranda. The owner can print this section completely or only the to-do list, and in that case the owner may choose items due in 1, 2 or 3 months. This system avoids confusion as there are no more hand-written updates or recommendations on certificates,” says Maillot. “At the same time we have enhanced the way owners and operators can see the ship status, which will help with planning maintenance and surveys. There is a graphical presentation of all surveys, audits, recommendations, non-conformities and planned maintenance and continuous survey items due in the next 12 months. Owners tell us this will help a lot to keep abreast of all requirements.”

The new system also allows the ship's staff to update the central record via VeriSTAR Info when planned maintenance items have to be done by a specific date. The item is then verified by a BV surveyor on the next ship visit. "Masters will love the new system and the Ship Documents folder and USB-key version we will supply to all ships because it makes organisation of all the paperwork needed for PSC and charters' inspections much simpler to maintain and present," says Maillot. "It sounds simple, and simplicity is what we want to deliver, but we can only do that now IT has caught up with the requirements of shipping."For a graphic of the new certificate or the survey planner e mail john@merlinco.com

Bureau Veritas is a world leader in conformity assessment and certification services. Created in 1828, the Group has close to 52,000 employees in 940 offices and 340 laboratories located in 140 countries. Bureau Veritas helps its clients to improve their performance by offering services and innovative solutions in order to ensure that their assets, products, infrastructure and processes meet standards and regulations in terms of quality, health and safety, environmental protection and social responsibility.

www.bureauveritas.com for corporate information,

www.veristar.com for marine information.

Life as a Harrison Line Engineer Officer

By LNRS Member Norman Swindells

Holding a Second Class Engineer Certificate of Competency for Motorships and needing only a further six months as a senior watch-keeper on board a steamship to sit for the Combined First Class Steam and Motor Certificate examination, I contacted the well known Liverpool shipping company Harrison Line for a position on one of their ships. My main knowledge of Harrison Line was that they were largely a cargo company and that their ships were usually named after trades or professions and perhaps I secretly hoped to be assigned to some exotic named ship such as **Scientist** or **Historian**. This was not to be, but I was lucky enough in October 1953 to be offered a position as fourth engineer on the **Selector**. She was a wartime standard Lithgow built, 9860 dwt, triple expansion engine driven steamer, completed in 1943 as **Empire Service** and purchased by Harrison Line in July 1946. She was perfect for me to complete the required watch-keeping time as the average voyage for this type of vessel was three to four months meaning that two voyages should comfortably see me achieve my required target.

Harrison Line were a highly regarded shipping company, operating their ships with the minimum of fuss and my future shipmates would turn out to be friendly and efficient colleagues. In addition as my previous steamship experience had been on a turbine ship I would be receiving a more rounded steamship experience on this different engine type.

Picture courtesy Stuart Smith

I joined **Selector** in Middlesbrough for the voyage round to Liverpool and my first surprise was that the crew were West Indians mainly from Barbados, although this turned out to be a very pleasant surprise, for they helped to make **Selector** the happy ship she was. I also found out in Middlesbrough that this voyage would be to South and East Africa. On leaving Liverpool I soon got into the on board routine but as my previous ships had all been passenger liners, with air conditioning one of my early lessons was to know when and when not to leave your cabin portlight open. This lesson came about as we were passing Dakar on the way South. At this point (I found out later from my Atlas) the coast juts out and ships travel very close to land.

The result was that in the steamy African heat I went on watch (12-4) leaving my port-light open, which as we came closer to shore was an entry point for some thousands of flying beetles. Coming off watch and looking forward to a good sleep I found my cabin looked more like a beetle farm. I tried to kill as many as possible but in the end succumbed to sleep amongst them. Lesson learnt! This particular trauma over we continued to our first stop, Capetown.

On the way I realised that keeping watches was only one part of my duties, for as we would have to carry out a certain amount of cargo handling with our own deck machinery, it was essential that the winches were kept in good order, which had to be done on daywork. Fortunately past staff had kept them well maintained so this was not a big problem. Capetown and Port Elizabeth, apart from the then apartheid laws, were good places to visit and we were fortunate to spend the Christmas holidays further up the coast, on the beach at East London, accompanied by thermos flasks full of gin and tonic. After that it was on to Durban, Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) and Beira, where due to congestion we took longer than anticipated. It was now back home with first stop Manchester. As we proceeded up the canal with winter ice on both sides we were surprised to be served with ice cream for luncheon dessert. As all

our time in hot Africa we had never seen ice cream we asked the Chief Steward what had prompted this, to which he replied to get rid of the last of the stock. We can only assume that he and perhaps a special friend (the Captain?) had been happily consuming it during the hottest part of the voyage.

Well this first voyage with Harrison Line had been a great success and I was very happy to be given the opportunity to stay on **Selector**, with a virtually unchanged crew, for a second voyage, which would be to the US Gulf, West Indies, Venezuela and through the Panama Canal to Puerto Armuelles.

The U.S. Gulf was to be memorable for many reasons, one being that I was very much an Americaphobe from my previous good experience with the Cunard Line passenger ship service to the Northern States, especially New York and in addition I had long been a both a cowboy and a jazz fan, so this Southern U.S. journey would be a delight. Our first stop was New Orleans where every sort of food and jazz was available, the highlight being Preservation Hall where a bunch of real old timers were playing non stop old time jazz. Next came Texas, starting with Houston which I came to know very well when I came ashore and joined a Texas oil company. Although Houston was in the heart of cowboy land and many of the denizens dressed like cowboys, it was really a big business oil town and more like New York. The real home of the old west came when we arrived in Brownsville, a small town close to the border with Mexico. I'm not particularly tall but I felt even smaller here for the locals in general were already on the large size (all that good food) but they looked even bigger with their high heeled boots and tall Stetsons. There were also lots of horses hitched to rails outside tough looking saloon bars, so all that was missing was John Wayne.

Our next stop was Venezuela where our mission was to deliver pipes to the Maracaibo oilfields and it was quite an experience to be navigated through the numerous nodding donkey pumps in the Maracaibo Lakes. Venezuela was the first time I had seen armed soldiers placed on the gangway but as this was 1954 one can only hope things are different now. By the time we were passing through the Panama Canal we were not the cleanest and best looking ship around and it was quite embarrassing to be passed by an American Robin Line freighter in immaculate grey livery as if she had just come out of the shipyard (perhaps she had). Another incident in the Canal took place in the Gatun Lakes shortly after dinner. We had adjourned to the small wardroom for coffee to see perched in the middle of the table a narrow insect about nine inches long, so we all raced back to our cabins for our Flit guns and proceeded to empty them over the intruder. To our horror it shook itself, throwing Flit all around and revealed as it took off a wingspan of some 16 inches. Needless to say we also took off, back to our cabins to lock ourselves in.

To say that my time as a Harrison Line engineer was enjoyable would be very true for not only had I met some really good shipmates, I had greatly improved my geography, had many new experiences and from a technical viewpoint had expanded my knowledge, which was to serve me well in the future. So thank you Harrison Line.

Answers to anagrams on page 22

1. Admiral Scheer
2. Achilles
3. Gneisenau
4. Barham
5. Blucher
6. Scharnhorst
7. Illustrious
8. Admiral Hipper
9. Bismark
10. Nelson
11. Hood
12. Rodney
13. Anson
14. Renown
15. Prince of Wales
16. Repulse
17. Exeter
18. Ark Royal
19. Warspite
20. Prinz Eugen

Presentation Schedule for 2012/ 2013

The remaining presentations planned for the current season are:

Thursday, 20th December, 2012	Wireless Operators of World War 1 Willie Williamson
Thursday, 17th January, 2013	History & Development of the Superyacht Captain John Percival
Thursday, 21st February, 2013	Freights down – Ships down John Cook
Thursday, 21st March, 2013	The Upper Mersey Navigation Commission Tony Barratt
Thursday, 18th April, 2013	William Robertson & Co. – Short Sea Traders Roy Fenton
Thursday, 16th May, 2013	The Shipping Federation John Stokoe

Book review

A Very Strange Way to Go to War.

The "**Canberra** in the Falklands", by Andrew Vine is the latest title by Aurum Press. It gives the astonishing story of the '*Great White Whale'*, the luxury ocean liner turned troopship, diverted from the Med to the heart of the Falklands war. Thirty Years ago, after Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands, a task force sailed from Britain to liberate them. In it was Britain's most iconic ocean liner, P&O's **Canberra**, diverted from a world cruise at Gibraltar and converted to a troopship in three days to carry 2,000 Royal Marines and Paratroops – as well as a civilian crew of volunteers – to the South Atlantic.

She went all the way into the fearsome battle zone of San Carlos Water, christened Bomb Alley, to take the troops to war, enduring air raids as she unloaded her troops and took on board wounded soldiers, sailors and airmen to be returned in the makeshift hospital, as bombs fell all around her. **Canberra** would return to Bomb Alley to take more troops to war, and then embarked a defeated Argentine army to take it home, finding among the defeated soldiers some who were little more than boys. And when this famously all-white boat returned, battered and rusted, to Southampton, she was given one of the most ecstatic welcomes in British history, as 120,000 people packed the docks to give her a tumultuous hero's welcome. Once refurbished, she became the hot ticket for cruise passengers around the world.

This is the untold story of unlikely combatants like waiters, cooks, nurses and cleaners, who never dreamt they could be caught up in a war, and then found themselves on the front line at the very end of the world. Through this compelling written account of one of Britain's 'finest hours', Andrew Vine weaves together interviews with the **Canberra's** crew and the troops who sailed on her, with previously unpublished archives – and brings to light this remarkable episode of modern war – the epic tale of how a luxury liner went into the heart of battle, and ordinary men and women found themselves on an adventure both terrifying and unforgettable.

"A Very Strange Way to Go to War. The 'Canberra' in the Falklands" (ISBN 9 781845 137458) is issued as a hardback and counts 321 pages. It costs £20. The book is available from any bookshop or can be ordered directly with the publisher, Messrs Aurum Press, 7 Greenland Street, London NW 1 0ND

A VOYAGE TO PUNTA ARENAS

The world's most southern commercial port

By Capt Stephen Roscoe

In 1840 the arrival at Valparaiso of the two steam paddle ships **Chile** and **Peru** marked the commencement of a long association with The Pacific Steam Navigation Company of Liverpool and the West Coast of South America. These two timber-constructed vessels had made the voyage from England to Valparaiso via the Magellan Straits, having taken on coal bunkers at Rio de Janeiro.

In November, 1960, 120 years later the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's (PSNC) cargo liner **Salaverry** departed from Valparaiso for Punta Arenas, minus a number of her crew who had failed to report. The missing crew were mostly from the deck department and were picked up by the police and detained as illegal entries to Chile. Their loss resulted in some of the catering department being called upon to lend a hand in letting go of the moorings.

The full complement of twelve passengers had embarked earlier that day. Their purpose was to experience the vista of the inner route through the Straits of Magellan to the next scheduled port of call -Punta Arenas. The Straits Pilot had also embarked at Valparaiso and would remain with the ship for the return trip, disembarking at San Antonio. This port is situated just south of Valparaiso and would be our first major loading port with copper in the form of ingots and slabs.

The Straits Pilots often carried their own charts for the planned route. In that era there was a noticeable absence of lighthouses along the whole length of the west coast of South America - the Magellan Straits being no exception. The ship also carried British Admiralty charts for the passage, some of which even made reference in the title to the original surveys made by Captain Fitzroy on HMS **Beagle** in 1831, this being only nine years prior to the arrival of PSNC's first two steamers; we also carried onboard the most updated version of charts available.

The lack of visual navigational aids through the inner channels called for a type of navigation and chart work that deck officers of today might read about, but rarely ever put into practice. Pilots often used clearing marks, such as the end of the land and distant mountain peaks in transit before advising a course alteration. Taking visual bearings of a ridge of land or conspicuous coloured rock that was standing out against the dark background was not unusual. These marks, the pilot would bring to the attention of the officer on watch. The position of such marks being plotted on the pilot's chart, which would then be transferred and recorded to the ship's chart in use. Visual bearings, together with the radar distance from the nearest land, enabled the ship's position to be accurately ascertained.

During this period I cannot recall the many light beacons in existence throughout the inner transit of the canals. There were some white-painted day marks in strategic places to assist in making course alterations and keeping the

vessel on track. The Straits are mostly wide, affording deep water for our size ship together with steep sided terrain on either side, making good radar targets throughout the passage. Today the situation has changed for the better with an abundance of navigational aids available to assist the modern day navigator.

Whilst on passage through this pristine area, it registered with me that Captain Fitzroy would have viewed this untouched part of the world in much the same way I was experiencing. This was also the major draw for passengers to make this journey, enabling them to view on occasions a glacier reaching down into one of the many hidden bays. The days ahead of us were to provide, not just for the passengers, but all on board, some awe-inspiring lifetime memories.

Fifty years ago Punta Arenas was considered to be the most southern commercial port in the world. On this occasion, it was to be our final discharge port unloading the small quantity of general cargo remaining. This consisted mainly of vehicles, mails, spirits, fine goods, cement, and chemicals. The total displacement of the ship at this time was not much more than being in full ballast condition.

I was one of four deck cadets and we were assigned to bridge watches of six hours on and six hours off. As the ship wasn't equipped with automatic steering, we were soon gainfully employed on the helm and lookout duties.

With our bow pointing south, buffeting into an ever-increasing southerly sea and swell, the ship's pitching increased accordingly. The following day dawned with a sky looking ominously dark with the temperature and barometric pressure falling. The worst was yet to come and the weather report confirmed our thoughts. This part of the world is a lonely desolate place to be during bad weather. The passage would take about four and a half days depending on the prevailing conditions

Salaverry built by Harland Wolff, Belfast in 1946 was one of four sister ships, **Salinas, Salamanca** and **Santander**. The vessel's particulars were length: 467ft, beam: 63ft, gross tons: 8590, and net tons: 5092. She was single screw and powered by a 2 cycle double acting 8 cylinders Harland Wolff engine, with a service speed of 13.5 knots.

MV **Salaverry** (1946) Picture Malcolm Cranfield

The navigational equipment was typical of that period, certainly by present day standards, it would have been deemed to be rather primitive and inadequate. The radar was not gyro stabilised and the display screen could be either set with the heading marker at 000°, or to the ship's course. The former seemed to be the preferred option, with all radar bearings being relative to the ship's head. Radar bearings were mostly used in poor visibility. In all other navigational circumstances visual bearings were the preferred option. The radar display unit was situated in the wheelhouse, with its transmitter in the chartroom. Generally it worked well providing water did not enter, and that we had sufficient spare parts.

The rest of the equipment consisted of a manual direction finder (DF) and one wet paper echo sounder in the chartroom. Positioned in the wheelhouse were the steering telemotor, gyro repeater, and a magnetic steering compass, together with an overhead periscope fitted to the magnetic standard compass situated on the monkey island above the wheelhouse. The sole gyro compass repeater for taking visual bearings was also situated on the monkey island in close proximity to the standard compass. The arc of visibility for taking bearings was obscured slightly in some areas, causing navigational frustration at times.

In addition to this equipment, we also possessed a Kelvin Hughes sounding machine and the Walker's Cherub Patent log. The log was used frequently during the voyage. Our deep-sea sounding machine positioned on the poop deck was used more for cadet's instruction, and tuition into the wonders of the deep.

Salaverry was a very good sea vessel, but like most ships when in a light condition, she was pitching into the sea and swell, shuddering and rising above it shaking off the spray, before plunging into the depths of the next ocean valley to repeat the onslaught. Amongst all of this, the usual wandering albatross, sighted in those latitudes from first to last light was keeping us company. Gliding effortlessly close by, playing hide and seek in the troughs, wing tips seemingly touching the sea for a fleeting second before climbing level with the bridge wing to view, and perhaps hold us in mutual admiration of our present surroundings.

The master, Captain R.K.Thomas, informed us that we had been requested to call at (Puerto) Port Eden, to land some much needed supplies for the well known British explorer Eric Shipton. Our radio officer had put in some very long hours getting this information, and overcoming some translation difficulties. The pilot was of great assistance in establishing contact through a radio telephone link with a Chilean air force radio station established at Puerto Eden. The radio officer had spent many hours using wireless telegraphy between Santiago and at times with relays through Wellington Radio in New Zealand. I recall the captain remarking on what a grand effort the radio officer had put in.

Our next problem was to ascertain the stowage of the necessary items. The purser's office was a hive of activity consulting the necessary tally sheets which they had compiled for the outward cargo. This chore was accomplished and the supplies

amounted to just one wood case, weighing a little over half a ton. The case fortunately was stowed in the after end of number one shelter deck, and easily accessible.

The wind had abated by then, but there was still a heavy swell to be encountered. It was time to round Faro Raper light and cross the Gulf de Penas. This occurred during the second officer's 0000 – 0400 watch, and brought the swell more on the starboard side. The ship took an almighty lurch and rolled heavily. A thunderous crashing sound from deep inside the accommodation was heard throughout. At the time I was on lookout, clinging onto the bridge-wing dodger, the second officer was piled up against the side of a flag locker in the wheelhouse, and our helmsman seemed to be having a relationship with our one and only telegraph some feet away from his steering wheel. As we gathered ourselves, the engine room phone rang with someone wanting to know what we were doing up there, or words to that effect! The captain was now on the bridge possibly wondering the same. Shortly I was detailed off to investigate the noise. On venturing down the inside stairway, I came across a number of off-watch sleepy people now up and about, eager to help me with my quest.

Eventually I descended towards the gyro room and store rooms situated at shelter deck level. These rooms were constructed of wood. It soon became apparent the whole side of one storeroom had collapsed inwards - a chief steward's nightmare. A concoction of cereals, tins of jam, syrup and treacle, not to mention the sacks of flour, sugar and tea. The second steward was busy getting his team up to commence cleaning and sorting things out. The bosun, carpenter and lamp trimmer were also ready to give a hand clearing out the dry stores, and making good the damaged storeroom.

On my way back to the bridge I heard voices in the passenger lounge and poked my head in; all the twelve passengers were sitting there, in their life jackets with worried expressions. I smiled at them and said that the captain would visit them shortly and not to worry. After I had reported my findings to the captain, he in turn, went and reassured the passengers, who then returned to their cabins.

At the end of my watch the swell had reduced considerably. We were now on track for the English Narrows (Angostura Inglesa), and our rendezvous at Puerto Eden. The English Narrows are less than a quarter mile wide; the channel affords room for only one ship at a time. The transit can only be made in daylight and near to slack water with little or no current. The maximum size ship that can use this passage is limited to 180 metres length with a maximum draft of 10.7metres.

The ship's speed was adjusted to arrive at the English Narrows for slack water. With the speed further reduced to barely making headway, the pilot kept an eagle eye on a buoy lying over in the tidal race. When the buoy was observed to becoming more upright, full ahead was ordered and we made our approach. The passage through there is best described as demanding. We made our transit after

lunch; the weather was cold and overcast, with low grey clouds depositing sleet, affording moderate visibility. Anchors had been cleared and made ready for letting go, the carpenter and a cadet stood by in case they were required.

The closer we got to Puerto Eden, the better communication we had on the radio telephone with the Chilean air force. They informed us they did not have a boat large enough to carry Shipton's case and asked if it was possible for us to open the wood case and make the contents into smaller manageable parcels. This was necessary, so they could be accommodated in the native's boats These natives were part of the Kawesqar tribe camped at Eden. Number one hatch was partly opened and using a swinging derrick the case was brought up on deck to be opened.

The ship anchored off Puerto Eden. It was not considered a safe anchorage with the possibility of sudden strong wind squalls developing, so everything was kept in instant readiness, for an immediate departure. The accommodation ladder with extension, and fixed spar, was lowered to the water's edge and a good lee was made for our visitors.

Shipton's case had been opened, and the contents made into manageable packages. These consisted of collapsible sleds, ice picks, walking poles to prod the ice as well as camping and assorted equipment that an explorer would require.

The Chilean air force representative and native Kawesqar Indians came in four boats that were of a canoe shape. The hull had a good width, constructed of wood and what appeared to be seal skin in places on a wood frame. The Kawesqar people did not speak much Spanish, but the old sign language worked wonders.

The Chilean air force gentleman knew some of their words, but explained the language had limited vocabulary. Each boat gave the impression it belonged to a particular family or group - they had some women and few children of various ages in them, plus a more aged-looking family member. They were dressed in an assortment of ill fitting garments, possibly donated and handed down over the years and some of native animal furs. It was difficult to pick their ages. Most of the full bloods, it was believed, did not attain their fifties. Births had never been recorded, so the ages were speculative I was informed they were a dying race for many reasons. This was mostly because of respiratory and other diseases, introduced by the European settlers and the lack of medical treatment.

When the Chilean air force man boarded, he was accompanied by a couple of natives and when shown the packages for their boats they nodded and smiled in a knowing way. A few more of them then ventured up the accommodation ladder after the others had waved for them to do so. They were not forceful people in anyway; I would suggest of a reserved gentle nature.

Our passengers, mainly from North America and two from Argentina, enjoyed very much their brief encounter with them, taking photos from the after promenade deck. The natives were given cigarettes, tobacco with papers and lessons with a quick demo on how to roll your own. Powdered milk, coffee,

packets of rice, cartons of matches, cocoa, bread rolls, bread, flour, tins of sweet condensed milk, tin openers, spoons, couple of sacks of potatoes, together with some of our dry stores! We were informed they had their own cooking utensils.

When I was making my way along the working alleyway, dressed in my heavy weather gear, two pairs of socks, sea boots etc and feeling the cold, I discovered this little Kawesqar bare foot girl, standing on the steel deck near the top of the gangway. My first reaction was to immediately pick her up and stand her on the coconut mat situated in the cross alleyway. These people did not seem to feel the cold as we did. The older natives nearby were being given a lesson in making hot chocolate drinks in the pantry by one the catering staff. I remembered I had an opened tin of milk tray chocolates in my cabin, so I fetched them. When I returned to the pantry our new-found friends were preparing to depart. Quickly I opened the tin took out a brightly covered chocolate, unwrapped it, popped it in my mouth and ate it in front of the little girl. I then handed the tin to the little girl who in turn took her brightly coloured chocolate wrapper and all and popped in her mouth. Instantly I fished it out and removed the silver paper. This little girl never took her eyes from me, when I replaced the sweet back in her mouth; her facial reaction was like a beautiful sunrise and one I have never forgotten.

One of the older natives also had a pleasant smile of understanding and appreciation when he tasted his chocolate. I then presented him with the tin of milk tray to share with the other children.

Those memories I have treasured ever since and I have often wondered what the Kawesqar natives might have thought about their encounter with us; who knows, perhaps our big black and white canoe with a yellow funnel featured in some of them? I have always felt privileged and fortunate to have had this opportunity to interact with these people fifty years ago. We waved them farewell as we weighed anchor and slowly departed, with a toot on the ship's whistle as we proceeded on our way through the inner route to Punta Arenas

My impression of the Kawesqar was they resembled more Indian than Asian Eskimo type features. They smelt of fish, not unpleasant, which was a result of their diet. Their life expectancy was not great. At that time it was thought the total number of Indian natives numbered approximately seven hundred throughout the Straits. They led a nomadic lifestyle with their canoes, along the shores of the canals and fjords from the Gulf of Penas to the Beagle Channel. Puerto Eden was very much an outpost in 1960.

On arriving at Punta Arenas and whilst making fast to the pier, our missing crew were sighted on the wharf. It transpired that they had been rounded up by the police in Valparaiso within hours of our departure, kept in jail until the next flight when they were escorted by two police officers ensure that they rejoined the ship. Their absence came at great expense to them, having to finance the policemen's return tickets to Valparaiso, hotel accommodation and their own air fares too. If

that was not enough, they also had fines, plus wages forfeited for the time of absence from the ship.

Later one of them related to me what a wonderful experience it had been to fly over and see the sun come up on the snow-capped mountains and glaciers of southern Chile. He claimed if he hadn't missed the ship he would never have had the opportunity to see such marvellous sights

Our passengers disembarked in Punta Arenas to continue onwards with their holidays, telling us how much they had enjoyed the trip, no doubt each with their own outstanding memories of recent events.

Salaverry completed discharge and commenced loading on her homeward journey to Liverpool. Departing Punta Arenas three days later our track took us north via the Magellan Straits to San Antonio,

Not every PSNC ship would visit Punta Arenas in the course of its normal voyages to South America, so I count myself as being very fortunate in my time with the company to have made three calls there. Also the unique experience of meeting some of the members of the now almost forgotten Kawesqar tribe is a memory, which I will forever cherish.

The Last Privateer?

From The Princess Story – a Century and a Half of West Coast Shipping.
By Norman R. Hacking and W. Kaye Lamb.
Submitted by Harry Hignett

One of the founders of the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company was Captain John Irving. He had previously been Captain on the Fraser River and had also run services between Vancouver and Victoria (the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. bought out the C.P.N.Co. in 1901).

In 1898 Captain Irving was Master of the steamer **Islander** and was trading up to Alaska from Vancouver and Victoria serving the Klondike Gold Rush.

The Spanish American War had broken out in the spring of that year and in June Captain Irving was having a few drinks in a bar in Victoria with other seafaring friends when the conversation turned to the war. They speculated what would be the effect if a Spanish Privateer arrived off the West Coast and began to intercept southbound vessels carrying gold back from the Klondike. As Britain was neutral only American ships would be targeted and this could mean that British ships would cream off the trade.

Eventually, one of the party went to the telegraph office and a cable was sent to the Spanish Foreign Ministry:
Senor Sagasta, Madrid. One hundred million dollars of Klondike gold will come down by way of St. Michaels in American ships. Wire or forward me immediate letters of marque so that I can commence work for Spain as soon as possible.

The cable was signed "George C. Brown" but this was apparently an alias and it has never come to light who the sender was. However the Victoria newspapers were informed by the hoaxers and both ran the story. The American Consul in Victoria sent a panic message to Washington. The local Collector of Customs and the naval authorities at Esquimalt also took the matter seriously with the Collector stating that if he found who the prospective privateer was, he would take steps to prevent him from sailing from Victoria.

Rumours spread like wildfire up and down the coast. The stories included one that Lloyd's of London was intending to increase insurance rates on American vessels. Steamers were arriving in Puget Sound ports with passengers claiming to have seen the privateer. Meanwhile, Captain Irving had sailed north no doubt chuckling to himself over the joke.

On July 8th the U.S. Navy Dept. in Washington issued the following statement:

> *The Navy Department has been informed that a Spanish privateer carrying five guns is hovering off the coast of British Columbia. According to last accounts, the privateer was between Queen Charlotte Sound and Dixon's Entrance. Prompt instructions have been sent to the military authorities on the northwest coast.*

Several ships were cited as being the privateer: amongst them the **Alpha** of 1863 (built for the Cunard S.S. Co. as a feeder vessel running between Halifax – New York – Bermuda) and the **Manauense** formerly of Singlehurst's Red Cross Line (**Manauense** was trading up to Alaska having been brought from U.K. with a cargo of whisky and other goldfield essentials by a group of entrepreneurs). A Vancouver Pilot was reported to have been offered $8,000 to act as pilot for the privateer and a Captain who had been running guns into Cuba in defiance of the Spanish blockade was also thought to be the man for the job.

On July 13th the Royal Naval Pacific squadron sailed from Vancouver on a routine cruise to the Bering Strait. Admiral Henry St. Leger Bury Palliser was a somewhat gullible man as he had, the previous year, become involved in the search for the Cocos Island treasure. The Admiral decided that his squadron would make a thorough search for the privateer. As the ship didn't exist, the R.N. expended a lot of coal to no end. H.M.S. **Sparrowhawk** returned to Esquimalt to report that there was no clue as to the mystery ship's whereabouts. Shortly afterwards the

Manauense returned from Alaska with passengers and gold having been about her lawful occasions all along.

Although there was no privateer, there was a Spanish agent active in Vancouver. Initially identified in the press as Senor Cobrejo he was, in fact, Senor Roman de Caranza the former Spanish ambassador to Washington who after receiving notice to leave the United States had gone to earth before appearing in Canada. Through him the Vancouver pilot was, in fact, approached.

In his later years, Captain Irving used to regale his friends with the story of the hoax which, however, had a grain of reality.

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

December	Mondays	3rd., 10th., 17th.
January		21st., 28th.
February		4th., 11th., 18th., 25th.

The Long Life of Two Port Line Sisters

Bill Ogle

In 1955 the **Port Melbourne** was launched at the Harland and Wolff Belfast yard, followed the next year by the **Port Sydney** from Swan Hunter at Wallsend. Twin screw motorships of just over 10,000 grt with a length of 532 ft. and a cruising speed of 17 knots, they incorporated luxurious accommodation for 12 passengers. After chequered careers both are in service today as part of the Sydney based Classic International Cruises fleet; however their service may now be curtailed as the entire fleet has recently been arrested at various ports due to alleged non-payment of crew wages and/ or fuel bills.

Princess Danae	Marseille
Princess Daphne	Souda, Crete
Athena	Marseille
Funchal	Lisbon
Arion	Montenegro

Both were sold out of Port Line in 1972 to the Greek shipping consortium J C Karras and Company for conversion to car ferries. However increasing demand for capacity in an emerging market lead to their conversion to luxury cruise liners. After some delay, the **Port Sydney**, having been initially renamed **Akrotiri Express**, emerged in 1975 as the **Daphne**; whilst **Port Melbourne** was named **Therisos Express** and subsequently **Danae** when her conversion was completed the following year.

Year	**Port Sydney**	**Port Melbourne**
1972	Sold to J C Karras and Company and renamed **Akrotiri Express**	Sold to J C Karras and Company and renamed **Therisos Express**
1974	Conversion completed and renamed **Daphne**	Transferred to Carras Liner Services for conversion and renamed **Danae**
1976	Sold to Delian Athena Cruises	
1978	Chartered by Flotta Lauro	
1979	Chartered by Costa Armatori	Sold to Delian Athena Cruises
1985	Transferred to Transoceania Armec	Sold to Independent Continental Lines Transferred to Prestige Cruises
1986	Sold to Independent Cruise Lines	
1991		Following a major fire whilst in dry dock at Genoa was declared a constructive loss and sold to Greek shipbreakers.
1992	Sold to Prestige Cruises	Resold to Harbour Maritime Ltd. and re-named **Anwar**. Then towed to Piraeus under ownership of Capricorn Maritime Inc. and renamed **Starlight Princess**. Following repairs and renamed **Danae** (once again) she resumed cruising.
1994		Sold to Flax Maritime and renamed **Baltica** and then **Princess Danae**
1996	Sold to Leisure Cruises and renamed **Switzerland**	when sold on to Waybell Cruises. Subsequently transfered into Classic
1999	Sold to Dreamline Cruises	International Cruises.
2002	Sold to Majestic Cruises and renamed **Ocean Odyssey**	
2002	Sold to Ocean Cruise Corp and renamed **Ocean Monarch**	
2007	Transferred to C.I.C. and renamed **Princess Daphne**	

This long history tells much of the quality of their original construction as well as their initial conversion from 1972 to 1975/ 76 and it can only be hoped that they are rescued from this financial predicament and continue the illustrious story.

The **Port Sydney**, as built

Princess Danae in Antigua

Princess Daphne in Bergen

(both pictures courtesy Harley Crossley)

The **Ideal X**, which began life as the standard T-2 Tanker **Potrero Hills**

Maiden Voyage of the Container Ship

Submitted by LNRS Member Harry Hignett

On April 26, 1956 the converted tanker **Ideal X** (see previous page) left Newark, New Jersey, carrying 58 truck-trailers on its specially fitted spa deck above the main deck and containerisation was born. This arrangement was the brainchild of North Carolina businessman Malcolm McLean (1914 – 2001), from a single truck in 1934 he built a fleet of nearly 1,800 trucks. As early as 1937, he'd noted the wasted time of break-bulk cargo handling, with stevedores laboriously loading individual items like sacks of coffee or nets full of cotton bales.

He thought it would make much more sense to lift whole truck trailers on and off the ship. And he wanted to save taxes as well as time. Sending truck trailers by ship from one domestic port to another would avoid the state fees imposed for excess weight as a truck passed through a dozen or more states.

The Seatrain shipping line had carried railroad box cars on deck as early as 1929 on the New York to Cuba run. But McLean envisioned ships dedicated entirely to the new loading system. He wanted to separate the truck container from its bed and wheels, and he conceived an angled-corner-post system to allow easy stacking and hold the containers in place.

So, he sold his trucking business (to avoid anti-trust issues and the enmity of the established shipping lines), and bought Pan-Atlantic Tanker Co. He renamed it Sea-Land Shipping and tested his idea with the **Ideal X.** McLean's gamble was closely watched, and by the time the ship arrived in Houston five days later, she already had space booked to ship containers north. The cost savings began immediately, and they got bigger. Ports needed to retool and install new jumbo cranes, but more and more did so as they saw other containerized ports increase traffic. Ships were built to contain nothing but containers, above deck and below. Containers were soon standardized to make the system global. 8 feet wide, either 20 or 40 feet long, with heights of 8, 8½ or 9½ feet. In a classic effect, increasing the nodes in the network increased the capabilities — and therefore the value — of every other part of the network. The U.S. military's need to supply troops during the Vietnam War also provided a big push for containerisation, and proved the container ship in international rather than just domestic, coastal trade. About 90 percent of global cargo is now carried by container. Automobiles are the biggest exception, but thanks to refrigerated containers that plug in to shipboard electrical systems, food is not. The average cost of shipping a product overseas has fallen from 15 percent of retail to less than 1 percent. There is less breakage and theft, but there is a downside. Ports handle more cargo, but there aren't as many jobs for dockworkers. And low-cost goods from overseas have cost millions of jobs in developed economies. McLean was surely a visionary, but that doesn't make him a saint. *Source: Wired News*

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

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A New Brunswick shipyard c 1850 see page 33

Marco Polo (see page 33) by Thomas Robertson Picture courtesy State Library of Victoria

SS **Markland** (1953) See page 7

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The Tragedy of the Londonderry

Submitted by Geoff. Holmes

One of the most horrifying episodes in the annals of 19th century emigration was the awful tragedy of the **Londonderry**. The 277-ton paddle steamer, which was built in 1841 for the Glasgow and Londonderry Steam Packet Co., was a regular on the Sligo - Liverpool route between July and December, 1848.

On the morning of Friday December 1st of that year the **Londonderry** was berthed at the Ballast Quay preparing to sail on her weekly run to Liverpool. After taking on board a portion of her cargo, consisting of sundry goods and merchandise together with 132 livestock, consisting of cows, bullocks and sheep, she proceeded to Oyster Island where 3 cabin and 174 steerage passengers, mostly emigrants, boarded. Although the steamer was ready to sail at noon she did not do so owing to an ebbing tide and squally conditions. She eventually got away at 4.30 p.m. heading into a stiff westerly wind, and continued on her voyage without incident, until after 9 o'clock when the wind reached gale force, the sea became exceedingly rough and the waves broke over the deck. As the night advanced conditions got worse. The Master, Alexander Johnstone, instructed members of his 25-man crew to clear the deck of any remaining passengers, secure the companionway, or entrance to the steerage area, and cover it over with tarpaulin to prevent the water from seeping through. Despite the loud and angry protestations of the passengers, the covering placed over the companion was so firmly secured that it cut off the flow of fresh air to the crowded compartment below.

By midnight it was blowing a hurricane. The heavy motion of the ship resulted in a number of cattle breaking loose on deck, many of whom were later found to be either dead or in a dying state. Meanwhile, below deck in an area measuring 23ft x 17ft x 6ft 7" high, 174 human beings, consisting of men, women and children, were so crowded together that they could scarcely move and. worse still, they lacked the air necessary to sustain life. Being unable to extricate themselves from the entombed position in which they found themselves, they struggled violently in a frantic effort to force an exit from the horror of the gradual suffocation that was about to engulf them. In the stampede many were trampled upon and crushed to death. While this was happening Captain Johnstone and his crew were fully employed as they exercised all their experience and skills in bringing their ship safely through the storm, and had no idea of the fearful tragedy being enacted below them.

At the subsequent Inquest, Michael Brennan, one of the passengers, gave the following graphic account of the unfolding disaster.

"My mother and three sisters went down early to the steerage, while I remained on deck. When it became very stormy I, too, was obliged to go down. When I got there the place was very hot and it was with difficulty I made my way to my mother and sisters. The place was so thronged that, while those at the sides were forced to sit down, there was no sitting room for those in the centre and they were moved to and fro with every motion of the vessel. Rows broke out between passengers as they struggled for air and space ... At one stage my legs were so wedged in with bodies of persons lying about me that I could not extricate them until by a roll of the vessel they were so shaken that I managed to free myself... Struggling desperately for air, I made my way with great difficulty over bodies of dead and dying to a ladder. After faltering a few times I eventually made the top and with the help of others succeeded in cutting through the ropes that secured the tarpaulin over the opening only to find a dead bullock partially blocking my way out... I then made my way to bags of mussels on the deck and from there, mounted to the bridge where I secured the attention of the first Mate ...

After the alarm was raised as many of the crew as could be spared rushed to the scene, opened the hatchway and were Immediately confronted by a blast of steam - "like that coming from a boiling pot"

It was only after the **Londonderry** put into Derry on the Sunday morning - thirty-six hours after the storm broke - that the full extent of the tragedy unfolded. According to one eye-witness - "The scene on entering the steamer was truly heart-rendering and such as no human being could witness without feelings of the most poignant description ... In the steerage the horrible spectacle presented itself of 72 bodies piled indiscriminately on each other, deprived of life. Dead bodies, in an awfully mangled state, lay in the hold like merchandise packed up in sacks, some of them lying on each other four in depth"· The dead consisted of 23 men, 32 women and 17 children. Amongst the survivors were three little children, all that remained of a family of nine on their way to join their father who had already emigrated.

When news of the tragedy reached Sligo, Charles W. Cooper of Coopershlll made his way to Derry to seek information as to the fate of a number of emigrants from the Riverstown area. Fortunately, only two of them had died and the benevolent landlord attended, as best he could, to the needs of the survivors, irrespective of their place of origin. Commenting on the causes of the catastrophe, the ‘Champion' placed the blame firmly on the shoulders of Captain Johnstone and his crew and deplored the "disgraceful and scandalous negligence" "The calamity arose out of ignorance and neglect ... When the storm arose the ill-fated

passengers went below deck of their own accord; they were then ignored and forgotten by the crew, and suffered unintentionally, we believe, to perish ... We do not exonerate the Master or the crew he commanded - they all displayed the greatest recklessness with regard to human life ... It was a brutal act and humanity shudders at the contemplation of it." At the subsequent Inquest, thirteen of the survivors, amongst others, were called to give evidence concerning the events on board the **Londonderry**. As their testimony unfolded it became clear that the Scottish crew had displayed some malice towards the steerage passengers, although there was evidence to suggest that Captain Johnstone had acted in what he considered to be the best interests of both the passengers and the ship in clearing the decks in the gale. The Coroner's Jury brought in a verdict that the deaths were caused by suffocation in consequence of the gross negligence and total want of the usual and necessary caution on the part of the Captain and the first and second Mates, Richard Hughes and Nilan Crawford; and found all three to be guilty of manslaughter. They also condemned the inhuman conduct of the remainder of the seamen on board. One member of the Jury observed that the crew had shown more consideration for the livestock than for the steerage passengers entrusted to their care.

The Glasgow and Londonderry Steam Packet Co., owners of the **Londonderry**, clothed the survivors and provided them with the necessary financial assistance to reach their respective destinations. Only 67 of the 102 survivors choose to continue onto Liverpool and thence to America. The remainder decided to return home rather than risk their lives again on the high seas. The tragedy of the **Londonderry** lived on for many years in the folk memory, and in counties Sligo and Mayo, in particular; and, for a time at least, had the effect of lessening the appeal of emigration.

Details of P.S. **Londonderry**.
Length 155.7ft Beam 22.9ft Draught 12ft. G.R.T. 513.
Built 1841 by R.Steele at Greenock for the Glasgow and Londonderry Steam Packet Co.
Engines by R. Napier.
Withdrawn in 1859.

Merchant Navy stamps - 19 September 2013

A set of Merchant Navy stamps to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic (designs still to be decided) are due to be issued on 19 September 2013. see: http://www.royalmail.com/personal/stamps-and-collecting

Then click on – “See our 2013 stamp Calendar” at bottom of the page.

Remember those days

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

January to March, 1971

Now operating in the Europe-Far East container trade is the giant container ship **Benalder**, 73,596 tons displacement, the first of three ships to be operated by the Ben Line of Leith. She is being followed into service by the **Benavon** and the third ship, the **City of Edinburgh** is to be delivered later this year. With an overall length of 947 ft., beam of 106 ft. and capacity for 2,687 teu they are powered by geared steam turbines developing 88,000 shp to twin screws. She achieved over 30 knots on trials. Their Data Bridge navigation system will provide advanced anti-collision radar; a computer system for dead-reckoning, great circle sailing and automatic position fixing; and thirdly will function as an autopilot.

All too often a ship bought for conversion emerges as a travesty of her former self. Now the four ships from the Ellerman's South African passenger and cargo service have been sold to the Michail A. Karageorgis Corporation for conversion to car carriers for service between Greece and Italy. So **City of Exeter** was commissioned at the end of November as **Mediterranean Sea** (15,212 gross tons). A great deal of structural work was necessary for their new role; two decks stripped out and new ones built to accommodate 246 cabins for 850 passengers as well as one principal car deck and two lower car decks with a total capacity of 400 vehicles. **City of Exeter** became **Tutku** in 1996 and then **Alice** before being broken up at Aliaga, Turkey in 1998. **City of Durban** became **Mediterranean Dolphin** in 1971, but the planned conversion was not completed and she was broken up at Kaohsiung in 1974. **City of Port Elizabeth** shared the same fate being renamed **Mediterranean Island** in 1971 and **Mediterranean Sun** in 1980 when she too was scrapped at Kaohsiung. **City of York** was also converted to become the **Mediterranean Sky** in 1971 and gave the longest service until 1999 when she was laid up at Eleusis, sadly becoming a total loss in 2003 when she capsized.

The biggest shipbuilding order ever won by a British shipyard has gone to the Swan Hunter Group on the Tyne. It has been placed by Maritime Fruit Carriers, of Israel, and is for 20 ships – mainly tankers and OBO carriers – worth £150mn.

Designed specifically for carrying rolls of newsprint, the **Ida Lundrigan**, 9,600 dwt is the first of two ships ordered by Newcastle shipowners Common Bros. Ltd., from Robb Caledon Shipbuilders Ltd. Specifically strengthened for navigation in ice she is 403 ft. long and 62 ft. wide. Propulsion is by a Crossley-Pielstick oil-engine having a maximum continuous rating of 7,000 bhp to give a service speed of 15 knots. The engine drives a KaMeWa controllable pitch propeller through a David Brown gearbox.

January to March, 1991

Now nearly 30 years old, the cruise ship **Norway** has been given a $40m. refit by owners Kloster Cruise Ltd. The work was carried out at Bremerhaven and included the addition of two glass-enclosed decks above the bridge deck bearing 135 suites and de-luxe cabins. These have increased her passenger capacity by 250 and her gross tonnage to around 75,000. She thus becomes the world's largest passenger liner, a title which she had temporarily conceded to Royal Caribbean Line's **Sovereign of the Seas**. As the **France** for the French Line, she was launched at St. Nazaire by Mme. De Gaulle on May 11, 1960. The longest ship in the world, she inherited the mantle of the ill-fated **Normandie** of 1935 which, in the meantime, had been worn from 1950 by the **Liberte**, the former **Europa.**

Early in the morning of November 22 the 55ft. trawler **Antares** from Carradale, Mull of Kintyre, sank north-east of Arran at the entrance to the Firth of Clyde, taking her crew of four with her. It happened in seconds, allegedly because the nuclear-powered submarine **Trenchant** had fouled her nets, dragging the vessel to the bottom. According to press reports the submarine surfaced and attempted to contact other trawlers in the vicinity by radio, but without success.

The Russian ro-ro passenger/vehicle ferry **Peter the First**, which has been converted to a floating eye hospital, has since August been stationed off Larnaca, Cyprus. With eight surgeons and four other medical practitioners among the 50-strong team the ship had been treating sight problems considered incurable elsewhere. Patients paid £40 for diagnosis and from £300 to several thousand for operations. More than 1,000 Britons, continued the Daily Mail report, travelled to Cyprus for diagnosis, 600 received treatment and, on return, told how the Russians' latest techniques had benefited their sight. But the venture ran foul of local doctors who objected to its "commercial nature", claiming that the ship was in Cypriot waters illegally. Accordingly the island's government asked the Russians to move on, although the Health Minister acknowledged that they were doing a very good job. They had asked for a two-month stay and then an extension, which was granted, but they now had to go. A lawyer acting for them claimed that opposition from the doctors was "based on self-interest and not medicine". The name **Peter the First** is an Anglicisation of **Piotr Pervyy**, a renaming of the 1981-built **Mikhail Suslov**

The Mersey's **Royal Iris** made her farewell "dance cruise" on January 12, a climax to her 40 years of entertaining Merseysiders. She has served longer than any other vessel in the history of the river's ferry fleets and her withdrawal will leave only three in commission. The future of the Dumbarton built diesel-electric **Royal Iris** is unclear but there have been suggestions that she should become a "disco" in one of the region's redundant docks. Whatever may be decided for her, maintaining a steel ship of her age afloat, even stationary, could be an expensive option.

Bowaters' Deep-Sea Ships, Part 3

LNRS Member Roy Fenton

A personal encounter, it was on 9th April 1961 that the author, during his Easter holidays from Ellesmere Port Grammar School (where a fellow pupil interested in ships was one John Stokoe), cycled to Eastham Ferry to catch the tide. It was then usual to see at least three deep-sea ships and a handful of coasters and Weaver packets lock in or out of the Manchester Ship Canal, but this day was quiet. The most interesting arrival was a modest-sized steamer, reminiscent of the 'Scandinavian' type of war standard ship, which I had been introduced to recently by Laurence Dunn's wonderful 'Ship Recognition: Merchant Ships'. But it was her port of registry and her name that made her interesting: she was the Liverpool-registered **Liverpool Packet**. Manchester Liners' ships were very familiar to us habituees of the Manchester Ship Canal, of course, and their **Manchester Merchant** had just sailed, but could this be a parallel 'Liverpool Liners'? As she passed, the Bowaters' insignia on her funnel dispelled this notion, and I had a hazy idea that there was another Liverpool across the North Atlantic, this one in Nova Scotia, which was evidently from where she hailed.

It was to be thirty years later, when an interest in live ships had turned into a passion for disinterring the histories of dead ones, that I followed up this sighting with research into the ship I had seen. **Liverpool Packet** turned out not to be a British war-built steamer, but one of the smaller Canadian-built 'Park' type, completed in June 1945 by the St. John Drydock and Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., New Brunswick as **Argyle Park**.

The 'Mersey' fleet

Eight ships have been identified as being in common ownership with **Liverpool Packet** (the one I saw was the second of the name), but these were owned by seven different companies, beginning many years before Bowaters became involved. All were subsidiaries of the Mersey Paper Co. Ltd. which began production in the 1920s. For the sake of completeness (and because of their 'Mersey' associations), all are listed below.

The beginning of this fleet can be traced to 1926, when the twin-screw **Markland** was delivered by Earle's of Hull to the Mersey Shipping Co. Ltd. of Liverpool, Nova Scotia. Much, much later, she was renamed **Liverpool Rover**, but this naming scheme was introduced in 1933 when Charles H.L. Jones, one of the directors of the Markland Shipping Co. Ltd. (which took over the **Markland** in 1938), bought her on behalf of the confusingly-named Schooner Trawler Fishing Co. Ltd.

The Markland fleet lost the Hog Islander **Vineland** which was torpedoed on 20th April 1942 in the Caribbean (so soon was it after her transfer to the Canadian

flag that no British official number seems to have been allocated). Soon afterwards the first **Liverpool Packet** was lost when she was torpedoed in May 1942, running between New York and Halifax. Unusually, a Markland-managed company was allowed to rename a ship during the Second World War, when the recently-acquired **Zenda** became the **Liverpool Loyalist** in 1942.

Liverpool Packet (2), which so impressed the author when she visited the Mersey in April 1961, photographed in the Thames Estuary in November 1958.

The **Liverpool Packet** I saw was bought by a Markland-managed company in 1946, accompanied by one of the larger Canadian built 'Park' **Champlain Park** which became **Vinland**. Confusingly, despite the reversion to an earlier naming scheme, the **Vinland** was owned by the Liverpool Loyalist Shipping Co. Ltd. (you were warned that ownership of this group of ships was convoluted).

Markland (2) was completed in 1953 by William Denny and Brothers Ltd. of Dumbarton who were to go on to design a whole class of ships for Bowaters.

Mersey Paper had been an early target of Bowater's acquisitive tendencies, a first offer being rejected in 1936, but it took Bowaters until 1956 to acquire the company. Only in 1959 were **Liverpool Rover** (2), **Liverpool Packet** (2), **Vinland** and **Markland** (2) transferred to the ownership of the Bowater Steamship Co. of Canada Ltd., based at Brooklyn, Nova Scotia and a year later to the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd. of London, being re-registered at Liverpool in England. Within three years, however, all had been sold, even **Markland** (2) which was then only ten years old.

An attraction of the Mersey Paper operation to Bowaters was that, as Nova Scotia is well to the south of Newfoundland, access to its mills was ice-free all year round, and it was considerably closer to the United States east coast cities whose newspapers were major customers. The over-capacity in the paper industry, which was later to hurt Bowaters, is apparent from Mersey Paper's trading results: the company's first profit was made in 1948, at least twenty years after it began operations. Nevertheless, the Nova Scotia mill remained part of Bowater's US empire when the Corner Brook operation was sold.

The fleet of Bowater Steamship Co. of Canada Ltd. and its predecessors

1. Markland (1)/Liverpool Rover (2) 1929-1961 Twin screw O.N. 161135 4,454g 2,695n 327.3 x 52.7 x 27.3 feet

T. 6-cyl. by Earle's Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Hull driving twin screws.

20.11.1929: Launched by Earle's Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Hull (Yard No. 677).

12.1929: Completed for the Mersey Shipping Co. Ltd., Liverpool, Queen's County, Nova Scotia as **Markland**.

1938: Owners became the Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

1952: Renamed **Liverpool Rover**.

1959: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. of Canada Ltd., Brooklyn, Nova Scotia (Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London, managers).

1960: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London.

1961: Sold to Compania Hroar de Navegacion S.A., Beirut, Lebanon and renamed **Lillehammer.**

5.4.1962: Breaking up began at Kure by the Nomura Trading Co. Ltd. of Osaka.

2. Liverpool Rover (1) 1933-1946

O.N. 145710 1,426g 733n 240.4 x 36.1 x 16.3 feet

T. 3-cyl. by J.I. Thornycroft and Co. Ltd., Southampton; 176 NHP, 900 IHP, 10 knots.

12.1920: Completed by J.I. Thornycroft and Co. Ltd., Southampton (Yard No. 987) for Groupement Industriel de Charbons et de Transports, Rouen, France as **Ville De Saint Amarin**.

19.7.1922: Registered in the ownership of the Tudor Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. (F.E. and O.T. Lewis and Co. Ltd., managers), Cardiff as **Tudor King**.

26.7.1933: Sold to the Schooner Trawler Fishing Co. Ltd. (Charles H.L. Jones, manager), Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

21.9.1933: Renamed **Liverpool Rover**.

20.8.1934: Transferred to the Rover Shipping Co. Ltd. (Charles H.L. Jones of Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

5.4.1946: Sold to George E. Marden of Wheelock, Marden and Co. Ltd., Hong Kong. *12.8.1946:* Renamed **Roverlock.**

2.3.1948: Register closed on sale to United Corporation of China Ltd., Shanghai, China and renamed **An Lein**

c.1953: Transferred to Nationalist Government, Taipeh, Taiwan.

1953: Broken up in Taiwan.

3. Liverpool Packet (1) 1941-1942

O.N. 154442 1,188g 654n 248.1 x 37.2 x 14.7 feet

T. 3-cyl. by MacColl and Pollock Ltd., Sunderland; 82 NHP, 725 IHP, 9 knots.

10.1926: Completed by Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd., Wallsend-on-Tyne (Yard No. 1289) for Rederi A/S Nidaros (A.L. Ombustvedt, manager), Oslo, Norway as **Nidarnes**.

18.5.1928: Registered in the ownership of the Delson Steamship Co. Ltd. (Frank K. Warren, manager), Montreal, Canada and renamed **Delson.**

28.5.1929: Transferred to the Sonia Shipping Co. Ltd. (Frank K. Warren, manager), Montreal.

20.7.1929: Renamed **Sonia**.

12.7.1941: Acquired by the Liverpool Packet Shipping Co. Ltd. (Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

14.8.1941: Authority given to rename **Liverpool Packet**.

30.5.1942: Torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U 432 in position 43.20 north, 66.20 west whilst on a voyage from New York to Halifax with US Government supplies. Two members of the crew of 21 were lost.

15.6.1942: Register closed.

4. Zenda/Liverpool Loyalist 1942-1946

O.N. 161567 1,416g 797n 248.2 x 39.5 x 14.9 feet

T. 3-cyl. by Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

5.1932: Completed by Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd., Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Yard No. 1477) for the Zenda Shipping Co. Ltd. (Frank K. Warren, manager), Halifax, Nova Scotia as **Zenda.**

1941: Acquired by the Liverpool Loyalist Shipping Co. Ltd. (Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool.

1942: Renamed **Liverpool Loyalist**.

1946: Sold to Skibs A/S Berto (T.J. Berge, manager), Oslo, Norway and renamed **Ala**.

1947: Sold to E.B. Aaby's Rederi A/S, Oslo, Norway.

1951: Sold to the Merchant Steam Navigation Co. Ltd., Bombay, renamed **Sagar Prabha**

11.1960: Breaking up began by Khanbai Esoofbhai, Bombay.

5. Vineland 1942

5,587g 3,424n 390.0 x 54.8 x 27.6 feet

Direct-reduction geared steam turbine by the General Electric Company, Schenectady, New York, USA; 602 NHP, 11½ knots.

3.1919: Completed by the American International Shipbuilding Corporation, Hog Island, Pennsylvania (Yard No. 503) for the United States Shipping Board, Washington, USA as **Sapinero.**

1930: Sold to Tampa Interocean Steam Ship Co. Inc., New Orleans, USA.

1940: Sold to Compania Scotia de Vapores S.A., Panama and renamed **Vineland**.

1942: Acquired by the Vineland Shipping Co. Ltd. (Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

20.4.1942: Torpedoed, shelled and sunk by the German submarine U 154 in position 23.05 north, 72.20 west whilst on a voyage from Portland, Maine to St. Thomas in ballast

6. Liverpool Packet (2) 1946-1963

O.N. 176028 3,181g 1,847n 328.8 x 46.5 x 20.9 feet

T. 3-cyl. by Canada Iron Foundries Ltd., Three Rivers.

6.1945: Completed by the St. John Drydock and Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., St. John, New Brunswick (Yard No. 20) for the Canadian Government (Park Steamship Co. Ltd.), Montreal as **Argyle Park**.

1946: Acquired by the Rover Shipping Co. Ltd. (Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool, Nova Scotia and renamed **Liverpool Packet**.

1959: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. of Canada Ltd., Brooklyn, Nova Scotia (Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London, managers).

1960: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London.

1963: Sold to Westport Compania Naviera S.A., Panama (A. Moschakis and Co., London) and renamed **Westport** under the Greek flag.

1965: Sold to Athos Shipping Co. Special S.A. (Empros Lines Shipping Co. Special S.A., George Dracopoulos), Piraeus and renamed **Athos**.

1968: Sold to Compania de Nav. Pinares S.A., Panama (Nello Patella, Venice, Italy) and renamed **Aramis** under the Somali flag.

3.3.1976: Arrived at Split to be broken up by Brodospas.

8.5.1976: Work began.

7. Vinland 1946-1959

O.N. 175618 7,160 g 4,286n 424.7 x 57.2 x 34.9 feet

T. 3-cyl. by Dominion Engineering Works Ltd., Montreal.

7.12.1944: Launched by Marine Industries Ltd., Sorel, Quebec (Yard No. 140) for the Canadian Government (Park Steamship Co. Ltd., managers), Montreal, Canada as **Champlain Park**.

1946: Acquired by the Liverpool Loyalist Shipping Co. Ltd. (Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool, Nova Scotia and renamed **Vinland**.

1959: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. of Canada Ltd., Brooklyn, Nova Scotia (Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London, managers).

1959: Sold to Wallem and Co. Ltd., Hong Kong and renamed **Vinkon.**

1960: Sold to Overseas United Shipping and Trading Co. Ltd. (Shipping Managers (Hong Kong) Ltd.), Hong Kong.

1.9.1962: Wrecked in Tolo Harbour, Hong Kong during typhoon 'Wanda'. She had been laid up since 23.6.1962.

4.1.1963: Breaking up began as lies.

8. Markland (2) 1953-1963 Twin screw
O.N. 195641 6,037g 3,464n 391.0 x 57.7 x 31.7 feet
C. 8-cyl Fredrikstad-type engine made by Rankin and Blackmore Ltd., Greenock.
3.12.1952: Launched by William Denny and Brothers Ltd., Dumbarton (Yard No. 1466) for Vinland Shipping Co. Ltd. (Markland Shipping Co. Ltd., managers), Liverpool, Nova Scotia as **Markland**.
31.3.1953: Delivered.
1959: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. of Canada Ltd., Brooklyn, Nova Scotia (Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London, managers).
1960: Owners became the Bowater Steamship Co. Ltd., London.
1963: Sold to the Panagua Steamship Corporation, Monrovia, Liberia (A. Willard Ives, New York).
1971: Sold to Saana Shipping O/Y (Immo Terasmo, manager), Haukipudas, Finland and renamed **Unari**.
1973: Sold to Leopard Shipping Co. Ltd., Gibraltar and renamed **Ariane**.
1973: Sold to Sherway Shipping Co. Ltd., Greece.
10.4.1974: Left Piraeus in tow for Gandia for breaking up.
5.1974: Breaking up began by Aureliano Perez Ibano.

Sources and acknowledgements
Parts of the text of this article appeared in Ships in Focus 'Record' number 5. Ships' histories are from 'Lloyd's Register', the 'Mercantile Navy List', 'Lloyd's Confidential Index' and the Starke-Schell Registers, with thanks to Bill Harvey for corroborative data.

Additional Information re Bowaters

The Editor

I am grateful to Graham Booth, a former General Manager of the Bowater-Scott mill in Barrow in Furness who has kindly supplied information which will bring the story of Bowater's U.K. operations up to date. Thus:
Bowater's interest in Bowater Scott was bought out by the Philadelphia Company in the late seventies. In turn Scott Paper was taken over by Kimberly Clarke in the nineties. Today Kimberly Clarke's main source of supply for Andrex and Kleenex are the two original Bowater Scott mills in Northfleet and Barrow in Furness. All the Northfleet supplies of pulp are still discharged at its own jetty on the Thames. For many years all the Barrow mill's supply came in by road, but more recently the dredging of the Estuary to enable the nuclear submarines to depart has meant that modern ocean going vessels have enough water to visit Barrow docks, and some pulp is now being supplied by this method.

Book Review

Ramsey Steamship Company, 1913- 2013 by Stan Basnett. Published by Ferry Publications Ltd., PO Box 33, Ramsey, Isle of Man, 1M99 4LP (Price: £18.00 ISBN:978-1-906608-590)

This book celebrates the centenary of the Ramsey Steamship Co. Ltd. it is a short history illustrating its highlights and some of its difficult times. By way of a tribute to the longevity of this island-based company, having achieved one hundred years of operation, this book traces its development from 1913 to the present day, predominately using photographs that give an insight into the different aspects of running a small shipping company, it charts the progress of a proud Manx company that is now among one of the very few early coastal tramp steamship companies to have survived into the 21st century albeit trading further afield than the British isles. During its lifetime it has owned and operated just twenty-six ships.

The Author, Stan Basnett was born in 1938 in the Isle of Man and has spent his life working as a surveyor on the island. Now retired he has written a number of books on transport-related subjects and also several on walking on the island, one of his many and varied hobby interests. An enthusiastic photographer as well as a writer, his books have provided a rare historical visual record of the development of transport on the Isle of Man over the last fifty years. He has compiled this book at the request of the Ramsey Steamship Co, Ltd using both his own pictures, those from his collection and many from the company's archive.

Nautical Trivia Quiz

1. What is a Monmouth?
2. Which ship is credited with being the first that the SOS signal summoned two ships to her aid?
3. What do the Irish words “Sinn Fein” actually mean? a) Peaceful resistance, b) Ourselves alone, c) Together united, d) Justice forever.
4. In 1946/1947, Salvesen’s had two factory ships in open waters. How many catchers do you think were attached to the operation; a) 10; b) 17; c) 22 d) 28.
5. Who is credited with conceiving the Barometer
6. Viking longships, with a following wind and calm seas could manage quite a turn of speed, a) 7 knots; b) 10 knots; c) 15 knots?
7. The American Space Shuttles are named after pioneering sailing ships, two American and three British. Name them!
8. Who published the first weather forecast?

Answers on page 33

Where were the German Carriers?

A summary of a talk given to the Society by David White in December 2012

In the inter-war years, policy-makers of the German Navy struggled with numerous difficulties to formulate and agree a clear definition of requirements for a projected future aircraft carrier. The Versailles and Washington Treaties limited new-builds to a maximum of 10,000 tons and there was no design experience. Political pressure greatly favoured the expansion of the U-boat programme, while Göring's refusal to support a carrier programme fitted with Hitler's lack of enthusiasm.

Doubtless in any major project there will be various pressures for and against, all pulling and pushing. The carrier project was no exception but there were three major players. Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy, being a "big gun" traditionalist, only slowly came to accept the concept of a carrier as being a major unit. His deputy, Admiral Karl Dönitz, was - and remained - dedicated to the U-boat fleet. Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, as head of the Luftwaffe, opposed the project, other than to declare that, if it did proceed, the aircraft and aircrew would remain Luftwaffe.

In 1934, naval architect Wilhelm Hadeler submitted proposals for a 22,000 ton vessel. This was approved and led to the ordering of a carrier of 19,250 tons the following year, being laid down at Deutsche Werke Kiel in 1936 as **Flugzeugträger A** and launched in December 1938 as **Graf Zeppelin**.

The launch ceremony was conducted by Count Zeppelin's daughter, Countess Hella von Brandenstein-Zeppelin and attended by Hitler, Raeder and Göring. In 1937, a second carrier, **Flugzeugträger B**, was laid down at Germaniawerft Kiel. Had she been launched, she was likely to have become **Peter Strasser**. The Kriegsmarine's Z Plan projected a third carrier to be in service by 1946 and a fourth by 1947.

Graf Zeppelin's displacement remains uncertain, with various sources' figures ranging from 19,000 to 30,000 tons. Propulsion was to be by sixteen La Mont boilers driving Brown-Boveri geared turbines, with 200,000 shp giving 35 knots. Because of the perceived need, commonly held by many navies at the time, for a carrier to be capable of fighting a conventional cruiser, her armament was substantial; sixteen 150mm and twelve 105mm guns, plus numerous smaller weapons. She was to carry 41-43 aircraft, all Luftwaffe, of course.

Conventional wisdom was that an aircraft carrier required four types of aircraft; fighter, reconnaissance, bomber and torpedo bomber. The fighter selected was the Messerschmitt Bf109, suitably modified for carrier operations. This was

reluctantly approved by Göring, who said they would be made available in 1944, by which time they were approaching obsolescence.

The Junkers Ju87 Stuke was to double as reconnaissance and bomber. There was no torpedo bomber available, so a design competition was established, at which Fieseler's Fi-167 outclassed its rivals. A biplane with a similar payload to a Swordfish, the Fi-167 had excellent low speed characteristics but was some 100 knots faster than the Swordfish.

After the fall of France in 1940, it was considered that the war was won, almost. Work was stopped on the **Graf Zeppelin**. Build was abandoned on her sister, whose keel was recovered for scrap. After Taranto, and again after Pearl Harbour, work restarted in a desultory fashion but stopped once more. In July 1940 she was moved from Kiel to Gdynia, beyond the then reach of the RAF. In 1941 she moved to Stettin then back to Gdynia. An RAF attack with 5,500lbs bombs in August 1942 failed due to bad weather. In November 1942 she was moved to the floating drydock in Kiel for the fitting of stability caissons then returned to Stettin. In March 1945, with the Red Army closing in, she was scuttled in shallow water in the river at Stettin and then shelled by Red Army tanks. In the winter of 1945/46, she was refloated. Treated as a dumb barge and loaded up with heavy machinery, including U-boat hull sections, she departed under tow for Leningrad. She disappeared en route, believed sunk perhaps by a mine or perhaps by heavy weather.

For decades, that was the end of the story. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, archives revealed what the intelligence community had missed. She had arrived in Leningrad, where the Russians, now very aware of their lack of carrier knowledge, examined her and carried out a series of experimental explosions. Eventually, in 1947 she was towed out to sea and sunk by torpedo off Leba.

Once again, that should have been the end of her story, but in 2006 the survey vessel **St Barbara**, working for Petrobaltic, the Polish oil industry, reported an anomaly on the seabed. The Polish Navy sent out their research vessel **ORP Arctowski** and on 26th July 2006 found the **Graf Zeppelin**. She is still there, in 44 fathoms of water off the port of Leba.

Thus finally ended the story of how political meddling and inter-service rivalry doomed a potentially-viable project to failure.

Refs: *Bundesarchiv*
Navies of World War II (Antony Preston)
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The Forgotten Squadron

First published in Blue Star 'Gangway'

By S W Swain

The Second World War dramatically changed the pattern of voyages of all merchant ships and because of the losses incurred complete crews — officers and men — were sent to the USA to take over new ships as they were built there. During the latter stages of the war some two to three hundred American-built ships were British crewed. There is no doubt that this contribution must have been a vital factor in the war's outcome.

My own wartime service took a unique turn when we became members of what we christened 'the forgotten squadron'. The **Samtay** was part of that squadron, on a bare boat charter to the Ministry of War Transport. During the time I was on her, from December 1943 until March 1947, we only returned to the UK two times, hence the sense of being forgotten.

The last of our three voyages lasted no less than one year eight months and it was the **Samtay**'s luck to get involved with another campaign in Indonesia long after Second World War hostilities had ceased — but that is another story.

My story begins in January 1943 when we disembarked in New York from the **Queen Mary** and were accommodated in luxurious hotels. I was in one near Madison Square Gardens, the famous boxing arena, and murals in the public rooms depicted scenes from events in the pugilistic world.

The meals were lavish with many courses. Breakfast included a plate of fresh oysters as a first course and having experienced the meagre UK wartime diet during my brief leaves I felt a bit guilty.

Exploring New York was exciting but a little difficult because of limited finances. We were allowed 70 cents a day 'pin money', yet it cost two to six dollars for the cinemas (although half price if we were in uniform).

At that time the exchange rate was four dollars to the pound and a haircut cost one dollar or five shillings (25p) compared with one shilling and threepence (just over 6p) at home.

Early in the new year the splendour of the hotel and excitement of that great city began to pall. Boredom, having nothing to do and lack of cash made me turn to looking for a job. As we had to be prepared to leave at a day's notice it restricted the choice of employment as it had to be on a day-to-day basis. Many officers took up relieving duties on American ships in port, others worked in the Red Cross, etc.

In my own case I thought it would be interesting to see what I could do on the open market and find out how an experienced marine engineer with a first class certificate of competency would fare outside his profession.

My apprenticeship was in electrical engineering so I first tried shops selling electrical goods and gained some initial interest until the potential employer learnt I might want to leave at a day's notice — so no luck.

After two days my ego was somewhat dented but I heard that other men had got casual labouring jobs at Sterns, the large department store. I was interviewed and told to appear next day at 0830 and report to a Mr X. I would be earning four dollars a day, paid each day. Mr X turned out to be the manager of the ladies' shoe department so I was sailing into uncharted waters!

After an eventful week at Sterns we received orders to move to Baltimore to take over the **Samtay**, so it was back to more familiar duties — engines and boilers and North Atlantic convoys.

The Bethlehem-Fairfield shipyard had many slipways, something like 14 I think, and a launching took place every other day. I was certainly impressed with the conveyor belt principle of mass production carried out on such a large scale.

It was a huge assembly plant, having acres and acres of space in addition to the slipways, so that storage and pre-assembly of enormous ships' sections could take place. It became quite clear how an average assembly time and launching of ships in a fortnight was possible.

*SS **Samtay** as **Rudby***

However, the total man-hours for building a ship was, I believe, not much different to the British effort on similar ships, a point discovered after the war. One cannot underestimate the shipbuilding efforts by Britain and America at that time: British workers in their confined yards working under blackout and severe wartime disruptions and danger; the Americans using their huge material resources, space and manpower and their characteristic attitude of 'get the goddam things moving'.

We boarded the **Samtay** during the afternoon and she was ready for sea trials the next day. Normally in Britain senior engineer and deck officers stood by a new ship

during the later stages of its construction to familiarise themselves with the vessel's physical and technical intricacies.

This time takeover and sea trials were completed in 48 hours flat during the most hectic two days — physically and mentally — I have ever experienced. We were suffered in the engine room as observers only and were not allowed to touch a thing. To make matters worse, there were no engineers available who had a working knowledge of the complete engine room plant, so asking questions was fruitless.

There were a number of minor plant malfunctions which were corrected American style, an example being a leaking boiler safety valve. Expecting it to be opened up and corrected for my approval the next morning I found a new valve had been fitted and the boiler under steam. This principle was practical and efficient because of the standardisation of these ships.

We had been told at Liverpool that we were going to the States to bring back a new ship — a short trip, so we thought. Our sailing orders at Baltimore soon changed that. We loaded at New York with stores and fighter planes bound for the Mediterranean and then made a second voyage to the same area, slow convoys all the way, before returning to the UK 11 months later.

Samtay ON. 169798. 7219g, 4380n. 422.8 X 57.0 X 34.8 feet.
T,3-cyl. by General Machinery Corporation, Hamilton, Ohio, U.S.A.
10.1.1944: Launched by Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A. (Yard No. 2308), as **Samtay** for the United States War Shipping Administration and bare-boat chartered to the Ministry of War Transport. Blue Star Line Ltd. appointed managers. 1947: Sold to Ropner Shipping Co. Ltd., Darlington, and renamed **Rudby**. 1952: Sold to Transmarina Compania Naviera S.A., Panama, and renamed **Thelka**. 1954: Sold to Esperanza Compania Naviera S.A., Panama, and renamed **Adamas.** 1968: Sold to Miyaji Salvage Company, Japan and arrived at Sakaide 10.9.1968 to be broken up.

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

March	Mondays	4th., 11th., 18th., 25th.
April		8th., 15th., 22nd., 29th.
May		13th., 20th.,

A CUT THROUGH A CONTINENT

The Story of the Panama Canal, a presentation to the Society on 18th October, 2012

By Dr. Robert Atkinson

The Panama Canal cut the journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific by up to 8,000 miles. Construction killed tens of thousands, destroyed the savings of hundreds of thousands and created a new country. Its story is one of over-optimism, dedicated sacrifice, opportunism and sheer dogged determination.

Within 60 years of Columbus' first voyage, Spanish colonists had found several possible routes across the Central American Isthmus. All were slow and disease ridden, but two looked promising. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, built by a French company led by Ferdinand de Lesseps, renewed interest in an Isthmian canal. US Government surveys confirmed both routes identified by the Spanish – one was in Colombia's Province of Panama based on the River Chagres while the other used Lake Nicaragua (130 ft above sea-level) in Nicaragua. During the rainy season, the River Chagres was known to rise 20 ft in a day and 40 ft overall; it was thought to be untameable. Consequently, the US saw Nicaragua as the feasible option. Ferdinand de Lesseps considered a sea-level route to be essential and, without much technical justification, proposed to build at Panama.

A French consortium secured the concession from the Colombian Government for a canal at Panama with the route to be agreed by an "international commission of competent engineers". A Congress, held in Paris in 1879, was rigged to choose a sea level route under Ferdinand de Lesseps' leadership.

The Panama Canal Company raised capital directly from the people of France. Work started in 1881 on a route from the Caribbean, to and along the valley of the River Chagres and then through a cutting to the Pacific. The river surface would be up to 90 ft above that of the canal. Massive dykes and barrages would separate the two. The cutting would be up to 300 ft deep. Slopes reaching 4 ft up for every 1 ft back were assumed to be stable. Later experience was that slopes were stable only at 4 ft back for every 1 ft up - one sixteenth of de Lesseps assumption.

The French bought the best equipment available. The best French engineering graduates were employed. Among them was Philippe Burnau-Varilla who became a major player in the fate of the canal. Disease was rife. Staff would arrive from France and 80 to 90 % would die within 3 months.

The greatest difficulty was de Lesseps' refusal to face reality. He would not listen to advice from his engineers. Misleading progress reports were issued. In 1885, an independent evaluation concluded that the sea-level plan was unworkable. It was nearly two years before de Lesseps would accept a lock canal. Then, Gustave Eiffel (creator of the Eiffel Tower) was contracted to build the lock system.

It was all to no avail. In 1888, the Company became the biggest bankrupt in contemporary French history; liabilities were equivalent to US $1000 per inhabitant of France at today's values. Thousands of investors lost their savings. The court cases began. Ferdinand de Lesseps and his son, Charles, were found guilty of fraud and, in 1893, Charles was also found guilty of bribing politicians.

In 1894, the New Panama Canal Company was formed. People making excessive profits from the previous work were offered a choice - buy "penalty" shares without voting rights or face legal action. Total capital raised was FF60 million; two thirds in penalty shares with Gustave Eiffel and Philippe Burnau-Varilla having shareholdings of FF 10 million and FF 2.2 million respectively. The New Company had two objectives; keep the concession valid and find a buyer. Excavation was concentrated in the Culebra Cut where it would always be useful. The obvious buyer was the US – but the concession prohibited sale to any "foreign" government.

In the US, President McKinley set up the Isthmian Canal Commission (ICC) to identify routes for a canal "under the control, management and ownership of the United States". Philippe Burnau-Varilla toured the US, speaking in favour of the Panama route. By the time of the ICC report in November 1901, Theodore Roosevelt, a keen proponent of a canal across the Isthmus, had become President.

The ICC concluded that the Panama route was technically better, only one third the length, with fewer bends and a lower summit level. Commercial preference was for Nicaragua. The French work was judged to be worth US $40 million, making a canal at Panama $6 million ($600 million today) less than one in Nicaragua. However, the French New Company valued their work at $109 million which put the cost for Panama at $63 million (about $6.5 billion today) more than Nicaragua. Based on the commercial issues, the ICC's overall preference was for Nicaragua.

Philippe Burnau-Varilla rushed to the US to see what could be done, becoming convinced that the US wanted the Panama route but would pay only $40 million. Back in Paris, he organised a shareholder revolt. In January 1902, the New Company offered the Canal to the US for $40 million. Roosevelt reconvened the ICC, calling for - and getting - a unanimous recommendation for Panama.

By January 1903, a Canal Treaty had been negotiated with Colombia. In August, the Colombian Government declined to ratify this. On 3 November, revolutionaries took control of the Province of Panama, declared an independent Republic and invited United States' protection. A Canal Treaty, more generous to the US than its Colombian predecessor, was signed on 18 November 1903. Negotiating and signing on behalf of the new Republic of Panama was its recently appointed Envoy Extraordinaire – Philippe Burnau-Varilla. No Panamanian was involved.

The Canal changed ownership. Shareholders in the New Company, including "penalty" shareholders, received 130% of their investment. At today's prices,

Burnau-Varilla's share was about $50 million. Even so, he should not be thought of as just self-interested. He really believed in the global benefit of a canal at Panama. His payout, in effect, only recovered his forced investment in the New Company.

In May 1904, President Roosevelt appointed John Finlay Wallace as Chief Engineer and urged him to "Make the dirt fly". Wallace is no hero in the history of the Canal but did make decisions vital to the American success. Work on control of disease was inadequate. Chief Medical Officer William Gorgas was the US Army's expert on tropical disease; he knew the measures needed but received little support. He predicted a yellow fever epidemic for the rainy season of 1905; it arrived and three quarters of the expatriate employees – over 500 people including Chief Engineer Wallace – left.

At the epidemic's height, there were 22 yellow fever deaths in the Canal Zone compared with nearly 250 from malaria, pneumonia and intestinal diseases. Yellow fever victims were mainly American or European; most of the others were not. The unskilled labour force came from West Indian islands where resistance to yellow fever was common. Wage rates on the Canal were 3 to 5 times what they could get at home. There was never a shortage of recruits for the labour force. Few expatriates had any resistance to yellow fever; a disease that killed 30 to 70% of those infected. They were the individuals needed to lead the work. For the Canal to be built, yellow fever had to be defeated.

Chief Engineer Wallace was replaced by John Stevens who had risen from labourer to become a highly regarded railroad construction manager. Stevens arrived in Panama in October 1905 and prioritised effort on sanitation and infrastructure, stating "The digging is the least thing of all". By late 1905, yellow fever was essentially eradicated and Stevens restarted digging. His lasting contribution was an effective railroad system for excavation and spoil removal. The equipment available to the Americans reflected the quarter century of progress since the French purchases. Typically, a US locomotive was capable of handling 20 to 25 times the load of a French-era loco.

The American intention was to complete the French lock canal plan. This proposed a dam and locks half-way across the Isthmus. By early 1905, it was clear there was no suitable site. When Stevens arrived, he thought a sea-level canal was the obvious choice; the sight of the Chagres River in flood changed his mind. That option became "an entirely untenable proposition". An Engineering Board in early 1906 recommended a sea-level canal at a cost of US $100 million more and duration of 3 to 4 years longer than a lock canal. The ICC opted for a lock canal. John Stevens saw that the technical leadership requirement would shift to lock design and concluded that someone else should take over.

Roosevelt appointed George Washington Goethals of the US Army Corps of

Engineers as Canal Zone Governor and Chief Engineer, telling the other ICC members that they would work as subordinates and that “disagreement [with Goethals] will constitute your resignation”. The management style on the project changed. It was now run by the Corps of Engineers under a very thin civilian camouflage. This was no bad thing; most of the workforce soon found the change to be fully acceptable.

The Canal was sized to take RMS **Lusitania** – then the largest ship in advanced design. Layout, Caribbean-side, followed the French concept but with an easier channel in Limon Bay. A site at Gatun, only a few miles inland, was suitable for the massive dam and triple locks needed to raise ships to the summit level 85 ft above the sea. Space was tighter on the Pacific side. A small dam and two locks were built at Miraflores with a single lock at Pedro Miguel. All dams and locks utilised the well-understood “gravity” design principle. Each structure was so massive that it was too heavy for the sideways thrust of even deep water to shift it from its installed position. The dredged channel in the Pacific was protected from the coastal current by a long causeway.

Central Division, 32 miles long, had over 200 miles of construction rail track, 76 of them at the 9 mile long Culebra Cut alone. At peak, 160 spoil trains per day ran to over 60 dump sites. Excavated rock was used to build the walls of the Gatun Dam, the Limon Bay breakwaters and the Pacific causeway as well as to reclaim nearly 700 acres of land on the Pacific coast. In May 1913, the Culebra Cut reached its design depth – 40 ft above sea level and 235 ft below the original surface.

Along the Cut, sections of hillside would break loose, sliding into the workings at 10 – 15 ft per day. One slip dumped 75 acres of the construction headquarters site - about 6 million cu yd - into the excavation. Nothing shows Goethals’ aptitude for the work better than his response to yet another landslip. Asked, “What to do, now?” he replied, “Hell, dig it out again”.

Lock construction used vast shutters as 36 ft long moulds which were filled with concrete on a continuous basis over a period of about 8 days. The shuttering was then dismantled and shutters, transfer cranes and workforce were moved 36 ft along and the next section poured. Each lock was 1000 ft long, 110 ft wide and 45 ft deep. Lock walls were up to 50 ft thick. Penstocks, 18 ft diameter, were built into the lock walls to transfer water to and between the locks. A total of 92 gates were installed, each 65 ft wide by 7 ft thick and with heights varying from 47 ft to 82 ft.

Gatun Dam is 1.5 miles long, 100 ft wide at the top, 500 ft wide at the lake level and up to 4,000 ft wide at its base. For months, around 100 trainloads per day dumped rock for the walls, between which dredged clay was pumped as infill at the rate of 1 million cu yd per month. When the last channel was closed in April 1912, Lake Gatun began filling at the rate of 2 inch per day.

Operation of the locks relied on electric motors to drive the machinery for

closing and securing the gates and operating the valves controlling water flow. Control boards were equipped with interlocks which physically prevented any control being moved out of safe sequence.

Exiting Gatun Locks, 2009 Author's picture

The first trial lockage was in October 1913. On August 3, 1914, the SS **Christobal** made the first full transit of the Canal. On board, Philippe Burnau-Varilla was celebrating his lifetime achievement. The First World War put an end to the plans for a grand opening of the Canal and the SS **Ancon** carried a low key official party on August 15, 1914.

The total cost of the Canal in 1914 money was $639 million which equates to a modern figure of about $1 billion per mile. Construction killed around 25,000 people under the French and over 5,600 under the Americans. The bodies, if laid head to toe, would stretch from the upper gates at Gatun, across Lake Gatun and through the Culebra Cut to the upper gates at Pedro Miguel - the 32 mile length of the summit level.

The 1903 Treaty gave control of the Canal to the United States in perpetuity. After years of representation, the US agreed that ownership should revert to Panama at midnight on December 31, 1999. Panamanians had good reason to celebrate the Millennium!

Today, the Panama Canal operates near its annual sustainable capacity of 330 million gross register tons. This is set by the capacity of the Gatun locks and by

the availability of rainwater to "drive" the system. Currently, only about 4% of the annual rainfall on the Canal basin - which averages about 100 inches - is surplus to requirements. There are nearly 13,000 transits per year; including container ships with over 12 million TEU capacity and over 200 million register tons of bulk cargo traffic. Cruise ships carry over 300,000 passengers. Revenues to Panama, based on the avoided cost of shipping around Cape Horn, are just under US $1.5 billion p.a.

The capacity of the Canal is to be near doubled by the use of larger ships. New locks will be 40% longer, 65% wider and 43% deeper than the originals. Despite the size increase, water saving measures are planned to reduce overall usage by 7% per transit. The Culebra Cut will be deepened as will channels in Lake Gatun and in the approaches to both terminals.

The building of the Panama Canal involved much suffering and massive loss – both national and personal – before being brought to a successful conclusion. Today, it is easy to forget how close the project came to failure because, like most successful engineering projects, it is not easy to see why it was such a difficult business at the time. Perhaps this short tale will help that understanding.

SHENANIGANS IN LIVERPOOL DOCKS

Lloyd's List November 12th 1901

Submitted by Society Member Harry Hignett

Some considerable agitation was recently apparent amongst the fruit importing community here in consequence of the action of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in respect to the Dock and Town dues payable on green fruit, such as bananas, tomatoes, oranges, apples, onions , and pomegranates. The Dues Book classifies such goods at a rate per package, with limitations as to gross weight. For many years the declared weight on importers' entry forms has never been questioned or checked by the Dock Board, but the Dock Board officials discovered recently that the weights per package as stated by importers were not correct, and this led to the investigation on a large scale of the whole business. It was found that the actual gross weights of various packages which had been usually passed at, say, under 56 lb., were over that weight, and consequently should have paid double the dues which packages under 56 lb. are liable to. The loss in revenue to the board upon the many thousands of packages which enter the port each week means a very considerable item, and to avoid this the board have appointed a number of special officers to watch incoming cargoes, and check for the average weight of such packages. Claims have been lodged, I understand, by the Dock Board upon several importers for differences on past shipments.

The Malta Convoy 'Operation Pedestal' of August 1942,

and Third Officer George D. Knight of the **Melbourne Star**

By Alan Knight

Editor's note: this rare first hand account of such a renowned event is worthy of publication in full. However its length dictates that it be divided between two issues. It has been submitted by the son of George D. Knight

George Douglas Knight was born in 1920 at Banchory, Scotland, about sixteen miles west of Aberdeen, growing up there (1920-1926) and in Edinburgh (1926-1936). Subsequently he attended ***HMS Conway****, one of Britain's naval training colleges at the time, completing the course of instruction in 1937 but without a job, having unsuccessfully tried for a Royal Navy appointment as a midshipman while some of his fellow cadets had already secured seagoing jobs in the Merchant Navy. Fortunately, while looking for jobs during this time of the Great Depression, he was unexpectedly offered one as a cadet by the Blue Star Line, accepted the offer, reported to the company main office in London, and was immediately assigned to his first ship, the* **Afric Star***. In January 1940 he became 4th Officer aboard the* **Empire Star***, and in 1942, 3rd Officer on the* **Melbourne Star***. Prior to serving on board the* **Melbourne Star** *he had also served aboard* **the Rodney Star** and **Empire Star***. He had married in December 1941. He became 2nd Officer on the* **Royal Star***, and finally served on the* **Samnid** *until leaving the Merchant Navy in 1946. Postwar, he earned his mechanical engineering degree from Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, eventually becoming an industrial engineer. Immigrating initially to Canada in 1953 and to the US in 1954, he continued working as an industrial engineer and became director of engineering for several rubber companies in Massachusetts. Long retired, he and his wife currently reside in San Antonio, Texas.*

In 1942, the island of Malta, a vital cog in British efforts to control the Mediterranean by interdicting the Axis supply route, by sea, to North Africa, was beleaguered. From Malta, surface ships, submarines and aircraft attacked the supply convoys destined for the Italian and German armies in North Africa. Continued and often intense German and Italian air attacks laid siege to the island which could only be broken by a convoy that would deliver essential supplies. The proximity of Malta to Sicily made it particularly vulnerable to Axis air attacks. Both Sicily and Sardinia also provided naval bases from which Italian Navy assets could intercept Malta-bound convoys. It had become, over time, more and more difficult to keep the island supplied, in the face of an increasingly aggressive enemy. Until a convoy with exceptionally heavy naval and air support could be dispatched to break the almost-

complete siege, the island's inhabitants were facing starvation. By the middle of 1942 there was no sugar, rice, tea, oil, butter, soap, or meat, and when coal ran out, there was no electricity[1]; until November 1942 this situation did not improve appreciably. Malta was close to capitulation, an event which was as near-at-hand as mid-August according to the island's Governor, Lord Gort. Military supplies and particularly fuel, were badly in need of replenishment and in 1942, as supplies diminished, the island's offensive efforts had declined. A slender lifeline of logistical support was provided by mine-laying submarines of the Royal Navy, operating out of Alexandria, Egypt. They "continued to bring in such essential small bulk cargoes as were needed – medical stores, kerosene, bags of mail, powdered milk, armour-piercing shells, and fuel."[2] By July 1942, the British Chiefs of Staff were faced with the very real possibility of losing both Egypt and the Suez Canal. Previous efforts to re-supply Malta from Alexandria had been inadequate.

Re-supply attempts that had recently been made were the simultaneously-executed Operation Harpoon (from Gibraltar) and Operation Vigorous (from Alexandria) in June 1942 in which only two merchant ships from Harpoon reached Malta, and none from Vigorous. Naval vessels escorting the convoys sustained heavy losses. It was in the face of such circumstances that Operation Pedestal was planned. Operational planning for Pedestal centered on passing a large convoy, originating in Britain, through the western end of Mediterranean, entering by the Straits of Gibraltar. There would also be subsidiary operations carried out as a part of Pedestal including one to provide Spitfires from an aircraft carrier to bolster the island's air defenses, and another to attempt the return of the two merchant ships from Harpoon from Malta to Gibraltar. It had already been proven that running a convoy (the Vigorous convoy in June, 1942) to Malta from Alexandria at the Eastern end of the Mediterranean was at this time virtually impossible due to Axis control of the area. However, as a diversionary effort, at the same time that the convoy would leave the United Kingdom, another, albeit smaller convoy, would be formed as a decoy and sail for Malta from Alexandria, in an effort to draw-off some of the Axis naval and air assets that would otherwise be used to attack the main convoy steaming from the west. Operation Pedestal would become known to the Maltese as the Santa Marija Convoy as the ships arrived on the feast day of Santa Marija.

Inasmuch as a large convoy could not avoid being sighted as it passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, there was every expectation that it would meet with strong enemy opposition in the form of attacks from the air, and by surface ships and submarines. "The acceptance of grave losses from air attack was understood from the first, and the possibility that the Italians, under pressure from the Germans, would make some move with their fleet had always to be considered."[3] Appreciating the likelihood of exceptional Axis resistance, the British effort to re-

supply Malta would be allocated an unprecedented level of naval and air support. To counter this threat, German and Italian forces in Sicily and Sardinia were heavily reinforced to interdict the convoy once it reached the Mediterranean. "Extra bomber squadrons assembled on the airfields, the flotillas of E-boats were brought up to greater strength, and German and Italian submarines deployed for maximum effect."[4] Measures such as the use of minefields, supplemented these preparations.

"The suspension of Arctic convoys until the shortening days of Autumn fortuitously released a number of warships from the Home Fleet for service in support of Pedestal, but it was not so much men-of-war the Admiralty needed as suitable merchant ships, especially a minimum of one tanker."[5] Arrangements were made to acquire the tanker **Ohio** from the U.S., a fast and large state-of-the-art vessel launched in 1940 and owned by Texaco, which will play a part in the narrative of George Knight. It would be manned by a British crew. Two other ships in the convoy were American, the **Santa Elisa** and the **Almeria Lykes**, with U.S. Merchant Marine crews, along with British gun crews of the Maritime Regiment supplementing the US Navy gunners assigned.

The thirteen merchantmen carried cargoes of ammunition, flour, gasoline, and kerosene in containers. The fourteenth ship, the borrowed American tanker **Ohio**, was loaded with aviation gasoline. Drums of fuel were distributed among all the merchantmen, a precaution in the event the **Ohio** did not reach Malta. "In the aggregate, their cargoes totaled over 110,000 tons of food, ammunition, tinned aviation gas, and hundreds of other badly needed items…."[6]

The convoy assembled off the mouth of the River Clyde on 1 August 1942. Heavy escort was to be provided by two battleships, HMS **Nelson** and HMS **Rodney**, accompanied by three aircraft carriers, HMS **Indomitable**, HMS **Victorious**, and HMS **Eagle**, three fast cruisers with anti-aircraft armaments, and 14 destroyers. These elements comprised Force Z and would accompany the merchant ships and the other escorts only until the Skerki Narrows were reached (which marked the approach to the Sicilian Channel; an area just west of Sardinia and on the African shore, approximately midway between Bizerta and Kelibia in Tunisia). Force Z would then return to Gibraltar. Continued and close-escort of the 14 merchant ships would be provided by three heavy cruisers, an anti-aircraft equipped cruiser, and 11 destroyers. This latter force was designated as Force X under command of Rear-Admiral H.M. Burrough, RN. In overall command was Vice Admiral Sir Neville Syfret, RN. Author Joseph Attard questions, in retrospect, the decision to have Force Z return to Gibraltar.[7] However the degree of risk to the heavy force was probably too high to allow it to continue on with Force X, given anticipated enemy strength estimates. Excessive losses would have been unacceptable. Operation Pedestal would represent the heaviest concentration of naval support ever assigned to a

British convoy during World War II. Some authors see Pedestal as more than a convoy, deeming it a major naval operation. Certainly the degree of naval support was unprecedented, comprising some seventy warships, many temporarily reassigned from escort duty in the North Atlantic and the Arctic. While Operation Pedestal has been viewed as a British convoy, it can be seen as an Allied endeavour. Not only were two U.S. merchant ships included but they were manned with U.S. Navy gun crews. The escort force also included a Polish Navy destroyer.

Facing the convoy would be a formidable array of sea and air assets including German and Italian bombers, dive bombers, torpedo bombers, fighters, and reconnaissance aircraft stationed at airfields in Sardinia and Sicily. A fuel oil shortfall impacted Italian Navy efforts, particularly those involving large vessels. "In all, some seven hundred aircraft were put on duty as a reception committee for any convoy that came within range. Eighteen Italian submarines were on patrol, one off Malta itself, eleven in the Narrows (Skerki Channel), and six spread between Algiers and the Balearic Islands."[8] The enemy order of battle also included three German U-boats patrolling off Cape Bon, Tunisia, Italian motor torpedo boats, new minefields, and a force of heavy and light cruisers and destroyers.[9] Running the gauntlet of such a well-prepared enemy was going to be, putting it mildly, a high risk operation.

George D. Knight, then aged 21, was the Third Officer on the MV **Melbourne Star**. Originally designed to carry primarily refrigerated cargo, and passengers, the twin-screw vessel was built by Cammell and Laird and Co. Ltd., of Birkenhead and launched on 7 July 1936.[10] She displaced 11,076 tons, and in length was 530 feet. She had 6 holds. Her normal cruising speed was from 16 to 17 knots, though she could run at 20 knots, fully loaded. No stranger to enemy action, she had already survived an E-Boat attack off Malta in July 1940. Her normal crew was 109 officers and men. Her captain was David Rattray MacFarlane, a former Royal Navy officer with a distinguished World War I combat record who had been one of many officers let go in the postwar reduction of the force. During wartime, the **Melbourne Star** carried a Royal Navy gun crew and, for Operation Pedestal, she would take aboard 30 Army gunners of the Maritime Regiment, Royal Artillery.[11] Only the Army gunners manned the two Bofors anti-aircraft guns. The Royal Navy gunners manned the 6-inch guns and two high-angle anti-aircraft guns. Mr. Knight indicated there was also a rocket launcher battery on the bridge and all gunners reported to him.[12] In short, the **Melbourne Star** was a heavily, though defensively, armed merchantman.

George Knight had joined the **Melbourne Star** on 20 May 1941 and had previously completed a prior convoy to Malta aboard this ship, then also under command of Captain MacFarlane. He begins his account as follows: "The **Melbourne Star**, was in berthed in Glasgow to load cargo (probably the last week in July, 1942: editor's note). No information was available as to where we were going with it. I

went on leave in Edinburgh and relaxed a bit. Eventually leave ended and I had to go back to the ship, still moored in Glasgow".

Although Mr. Knight claims all personnel were unaware of the cargo's destination, there is some evidence that security for the convoy was initially compromised by the marking of cases and bales entering the holds of the merchant ships with either "Malta" or a cover designation as "Latia." Whether the **Melbourne Star's** cargo was marked in this manner is unrecorded. One author mentions delivery of Mediterranean charts to the warships, discussion of same in dockside pubs, and a subsequent official inquiry occasioned by the complaint of a merchant ship's engineer officer to his father, an admiral, to the effect that crew members felt betrayed, believed they were heading to certain doom, and toyed with the idea of disobeying orders and not sailing.[13]

mv **Melbourne Star** (1936)

Mr. Knight commented on the **Melbourne Star**'s cargo in terms of content, approximately 12,000 tons. It consisted of 500lb bombs (not fused) and oil for submarines. Deck cargo consisted of two landing craft.[14] (Published photographs of the **Melbourne Star** on this convoy do not show the landing craft; perhaps the informant looked at images of the **Rochester Castle** that had two of these craft on deck, mistaking the ship for the **Melbourne Star**, or was recollecting such craft as cargo on the **Melbourne Star** at a different time, or on another convoy aboard a different vessel.) According to another author, who had access to reports sent by Captain MacFarlane to the company (Blue Star Line), the cargo consisted of 1,350 tons of high octane fuel, 700 tons of kerosene, 1,450 tons of high explosive shells and cartridges, along with several thousand tons of heavy oil. "Captain MacFarlane's ship had all the ingredients for creating a minor earthquake."[15] The captain did not comment upon the landing craft mentioned by Mr. Knight.

Other than the landing craft, Mr. Knight indicates the decks were clear. One author claims most of the merchantmen had deck cargoes of kerosene and other fuel. [16] Another author, utilizing information recorded by Captain MacFarlane, indicates that there was more than one kerosene container aboard.[17]

The ship was provisioned for about 6 months of operations until shortly before departure when personnel from the Ministry of Food seized control of the provisions, and took away most of it. Mr. Knight writes that, " … this action was based on the fact that the ship, per personnel strength figures used by the ministry, had only 109 requiring subsistence, in conjunction with the projected sailing time to the immediate destination. Ministry bureaucrats failed to take into account not only the Navy gun crews aboard, but the 30 soldiers (gunners) who were attached along with a Royal Navy liaison officer, his signalmen and 3 radio operators". The food supply was exhausted in 6 weeks, while the **Melbourne Star** was in Malta.[18]

While there is much truth in Mr. Knight's assessment, it is also likely that the Ministry of Food was simply unwilling to leave the original volume of provisions on board, given the high- risk nature of the operation and potential for the vessel's loss.

Loading at Glasgow was contentious because the stevedores loading the cargo handled it without regard to proper procedures; some occurred during the time Mr. Knight, the 3rd Mate, was the watch officer. The stevedores insisted that they loaded as directed by the Admiralty and tried to pressure the **Melbourne's** 2nd officer (responsible for cargo loading), Knight, and the ship's master into accepting their methods. To the horror of Mr. Knight and the other ship's officers, the 500lb bombs had been loaded like cordwood. Ultimately, the issue reached the Admiralty office in Glasgow who sent officers to see what was happening; they were equally horrified at the loading. Knight commented that all too often the Royal Navy sea transport personnel were unfamiliar with merchant ships and the loading plans they developed were all too often unworkable. Ultimately the cargo was loaded properly, meeting tested and approved loading plan requirements.[19]

Mr. Knight wrote, "Clambering around all the hatches and looking at the stuff, I knew where we were going – Malta. Oh my, that's not a very healthy place, and certainly very unhealthy for anyone trying to sail to it from the west. A little later (probably during the last week of July) I was back in Edinburgh. Marion (Marion Knight, his wife) took one look at me and just said, "You are going to Malta." When we were full to the brim with everything that would make a big bang if hit by a bomb or a torpedo, we sailed out of the Clyde and joined eleven or so other ships along with Navy escorts".

The convoy proceeded at a speed of twelve knots.[20] While the **Melbourne Star** was loaded in Glasgow, apparently other vessels had taken on cargo at Bristol Channel ports, Liverpool, Belfast, and Glasgow. The drafts of Army (Maritime

Regiment) and Navy gunners joined their ships. Mr. Knight continued, "We were well-armed with lots of additional weapons, and the personnel to man them. These few days, as we went out into the Atlantic, were spent trying to train the gun crews, firefighting, and damage control crews. Each was under control of a deck officer. It scared me that I was responsible for the armaments. In action it was decided that the Captain (David R. MacFarlane) would control from the flying bridge and would keep an eye on stuff coming down, the 2nd Officer (W.E. "Stan" Richards) would look after everything forward and down on the port side and I (George Knight), as Third Officer, would do the same down the starboard side of the ship. The radio room would be manned by Royal Navy personnel".

"The Chief Engineer organized the mechanical side. With so many electrical systems the main switchboard had to be manned by the ship's Chief Electrician Officer Christie from Lossiemouth, Scotland. The engine control platform would be manned with the 2nd Engineer and others who would be responsible for the diesel generators and auxiliaries. The two watertight doors would be closed. The steering motor was electrical, quite complicated, and very powerful; it could turn the rudder with the ship at full speed, in a little over twenty seconds. We never liked doing it unless we had to. A Call to Action Stations was the responsibility of the Officer of the Watch who was positioned on the bridge. He would push the button that would sound the klaxons. We felt we were as prepared as we could be. After all, we were "only civilians" according to the Government".

Mr. Knight observed that, "Soon we are far out in the Atlantic and joined by what looked like the whole of the British Navy. Now were we safe or too enticing to some ambitious Nazi submarine captain? The real work started for us deck officers, working with the Navy on high speed manoeuvres. This was most difficult because we had to use the Naval code and nomenclature. We had to learn fast, but received help from some Navy signalmen." [21]

"If you want the adrenaline to flow and the sweat to break out, try turning 24,000 tons of ship 180 degrees at full speed in the middle of the night with no lights. First of all we did it in daylight and then, getting confident in what we were doing, we did it at night. Captain MacFarlane left it to me; afterward he told me I did well. It certainly was exhilarating, to say the least. We now think we are ready for anything the Germans can throw at us".

These manoeuvres had commenced on the 4th and continued through the 7th. They executed emergency turns and zigzags and practiced altering speed, wheeling, and changing the cruising disposition by both visual signal and short-range wireless telegraphy. The merchant ships carried out gun drill, practicing laying their weapons on bearings, angles of sight, and range-judging……. Everything from fire-extinguishers to fenders and mooring wires was made ready as these laden

vessels, no longer mundane merchantmen, were patiently metamorphosed into His Majesty's Military Transports.[22] As evening approached, the convoy, now heading east again, moved in and out of fog patches through which the land came intermittently into sight.[23] As the ships of Operation Pedestal approached the entrance to the Mediterranean, the convoy encountered two neutral merchant ships. As the ships took evasive action fog settled again, this caused a degree of disruption.[24]

Meanwhile the transports, having slowed in the fog, increased speed to 13.5 knots and resumed a four-column cruising disposition, two on either side of a central column consisting of two battleships and the cruisers. Beyond this, the destroyers formed an anti-submarine screen. Then at 1700 hours, a Vichy French civilian airliner flying from France to Algeria was seen above the convoy and its broadcast report was monitored in which it unhelpfully (from the British perspective) transmitted a report about two battleships, with cruisers and destroyers escorting twelve merchantmen bound eastward.[25]

Any effort to pass un-noticed was of course doomed to failure, given the size of the convoy and the reports undoubtedly transmitted by the hundred or so Spanish fishing vessels. Aboard the **Melbourne Star**, Mr. Knight recalls that, "We all passed through the Straits of Gibraltar in the middle of the night (10 August), I remember getting all tangled-up with a lot of (Spanish) fishing boats which no doubt were positioned there by the Germans; they were too far out for fish. We were the fish….juicy big ones. The boats were brightly illuminated and were clearly able to see the merchantmen and their naval escorts. In the Spanish port of Algeciras and on the North African side at Ceuta, Italian agents alerted Mussolini's government in Rome regarding this large convoy. This information soon reached Rome. Early on the morning of 11 August, British radar noted the presence of enemy aircraft shadowing the convoy, a reconnaissance that continued. At this time the convoy would have been about 80 miles north of Algiers".

Mr. Knight writes that, "At lunchtime (11 August) I was eating my meal when I heard six distinct thumps. The **Eagle** had been torpedoed as she was sending off fighters to Malta. It was quite a sight as the carrier turned over, planes slid off her flight deck and men walked up her sides; in four or five minutes she was gone".

To be concluded in the next edition:

ENDNOTES

1. Peter Elliott,*The Cross and the Ensign* (Cambridge: Patrick Stephens Ltd., 1980), 136.
2. Ernle Bradford, Siege: *Malta 1940-1943* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1986), 251.
3. Ibid., 252.
4. Elliott, *The Cross and the Ensign*, 139.
5. Richard Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943* (London: John Murray, 2000), 374.
6. Charles A. Jellison, *Beseiged: The World War II Ordeal of Malta* (Hanover: University Press of New England), 250.
7. Joseph Attard, *The Battle of Malta* (Feltham: Hamlyn Publishing Group, Inc., 1982), 206.
8. Bradford, *Siege: Malta 1940-1943*, 254.
9. Ibid., 254
10. Normally only 12 passengers carried in peacetime, but cabin space existed for many more.
11. The Maritime Regiment, Royal Artillery, was formed in 1939 to provide gunners to man the weapons on board the defensively equipped merchant ships. While these gunners would normally be aboard British ships, they also manned guns aboard the two American vessels on the Pedestal convoy. Such a crew aboard a merchantman would supplement the gunners in the crew and those from the Royal Navy and or Royal Marines. The Bofors and Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns aboard ship would normally be manned by a Maritime Regiment crew, but they had to be capable of handling every weapon. A detachment of Maritime Regiment gunners would normally be under command of a non-commissioned officer. A detachment of up to 30 men was assigned to larger merchant ships. The regiment's personnel were located in the UK regionally. Maritime Regiment gunners aboard the Melbourne Star came from the Clyde region. Other regions included Firth of Forth, Tyne, Tees, Bristol Channel, and Mersey. Personnel wore the standard Royal Artillery khaki with an upper sleeve insignia consisting of a patch of black silk with a crimson fouled anchor.
12. Phone call, writer to George Knight, 15 January 2011.
13. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 376.
14. Phone call, writer to George Knight, 15 January 2011.
15. Taffrail (Taprell-Dorling), *Blue Star Line at War, 1939-1945* (London: W. Foulsham & Co. Ltd., 1973). 90.
16. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 377.
17. Peter C. Smith, *Pedestal* (Bristol: Crecy Books Ltd., 1999), 183.
18. Phone call, writer to George D. Knight, 7 January 2011.
19. Phone call, writer to George Knight, 15 January 2011.
20. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 379.
21. Phone call, writer to George Knight, 7 January 2011. The signalmen were under control of the Royal Navy liaison officer assigned to the ship during Operation Pedestal.
22. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 380.
23. Ibid., 383.
24. Ibid., 383.
25. Ibid., 387-388.

Answers to Nautical Trivia Quiz;

1. A knitted woollen cap worn by sailors and pirates.
2. The s.s. **Savonia** ---- NO not the Titanic!
3. b) Ourselves alone.
4. 22 catchers working from the two factory ships and another 6 based ashore.
5. Evangelista Torricelli in 1643
6. c) 15 knots
7. American – Atlantis and Columbus. British – Discovery, Endeavour, Challenger.
8. Captain (later Admiral) Fitzroy of HMS **Beagle.**

The Marco Polo

by Captain E A Woods

Although generally considered that **Marco Polo** was the first ship of the Black Ball Line, she was not included in the fleet until after her first voyage to Melbourne. The first sailing of the Liverpool Line of Australian Packets was made by the **Flora Macdonald**, sailing on April 14th, 1852, for Portland Bay from Birkenhead.

The name was not altered to the Black Ball Line until July of the same year. In his speech on the eve of **Marco Polo's** first sailing, Baines stated that "if the **Marco Polo** does not earn for herself such a reputation for speed that, when on her return, she takes her place as one of the Black Ball Line".

The **Marco Polo** was built in 1851 by James Smith in the Marsh Creek in Courtenay Bay, New Brunswick. Her length was 185 feet, amidships breadth 38, and her amidships depth 30 feet. She had three decks with a headroom of eight feet between each. Built with hard pine beams, her frames were of hackmatask and planking of pine and oak.

Above water she was lofty and boxlike with an underwater body of sharp entrance and a clean run. Amidships she had the bilge of a cargo carrier with the bow ports of a timber drogher. She was fastened with black iron and was uncoppered. Her upper deck was flush with small houses at each hatchway. When launched her lowermasts were stepped and her topmasts setup and stayed.

There was a creek running through the flats on which the yard was situated, and when the **Marco Polo** was launched on an ebbtide, she took charge and stuck her sternpost on to the high bank at the other side of the creek and stayed there. When the tide had finished ebbing she fell over on her side. Two weeks later she

was refloated, undamaged, although it was at first thought she would be hogged. She was rigged and placed in commission by her builder.

Loaded with timber she was sent to Liverpool and made the run across in 18 days. Not being immediately sold, she was sent to Mobile for a cargo of cotton, and on her arrival back in Liverpool in May she was offered for sale by Messrs. Stitt, Coubrough & Stitt, of 31, North John Street. She was bought by James Baines, who held 28 shares in her, Thomas Miller Mackay holding the same amount, with Captain James Nicol Forbes holding the remaining eight.

Put into drydock, her iron fastenings were knocked out and replaced by copper, and at the same time she was sheathed with metal. She was then fitted up to carry passengers, and the *Illustrated London News* of that day gave an account of her which fully described her passenger accommodation. “The poop was used as a ladies’ cabin, and on the deck, forward of the poop, was the dining saloon. The ceiling of the saloon was in maple and the pilasters were panelled with highly ornamented and silvered glass, coins of various countries being a feature of the decorations. Between each pilaster was a circular aperture, about six feet in circumference, for light and ventilation. Over each aperture was placed a sheet of plate glass with a painted picturesque view in the centre, enclosed in a framework of foliage and scroll of opaque colours and gold. The whole panels were brought out slightly by a rim of perforated zinc, so that air was freely admitted, as well as light being diffused over the whole”.

“The saloon doors were panelled in stained glass, bearing figures of commerce and industry from the designs of Mr Frank Howard. In the centre of the saloon was a table of thick plate glass, which had the advantage of giving light to the dormitories below. The upholstering was in embossed crimson velvet. The berths were ranged in the ‘tween decks in separate state rooms and had circular glass ports of effective construction.

The **Marco Polo’s** registered tonnage was 1,625, though she was capable of carrying over 2,000 tons of cargo. Her figurehead was a full-length figure of the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo. After purchase by the Black Ball Line her stern was decorated by carvings of an elephant's head in the centre with a reclining figure of Marco Polo on each side of it.

Contemporary writers in St. John said that she was a fortunate fluke, and though it has often been stated that she was built for the Black Ball Line, she was primarily built to carry timber and a timber ship she was, classed for six years by Lloyd's.

By no stretch of imagination could it be said that her speed was wholly due to her lines and design of build; it was rather due to skill and daring of her commanders that she made so many extraordinary passages.

On May 20th, 1852, the following advertisement appeared in the Liverpool shipping papers : -

Under engagement to sail on 21st June,
for Melbourne and Port Philip.
The splendid new frigate built ship,
MARCO POLO,
J. N. Forbes, Commander,
is the largest vessel ever despatched from Liverpool
to Australia and is expected to sail as fast as any
ship afloat. Carries two Surgeons.
Vacancies for a few Naval cadets.

On Sunday, July 4th, she left Liverpool for Melbourne with 930 emigrants and a crew of 60. She was under charter to the Emigration Commissioners. Nearly half of her crew were only working their passage out, bound for the goldfields.

Captain Forbes had been transferred from the **Maria**, in which ship he was by Captain Jackson.

With a big crew, good officers, a light ship and plenty of nerve, Forbes drove her out to Port Philip Heads in 76 days, arriving at 11a.m. on September 18th. The Black Ball Line advertised this passage as being 68 days, taking their time from land to land. Her best day's run outward was 364 miles, and running her Easting down in South latitudes she averaged 336 miles a day for four consecutive days.

There is a story told that Forbes, on arrival, immediately trumped up a charge of insubordination against his crew and had them all put in jail, so that they could not desert for the gold diggings. It would be interesting to know how he managed to persuade the authorities in believing this charge, especially as half his crew were only signed on for the run out.

On October 11th she sailed again for Liverpool by way of Cape Horn, and, after a record passage of 76 days, arrived in the Mersey, only 5 months and 21 days for the round voyage. No wonder the shipping world was astounded, and thousands of people made their way to Salthouse Dock to view the "Fastest ship in the world."

On Sunday, March 13th, 1853, the **Marco Polo** sailed on her second voyage to Melbourne in ballast, with 648 passengers, arriving out on May 29th, after a passage of 75 days. On this outward passage she lost 53 passengers by death.

Leaving Melbourne on June 10th with 40 passengers and £280,000 of gold dust on board, she arrived in Liverpool on September 13th, after a passage of 95 days. This was not a very fine homeward passage, having been five days jammed in the ice in 60^0 South, and then becalmed 15 days on the Line, but she had again made the round voyage in less than six months.

Captain Forbes was now relieved by his Chief Officer, Charles McDonnell, and under her new commander she made the outward passage in 74 days, 12 hours.

Entering Port Philip Heads she grounded, owing to the inefficiency of the pilot, and remained there for some time. In January, 1854, she was refloated by Captain Charles Ferguson, the Harbourmaster of Melbourne. Found to have not sustained any damage, on her discharge she was reloaded for home, and arrived in Liverpool after a passage of 78 days. In July of that year a service of plate, breakfast and tea, valued at 200 guineas, was presented to Captain Ferguson by the Black Ball Line for his service in rescuing their favourite and far-famed ship.

On her arrival Captain McDonnell transferred to the **Lightning** and was relieved by Captain Wild. Her fourth voyage out was made in 95 days, and then she sailed from Melbourne on December 4th, 1854, with 208 passengers and the following cargo: 1,374 bales of wool; 159 casks of tallow; 8,128 hides; 18,002 horns and 4,280 shinbones. In her strong-room was 56,895ozs. of gold and 4,280 sovereigns; and a further £40,000 worth of gold in the possession of her passengers.

She arrived in the Mersey at 4 p.m. on February 28th, 1855, after a passage of 85 days. Captain Clarke was now appointed to the ship and she sailed on her fifth voyage on April 5th.

Some changes were by now appearing on board. She had a well-ventilated hospital erected on board and an improved cooking range. A band was also provided for the amusement of the passengers, as well as a printing machine for the ship's paper, and a photographic apparatus which was placed in charge of the doctor. She also had a cow, 30 sheep, 30 pigs, and 30 dozen fowls and rabbits, hares etc., for the table. Her passages this voyage were 81 days out and 85 days home.

On October 24th Captain Clarke was summoned before the magistrates by Captain Schomberg, R.N., acting on behalf of several third class passengers. The complaints were that during the voyage the flour served out was occasionally sour, that provisions had not been served out to the extent and of the nature specified in the dietary scale, and that the Captain had on one occasion suspended the issue of a certain portion of the provisions, because several of the third class passengers refused to sign receipts for the provisions as they had formerly done.

Mr. James Aiken, the magistrate, said that some complaints about the provisions appeared to be unfounded as, according to the passengers themselves she was exceedingly well supplied, with one or two trifling exceptions. The only error on the part of the captain was his suspension of the issue of provisions, by which the magistrate felt he had incurred a penalty, but he would only inflict the smallest the law allowed, namely, £10.

She sailed on her sixth voyage on December 7th, and arrived out on February 26th, in 83 days. On her following voyage she took 89 days outward.

Homeward bound in 1861 she collided with an iceberg in Southern latitudes and was badly damaged forward. Leaking badly she made for Valparaiso. She had

£260,000 worth of gold on board, with 800 passengers and crew. She left Valparaiso on May 21st for Liverpool, and arrived in the Mersey 183 days from Melbourne.

In 1858 Captain Clarke left her for the **Lightning** and had been relieved by Captain D H Johnstone. In 1865 her master was Lieut. R Arnold, R.N.R., but he died the following year, and Baines gave her original master his old ship again.

Forbes retained command of her until she was sold in 1871 to J. Wilson & Co., of South Shields. She was sent by them tramping to the Mediterranean and she left the Australian trade for good.

In 1874 she was cutdown to barque rig and sailed for Rio loaded with coke and coal. After discharging this she took on board 1,100 tons of stone ballast, and sailed for Callao to load guano. There she lay for 96 days before receiving orders to load guano for Huanillos. She took 15 months and 17 days to load a full cargo and finally sailed for Falmouth for orders. After a passage of 97 days she proceeded to Antwerp to discharge.

In 1882 she was sold to Bell & Lawes of South Shields, who resold her the following year to M.I. Wilson, of Liverpool. Resold again to the Norwegians, she loaded a cargo of pine deals at Montmorency, Quebec, in July, 1883

On the afternoon of July 22nd she piled herself up at Cape Cavendish, Prince Edward Island. Leaking badly, and with her pumps broken down, she was beached by her master to save her from foundering. The wreck and cargo were sold at auction, and the deals were discharged into schooners. During one night a gale sprang up and the ship broke in two and soon went to pieces.

Her steering gear and stove were installed in a new barque **Charles E Lefurgey**, of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. A dinner bell is said to be still in the possession of a Prince Edward Island family and the stern carving is now in a St John Museum, after being nailed up on a farmer's barn for years.

*[Editor's note: it will be of interest that, for over 20 years, a group of community volunteers have worked to build a half-sized scale replica of **Marco Polo** at St John, New Brunswick. The project is now well advanced and their website is at:*
http://new-brunswick.net/marcopolo/shipyard.html

Ooops During the recent period of snowfalls a Government warning said anyone travelling in icy conditions should take a shovel, hat, blankets, a supply of food and drink, de-icer, rock salt, a torch and spare batteries, a petrol can, first-aid kit and jump leads. I felt a right prat on the bus.

Landfall

By Bill Ogle

In 1946, a tank landing craft, **LCT 7074**, was acquired by the Merseyside Master Mariners' Club from the Admiralty and converted into a comfortable club ship by Messrs. Bell and Burnie, Ltd., of Bootle, at a cost of more than twelve thousand pounds. She was "commissioned" as a club in August, 1948, and was moored in Canning Dock. Through the kindness of the Master and Committee of the Club, the Liverpool Nautical Research Society was, for some years, able to hold its meetings on board.

The comfortable quarters provided just the right atmosphere for maritime matters and this gesture was greatly appreciated by the Members.

Sadly the subsequent history of **Landfall** was less successful.

LCT 7074 was built in 1944 by Hawthorn, Leslie & Co, Hebburn and is the only surviving LCT which actually participated in Operation Neptune, the naval dimension of Overlord. She is one of the 6,883 vessels commanded by Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay that took part in the D-Day landings, and of this vast fleet - including 1,200 warships, some 4,000 landing craft of various types and nearly 900 merchant vessels - assembled to land five divisions and their armour along a fifty-mile front in Normandy, is now one of the only two survivors, the other being HMS **Belfast**. This critically significant, close and direct association with the D-Day landings, the largest amphibious operation in all history, gives her a unique value.

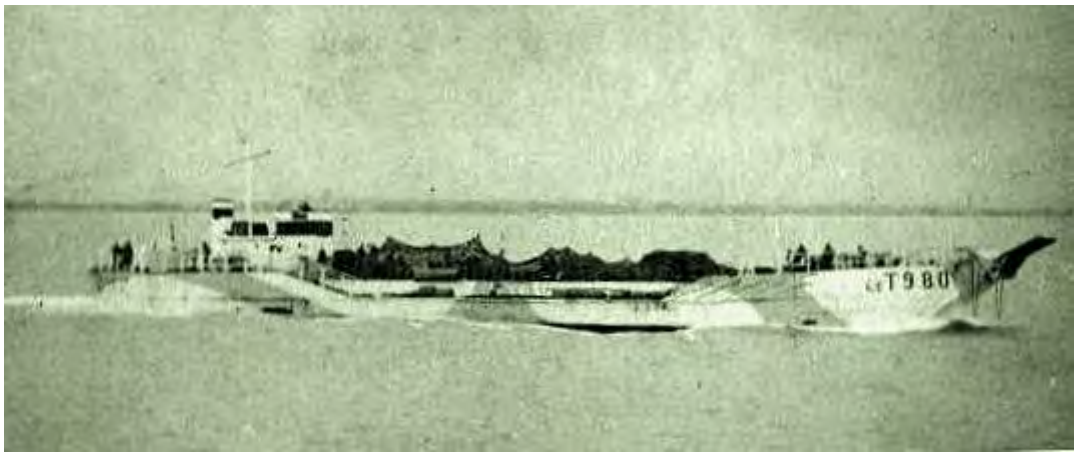
She has an added significance in the history of the shipping trade, since many of her sister-ships were utilised in the post-war years and modified for a wide range of commercial carrying purposes. This led in a comparatively short time to a revolution in sea transport with the Roll-on/Roll-off ferries. Though the passage of time and the variety of uses to which the vessel has been put have left many changes in her appearance, both outward and internal arrangements, **Landfall** is still demonstrably an LCT with a distinguished record of combat operations.

In the late 1930s, consideration was given to the provision of shore-to-shore tank carriers and landing craft and the first tank landing craft, designated LCT Mark I, was built at R&W Hawthorn, Leslie and Co Limited on the Tyne and launched in November 1940. Incorporated in her design were several novel features including the front loading ramp, hinged just above the water-line, the double floating dock form of hull, enabling the vehicles in the hold to be concealed from view and protected from the weather by the side tanks, from which a canvas cover was suspended. Motive power was provided by a Paxman diesel engine. Progressive modifications were introduced and, over time, a total of 235 LCT Mark 3s were completed, having an additional 32-foot midsection that gave a length of 192 feet

and a displacement of 640 tons. Even with this extra weight, the vessel was slightly faster than the Mark 1. The Mk.3 was accepted on 8 April 1941, and was prefabricated in five sections. The increase in length allowed it to carry five 40-ton tanks and all their related support equipment, or 300 tons of deck cargo. Though the Royal Navy appreciated the higher load capacity of the Mk.3, it soon discovered several construction deficiencies. The craft had evidently been pressed into service without sufficient testing; combat operations demonstrated the need to add longitudinal stiffeners to the Mk.3s (and later the Mk.4s) in order to avoid torsional stresses to the hull. Two hundred and thirty-five Mk.3s were built.

Among these was **Landfall**, built like the others by Hawthorn, Leslie and powered by American Sterling Admiral petrol engines. She was launched without ceremony on 4 April, 1944, then completed and commissioned shortly afterwards.

With a crew of 2 officers and 10 ratings, she sailed for the River Orwell under the command of Sub Lt John Baggot RNVR. She joined the 17th LCT Flotilla at Great Yarmouth then steamed onwards to Felixstowe to prepare for the build up to D-Day. The backbone of the invasion fleet LCT's, which could carry up to eleven Sherman tanks, were manned mainly by British crews and transported almost all the tanks, heavy artillery and armoured vehicles landed in Normandy. The 17th LCT Flotilla was part of Assault Group L2, LCT Squadron "H" of the Eastern Task Force, which supported the British landings (made up of two British divisions, one Canadian division plus two Army and one Royal Marine Commando unit), and **Landfall** carried troops and ten Shermans to Normandy, successfully landing nine of the tanks on Gold beach. For several months after the invasion, the vessel was consistently engaged in ferrying troops, supplies, vehicles and ammunition to ports across the Channel in support of the Allied Forces advancing across northern Europe, continuing in this role throughout the summer and well into the autumn of 1944. At the end of the war the ship was evidently re-named NSC L (19) and although work was started to convert her into an emergency repairs ship for service in the Far East, with the end of hostilities in the Pacific this was abandoned. Later de-commissioned, in 1948 she was presented to the Master Mariners' Club of Liverpool and adapted to become their club ship. With her name changed again, this time to **Landfall**, she occupied a prominent position on the Liverpool waterfront before being purchased by commercial interests to be turned into a riverfront nightclub. Towards the end of the 1990s, the vessel was acquired by the Warship Preservation Trust and, after minor restoration works, was moored alongside the other historic vessels in this fleet at East Float Dock, Dock Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, until January 2006, when the Trust went into liquidation. The ship was then left to rot, and by April 2010 had sunk at her berth. Efforts are being made to raise the funds for restoration.



A similar vessel in 1944

Landfall as a clubship

...and at the East Float, Birkenhead in 2009 Picture by Joe Neary

Keeping containers safe

MNA Circular

If you go to any container terminal and you know your way around, in a corner of the terminal, usually away from public view, is to be found the “graveyard”. Here are found the containers that have come to grief. It will usually present a sorry sight of mangled steel and crushed cargo, to be kept while the insurance company surveyors do their work.

Many will have fallen from cranes when being handled, some dropped by ground handling equipment or toppled off trailers. Some will have been damaged on the voyage, perhaps when a stack has collapsed or when heavy green seas have boarded a ship. But most will have been victims of bad cargo loading, overloading, or some problem with the contents. Almost all of these expensive mistakes will have been preventable. In pre-container days, a close eye was kept on the loading of ships, both by expert stevedores and by the ships’ officers themselves who ensured that the cargo was properly secured, that heavy cargo was not stowed on top of light cargo and that cargo would not shift once the ship started to move around in heavy weather. Containerisation is a wonderful time-saver in every respect, but does transfer the responsibility for stowage to who-ever “stuffs” the container. This is probably accomplished at cargo consolidation stations, or factory premises, possibly a long distance from the port and will be undertaken by people who see just a box in front of them, with no knowledge of the accelerations of a ship in a seaway, or the importance of not exceeding maximum weights. Indeed there will be people who will consider their job done if they are able to get all the cargo into the box, and manage to shut the doors.

The importance of balancing the weights within a box so it is not heavy one end, or the need to ensure that the cargo is properly shored or lashed so that it will not start moving about once the ship starts to move, may be beyond the comprehension of the loaders. Cargo insurers can point to innumerable “horror stories” of container contents totally destroyed on the voyage, of boxes that have turned over on the trailer at the first roundabout or boxes so heavy that the corner posts have been torn out when the crane started to lift them. They will recount the carnage caused when overweight boxes collapse in the ship’s stow, crushing the containers around them, breaking lashings and even causing whole stacks to fall over the side. They will recall improperly stowed containers that have caught fire or exploded, because of the ignorance or criminal negligence of the shippers. And that is before we get onto the hazards these might inflict upon the ship’s crew, or the terminal operatives. What can be done? Certainly better information, spread liberally among those who load containers, will help. Compulsory weighing is essential too, along with a more robust action against those who break the rules, impressing upon them that safety is the responsibility of all.