

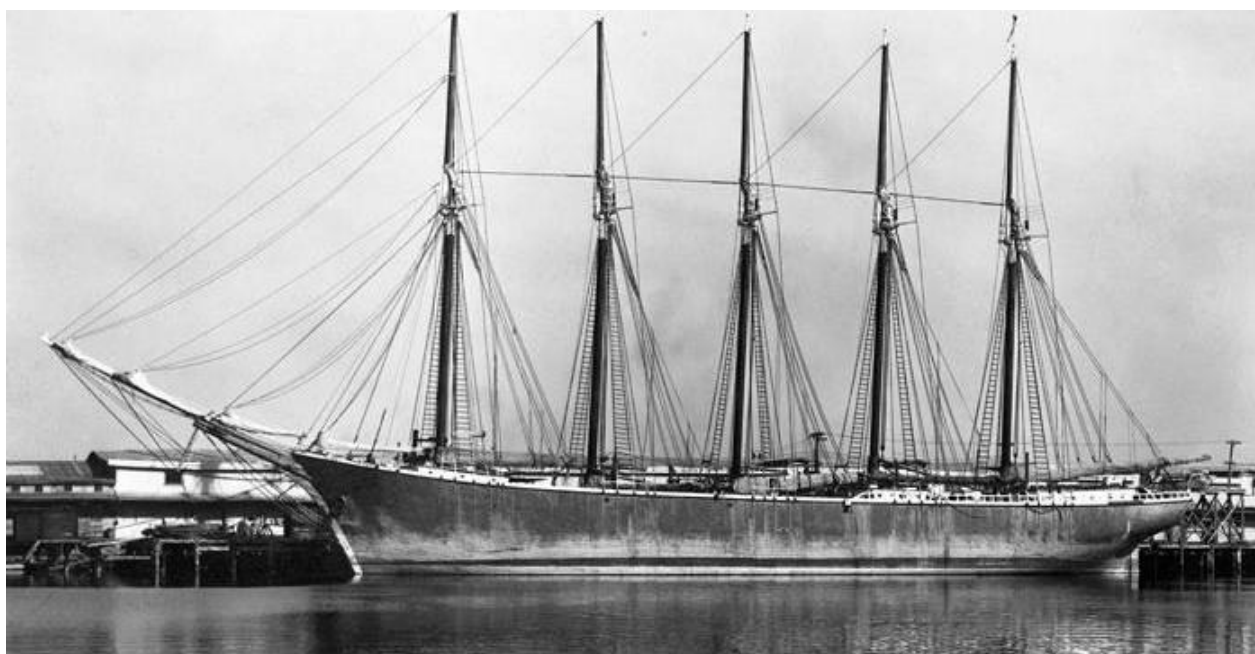
# The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

## *THE BULLETIN*

### Special 75th Anniversary Edition

Volume 57 No.1, June, 2013



The **Edna Hoyt**. Last of the American five-masted schooners, at Tampa, Fl. 1930.

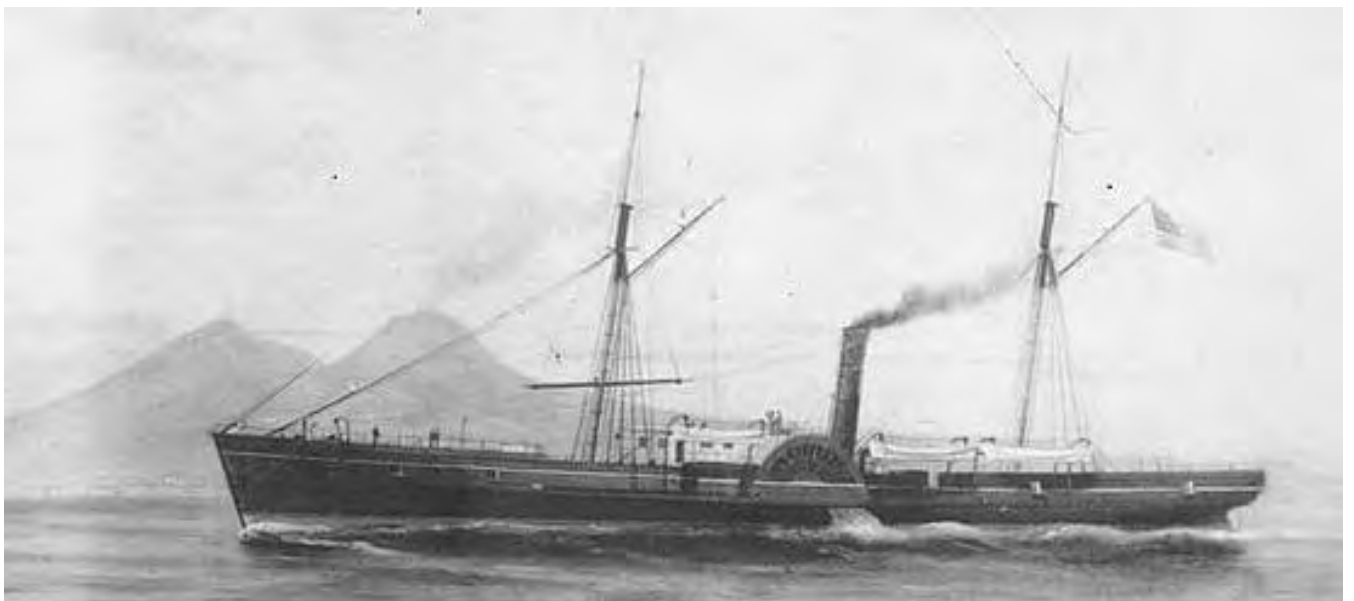
See page 11

Picture courtesy Steven F. Greenwald Design Inc., Fort Lauderdale, Fl

From the Chairman	David White	Page	1
Origins of the Society	The Editor		2
Remember those days...	Bill Ogle		8
The Skerries Lighthouse	Christopher Nicholson		12
Mutiny and Murder on the Veronica	Gordon Bodey		20
The Story of the Douglas (1858)	Dick Clague		33
Shipbuilding on the Mersey (1938)	David Eccles		40
Book Review	The Editor		45
Malta Convoy Part 2	Alan Knight		46
To Serve the World on a Summer Evening	Barrie Youde		58



The four-masted barque **Lawhill** (1892-1957)      From the original painting by John Richardson  
See page 8



USS **Gettysburg** (1864), formerly the **Douglas** (1858)    See page 33

# The Liverpool Nautical Research Society



President:  
Mr. A.S.Davidson

Vice-Presidents:  
Captain G.Cubbin,  
Mr. H.M.Hignett

Chairman:  
Captain R.Settle

Vice-Chairman:  
Mr. D.C.White

Council:  
I.Duckett (Talks Secretary), D.K.C.Eccles, D.Littler, Dr. E.S.Long,  
A.H.McClelland, W.A.Ogle (Editor).

Honorary Officers:  
Secretary: J.Stokoe                      Treasurer: B.Groombridge

Web site: [www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](http://www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)

Contact details:  
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society  
Maritime Archives and Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Albert Dock  
Liverpool L3 4AQ  
United Kingdom.

[info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](mailto:info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)

## From the Chairman

David White

On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Society's founding, I am pleased and honoured to welcome all members to this bumper birthday edition of our Bulletin.

Our founding members were no more able to look 75 years into the future than we are today - 2088 is a long way off. What they did do in 1938, however, was to lay the foundation of a thriving and vibrant body which remains active and well-supported in 2013.

Though "nautical research" may at first sound like a narrow and esoteric field, members' interests cover the full range of nautical matters; ships, seafarers, shipping companies, ship builders, ports and harbours, plus that myriad of supporting and associated industries without which the ships could never have sailed. Whatever the favoured specialist topic, there is likely to be a member who knows about it and others who would like to know about it.



Society members Alex Hampton and Gordon Wright at work in the Archives

It is very apparent to us that our quarterly Bulletin plays a vital role in linking our often far-flung membership. What may be less well known is that the back issues of the Bulletin remain accessible to members via bound volumes in the archives. They make fascinating reading. It is not always necessary for each generation to re-invent the wheel.

Finally, I'd like to extend to the Society and to our members all very best wishes for the next 75 years.



# The Origins of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society

Bill Ogle

The first five papers presented to the Society were read between May 1938 and February 1939, but the Society then became an early victim of World War 2 and went into abeyance until 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1942. Subsequently, a further ten papers were presented between the reactivation of the Society and March 1944. All fifteen of these papers were deposited in the Picton Library, Liverpool, and are now available as a bound volume located in the Archives of the Local History Library (Reference Section) of the Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool. They are as follows:

No. 1	Early Liverpool Vessels and Trade	A C Wardle, May 1938
No. 2	James Baines	Captain E A Woods, Oct. 1938
No. 3	Liverpool Pilots & Pilot Boats, Early Times	J S Rees, Nov. 1938
No. 4	Liverpool and the Newfoundland Trade	A C Wardle, Jan. 1938
No. 5	Liverpool-Its Ships & Owners a Century Ago	W S Rees, Feb. 1939
No. 6*	White Star Australian Packets	Captain E A Woods, Oct. 1942
No. 7	British Built Blockade Runners	A C Wardle, Nov. 1942
No. 8*	Ships Depicted on Postage Stamps	E W Argyle, Dec. 1942
No. 9	Brigs & Schooners – Origins	W McQ Mather, Jan. 1943
No. 10	A Model of the Shamrock Class Sloops	W McQ Mather, Oct. 1943
No. 11 <sup>‡</sup>	Three Early Liverpool Screw Steamers	A C Wardle, Nov. 1943
No. 12	John Nicol (Bully) Forbes	Captain E A Woods, Dec. 1943
No. 13	An Outline of the Nautical Bibliography	B W Bathe, Jan. 1944
No. 14	Some Merseyside Shipbuilders	W S Rees, Feb. 1944
No. 15	Sailors are Superstitious	B J Herrington, Mar. 1944

Those papers marked \* have subsequently been re-published in the *Bulletin* and those marked with <sup>‡</sup> in *News, Notes and Queries* (in separate editions).

*Transactions* was started in 1944/1945, *N.N.&Q.* commenced in January, 1951 and the *Bulletin* in January, 1973.

Society publications available at the Local History Archives at the Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool are accessible via their index entry 'Nautical'.

In 1955, Society Member Mr R B Summerfield produced a document entitled *In Retrospect* (1938 – 1955) being a brief outline of the foundation, growth and achievement of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society. On the occasion of our seventy-fifth anniversary it is reproduced here in full:

The idea of a Research Society was certainly in the minds of a number of independent research workers in 1937, notably the late Mr. Arthur C. Wardle and the late Mr. W. Stewart Rees, as is evidenced from correspondence which passed between them.

Some local ship model makers drawn towards research in their quest for accuracy in their models, were also thinking on similar lines, notably Mr. W. McQ. Mather, Mr. Harry Owen, Mr. V.H. Green, the late Mr. H.N. Leask, A.M.I.C.E

Stimulus was given to the idea by an article in the magazine *Sea Breezes* – “Preserving a Maritime Epoch” (reprinted in the *Bulletin*, Volume 54, No. 4, March 2011, page 23) – and also some paragraphs in the Liverpool Daily Post.

The return from Burma to Merseyside of the late Captain E.A. Woods, an authority on sail, and a member of the Flag Circle, undoubtedly had some influence on subsequent events.

Mr. J.F. Smith, M.A., F.R.S.A., at that time the City Librarian, lent his support, and at his invitation a private meeting was held at the Picton Reference Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool, on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1938, attended by the late Mr. Arthur C. Wardle, in the Chair, the late Captain E.A. Woods, the late Mr. W. Stewart Rees, and Messrs. H. Owen, J.F. Hall, and K. Hopkins. Mr J.F. Smith had kindly arranged a special exhibit of shipping records, maritime pictures, and books.

The meeting resolved that the Liverpool Marine Research Society be formed with the following objects:-

- 1.To encourage a public interest in Liverpool’s maritime and ship history.
- 2.To collect and collate all available material relating to Liverpool ships and seamen of the past.
- 3.To undertake an historical survey of locally owned vessels, their masters, and their owners.

It was also resolved that an Inaugural Meeting be held on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1938, to elect a Chairman, Officers and Committee.

The Liverpool Daily Post in a short article on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1938, referred to these particulars and wrote of “the promising start” the new Society had made.

Messrs. Wardle and Hall acted as Conveners of the inaugural meeting, and a letter of invitation was circulated amongst people likely to be interested. The Inaugural Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1938, was held in the Accountants’ Hall, Fenwick Street, Liverpool, and was fully reported in the Liverpool Daily Post and the Journal of Commerce the next day.

The subscription was fixed at 5/- (25 pence) per annum, and the following Officers and Committee were elected:

Chairman:	Captain E.A. Woods
Secretary and Treasurer:	Arthur C. Wardle
Recorder:	W. Stewart Rees
Committee:	H. Owen, T. Hughes, K. Hopkins, H.N. Leask, J.F. Hall, V.H. Green

The question of President and Vice-Presidents was left to the discretion of the Committee and a number of well known gentlemen were to be approached. Colonel Vere E. Cotton, C.B.E., T.D., M.A., Chairman of the Liverpool Libraries Sub-Committee spoke on the enormous amount of work there was for members of the Society to tackle and Mr. Robert Gladstone, B.C.L., suggested the name should be "Liverpool Maritime Research Society". For a month, however, the name continued as "Marine" rather than "Maritime", and letter headings were printed with "Marine" in the title. Others present at this meeting included Messrs. John S. Rees, E.B. Royden (now Sir Ernest, 3rd baronet), and W. McQ. Mather.

The next meeting of the Society was held at the School of Commerce, Tithebarn Street, Liverpool, on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1938, where, in addition to adopting a Constitution and Rules, Mr Arthur C. Wardle presented the first paper to be read before the Society entitled "Early Liverpool Vessels and Trade". This paper was reported in the Liverpool Daily Post on 10<sup>th</sup> May. By 11<sup>th</sup> May the name of the Society had been finally decided, and the Liverpool Daily Post recorded that:-

"The newly formed society which is to study Liverpool shipping history has at last decided what its name should be. Originally it chose 'The Liverpool Marine Research Society'; then it was changed for a short time to 'The Liverpool Maritime Research Society'; then it went back to the original title tentatively; and finally it has chosen 'The Liverpool Nautical Research Society'. Rightly or wrongly, some supporters thought that 'Marine' would suggest to the man in the street a biological interest, and 'Maritime' a commercial interest".

A short notice under the heading "Maritime Research" appeared in Lloyd's List, 26th May, 1938.

The late Lord Derby accepted the Presidency by letter dated the 4th June, and on the 23rd June, 1938, the following announcement appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post, under the heading "Nautical Research":

"In discussing some time ago the formation of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society, I mentioned that it was assured of influential support. I am now able to announce that the Earl of Derby has accepted the presidency, while vice-presidencies have been accepted by Sir Edgar Rennie Bowring (to whose inspiration the excellent history of the Bowring

ships recently published was due, an example which might be followed by many other shipping firms in Liverpool), Sir Geoffrey Callender (Director of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, who from the start has been keenly interested in the Liverpool move), and Messrs. Robert Gladstone and Earnest B. Royden, both of whom joined the Society at the outset”.

“The Society is rapidly getting together a membership of men and women genuinely interested in local shipping history, which includes that of the people who built, owned and manned the ships”.

On 9<sup>th</sup> July the Daily Post announced that Mr. Ronald Stewart-Brown and Sir Sydney Jones had joined the list of Vice-Presidents, making six altogether.

Some reference to these early days also appeared in the magazine *Sea Breezes* for May, 1938, page 64, and June, 1938, page 104.

Four further papers and one lecture were given during the season 1938/ 39, when the war caused the Society to close down temporarily for a year or two.

Finding that Liverpool still stood firm after the worst the enemy could do, a number of the Founder Members were ready and anxious to take up the threads again. Apart from the enforced interval of more than three years and the loss of many valuable documents and records through enemy action, enthusiasm and incentive had not suffered, and the Society reformed at a meeting held in Richmond Street, on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1942.

This meeting was, in fact, the first Annual General Meeting, and after the election of Officers and Council, a paper, “The White Star Australian Packets” was read by Captain E.A. Woods, who continued as Chairman of the Society. Meetings were held on Saturday afternoons as a safety measure whilst hostilities lasted, but a return to evening meetings was made in October, 1945.

The subscription was maintained at 5/- at the resumption in 1942, then increased to 7/6 (37½ pence) for the following season and 10/- (50 pence) for the 1944/45 season, at which level it has remained ever since.

From that rebirth in 1942, a series of papers and illustrated lectures has been given to the Society, interspersed with open soirees, dock visits, film shows, etc. The total number of meetings has now reached 97 and 53 papers (April, 1955).

In 1947, Mr Arthur C. Wardle was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society for his researches into the history of Liverpool.

With a desire to widen the scope of the Society, a sub-committee was appointed in 1948 to consider, and if thought necessary, to revise the Constitution and Rules, originally drafted in 1938. In November, 1948, at the adjourned Annual General Meeting, the new Constitution and Rules were approved and adopted.



In February, 1952, the Society became affiliated to the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire, and members are invited to their lectures whenever they are of a nautical character. In March, 1954, Mr. A.N. Ryan, M.A., Honorary Secretary of the Society, was elected to the Council of the Navy Records Society.

The Society members have been active in research in connection with shipping on the Mersey and the West Coast generally, and very considerable strides have been made in the recording of information about Liverpool ships, their owners and builders, and the voyages which they made.

Much of this information is contained in the original fifteen papers, deposited in the Picton Reference Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool, and in the seven volumes of *Transactions* published, from 1944 onwards, by the Society.

Lectures have been printed and other information of nautical interest has been issued from time to time, notably the researches of Mr. Arthur C. Wardle and Captain E.A. Woods. Copies of these contributions are also deposited in the Picton Reference Library.

A new feature, a quarterly pamphlet, "News, Notes and Queries" was commenced in January, 1951, edited by Mr. Keith P. Lewis, and has continued under his care ever since. This includes a report of the previous paper or lecture read to the Society, news of, and contributions from members, and items of local maritime interest.

But how did the badge emerge?



It was in fact presented to the Society by our Founding President, Ernest B. Royden. In 1930, Mr. George Kruger Gray, the well-known heraldic artist designed a badge for the then Mr. Royden, which was never put to its intended use.

With a suitable alteration in the lettering it became our official badge, and the Society is most grateful to the President for his kindness. Some years later Mr Royden was in fact elevated to become Sir Ernest, 3rd Baronet

It is of interest to note that Mr. Gray, on one occasion, designed some of our national coinage.

## Sticker Enclosure

John Stokoe, (Hon. Secretary)

It is with much pleasure that we enclose a 'car sticker' to commemorate the Society's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; it is hoped that with pride these will grace the windscreens of members' cars. We are particularly indebted to Life Member William J. Pape for his recent donation to our Society's account, which has enabled this rather novel initiative

(Thank you, Bill)

## Serendipity

Recently spotted (Sea Breezes Vol. 21, p 10, 1956)

By Society Member Harry Hignett

Liverpool Nautical Research Society

The 100th meeting of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society was held in the Picton Reference Library on 7th December (1955? Ed.), when Mr Frank G.G. Carr, Director of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, was the speaker. Formed in 1938 the Society has held regular meetings ever since, apart from a short period during the War.

## Plaque Commemorates Liverpool Pilots

The Editor

During 2011 it was realised that anyone passing the former pilot office on the river frontage of Liverpool's historic Albert Dock, at Canning Pierhead North would not be aware of its history.

Strangely there is a plaque on its NW wall commemorating the Irish famine, but not one to indicate the building's former purpose.

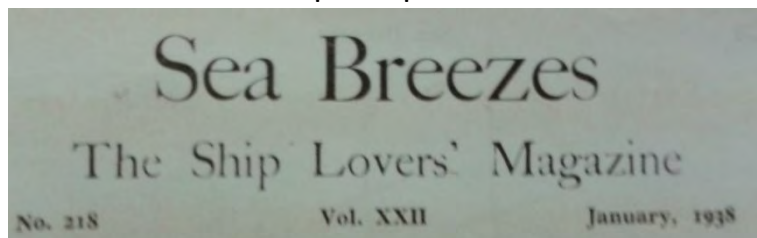
Through the intervention of the Liverpool Pilots (Retired Division) and the Liverpool Pilots (who have met the full costs of production and installation) the omission has now been corrected.

It is of further interest that the Liverpool Pilot Service will celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2016, and they are liaising with the Maritime Museum in the expectation that a suitable exhibition might be put on in that year.

## REMEMBER THOSE DAYS .....

The Editor

It was hoped that the normal format of the "Remember those days...." section could be created from the Sea Breezes editions covering the foundation year of the Society. However the then content is very different from that of the 1970s and 1990s. The clue perhaps lies in the title then used.



The content reflects a nostalgic interest in events of the past with the lesser parts devoted to the then current activity, but that in itself relates almost

exclusively to activities of sailing ships of the day. This was incorporated in the regular article entitled "The Signal Station." What follows will give a flavour of what was reported under that heading in 1938.

### Signal Station, January:

The outward passages to South Africa have been protracted, the best being **Lawhill**, 73 days from Elsinore. In contrast to the earlier sailings when delays were general in clearing from soundings, **Winterhude** has made a good passage of 29 days from Clyde to 4<sup>0</sup>–45'S. of the Line.

Late in November considerable anxiety was caused by the American schooner **Helen Barnet Gring** being considered overdue, as no news had been received of her since sailing from Parrsboro, N.S., on 17th September for the Mersey. It was soon found however that she had put into Eastport, Me., and sailed again on 15th October and was reported on 26th *idem* in good order. She did not arrive however at her destination until 4th December.

Across the Atlantic, the American three-mast schooner **Henry H. Chamberlain** stranded at Dover, N.S., on 15<sup>th</sup> November and became a total loss.

### Signal Station, February:

The best news to report is the fine passage of seventy-nine days from Clyde to Port Victoria made by **Winterhude**. Her good start mentioned last month was maintained, and it is very doubtful if her passage will ever be equalled. Will she go down to history as the last sailing ship to make a passage of under eighty days to Australia? **Abraham Rydberg** and **Admiral Karpfanger** were 105 and 107 days respectively, but each had a bad start. Freights homeward have declined, and the latest fixtures are: **Penang**, 37s 6d; and **Olivebank**, 36s 6d per ton.

**Viking** has also made a very good run of 24 days from East London to Port Lincoln, beating **Killoran** by 7 days.

There are some losses to report amongst the smaller sailing vessels. The French schooner **Sylvabelle** was sunk off St. Ives by collision, the schooner **La Bougeotte** foundered off Cape Creus, and the **St Jean**, which left Fecamp last October for Bari, having been sold to Italy, after sundry troubles on the coast, was eventually wrecked on one of the Chausey Islands between Jersey and St. Malo; unfortunately, four of her crew were drowned. The Italian schooner **Oropa**, 467 tons, has gone ashore near Philippeville, and is likely to become a total loss; the crew were saved. The Danish **Frida** has been ashore, but refloated.

#### Signal Station, March:

Two more arrivals at South Australia are to be recorded, **Passat** and **Pommern**, in almost equal time; three others have left South Africa for Australia.

Captain Oscar Malmberg, master of s.v. **Abraham Rydberg** reports the following passage outwards:- *“Left Elsinore Roads, September 6<sup>th</sup>, with strong S.W. wind, and passed the Skaw 12 hours later with royals fast and a strong breeze from S.S.W. A few hours later wind veering to W. and blowing a gale. Then wind varying between W.S.W. and W.N.W. for four days with variable strength. Sometimes royals on for a few hours, and sometimes only lower topsails.*

*At last we got a favourable wind and passed Dover seven days out. Then head winds for five days in the channel. Strong and fair wind to the Porto Santo, when the wind shifted to W.S.W., and as we should call at Madeira kept us tacking on and off between Madeira and Porto Santo for a week.*

*We spent two days at Madeira, where all the cadets got a sight-seeing tour right on top of the mountains, which they highly appreciated.*

*Sailed from Madeira at night and did not get any strong Trade Wind. We got better luck in the Doldrums and in the South Atlantic Ocean anyhow, and from the Line to Cape meridian very good indeed, as we only had 21 days and a few hours. As we left the S.E. Trade and were changing sails, we had a very unusual sight – another big sailing ship ahead!*

*The wind was light and calm with squalls, but the next day we passed her so near that we could exchange names with the morse lamp, and found out it was **Viking**. In the night we got fresh southerly, and as we stood away to the westward with all sails drawing, it was the last sight of her.*

*From the meridian of Cape of Good Hope to the Kerguelen Islands, we had much calm and head wind and made very small progress, as you can understand, as it took us a fortnight. From the Kerguelen meridian to Wallaroo, as we at last got strong, favourable winds, and made a very good running up. The whole voyage was accomplished in 102 days' sailing time.*

*We have had very fine weather the whole time, and no storms. Was nearly run over three times by different steamers, but escaped!”*

A report from a Danish correspondent states that the Estonian schooner **Martha**, of Parnu, ex **Clara Davis**, is at Copenhagen, leaking badly and floating on her cargo; she has probably sailed her last voyage. Built of wood, in 1905, at Mystic, Conn., U.S.A., she was under the French flag from 1917 – 1928. Can any American readers give particulars of her early days under the Stars and Stripes? It would be interesting to Sea Breezers.

The American schooner **Leona and Marion** was abandoned on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 12 miles off Nantucket, in a sinking condition.

The following sample of sailing ship movements is taken from the January, 1938 edition:

#### Australian Trade – Outward (via South Africa)

**Abraham Rydberg** (direct). Wirelessly 26<sup>th</sup> November, 3<sup>rd</sup> December and 10<sup>th</sup> *idem*.

**Admiral Karpfanger** (direct). Wirelessly in 1<sup>st</sup> December and 8<sup>th</sup> *idem*.

**Archibald Russell** (via Laurence Marques). Spoken to 16<sup>th</sup> November.

**Killoran** Arrived East London 26<sup>th</sup> November, 92 days from Oslo. Sailed again 15<sup>th</sup> December for Port Victoria.

**Lawhill** Arrived East London 13<sup>th</sup> December, 73 days from Elsinore.

**Moshulu** Arrived Laurence Marques 16<sup>th</sup> December. 74 days from Skaw.

**Olivebank** (via Port Natal) Spoken to xxxxx

**Passat** Arrived East London 26<sup>th</sup> November. 95 days from Elsinore.

**Pommern** Arrived Port Natal 11<sup>th</sup> December. 84 days from Elsinore

**Viking** Arrived East London 26<sup>th</sup> November. 75 days from Skaw.

**Winterhude** (direct), spoken 16<sup>th</sup> November: 29 days out from Clyde.

#### Baltic Passages

**Alastor** Arrived Mariehamn 2<sup>nd</sup> December. 13 days from Gravesend.

**Gunn** Arrived Copenhagen 26<sup>th</sup> November. 15 days from Kalix.

**Jadn**, Estonian four-mast schooner. Arrived London 10<sup>th</sup> December, from Karlsborg.

**Tormilind** Arrived Copenhagen 15<sup>th</sup> November, 18 days from Vüpur. Wrecked on a sunken rock off Russarö Light, on the southern coast of Finland on 11<sup>st</sup> inst., three men went down with her, the rest being saved by a steamer. She was owned by Captain Tiedermann, Tallin (details from Sven Tvermoes, Copenhagen).

#### Miscellaneous Trades

**Albert H. Willis**, American three-mast schooner. Arrived New York 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 18 days from Beaver Harbour, N.S.

**Alvena** American four-mast schooner. Sailed New York 14<sup>th</sup> November for Sheet Harbour, N.S. Put into Boston 18<sup>th</sup> *idem* for shelter and sailed 30<sup>th</sup> for destination.

**Anna R. Heidritter**, American four-mast schooner. Arrived New York 28<sup>th</sup> November, 23 days from Jacksonville, Fl with bowsprit and headgear carried away after collision with ss **Pennland**.

**Bastian**, British brigantine. Sailed Grand Banks, 15<sup>th</sup> November for Oporto.

**Chesley R.**, British schooner. Arrived Lisbon, 22<sup>nd</sup> November. 25 days from Grand Banks

**Citnalta**, British three-mast schooner. Cleared from New York, 30<sup>th</sup> October for St. John, N.B., and passed Highland Light, Cape Cod, 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**Edna Hoyt**, American five-mast schooner. Sailed Cardiff for La Guaira, towed in Lisbon, 25<sup>th</sup> November. Leaky.

**Helen Barnet Gring**, American four-mast schooner. Arrived Birkenhead, 4<sup>th</sup> December; 50 days from Eastport, Me.

**James and Stanley**, British schooner. Sailed New York, 17<sup>th</sup> November, for Grand Banks.

**Jean F. Anderson**, British three-mast schooner. Arrived Barbados, 10<sup>th</sup> December; 21 days from Bridgewater, N.S.

**Jean F. McRae**, British three-mast schooner. Arrived North Sydney, N.S., 20<sup>th</sup> November; 27 days from Barbados.

**Padua**, German four-mast barque. Wirelessly 27<sup>th</sup> November and 9<sup>th</sup> December.

**Priwall**, German four-mast barque. Arrived Hamburg, 21<sup>st</sup> November; 4 days from Dunkirk.

**Ronald C. Longmire**, British three-mast schooner. Arrived St. John, N.B., 15<sup>th</sup> November; 49 days from Barbados, via Moncton, N.B. Arrived Yarmouth, N.S., 20<sup>th</sup> *idem*

**St. Clair Theriault**, British three-mast schooner. Sailed Boston, 16<sup>th</sup> November, for Port Hawkesbury, N.S.

**Schulschiff Deutschland**, German training ship. Arrived Santos, 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

#### French schooners to and from South Wales

**Eglantine**, schooner. Sailed Penarth Roads, 6<sup>th</sup> December, for Concarneau.

**Leon**, ketch. Arrived Cardiff, 14<sup>th</sup> December, from Auray after sheltering in Mounts Bay.

**Oceanide**, schooner. Arrived Cardiff, 17<sup>th</sup> November; 3 days from Roscoff (2¼ days from Longships). Arrived Roscoff, 26<sup>th</sup> *idem*; 4 days from Cardiff. Arrived Penarth Roads, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 3½ days from Roscoff (17 hours from Longships). Sailed Cardiff, 16<sup>th</sup> December, for Treguier.

**Roger Robert**, ketch. Arrived Cardiff, 19<sup>th</sup> November; 3 days from Donarnenez. On return voyage sank off Roscoff, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, after explosion. Crew saved.

**Sylvabelle**, schooner. Arrived Lorient, 19<sup>th</sup> November; 6 days from Cardiff. Arrived Cardiff, 2<sup>nd</sup> December; 3 days from Lorient. Sailed Cardiff, 16<sup>th</sup> December, for Quiberon.

#### British sailing coasters

**Alert**. Put back Holyhead, 19<sup>th</sup> November, and sailed next day for Runcorn. Sailed Weston Point, 1<sup>st</sup> December, for Port Dinorwic.

**Brooklands**. Passed Mumbles, 14<sup>th</sup> December, for Briton Ferry.

**Katie**. Sailed London, 15<sup>th</sup> November, inside Isle of Wight, off Yarmouth from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, arrived Fowey, 22<sup>nd</sup> *idem*, after a dirty passage and at Par the following day



## Liverpool Merchant Shipping Conference - 2013

After successful events in London, the organiser now advises that this event moves to Liverpool where it is to be held in conjunction with the World Ship Society's Merseyside Branch, the Liverpool Nautical Research Society and the Centre for Port and Maritime History. The planned date is Saturday 2nd November and the venue is the Liverpool Seafarer's Centre, 20 Crosby Road South, Liverpool L22 1RQ.

The meeting will begin at 10.30am with a quiz, followed by six presentations of approximately 40 minutes each, with a break for lunch and finishing about 17.00. Refreshments can be bought at the Centre, which is readily accessible by road and public transport. Those attending will be asked to make a modest donation to cover costs.

Some speakers are already promised, but we would be pleased to have further volunteers. Already booked are talks about Liverpool-Welsh ship owners, Liverpool's coastal shipping, and a look at shipping companies' marketing as portrayed by their posters. Presentations are usually made using Powerpoint but, for those unfamiliar with this medium, help in preparing a presentation can be given.

Expressions of interest are invited, as a minimum of 25 is required to make the event viable. Nearer the time a detailed programme will be sent out to those registering. Please register by 1<sup>st</sup> July by e-mail to [roy@fenton.co.uk](mailto:roy@fenton.co.uk) or by writing to Roy Fenton, 18 Durrington Avenue, London SW20

### The Skerries Lighthouse - and the price of generosity adapted from *Rock Lighthouses of Britain* by Christopher Nicholson

The day Henry Winstanley first put a taper to the tallow candles in his beacon on the Eddystone reef, 12 miles out from Plymouth, a new era of lighthouse construction was about to unfold. He had finally proved that it was indeed possible to place a lighthouse on an isolated, sea-swept rock.

Trinity House who, under the Charter of 1566 had been granted the sole right to supervise the erection of lighthouses and beacons, were doubtless grateful to Winstanley for the financial saving it meant to them, but would be less pleased with the deluge of requests that now followed for similar beacons to be put up on various exposed sites around the coasts of England and Wales.

Several of these petitions concerned the lighting of a notorious group of low-lying rocky islets 4 miles off the northern coast of Anglesey and 7 miles north-east from Holyhead known as the Skerries. What's interesting about the lighthouse on this site is not so much the tale of its construction, but the history of how it came into existence and the landmark events which took place before it was finally acquired by Trinity House from private ownership.

As long ago as 1658 there were rumblings of discontent about the Skerries from merchants trading between Britain and Ireland. Chief amongst the protesters was one Henry Hascard, a private speculator, who highlighted the need for some kind of beacon on these rocks which were in the direct path of vessels plying between Liverpool and Dublin. He appealed to Oliver Cromwell's Council of State and even offered to personally erect a beacon there. Trinity House, jealously guarding their 1566 rights, opposed Hascard vehemently and the matter lapsed, even though, by April 1662, they had agreed in principle that the construction of a Skerries beacon was desirable.

A particularly high-profile casualty of the Skerries at this time was the first British 'Royal Yacht' **Maria** - a gift to Charles II in 1660 from the people of Holland. On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1675 en-route from Dublin to Chester with 46 passengers and 28 crew, she struck the Skerries in full sail and dense fog at 9.30pm. She came to rest on her side with her mast touching land, enabling just over half the passengers to escape along the mast-bridge. The ship's Master, his bosun and another thirty or so souls perished.

With the dawn of the 18th century over 140 merchantmen signed a petition to light this reef in 1705. It was drawn up by Captain John Davison who duly presented his signatures to the Attorney General in 1709, pointing out that it was only because, "*. . . many ships were cast away . . . chiefly for want of a light in the night on the Welsh Coast*" that his petition was necessary. Out of courtesy, In 1711, The Attorney General, Sir Edward Northey, invited the views of Trinity House on this matter. They again protested that Queen Elizabeth I had granted them the sole rights in this matter, and under no circumstances were they prepared to put the undertaking into the hands of private individuals. Also, they now saw no pressing need for a light on this site. However, if those involved were prepared to meet some of the cost, then Trinity House would build a lighthouse there.

This was indeed a curious statement, as in 1662 they were in agreement with the principle but the construction, they said, was out of the question owing to the exposed position of the reef. Yet now, just 49 years later, the Elder Brethren were actually offering to do the building themselves. Could it be that the successful placing of two lighthouses on the notorious Eddystone had altered the perspective

with which they viewed isolated sea rocks, and that sites previously considered impossible were now being regarded as a more feasible proposition?

What is probably the most significant decision in the whole history of this saga was now taken by Northey and his Law Officers. They disagreed with Trinity House about their sole rights, and recommended to the Crown in 1710 that Captain Davison's petition and offer of construction be granted. Legal difficulties encountered in negotiating a lease of the Skerries from their owner, one John Robinson, meant that Davison and his fellow petitioners never availed themselves of this historic decision and their interest waned in 1712.

In June 1713, the Skerries were acquired by a wealthy merchant, William Trench, with a 99-year lease on payment of £10 rent for the first year and £20 for subsequent years. By 13<sup>th</sup> July 1714 he had added to this a patent for the erection of a lighthouse, financed from his own pocket, at an additional annual rent of £5, but with a provision to collect dues of 1d and 2d a ton from shipping for 60 years after its completion.

Trench could not have had a more disastrous start. In 1714 he watched the departure of the first boat containing his son and six workmen for the Skerries. He never saw his son again; before they reached the rocks their boat was wrecked in a freak storm which swamped the boat and snapped its mast. It was driven onto Platters Rock with the loss of all seven men.

It was not until 1717 that he finished his lighthouse. It had cost him the life of his son and over £3,000 to produce a tower, *"about 150 foot higher than ye sea about it and on ye 4th November a fire was kindled therein and ever since supported."* But it was a landmark in more ways than one - apart from the warning it gave, it was also the first permanent light along the entire west coast of England.

Rather than relying on candles for illumination Trench had installed a coal-burning grate. The northern coast of Anglesey was frequently engulfed by notorious sea fogs which can form in a matter of minutes and last for several days; swirling mists that caused the loss of many fine vessels. It is unlikely that any source of illumination could pierce far into these fogs, but of the choices of illuminant Trench could reasonably have made, a cast-iron grate 3ft across piled high with burning coals was perhaps the most satisfactory compromise. Its intensity, although completely inadequate by later standards, would certainly have been an improvement on a handful of tallow candles.

According to contemporary documents, the circular stone tower was about 36ft high with the grate set at 78ft above the high water mark. At a later date, but on the same islet, a lightkeeper's cottage was built from the local stone with the characteristic Anglesey feature of stepped gable ends. It still exists today, although

abandoned since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is probably the earliest remaining purpose-built offshore lighthouse keeper's house anywhere in the world. Large amounts of fuel were required to keep the light in service, 80 tons in an average year, upwards of 100 tons during severe winters. It was stockpiled on Carmel Head and brought across by boat. Smoke from the smouldering coals soon became a serious problem, particularly when there was no breeze to prevent it from obscuring the glow. So frequent was this occurrence that the Skerries' coal grate earned for itself the reputation of being one of the worst lights in Britain.

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 1725, eight years after its completion, William Trench died. The ownership of the Skerries was passed to his wife Ruth, while the lease of the lighthouse passed to his daughter Anne and her husband Sutton Morgan who sold it for a nominal sum. This unhappy outcome was caused by the Trench family having difficulty with the enforcement of light dues, particularly in the port of Liverpool where the majority of traffic passing the Skerries was bound to or from. Losses were estimated at over £100 a year during the infancy of the light, which coupled with the £3,000 spent on construction, meant that for most of the 12 years preceding his death Trench was an impoverished man.

Out of sympathy for his descendants, Trench's family, upon presentation of the lighthouse accounts, were granted the lease of the light, together with the right to keep all the dues, *in perpetuity*, by an Act of Parliament of 24<sup>th</sup> June 1730. This was an exceptional act of generosity, a precedent they were later to regret, and one that was to give the Skerries a unique place in lighthouse history.

In 1759 Trench's original tower was demolished by Sutton Morgan's son and replaced by a new stone tower 28ft high and 22ft in diameter, together with a new coal jetty. In 1778 the Skerries lighthouse became the property of Morgan Jones Snr, the High Sheriff of Cardiganshire who managed his property with particular diligence. By 1803, however, the Skerries coal fired grate was beginning to look distinctly dated compared to recent advances in lighthouse construction and illumination. Trinity House 'advised' Morgan Jones – because that was all they could do – that extensive repairs and upgrades were required. Wisely, he listened to their advice.

Samuel Wyatt, the Trinity House consulting engineer, produced plans to raise the tower by a further 22ft, complete with battlements along the top. Above this a proper iron-framed and glazed lantern, 12ft high, was installed, complete with 16 Argand lamps and reflectors. They gave a range of approximately 18 miles for the light and were lit for the first time on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1804.

The early half of the 19th century saw trade between England and the Americas expand considerably. In 1834, it was calculated that the profits for the

Skerries lighthouse, after expenses and maintenance costs had been deducted, was well over £12,500. Much of this trade was conducted through the thriving port of Liverpool, causing all such vessels to pass the Skerries and therefore render themselves liable to light dues. In less than a century the coal-burning, smoke-enshrouded light which had bankrupted its builder was transformed into a highly profitable, oil-burning lantern, a fact that had not gone unnoticed by Parliament.

Exactly how profitable they were not entirely sure to begin with. By 1834 the light was in the hands of another Morgan Jones who had inherited it from his father of the same name. A Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry in that year demanded to see the lighthouse accounts but Jones claimed immunity from producing them by an earlier Act passed in the days of George II. When the figures were eventually extracted from him, the government were staggered to find that besides an annual profit of over £12,000, he was also receiving £1,700 from them under a reciprocal agreement made during the earlier history of the light when it was incapable of recovering its own costs. Such an absurd state of affairs would not exist, Parliament said, if all lighthouses around our coasts were managed and administered by one responsible body, who would levy a standard rate of light dues for all lighthouses. This would do away with 'private' lights whose owners were at liberty to charge whatever they thought appropriate, and had led to unscrupulous profiteering.

As a result the Act of 1836 was passed, *'An Act for vesting lighthouses, lights and seamarks in England in the Corporation of Trinity House'*, which gave Trinity House the authority to purchase all remaining private lights – by compulsory purchase if necessary – and bring them under their jurisdiction. This legislation started lengthy legal wrangling over the Skerries which were to further guarantee this beacon a special place British lighthouse history.

Trinity House was keen to acquire the ownership of this lucrative source of income as soon as possible, yet Morgan Jones was a resolute man who was equally determined not to part with his property without a fight, particularly as it was now earning him over £20,000 a year. He rejected offers of first £260,000, then £350,000, and lastly £399,500 for his lease. For five further years Jones resisted the pressure of the Elder Brethren, taking the view that his family had been granted the right to all the light dues from the Skerries "in perpetuity" and therefore the Act of 1836 did not apply to him. He would doubtless have done so for a good deal longer had it not been for his untimely death in 1841.

Here was the ideal opportunity for Trinity House to take control of the light, yet the battle was not quite over. The executors of Morgan Jones, the same solicitors who had been fighting for him against Trinity House, insisted on the final settlement being decided by a jury. It led to a jury sitting before the High Sheriff at

Beaumaris, Anglesey, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1841, who awarded to Morgan Jones' estate the phenomenal sum of £444,984.

The fate of the Skerries light was finally sealed. From that day the light was maintained by Trinity House who had paid a vast sum, sizeable even by today's inflated standards, yet undreamt of in 1841. It was the final private lighthouse to pass into public control and fetched a King's ransom for doing so. The beacon which in 1777 was one of the worst lights in the United Kingdom and left its builder a destitute bankrupt had now sprung to prominence for the second time in its history. How Parliament must have bitterly regretted their generous decision in favour of the Trench family over a century earlier.

In 1845 Trinity House and James Walker, their consulting engineer, started on another new tower 75ft high with a ring of even more impressive castellations on top. A new iron lantern, 14ft in diameter and 16ft high, contained 16 Argand lamps with mirrored reflectors that revolved by clockwork. Its light was set at 119ft above high tides, had a range of 18 miles, and was first seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1846.

Apart from continuous modifications and improvements in line with the technology of the day, this is the structure that is found on the Skerries today. A huge 'First Order' Fresnel lens from Chance Brothers revolving around a new oil lamp on a clockwork pedestal arrived in 1851, increasing its range to 21 miles. A fog horn was added in September 1876, and a new semi-circular lantern 10ft in diameter and 21ft high was attached to the south west of the existing tower in 1903. It showed a fixed red beam, visible for 14 miles over a cluster of dangerous outliers of the Skerries. Electricity arrived in 1927 and automation in 1987 ending a period of 270 years of continuous manned service at the same lighthouse.

These 270 years have not been without incident, indeed 'troubled' might be a fair description of the history of the Skerries lighthouses. However, throughout the embittered legal complexities and the stubborn resistance of all the various parties concerned, one fact mustn't be overlooked. These disputes were over a lighthouse - tangible evidence of one of mankind's more humane instincts, and a building whose sole purpose was to save lives. As such, its purchase would have been justified at twice the price.

The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Trinity House and Chris Foulds, a former keeper of the Skerries lighthouse, with some of the illustrations for this article. The historic postcards are from the authors collection.

*Rock Lighthouses of Britain* by Christopher Nicholson ISBN 1-904445-27-6 (Whittles Publishing, 2006)





From a helicopter landing on the pad built in one half of the walled garden. The stepped gable end cottage - a former keeper's dwelling - is visible to the right of the tower. (Chris Foulds)



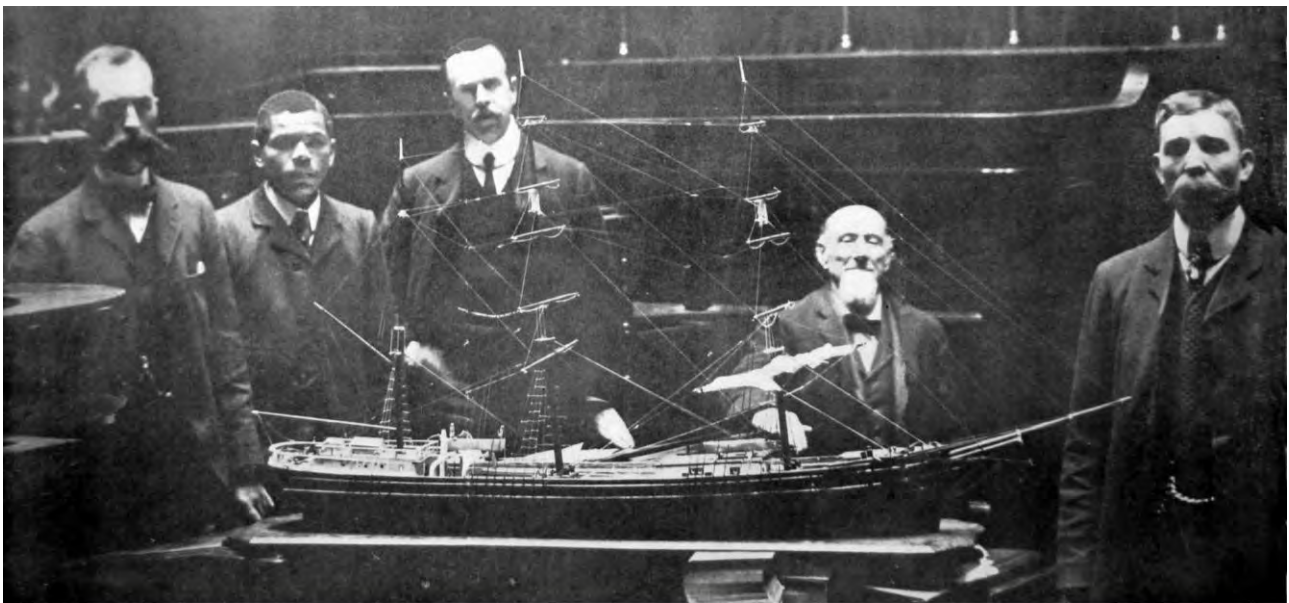
Principal Keeper W.J. Hast going ashore from the Skerries lighthouse on board a Trinity House vessel in the days before helicopter reliefs. (ALK archives)



A dramatic view of the Skerries lighthouse at night in which we can clearly see the fixed red sector light at the base of the tower. (Chris Foulds)



The barque **Veronica**, painted in 1893 by William Yorke.  
Picture courtesy New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, NB.



Detective Inspector  
Duckworth

Veronica's Cook,  
Moses Thomas

The Artist  
W. H. Yorke

The Biloxi Pilot  
Antonie Bellande

Detective Sergeant  
Ford

The Witnesses for the Prosecution at the Trial of the **Veronica** Mutineers

## Mutiny and Murder on the Veronica

By LNRS member Gordon Bodey

Much of the sailing-ship era, particularly in popular accounts, is portrayed as that of tough men living romantic, adventurous lives. The reality was very different: a great many were shiftless, drunken ne'er-do-wells who lived in appalling conditions, were worked excessively hard, and often had to battle the elements to survive. Many were violent and, given the opportunity, some were murderous. Masters and their officers were required to be tough and constantly vigilant to ensure that control was maintained, but in doing so brutality was not uncommon. In some cases enough crew members of a like mind were able to get the upper hand, and mutiny and murder ensued. The **Veronica** mutiny was such a case.

**Veronica**, a three-masted barque some 186 ft long x 38 ft wide x 22 ft deep, and of 1167 grt. was built at Indiatown, N.B. in 1879. In 1900 she was owned by Robert Thompson of Saint John, N.B., who also owned a near sister ship, the **Monrovia**. Alexander Shaw signed as master on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 1900, at Waterford, but had been on her previous voyage as first mate.

Shaw was born at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1853. From the middle of 1882 he appears to have acted as chief mate and relieving master (uncertificated) of the Canadian barque **Bluebird** until February 1886 when he went to Liverpool to sit his master's ticket, which he obtained (ticket number 014304). His first command thereafter was the **Lottie Bell** (June 1887), a small barquentine owned by G.D. Longworth of Charlottetown, P.E.I.

By 1902, aged forty-nine, he was extremely deaf, and was noted as a violent, cruel man at sea, although when ashore in more refined company, as a mild-mannered, softly-spoken gentleman. Part of Shaw's earlier sea-going character was described by one James Brame in a letter to the *Mobile Herald*, published 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1903. At the time Brame was cook at Jackson's logging camp at Peterman (80 miles NE of Mobile).

In it he said that he had sailed with Shaw in the 1880s in an American barque called the **Bluebeard** in which Shaw was the chief mate. He stated that Shaw had made life hell for six weeks for the eight Norwegians in her crew (of whom Brame was one) on the trip from New York to Rio de Janeiro. However, the vessel referred to was apparently the **Bluebird** above (no vessel registered as **Bluebeard** has been located). She left New York for Rio de Janeiro on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1883, and arrived there on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1884 - a passage of eight weeks. He also said:

*"In the late 80's Captain Shaw was arrested in Boston for cruelty to sailors and was placed under \$500 bond, but pulled out, leaving his bondsmen to settle. As mate and master his career was well known by many an old sailor. He belonged to the old school of sailors that give a blow first and a curse later, a born tyrant."*

The **Veronica** had arrived at Ship Island, about twelve miles south of Biloxi, in mid-August 1902 from Rio de Janeiro, in ballast, and was piloted across the bar to an anchorage by Antonie Bellande. Here she remained in quarantine for fifteen days (for five days of which the pilot had to remain on board). On completion of the quarantine period she commenced loading a cargo of timber for Montevideo; the cargo being stowed both in the holds and on deck.

By 25<sup>th</sup> September Captain Shaw had a full crew. All had been signed by Shaw, who relied on the crimps at boarding houses and bars to round up ratings to replace those who had signed off, or who had absconded. The going rate seems to have been thirty dollars a head.

The first officer, Alexander McCloud, also a native of P.E.I. and had sailed with Shaw on the ship's previous voyage. He was noted as an efficient, but tough man who would knock to the ground anyone who did not obey an order promptly.

Fred Abrahamson, a Swede aged about thirty-nine and illiterate, was signed as bosun, and acted as second mate, and according to those who had known him at Biloxi, the worst of a very bad lot. He had sailed with Shaw on an earlier voyage but had since been ashore at Biloxi acting as a boarding-master i.e a crimp.

Gustav Rau (aged 28), a German, who had left the German Navy in January 1901, and subsequently served as a fireman on a steamer. He joined the **Veronica** on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1902 at Ship Island, Miss.

Ludwig C.H. Flohr, another German, had been signed on at Rio de Janeiro the previous voyage. He was just turned eighteen, and had been at sea for two years.

Otto Monsson (aged 19) was also a German, and like Flohr had sailed with Shaw on the previous voyage. He became acquainted with Rau whilst working for a week or two on an oyster boat out of Biloxi while the **Veronica** was loading.

<sup>1</sup>Willem Smith, a Dutchman, was born at Vlaardingen (by Rotterdam) in 1872. He had been dismissed for theft from a German steamer on which he had served as a fireman for a year, and had then shipped as a fireman on the German steamer **Luise** at Rotterdam, bound for Pensacola, Florida. Arriving there, he deserted with three others.

Alex Bravo (otherwise Bijou), originally from India, had lodged with an Alfred Brown, a crimp at Scranton, Miss. Brown had passed both Bravo and Smith to Captain Shaw in return for sixty dollars.

Nothing is known about the two other Swedes in the crew, Gus Johansen, and Julius Herrson (or Parrson), or about an Irishman, Pat Durran (or Doran).

Lastly, there was Moses Thomas (aged 24) of Deep Creek, Va. who signed on as cook/steward, and had been at sea for ten years. George Lander, a boarding-house keeper at Mobile, and with whom Thomas had stayed for four days in early October, said that Thomas was a quiet, steady man of good character. The same



testament was given by Charles Jacobs, steward and part owner of the schooner **Gertrude A. Bartlett** in which Thomas had sailed. Thomas had been shipped aboard the **Veronica** by Charles Nelson, a saloon-keeper, who said that he had known Captain Shaw for three years, and knew him as a very hard and mean man. However, <sup>2</sup>C.T. Ellis of Scranton, Miss., who had been the cook of the **Veronica** before Thomas, had a very good opinion of Captain Shaw.

Loading was completed by 5<sup>th</sup> October, and the ship was cleared to sail on a voyage that would be expected to take between seventy and eighty days. Also, she was provisioned for the round trip as commodities at Montevideo were considered too expensive. On 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1902 she was towed over the bar at Ship Island; the pilot taking her out into the Gulf of Mexico was again Antonie Bellande, who later recalled that all seemed well on board and no signs of discontent were observed. He also said that the provision merchants, De Jean Mitchell & Co. at Biloxi, were noted for the high quality of the goods that they provided.

Little is known of the **Veronica's** passage after leaving Ship Island. It is known that her passage to Montevideo would have entailed her sailing south-eastward to round Florida, then northward up through the Florida Straits. When sufficiently northward to clear the Little Bahama Bank she would have sailed on an eastward course for about a thousand miles, then south-eastward until in the vicinity of St Peter & St Paul Rocks. These lie almost on the equator midway between West Africa and northeast Brazil. Here she would pick up the NE Trades, which would carry her on a south-westerly course, sufficiently far out in the Atlantic to clear the NE coast of Brazil.

On 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1902, she was spoken by the steamer **Gloamin** (owned by R.H. Mudie of Dundee), bound from Galveston to Havre, at 29°35'N, 79°44'W (about 150 miles north of the Little Bahama Bank, and about 950 miles from Ship Is.), when she reported that her upper main topsail had carried away, but no other details were given. No other sightings of her were reported.

The **Brunswick** was a steamer of 1574 grt. owned by the Liverpool & Maranhão S.S. Co. (Hugh Evans & Co., Mgrs.). In conjunction with another similar Evans vessel, the **Bourbon**, she operated a regular service from Liverpool to two minor ports on the north coast of Brazil: Maranhão (present-day São Luiz), and Tutoia (formerly Cajueira Tutoia) via Oporto, Lisbon, and Tenerife, and home by the same route. Maranhão is about 150 miles to the west of Tutoia.

Tutoia, (2°46'S, 42°16'W) is a small town on the west bank of the mouth of the estuary of the Parnaíba river. The town also gives its name to a low-lying island, part of a stable, uninhabited, sand bar some four miles east of the town across the estuary, and where Hugh Evans & Co. had a warehouse in which cargoes were stored ready for shipping. Both vessels called there as cargoes offered: usually three

to five times a year. When a ship arrived labourers from the town were ferried over to load her. On 28<sup>th</sup> December, 1902, the **Brunswick** arrived at the island, *en route* back to Liverpool from Maranham, to load a bits-and-pieces part cargo of cotton, hides, gum, hair, wax, rubber, feathers, tallow, and jaborandy [*Maranham jaborandi* - a plant from whose leaves is extracted an alkaloid, pilocarpine, which has medical uses, particularly in the treatment of glaucoma].

When the pilot was picked up off the estuary he informed the ship's chief officer, William T. Watson, that there was a ship's lifeboat, which bore the name **Veronica**, tied up at the small jetty. Having secured the **Brunswick** at her anchorage, Mr Watson observed that the boat had come alongside, and Rau and Thomas climbed on board. Rau, who claimed to be the **Veronica**'s second mate, proceeded to tell of a voyage dogged by misfortune almost from the start:

On 25<sup>th</sup> October a seaman, Gustav Johansen, had died; on November 23<sup>rd</sup> the first mate had fallen from the main topsail-yard and been killed; and on 20<sup>th</sup> December fire was discovered in the captain's cabin, and due to lack of equipment to bring it under control it was decided to abandon ship. The crew had taken to the ship's two lifeboats and watched as she burned, and finally sank. Rau's boat contained Smith, Monsson, Flohr, and Thomas. They had drifted away from the other boat, commanded by the master, during the first night adrift and had not seen it since.

Rau said that the **Veronica** had caught fire somewhere to the north, but could not say where, and it had taken five days of sailing to reach Tutoia island, where they had landed on the morning of Christmas Day. He also claimed that the only provisions that they managed to secure before abandoning ship was a small barrel of water and eleven biscuits.

While the misfortunes described by Rau were not uncommon on sailing ships, Mr Watson sensed that the tale was not wholly believable, particularly when he observed that the cook, looking fearful, kept well away from Rau. He asked Rau if the ship was burning badly when they left, and he said it was. He then asked Rau why the only food taken with them was eleven biscuits, to which Rau replied that the steward happened to pass by with the biscuits in a kid, so they took them. Mr Watson felt he had heard enough to arouse his suspicions and informed the master, Captain George Brown (otherwise, Browne).

Rau was subsequently taken to Captain Brown's cabin where he repeated the story he had told to Mr Watson. Captain Brown decided that the 'survivors' should be taken on board and then to Lisbon and handed over to the British Consul there. The lifeboat was also taken on board, upon which Fred Stander, the **Brunswick**'s bosun, noticed that the lifeboat's planks had been freshly caulked in places, and the caulking over-painted. This he thought somewhat odd.



Captain Brown questioned Rau the following day, who told the same story; and again the day after the **Brunswick** sailed from Tutoia. This time he was asked how he had steered the lifeboat, as Rau had already said that he had little knowledge of navigation. Rau said that during the day he had kept the wind two points abaft the beam, and at night, having no compass, steered by the stars.

When the **Brunswick** sailed for Lisbon on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1903, Mr Watson allocated a berth in a state-room aft to Rau; Smith, Flohr, and Monsson were berthed in the fo'c'sle; and the cook, having pleaded that he never was berthed in the fo'c'sle, was berthed with the **Brunswick's** two cooks.

Not unnaturally, the fo'c'sle members showed great interest in the 'survivors'. George Templeton, one of **Brunswick's** seamen, noticed that when they came on board Smith was carrying a new suit and a new pair of boots in a bag, which he claimed to have salvaged from the burning ship. Templeton thought it odd that none of them had their seamen's caps, an item seamen normally wore about the deck. One had sea-boot stockings that were identified as having belonged to Captain Shaw and was asked how, if the fire had broken out in the captain's cabin, they could have been salvaged. They were also asked how it was that all the Germans (Smith was also taken to be German) were in the same boat, and were told that it was because they were all in the same watch; a reply greeted with disbelief.

**Brunswick's** bosun, Stander, asked Rau how they had tried to put out the fire, and was told that as they only had one draw bucket and one windmill pump it would have been useless to try to do so. Captain Shaw had shouted, "*Every man to his own boat*". He said that Captain Shaw's boat was in davits on the poop [it was just forward of the poop between the main and mizzen masts, and to the starboard side], and was successfully launched. Stander asked him how the master was able to get his boat away when the fire had started aft in his cabin and was burning out of control from the stern to the mainmast. Rau suggested that the other watch had run along the windward side to their boat.

Thomas, already segregated from the others, had constantly disturbed the peace at night howling and groaning. When Tenerife was sighted on 12<sup>th</sup> January he asked to see Captain Brown. As a result of a long statement that he made, the other four were kept under close observation. However, Mr Watson and the master apparently did not wholly believe the account that Thomas had told because Watson unguardedly asked Rau what was the matter with the cook, who had been to see the master and was blubbing and distraught.

Rau and the other three realised that Thomas must have given a truthful account of what had occurred aboard the **Veronica**, and they kept trying to lure him out of the galley, but he would neither leave the galley nor speak to them. Having been alerted that Thomas had given the true account of the ship's loss to Captain

Brown, the other four now began to rehearse a completely different story: this was that Thomas had murdered those on the **Veronica**, and had terrified them into abetting him to do so. However, they did not tell the new story to Captain Brown, possibly thinking that their original story would still be believed.

All the 'survivors' were told that they could not go ashore at Lisbon. There, the Consul was informed of the content of Thomas's statement. He ordered that the ship should proceed to Liverpool with the men and hand them over to the police there. He would, in the meantime, telegraph the information to Liverpool. He also ordered Captain Brown to make the following entry in the ship's log:

*"Moses Thomas of the barque **Veronica** of St. John's, New Brunswick, and one of the members of the shipwrecked crew on board this vessel, did on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1903, make a statement to me privately that the other four men led by Gustav Rau did before the barque was burnt kill the Captain and mate, and also attempt to kill him. This statement I have communicated to H.M.B. Consul at Lisbon, who ordered me to make this entry in the Official Log and take the men to Liverpool and hand them over to the authorities.*

*(Signed) George Brown, Master."*

The **Brunswick**, en route to Liverpool, called at Oporto where Flohr asked if he could go ashore, but was refused: nobody was to go ashore. However, Rau asked Stander, the bosun, to take him ashore which, strangely, he did; even more strangely, Rau returned.

On Wednesday night, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1903, the **Brunswick** arrived in the Mersey, and on the following morning proceeded to berth in Queens Dock, Liverpool. She was immediately boarded by Liverpool Customs officer Fred Cornish, Detective-Inspector Robert Duckworth, Sergeant Ford, and Constable Inglis of the Liverpool Police Force. All five men brought home on the **Brunswick** from Tutoia were taken into custody.

Thomas had, indeed, disclosed to Captain Brown a full account of an horrific criminal rampage on the high seas perpetrated by those arrested. It was only when they were questioned by the detectives at the main Bridewell that their alternative story was first voiced. However, one of the four charged was, eventually, to refute that account and turn king's evidence, which brought him to court as a witness for the Crown.

Two day later the accused were arraigned at the Liverpool Police Court, before Mr W.J. Stewart, the stipendiary magistrate, where they were formally charged with the wilful murder on the high seas of the Captain, the first mate, the second mate, and four crew members of the barque **Veronica**, between 7<sup>th</sup> December and 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1902.

Those initially charged were: Willem Smith (real name Dirk Herlaar), Gustav Rau (real name August Mailhan), Ludwig Flohr, and Otto Monsson. Only Rau and Flohr were able to speak English tolerably well. All were noted as being able seamen. The fifth man was the cook/steward, Moses Thomas, who was to be the principal witness for the Crown.

Having now been charged with murder, the four accused decided to adopt the story of Moses Thomas, the cook, terrifying them into taking part in his criminal acts. However, the picture that they painted of him as a terrorising murderer bore no resemblance to the terror-stricken man aboard the **Brunswick**, and by careful questioning of the cook it was obvious to the police that he knew nothing of how Captain Shaw and the mate had met their deaths.

Realising that the authorities were not going to believe the new story, Flohr decided upon confession. He had not had any contact with Thomas since Thomas had been segregated, and the story that he now told agreed in all the material details with that of Thomas except that he, Flohr, denied killing anyone.

Subsequently, during April 1903, Inspector Duckworth was sent from Liverpool to make enquiries at Mobile, Ala., and at Biloxi and Scranton, Mississippi, to obtain information about Captain Shaw, and to bring back to Liverpool, Antonie Bellande, the ship's pilot at Biloxi. Bellande (of Ocean Springs, four miles from Biloxi), was to appear as a witness for the Crown at the trial of the three crewmen accused of Captain Shaw's murder.

The trial at the Spring Assizes, at St George's Hall, Liverpool, began on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1903. The judge was His Honour, Mr Justice Lawrance; Mr A.A. Tobin, K.C., led for the Crown, and Mr F.E. Smith was his junior; each defendant had separate Counsel, and all pled 'Not Guilty' to the charge of the wilful murder of the **Veronica's** captain, Alexander Shaw, on the high seas.

Moses Thomas recounted what he had witnessed from when he first became aware of the mutiny until the **Brunswick's** arrival at Tutoia, and the journey home. Flohr told of his part in the mutiny and murders, but painted a picture of himself as not actually killing anyone; in fact, of deliberately shooting to miss victims he was ordered to kill. However, Thomas testified that it was Flohr who had shot dead Alec Bravo, the Hindu.

For their defence, the accused stuck with their well-rehearsed story of the cook as the arch villain. They also said that they had acted against the officers because they believed that they were going to be killed by them, and spoke of being ill-fed and ill-treated. This was refuted by the cook who said that he saw no ill-treatment of the crew, and that the food was good and plentiful; indeed, the list of the <sup>\*</sup> sea stores put aboard the vessel at Ship Island shows that they were not only plentiful, but also very varied.

Their testimony was consistently contrary to that given by Thomas and Flohr, and to that of Captain Brown and members of the **Brunswick's** crew. They obfuscated, and when cornered refused to answer.

William Howard Yorke, the noted Liverpool marine artist, was retained by the Crown as an expert witness to explain to the Court the layout of the <sup>3</sup>**Veronica**. He had made detailed drawings to scale of the ship some years before when she was in Liverpool [*vide* Captain Robert Pape and the **Maitland**, Vol.55, No. 3], and from the drawings and measurements he had constructed a 1:48 model of the ship for the Court's guidance. Various sections of the model were removable to show the below-deck rooms and passageways in order to indicate the locations of the activities that went on during the mutiny. Also, the lifeboat brought home by the **Brunswick** was transported to St George's Hall and placed in the basement for the Court's scrutiny.

Many of the details of the criminal events that took place on the last voyage of the **Veronica** are too horrific to recount in full, and the following is a summary (albeit still harrowing) based upon the evidence of Thomas (mainly), Flohr, and that gathered by the police and given in court:

During the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> November Flohr was on look-out when Monsson came and spoke to him. Monsson hinted that something was going to happen. Rau then joined them and said that he, Monsson, and Smith were going to kill the officers. He said that they had two revolvers, and that there was plenty of iron knocking about the deck to use as weapons. Flohr was terrified and said that he could not murder or shoot any man. He was told by Rau that he would be thrown overboard if he did not join them. Monsson threatened him likewise, and Flohr agreed to go along with them.

Nothing further happened until Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> December. All four were sitting on some of the timber on deck amidships when Rau said that the action would start at between two and four o'clock on Monday morning [8<sup>th</sup> December] during the chief officer's watch when Paddy Durran would be on look-out on the fo'c'sle head, and Johansen would be at the wheel.

At Sunday midnight McCloud's watch, which included Smith and Flohr, came on duty. Flohr had been instructed by Rau to rouse him and Monsson at two a.m., which he did. He then went back on deck and joined Smith. It had been planned that Smith would engage Durran in conversation, then Flohr would stab Durran, but Flohr could not bring himself to commit murder. Rau then joined Smith and Flohr and said that they might be afraid to start but he was not.

At 3 a.m. the three of them then went onto the fo'c'sle head - Rau carrying an iron belaying pin. Rau asked Durran if he could still see the North star [above the horizon], indicating that the ship was nearing the equator, and possibly the St Peter

& St Paul Rocks (at which latitude the North star would be almost down on the horizon). Durran stooped to look aft under the sails. He was struck down with the belaying pin by Rau and collapsed, and his senseless body was heaved into the port locker on the fo’c’sle head. He was later killed and thrown overboard.

Noticing that the look-out was not on the fo’c’sle head, the mate now came forward. As he came up to the trio Rau told the mate that Paddy had been fighting again, but was about somewhere. Then suddenly Rau swung round and struck the mate with the belaying pin, then again when he fell to the deck, and without further ado threw his body overboard.

Rau and Smith then went to the after cabin. Soon after, Flohr heard two shots from aft, and going aft he looked through the cabin’s fore companion-door and saw Rau and Smith emerging from the second mate’s cabin, each carrying a revolver. [They had also been to the murdered mate’s cabin and found another revolver, which they took.] Abrahamson staggered out after them, toward the Captain’s cabin crying out that he had been shot.

They now decided to kill the helmsman, Johansen, and Rau told Flohr to go and strike him with a belaying pin. However, Flohr used a wooden one, and Johansen was only stunned and ran forward. Flohr was told to take the wheel, and on doing so saw Captain Shaw by the compass staring at the topsails; apparently, due to his deafness, unaware of the commotion and mayhem about him. Rau struck him with a belaying pin, then fired two shots at him. Captain Shaw, though badly wounded, was not fatally so, and managed to tumble down the steps to the cabin, then into his navigation room, where he managed to secure the door. Flohr was left to guard the cabin with orders to strike down the captain or the second mate if they attempted to come out.

While the captain was being attacked, Monsson had found Herrson trying to escape through a window and had struck him down, and thrown him overboard.

Meanwhile, the cook, Thomas, was cowering terrified in his tiny room in the after cabin having heard the shots. Rau was shouting about those already killed, and that only the steward remained to be dealt with, when he appeared at the cook’s slightly open port-hole that faced onto the deck. Thomas did not respond to Rau’s imprecations to come out, but barricaded the door. He remained there for some hours until Rau again came to the door and shouted that he would certainly be killed if he did not come out. Thomas eventually came out. Rau pointed a revolver at him and seemed about to shoot when, oddly, Smith said, *“Don’t kill the poor cook, he hasn’t done anything, it is a pity to kill the man”*. Rau then searched Thomas, and ordered him to go and make some strong coffee, which he was ordered to taste in case he had poisoned it.

Having breakfasted, the mutineers went to the chartroom where the wounded captain and second mate were, and proceeded to nail planks across the ports and the door, and to secure ropes across the skylight: this to prevent those inside shooting at them. The cook was then locked in the windowless sail-room next to the galley at the after end of the forward house, and fed on bread and water for three days. He was then allowed out to feed the mutineers; the ship now being short-handed, he also had to take a turn at the wheel, and at the pumps.

The wounded captain and second mate had been kept without food and water since the start of the mutiny, and were now in very bad shape. On Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> December, Rau decided that he required a chart and some instruments, and opened the skylight to call down to Captain Shaw. The second mate told him that the captain was in his bed unable to move, and very ill, but Rau insisted. A few moments later the captain staggered into view, and pleaded for a drink of water saying that he would give him his gold watch in return, and pleaded for his life. Rau relented slightly and ordered water to be brought, but he was not going to risk the prisoners being able to live to tell the tale.

Flohr was now told to summon out Abrahamson, who came out and was then shot in the shoulder by Smith. Abrahamson ran forward before jumping overboard, but the ship was put about for Smith, Rau, and Monsson to fire at him in the water. He was not seen again.

A couple of hours later Bravo was sent to the cabin with an axe to drive out the captain, which he did. Flohr went also, with a gun. Captain Shaw, barely able to walk, had his arms about his head to ward off an expected attack with a belaying pin. Flohr fired three shots at Captain Shaw, but claimed that he deliberately aimed to miss. Rau appeared immediately and shot Captain Shaw in the head. All three then threw his body overboard. Five of the crew had now been murdered.

All four of the killers now ransacked Captain Shaw's cabin and appropriated his belongings - an action that would eventually disprove beyond doubt any of the stories they told of the events.

Although Bravo had taken some part in the murder of Captain Shaw he was not to be spared, nor was Johansen who had played no part at all. Both men had proved themselves unable to learn off by heart (probably due to the language barrier between them and the Germans) the original fabricated story, and thus their fate was sealed. Smith was the appointed executioner.

During the evening three days after Captain Shaw's death, and while Thomas the cook was at the wheel, Smith went to Johansen's room and wounded him with a knife. The injured man staggered onto the deck to Rau who told him that Smith had not acted under orders, and had Thomas dress the wound. Johansen then



went to take the helm, but soon afterwards he was shot by Smith and thrown overboard.

The last victim of the savagery, two days later, was Bravo. He was ordered by Rau to haul ropes forward. Flohr followed him with a loaded revolver and shot him at close range. He fell overboard and was not seen again. Flohr then fired twice at the cook, who was close by Bravo when he was shot, but each time the gun misfired, allowing Thomas to run to the fo'c'sle head. He was again spared - selected by fate to play the role of Nemesis.

In between these murderous attacks, Thomas had been ordered to make the lifeboat ready before the final act of the mutiny: setting the **Veronica** afire before abandoning her. He had caulked its seams, opened by long exposure to the tropical sun, as best he could, and which amateur handiwork had attracted the eye of the **Brunswick's** bosun.

Abundant provisions were put aboard the forward lifeboat during the last day, 20<sup>th</sup> December. These included: eight freshly-baked, two-foot long, loaves, tins of hard tack biscuits, canned beef, a case of tinned oysters, cans of condensed milk, canned beans, and a keg containing ten gallons of water. Also put on board was a compass, a ship's patent log for recording the distance run each day, a sextant, a set of parallel rules, a pair of dividers, and a number of oars; Rau was, indeed, able to navigate and probably knew where the ship then was.

The boat was then launched and moored along the starboard side. A mast was stepped, and a sail rigged ready for departure. Meanwhile, piles of chopped wood and clothing were placed in the ship's cabin and saloon, and tar and kerosene poured over them. The after lifeboat was then thrown overboard, but having failed to capsize it, the mutineers left it to drift away.

Having selected clothes for themselves from the pile they had looted from the cabin, the mutineers then dropped down into the lifeboat; Rau being the last to leave after setting the wood piles alight. The boat then pulled away rapidly using the oars. It was then about 7p.m., and within minutes the whole after end was ablaze. They then sailed off with a favourable breeze on a SW course.

It is not known how far the **Veronica** was from <sup>4</sup>Tutoia when abandoned, but it seems probable that Rau knew the island was not too far off; more than enough provisions were taken to reach the river mouth. On arrival, the surplus was thrown overboard (in iron-weighted bags that they took with them, an indication of their awareness of the closeness of the landing place) in order to add authenticity to their story of a hasty departure from the burning ship, and subsequent deprivation whilst adrift for five days. Also thrown overboard were the seamen's caps and oilskin caps that they had taken with them. The revolvers and ammunition were

buried on reaching shore, and they made do with eating coconut, apparently in the knowledge that 'rescue' would soon arrive.

The trial ran to three days. In directing the jury, Mr Justice Lawrance said, in essence, that it was only necessary to decide if the accused were acting in concert when Captain Shaw was killed. If so, it did not matter which one delivered the fatal blow, each would be equally responsible. Also, it was only necessary to say that the accused intended to end the lives of those killed.

In claiming that they acted in self-defence to avoid being killed by the officers, he said that it was hard to imagine why or how the three officers were going to kill and throw nine men overboard, and how they would then have sailed the ship themselves.

The Jury retired at 8.45 p.m. on the third day of the trial, Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> May, and returned twelve minutes later with a verdict of "Guilty" in respect of each prisoner. There was a recommendation to mercy in the case of Monsson on account of his youth and previous good character. The Judge agreed with the Jury's recommendation, and said that it would be forwarded to the right quarter. He then formally sentenced all three to death.

Monsson's sentence was subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life. Rau and Smith were both hanged at Liverpool's Walton prison on the morning of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1903. There were two hangmen, both brothers: William and John Billington. It was Walton prison's first double execution.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Prior to going to sea, Smith had been a labourer working in various gin distilleries in Schiedam. On 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1902 he wrote to his wife to say that he was living under the alias A.B. Brown at the Sailor's Home in New Orleans, and was working on a tug there as 2<sup>nd</sup> engineer. He then did a trip to Vera Cruz on a four-masted schooner before returning to Scranton, Miss., and soon after was in the hospital at Mobile suffering from typhus. According to the Consul of the Netherlands at Liverpool, Louis J.M. Bonke, he was known to the police at Schiedam as a reckless, rough character, a liar, and a cheat.

<sup>2</sup>Ellis had served on the **Veronica** from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1902 until 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1902, and in a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1903, he had offered to swear to Captain Shaw's good character and kindness to his men. He was still on the crew when Rau and the others joined. He said that Rau and Flohr spoke on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1902 about having revolvers, and of their intention to kill the mate before the ship reached Montevideo. Ellis told both the mate and Captain Shaw about the revolvers and their threat, but Shaw said that it was only 'talk for talk's sake', and once at sea he would see about it. He saw the master again on 6<sup>th</sup> October, and was again asked to sail on the ship. He refused.

<sup>3</sup>A painting (1893) by W.H. Yorke of the **Veronica**, is owned by the New Brunswick Museum at St John, N.B.

<sup>4</sup>When the mutiny started on 8<sup>th</sup> December, and if then in the vicinity of St Peter & St Paul Rocks, the **Veronica** would have been about 750 miles from Tutoia. Twelve days later, with favourable winds and conditions, she could have easily been within 120 miles of there when abandoned.

\*Sea stores put aboard the Veronica by De Jean Mitchell & Co., of Biloxi, Miss.

Beef, 9 barrels, 200lbs each. Roast beef, 2 dozen 2-lb tins. Roast beef, 2 dozen 6-lb tins. Hams, 4. Pork, 1 barrel, 200 lbs. Findon [sic] Haddock, 1 dozen tins. Dried Herrings, 2 boxes. Codfish, 3 boxes, 40 lbs each. Mackerel, 18 lbs. Salmon, 1 dozen tins. Clams, 3½-dozen tins. Oysters, 5 dozen tins. Mustard, 2 lbs. Vinegar, 4 gallons. Corn meal, 1½ dozen tins. Flour, 5 barrels, 280 lbs each. Oatmeal, 72 lbs. Hard bread, 2 barrels, 92 lbs each. White sugar, 119 lbs. Brown Sugar, 401 lbs. Lime juice, 1 case. Butter, 55 lbs. Lard, 40 lbs. Syrup, 5 gallons. Coffee, 25 lbs. Tea, 10 lbs. Prunes, 50 lbs. Evaporated apples, 50 lbs. Barley, 5 lbs. Rice, 100 lbs. Tapioca, 5 lbs. Corn starch, 5 lbs. Sago, 5 lbs. Green peas, 2 dozen tins. Lima beans, 2 dozen tins. White beans, 2 dozen tins. White beans, 216 lbs. Split peas, 100 lbs. String beans, 2 dozen tins. Tomatoes, a dozen tins. Green corn, 2 dozen tins. Potatoes, 7 sacks, 112 lbs each. Milk, 4 dozen tins.

Acknowledgements and sources consulted:

Mr A.S. Davidson, LNRS President who first drew the writer's attention to the *Veronica* mutiny.

Mr L. Wheeler at the Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool Law School, most kindly retrieved and made available to the writer the book, '*The Trial of the Veronica Mutineers*', by Professor G.W. Keeton and Dr. J. Cameron, and other relevant information. The above account was mainly derived from the transcript of the trial contained in the above book.

*Lloyd's Lists and Lloyd's Registers*

*Liverpool Customs Bills of Entry*

*Times, The*, May 13<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>, 1903, Reports of the Assizes trial

## THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

June	Mondays	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup>
July		1 <sup>st</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup>
August		5 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup>

# The Story of the Douglas (1858)

By LNRS Member Dick Clague

The **Douglas** was the eighth ship built for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company (IOMSPC), entering service in 1858. She served the Island for only four years, being sold in 1862 officially to Cunard Wilson and Company but in practice to the Confederate agents, Fraser Trentholm & Co, the American Civil War having broken out in 1861. Her history, next as the blockade runner **Margaret and Jesse** and finally as the USS **Gettysburg** from 1864 has been written up elsewhere but it is worth noting that 26 Clyde paddle steamers were purchased for blockade-running during the American Civil War – their shallow draught making them particularly suitable for the approach channels to the southern ports. The casualty rate was high and only three were known to have survived and returned to commercial service. The **Douglas** is thought to have survived longer than most, being broken up in Naples in 1879

Unfortunately no technical records or design documents have survived for the **Douglas**, although her colourful career means that much has been written about her, some of which is based on local newspaper reports and publicity materials which, until recently, have not been subjected to rigorous examination. However a paper published privately in 2009 by William H Sleigh, following his researches in the Napier Archives held by Glasgow University, and in the Science Museum in London, throws new light on some of the aspects of the vessel which were previously accepted as historical fact. What follows is substantially based on this paper– and is used with the author's encouragement.

The **Douglas** was an iron paddle steamer, built and engined by Robert Napier of Glasgow, having side-lever beam engines, the last of this type installed in a Steam Packet vessel, and having been favoured by her owners since their original **Mona's Isle** of 1830. The **Douglas** was also the last vessel ordered by the company from Robert Napier, although **Douglas** (3), acquired by IOMSPC in 1901, had been built at the same yard in 1889 as the **Dora** for the London & South Western Railway Company.

A.M.Moore's 1904 History of the IOMSPC described the **Douglas** (1) as *“the first steamer which had an upright stem, instead of the picturesque bowsprit and figure-head of her predecessors. In other respects, too, she was a great contrast to them, being long and rather narrow, instead of short and broad. She did seventeen and a quarter knots per hour on her trial trip. Her quickest passage between Liverpool and Douglas was four hours and twenty minutes, and she was said to be the fastest steamer then afloat”*.

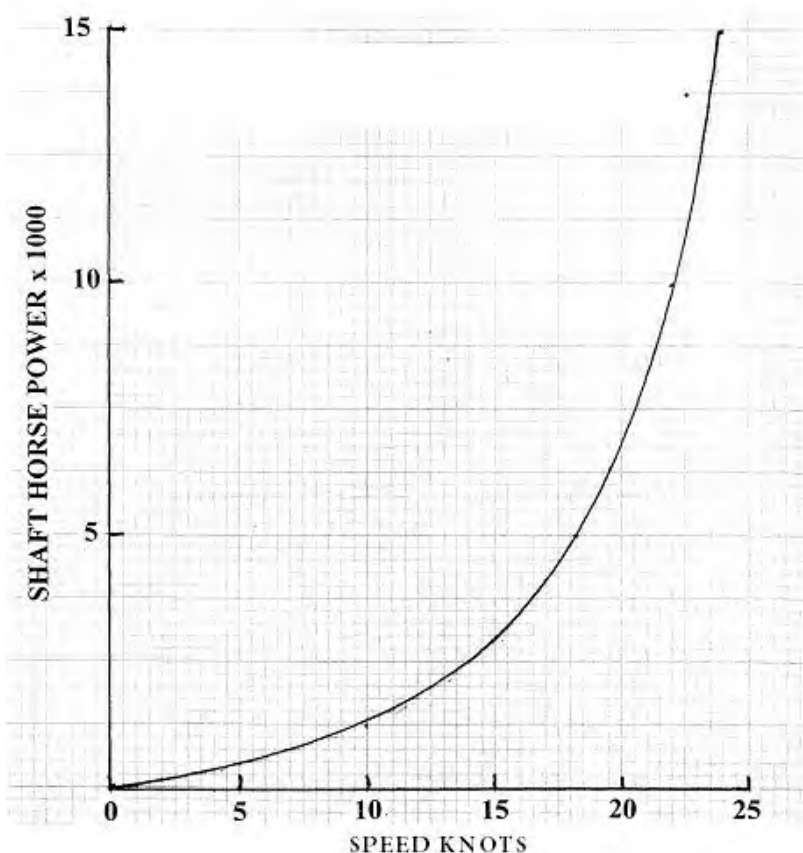
There are three specific claims which have been made, and widely accepted, about this vessel which William Sleigh has challenged – namely that the **Douglas** was:

1. The fastest steamer then afloat
2. Built with two funnels
3. Her engines ended up on the beach at Nassau

The claim that the **Douglas** was the fastest steamer then afloat, was repeated verbatim in the Company's 1930 Centenary Book and quoted by John Shepherd in "Life & Times of The Steam Packet" (1994). However F J Henry's 1960's article in the Journal of the Manx Museum quotes the Manx Sun report that the ship made the journey at 17.25 miles per hour. This is just under 15.2 knots which was still faster than any previous IOMSPC vessel. However to add to the confusion the first (1962) edition of Fred Henry's "Ships of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company" not surprisingly refers to miles per hour but by the time the 4<sup>th</sup> (revised) edition appeared in 1977 the units had been amended to knots – but the numbers were unchanged.

Engine output power requirement over speed range, Issued I.Mech.E. 1941  
Cross Channel Packet Ships - 1000 to 3000 Tons

(A similar type of curve would have applied to mid-nineteenth century paddle steamships).



The **Douglas** was a development of the 1846 **Tynwald**, both being fitted with Napier's well proven side-lever beam engines, similar to those fitted to **Mona's Isle** in 1830, although by the time the **Douglas** was ordered oscillating cylinder engines, capable of greater speed were available. This later type of engine had been introduced in the 1840s and was used in the larger 1863 **Snaefell** to produce a 15 knot ship, although by then they were also powering the much larger 18 knots ships of the City of Dublin SPC. There is no surviving evidence in any relevant UK maritime archive to indicate that side-lever

marine engines were developed to operate beyond the maximum normal speed range of 12 – 14 knots.

Apart from the type and power of the engine, the speed of a paddle steamer is dependent on the diameter of the paddle wheel, which is restricted by the freeboard of the vessel. F J Henry describes the **Douglas** as having 19ft diameter paddle wheels. The “slippage” (or loss of thrust efficiency) of a paddle wheel at that time is estimated at 23%, thus the ship could only travel at a maximum of 77% of the paddle wheel's circumferential speed. The normal piston stroke for an engine of this type in 1858 was 6ft, so a piston speed of 60 inches/min would produce a paddle speed of 26 RPM and a ship speed of 12.7 knots. A 17.5 knot ship would have required this size of paddle to rotate at approx 36 RPM - only achievable with a then impossible piston speed of 80 inches/second. It was another 30 years before a piston speed of 75 inches/second was achieved with a comparable-sized ship - the PS **Princess Henriette** – built by William Denny & Brothers for the Belgian Government in 1888.

Having demonstrated the technical impossibility of **Douglas** having a speed of over 17 knots, we are left with the Manx Sun's report of her delivery voyage, quoted by F J Henry: *She left the Clyde at 8.30 am on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1858 under the command of Captain Quayle, and arrived at Douglas at 4 pm.* The distance from Gourock (the entrance to the Firth of Clyde) to Douglas Head via the Mull of Galloway and the Point of Ayre is 125 nautical miles, but the tides can have a significant effect on passage time. With a new ship to show-off Captain Quayle would be likely to have timed his voyage and plotted his course to take maximum advantage of tidal flows.

There is no surviving record of the course actually taken but if she had left the Clyde 2 hours 40 minutes prior to low water, she would have maximised the benefits of the south flowing ebb tide and, after passing Garroch Head (Isle of Bute), would have picked up the additional outflow from Loch Fyne through the Sound of Bute to reach Ailsa Craig by the time the tide turned. Once south of Ailsa Craig she would have picked up the flood tide running south into the Irish Sea, picking up the strong flood down to the Mull of Galloway and round the Point of Ayre. That passage would have required an average speed over the ground of 16.66 knots – and given the tides worked to maximum advantage this should, under ideal conditions, have been achievable by a vessel with a design speed of around 14 knots.

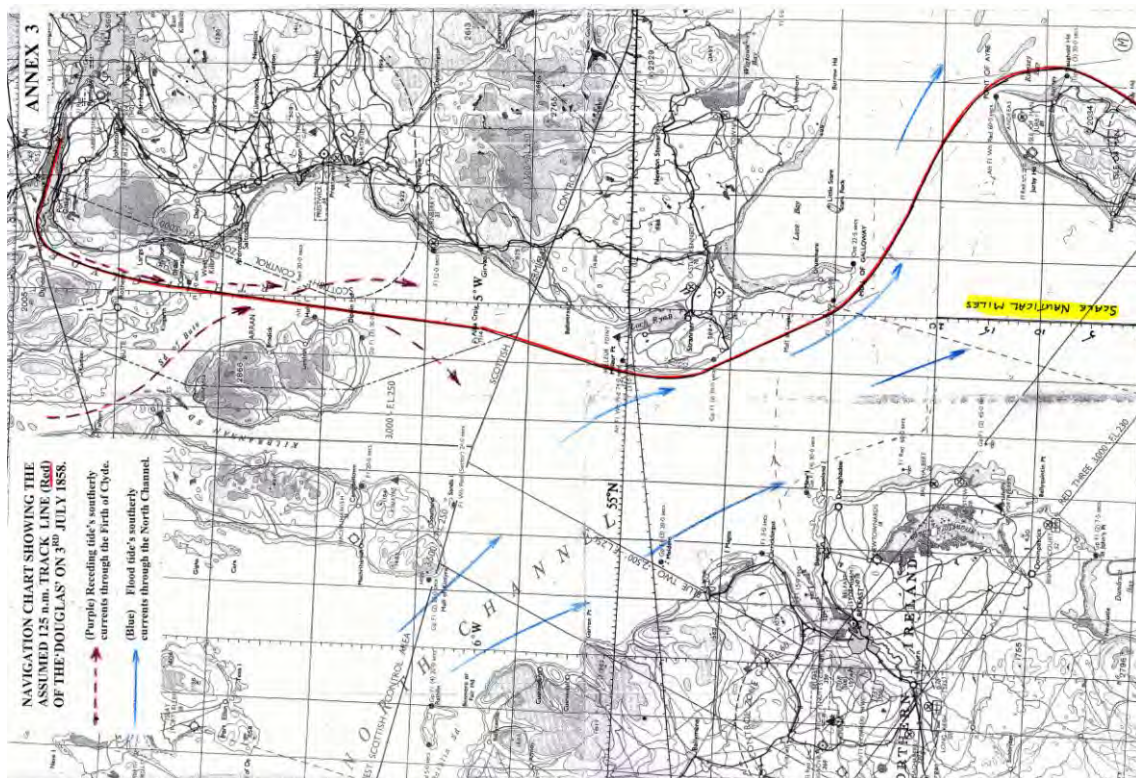
There is variation of at least 10 minutes in the surviving reports of her passage time between Douglas and Liverpool on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 1858, the longest being four and a half hours.

(Continued on page 38....)





“Paddle Steamer at Douglas” by H Frost – the original painting showing the **Douglas** with two funnels – and used in the 1930 IOMSPC Centenary Book.





HMS **Legion** moves alongside HMS **Ark Royal** to take off survivors. Picture Imperial War Museum

See page 40



RMS Mauritania

See page 40



However John Shepherd referred to her as “reducing the Liverpool and Douglas passage to between four and a half and five hours”. In claiming these times it is unclear what timing points were used. Was it from Douglas Head to the Bar light or to the Rock Light at New Brighton? The new Princes Landing Stage at Liverpool had only opened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1857, passengers previously having had to wait for the tide to berth in the dock or be taken from a vessel at anchor mid stream - so the **Douglas** arrived at the right time to take her part in the enhanced passenger experience. Even today the 19 knot **Ben-my-Chree** is scheduled to take 4 hours 15 minutes from Douglas to Birkenhead (Twelve Quays) – slightly further up river than the Pier Head. A 14 knot ship would take an average of about 5 hours from Douglas to Liverpool Landing Stage but under ideal tidal conditions this would obviously be reduced. The claimed time for her “fastest passage” - which should not be confused with her normal passage time – would have been within the possibility of a 14 knot vessel as described only when enjoying maximum tidal assistance.

The only known surviving photograph of the **Douglas** was taken by Duncan Brown at Napier's yard on the day of her launch (28<sup>th</sup> May 1858) – but this was before her machinery and funnels had been installed, but her masts had been stepped. No working drawings have survived, but two contemporary paintings have.

The first shows her with two funnels as **Douglas** and was reproduced in the 1904 and Centenary books..(see 36). The artist is not mentioned in either book but the picture is believed to have been the work of H Frost and was at one time in the possession of Mr J D Clucas, who became a Director of the Company in 1919. The 8p postage stamp issued to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the IOMSPC in 1980 was designed by J H Nicholson R I (1911-88) almost certainly painted for that purpose and based on the Frost painting. However in these paintings the foremast is shown mounted a good deal further forward than in the launch-day photograph. The title of the H Frost painting (acquired by Manx National Heritage in 2003) is actually “Paddle Steamer at Douglas” - although it has always been understood that the paddle steamer portrayed was the ship of that name.

The second painting, as USS **Gettysburg** by De Simone, Naples (1878) shows her with one funnel, but with the foremast stepped in the same position as the launch day photograph.

No contemporary pictures of her as the **Margaret and Jessie** have been identified but the assumption made by Fred Henry has been that the second (forward) funnel was removed when she was converted for US Navy service. However John Nicholson (no relation to J H Nicholson) a marine artist with a renowned eye for detail, produced a picture as a header for his Manx Life article in the 1960s which showed her in 1863 with only one funnel – at which time she was the **Margaret and Jessie**. However in the same article he included a picture of a two

funnel **Douglas**, captioned “as built in 1858” and this was used by Connery Chapple in “Island Lifeline”.

It therefore appears that the number of funnels carried by the **Douglas** (1) at any particular stage of her career cannot be definitively verified by reference to paintings, photographs or drawings.

Examination of other ships with similar engines built at the same time suggest the usual layout was to have the paddle wheels positioned slightly forward of midships. This dictated the position of the engines, and the boiler was installed immediately aft of them. This was necessary to get the trim of the vessel correct and was effectively a standard layout for all the side-lever engine ships which Napier built. The position of the forward funnel in the original painting (and the subsequent ones derived from it by both J H and later John Nicholson) would therefore have been directly over the main crankshaft of the engine – a position which would have been technically impossible for a functioning funnel. The Frost painting shows smoke coming from both funnels – so one can only assume some artistic licence had been exercised – and that the only surviving painting of the ship “as built” may be suspect over this issue.

On page 25 of the Centenary Book there is a photograph captioned “ENGINES OF “DOUGLAS” I ON THE BEACH AT NASSAU IN 1926”. As the **Douglas** had been broken up at Naples in 1879 this seems quite surprising. The “identification” of these engines seems to be based on a report in the *Nassau Guardian* quoted initially in the *Manx Sun* on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1863 and then by A W Moore in 1904 and repeated in the 1930 book. This stated that after being chased by the *Federal Steamer 'Rhode Island'*, the *'Margaret and Jessie'* (as the **Douglas** had then become) *received a shot through her boiler, and another through her bows, which forced her to take the beach, then only fifty yards distant. Some days later, she got off the beach, and arrived at Nassau. She does not seem to have been again employed as a blockade runner, and we do not know what became of her* - to which the 1930 authors added *“but her engines were lying rusting on the beach at Nassau in July of 1926.”*

Clearly the subsequent history of the vessel – both as blockade runner until her capture in November 1863 by a boarding party from the US army transport **Fulton**, and finally as USS **Gettysburg** until 1878 was not known to either A W Moore or those responsible for the 1930 book.

But to give William Sleight the final word “All Napier engines incorporated robust cast iron frames to rigidly support the main crankshaft and not that of rather flimsy iron bars visible in the photograph. That old rusting engine featured in the photograph was possibly a side lever engine of other manufacture fitted to a (wooden) vessel wrecked at that place.”

## Shipbuilding on the Mersey in 1938

By LNRS member David Eccles

By 1938 Cammell-Laird & Company was the only firm building ships on the bank of the River Mersey. It controlled two Yards, the North Yard able to build ships up to 500 feet long which included six Slipways, seven dry-docks, a large office block and a Fitting-out basin, and the Tranmere Yard for building ships 500-900feet long with six Slipways and a large main-engine assembly works and boiler shop. The company had little work during the first five years of the decade due to the world-wide slump in trade, but its fortune changed in 1934 when it was awarded the contract by the Admiralty to build the 20,000 ton aircraft carrier which provided work for a quarter of Merseyside shipyard workers. Thus HMS **Ark Royal** was followed over the next three years by orders to build the King George V class Battleship HMS **Prince of Wales**, the light Cruiser HMS **Dido**, and three patrol submarines HMS **Trident**, HMS **Thetis** and HMS **Taku**. Shipbuilding contracts were placed on a cash basis with the money paid in six instalments, the first when the contract was signed, the others when the keel was laid, the framing completed, plating completed, the vessel launched, and the final one when the vessel was delivered. Naval ships were built to Admiralty drawings under Admiralty inspection, merchant ships under survey to Classification Rules. In 1937 the firm was also building two destroyers for the Argentine Navy, but Navy work was very labour intensive and the firm was keen to obtain more merchant ship contracts. It already had contracts to build two cargo liners for Ellermen Lines, two for John Holt & Co. and a tanker for the British Tanker Company, and was delighted to obtain the contract to build the 34,000 ton passenger liner **Mauritania** for Cunard-White Star Line.

Over ten thousand men were employed by the shipyard covering a large number of trades, all members of a trade union, also a large number of trade apprentices aged sixteen to twenty-one who were not allowed to join a trade-union or take part in any strike action. A tradesman served a five-year apprenticeship to become a 'Journeyman' and was then expected to seek employment as a tradesman elsewhere. Promotion in the shipyard was by merit, from worker to charge-hand, to foreman, then manager.

The shipyard was very busy on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1938 with HMS **Ark Royal** and the Argentine destroyers **Missiones** and **Santa Cruz** fitting-out in the Basin and eleven ships on the slipways including a Battleship, a Cruiser, three Submarines, four cargo ships, a tanker and the passenger liner **Mauritania** on which 2,000 men were employed. However there was only one merchant ship on order, the 12,000 dwt motor-tanker **Diloma** for Anglo-Saxon. Both the main-engine assembly works and boiler shop were busy constructing machinery and boilers for all the vessels building at the shipyard, also working on a contract to supply new boilers and two sets of

single-reduction geared turbines to be installed into the Battle-cruiser HMS **Renown** refitting at Portsmouth Navy Dockyard. The new machinery was to replace the original forty-two Scotch boilers and direct drive turbines fitted in 1916. There was little work however for the six dry-docks used for dry-docking, survey, and repairs.

The company faced a set-back in March when the Boilermakers Union placed an overtime ban on all riveting work on Merseyside, because over one hundred riveters in the region were unemployed due to the large amount of welding used in modern ship building. Electric welding had been introduced into British shipbuilding yards by Cammell-Laird in 1920 when they built the mv **Fullagar**. The first launch of the year occurred on March 31<sup>st</sup> when the **John Holt** (3881 gt) slid into the river. Constructed with a counter stern for the West-Africa trade, she had forecastle accommodation for the white deck crew and would be driven by a reciprocating steam engine with geared exhaust turbine. Two weeks later the **City of Edinburgh** (8046gt) was launched on April 14<sup>th</sup>. She was the third of a series of four 10,500 dwt twin-screw turbine driven cargo ships ordered by Ellerman Lines for their world-wide service. During the month the keel of the Anglo-Saxon tanker **Diloma** was laid, and the Admiralty announced it had awarded the contract to build two 'L' class destroyers to Cammell-Laird & Company. These would be named HMS **Larne**, and HMS **Lively**.

Thirteen months after her launch HMS **Ark Royal** left the Fitting-out Basin to enter the Gladstone Graving Dock, Liverpool, to have the outboard propellers fitted and underwater area painted before leaving the Mersey to carry out Anchoring Trials in Liverpool Bay then Speed Trials on the Clyde. After successful trials were completed she returned to the shipyard on June 29<sup>th</sup> to be fitted out ready for commissioning..

Two vessels were launched in June, HMS **Thetis** on the 29<sup>th</sup> named by Mrs Power, wife of Captain Arthur Power the commander of HMS **Ark Royal**, and the steamer **Johnathan Holt** (3881 gt) the following day. The warship was a 1,090 ton 'T' class Submarine to be armed with eleven torpedo tubes and a 4" deck mounted gun, the merchant ship was sister to the **John Holt** that left the shipyard earlier in the month to load cargo at Liverpool for West Africa.

It was a proud day for Cammell-Laird on July 28<sup>th</sup> when Lady Bates, wife of the Cunard White Star Line chairman, launched the **Mauritania**. Measuring 35,677 gt she was the largest liner to be built in England, and when completed would accommodate 486 First Class, 1392 Second Class and 502 Cabin Class passengers.

Work was progressing well on the Argentine contract with the **Santa Cruz** beginning her trials in Liverpool Bay early in July. She was the second and last of the modified 1,353ton British 'G' Class destroyers under construction by the company. After lengthy trials the **Missiones** was handed over to the Argentine Navy on September 3<sup>rd</sup> followed on the 26<sup>th</sup> by the **Santa Cruz**. This completed the order for

eight destroyers placed with British ship-yards to form the 'Buenos Aires' Class of Destroyer for the Argentine Navy.

To complete the order from Ellerman Lines the keel of the **City of Lincoln** (8046 gt) was laid on September 22<sup>nd</sup> six weeks after the **City of Edinburgh** departed the shipyard, and the following month the keel of the 1,920 ton 'L' class destroyer HMS **Larne** was laid on 18<sup>th</sup> October, followed by keel laying of the DIDO Class cruiser HMS **Cherybdis** on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

On November 16<sup>th</sup> both banks of the river were lined with excited crowds when the aircraft carrier HMS **Ark Royal** sailed down the river bound for Portsmouth, after her hand-over to the Admiralty at Birkenhead. Capable of 30 knot speed, she was driven by triple screws and designed to carry 40 to 50 aircraft.

There was a flurry of activity in the shipyard after this. On November 22<sup>nd</sup> the keel of the **British Sincerity** (8402gt), the last merchant ship in the order book, was laid. The last launch of the year took place on December 8<sup>th</sup> when the 'T' Class submarine HMS **Trident** slid into the river, and on December 20<sup>th</sup> the keel of the 'L' Class destroyer HMS **Lively** was the last to be laid in 1938.

At the end of 1938 seven of the slipways were occupied by the battleship **Prince of Wales**, the light cruisers **Dido** and **Cherybdis**, the destroyers **Larne** and **Lively**, the submarine **Taku** and the Anglo-Saxon tanker **Diloma**. In the Fitting-out Basin the passenger liner **Mauritania** with the submarines **Thetis** and **Trident** were being completed, and the tanker **British Sincerity** was preparing to sail for the Persian Gulf. The need for annual dry-docking, survey work and voyage repairs had ensured use of the firms dry-docks throughout the year, despite fierce competition from Merseyside ship-repair firms. Sadly the year ended with only one merchant ship on order, the steam-tug **Black Cock** for the Liverpool Screw Towing Company ordered on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

Eight of the ships under construction at Birkenhead in 1938 were lost by enemy action during the war, two of them owned by John Holt (Liverpool) Ltd.

On February 24<sup>th</sup> 1941 the **Jonathan Holt** was outward bound for West Africa in convoy OB 289 when she was torpedoed and sunk by **U97** approximately 350 miles W of the Shetland Isles. Fifty-two men were lost but three were picked up by other ships in the convoy, including one by the rescue-ship **Copeland**. Seven months later on September 24<sup>th</sup> the **John Holt** was torpedoed and sunk without loss of life by **U107** when homeward bound from West Africa in convoy SL 87. The **John Holt** had earlier gained fame when she landed over 1,000 survivors at Plymouth from the **Lancastria** bombed and sunk off St Nazaire on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1940 during the evacuation from Europe. The **Lancastria** survivors had been taken aboard from the trawler **Cambridgeshire** in the Loire River anchorage, after she rescued them from the sea covered with fuel-oil.

HMS **Ark Royal** was returning to Gibraltar after ferrying RAF Hawker Hurricane aircraft to Malta on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1941 when she was hit in the forward boiler-room by a single torpedo fired long range by **U81** that killed one man and caused extensive damage. The warship began to flood, and in twenty minutes had developed a list of 18° when the order was given to abandon ship. Two Admiralty tugs sent from Gibraltar thirty miles away arrived and took the vessel in tow, but she capsized, broke in two and sank the following day twenty-five miles from port.

Commissioned on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1941, the battleship HMS **Prince of Wales** took part in the Battle of Denmark Strait on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1941 (in which she received damage but scored hits on the German Battleship **Bismark**) before she was sent out to the Far East. In company with the battle-cruiser **Repulse**, the **Prince of Wales** was returning to Singapore from patrol on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1941 when the warships were attacked by waves of Japanese Navy aircraft. Badly damaged during torpedo attack, the **Prince of Wales** was then hit amidships by a 500Kg bomb before sinking within thirty minutes with the loss of 327 men.

In response to the gift of one day's pay by each officer and man of the Gurkha Regiment for a replacement for the loss of the Tribal Class destroyer HMS **Gurkha** on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1940, HMS **Larne** was given that name when launched by Miss Mary Churchill, daughter of the Prime Minister on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1940. Following commissioning on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1941 HMS **Gurkha** began convoy escort duty in the Atlantic, and then the Mediterranean for convoys to Malta and North Africa. She was patrolling off Sidi Barrani (Egypt) on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1942 when torpedoed and sunk by **U133** with the loss of nine men.

Commissioned on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1941 as an anti-aircraft destroyer HMS **Lively** was assigned for Mediterranean duty. On May 11<sup>th</sup> 1942 she was leading a division of four destroyers patrolling between Crete and Libya when they came under attack by German bombers. Whilst steaming at full speed HMS **Lively** received a direct hit, turned over, and sank in four minutes with the loss of sixty-five men.

After her return to Cammell Laird the submarine **Thetis** was reconditioned and named HMS **Thunderbolt** when commissioned on October 26<sup>th</sup> 1940. She served in the Atlantic until mid 1942 when she was converted to carry two 'Chariots' (manned torpedoes) for special service in the Mediterranean. On March 14<sup>th</sup> 1943 she was detected submerged off Sicily by the Italian corvette **Cicognai** and destroyed by depth-charge with the loss of fifty-nine crew.

Completed on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1941, the cruiser HMS **Cherybdis** served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean as required. She was on blockade patrol in the English Channel on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943 when she was hit on the port side by two torpedoes fired from the German torpedo-boats **T23** and **T27** and sank within an hour with the loss of over 400 men.

## Dalbeattie Museum – The Ernie Robinson Collection

Submitted by W.G.Williamson

The name Ernie Robinson will be known the whole world over through his passion for all things that had a connection with the sea. Especially Ernie's huge interest in all that sailed on the Solway Firth. Ernie was a lecturer at one time in Penrith. He had a holiday home called "Victory Cottage" in the village of Portling in Dumfries and Galloway. This was where Dalbeattie Museums President Mr Tommy Henderson was to first meet Ernie, as he required an electrician to do some wiring at the cottage. This was almost 45 years ago and thereafter they became close friends.

Tommy Henderson was encouraged by Ernie to start his Museum in Dalbeattie, and even though Ernie never took an active part in the building of the Museum he was always in the background.

His knowledge of local history was wide ranging, especially local ships and their captains, where and when each ship was built and even to how much they cost. He spent hours in London researching out information from Maritime records, all copied long hand.

Ernie was a perfectionist especially if a wrong date appeared in type, as Tommy has found in the books which were gifted to the Museum.

The Museum now has the most comprehensive collection of facts and figures appertaining to the sailing vessels that frequented the Solway Firth and the River Urr, when the boats came up as far as Dalbeattie Harbour.

See: <http://www.dalbeattiemuseum.co.uk>

### Why is a Ship a She?

"A ship is called a "she" because there is  
always a great deal of bustle around her;  
there is usually a gang of men about,  
she has a waist and stays;  
It takes a lot of paint to keep her good looking;  
it is not the initial expense that breaks you,  
it is the upkeep,  
she can be all decked out;  
it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly;  
and without a man at the helm  
she is absolutely uncontrollable.  
She shows her topsides, hides her bottom and  
when coming into port always heads for the buoys."

## Book Review

*All At Sea (a Limited Edition). The Maritime Art of Robert G. Lloyd over the last 25 years*, By ROBERT G. LLOYD, Isle of Man, Published by LILY PUBLICATIONS LTD (Ferry Publications). £18.50

The development of the narrative begins with Robert Lloyd's formative years and the influences on him and his early career. Brought up on the Wirral Peninsular, it began with the River Mersey and the local ports. Starting out in the early 1980s, he was launched into the container ship years, and would have missed the growth of the general cargo ship trade to/from Liverpool and Birkenhead - the era of numerous ships and many companies. Many came into the port twice on every voyage, once to load outward cargo and then a few months later to discharge an inward cargo.

The Cunard story is told at some length, and includes paintings of some of the older vessels and others of the three Queens -**Elizabeth 2**, **Mary 2** and **Victoria** - in turn each becoming even greater than the one before. The inhospitable sea is particularly well captivated with several different types of vessel in adverse weather. The environment is very true to life in terms of turbulent sky and high angry seas, and perhaps these pictures show more than any others, the qualities and understanding of the rough weather waves, being so well illustrated by this artist.

Looking back in time, ships of Brocklebank, Ben, Ellermans and Shaw Savill, show the last generation of general cargo vessels before containers and bulk trades took over. One may lament briefly at the absence of the delicate yellow funnel of New Zealand Shipping Co., but there remains a good cross section of the leading liner companies illustrated and described.

The book then turns to bulk trades and the modern dry bulk carriers, which continue to grow as and when new deep water ports are established. The large ore carriers are usually gearless, but the geared bulkers with travelling gantry cranes have a niche market on forest products, whilst the typical five hold/four crane ships are very versatile. The large tankers are less photogenic than older cargo ships, the smaller oil and dry cargo ships often novel in design and of increasing sophistication.

Described quite fairly as a "gem for all ship-lovers" and for those interested or enthusiastic about ships in general, this is a grand collection of superb paintings offering as much detail as photographs and accompanied by an authoritative commentary.



# The Malta Convoy 'Operation Pedestal' of August 1942

## and Third Officer George D. Knight of the Melbourne Star

By Alan Knight

*Continued:*

At lunchtime on 11 August **HMS Eagle** had been hit by four torpedoes when about seventy nautical miles south of Cape Salinas. (She was sunk by the German U-73, commanded by Kapitanleutnant Helmut Rosenbaum.) Unfortunately the loss of the **Eagle** deprived the convoy of 25% of its air cover.<sup>26</sup> On a positive note, the aircraft carrier **Furious** was able to successfully launch a number of much-needed Spitfires that flew to Malta.

Mr. Knight continues his recollections: "Eventually (12 August) we arrive in the Bay of Tunis and the enemy has us where they want us, confined in narrow waters with minefields to the north. Action stations have sounded, people are dashing to their stations. I grasp my dinner and take it to the bridge. The galley is closed down and the last meal is in my hand. Everything goes along smoothly, all guns are ready expecting aircraft, but none come immediately. That will soon change. In a few hours things start getting hectic, air attacks develop, and they are very effective."

Just as the convoy approaches the Skerki Channel, Mr. Knight observes that, "All hell breaks loose, ships blowing up, ships on fire, men in the water."

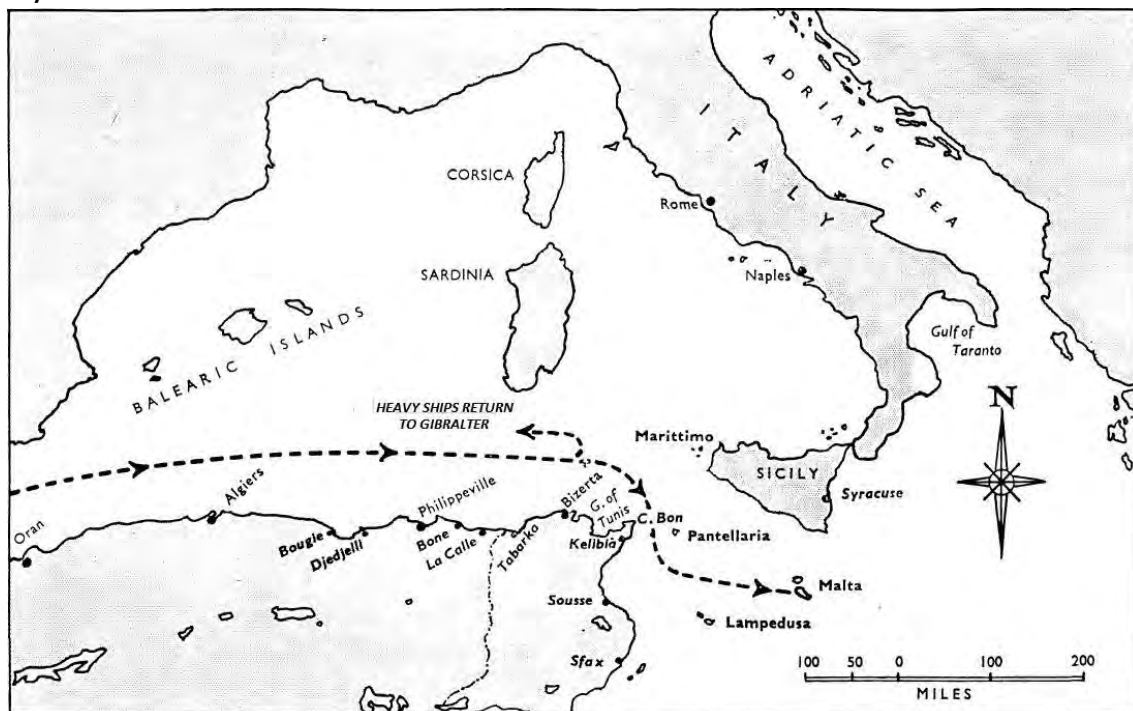
Some of the worst attacks come that day, beginning with a strike by 14 S-79 torpedo bombers, 28 Macchi 202s, a squadron of ME-109s, and two flights of Stukas piloted by both German and Italian pilots, and primarily directed at the aircraft carriers **Indomitable** and **Victorious** (in the Skerki Narrows area).<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Knight, continuing his recollections, observed: "They take out two cruisers that are responsible for communications. This whole affair was being controlled by London; now they have lost that communications capability, and its up to the Admiral on his flagship".

Actually, he is a little ahead of himself in his account; he is referring to the loss of the **Cairo** and the **Nigeria**, the only two vessels with the capability of communicating with fighters based in Malta, fighters who are barely able to reach the convoy as they were at the end of their operational range. As we shall see, they become combat losses later in the evening.<sup>28</sup> Knight does not comment on the **Indomitable**, whose flight deck was wrecked by bombs dropped from attacking Stukas around 1900 hours, 12 August, other than to mention her steaming away with fires still apparently burning. However this happening and the actual attack was clearly visible from aboard the **Melbourne Star**, as it was commented upon by Captain MacFarlane. "It was a most impressive sight to see her guns blazing

furiously out through the smoke and flame, and later to see her steaming westward towards the setting sun, with her fires still burning fiercely.”<sup>29</sup> The carrier had no choice but to return to Gibraltar.

Around 2200 hours that evening, Force Z with Admiral Syfret reversed course and set sail for Gibraltar. Force X, providing close escort for the convoy, continued. The convoy was ordered by Admiral Burrough aboard the **Nigeria** into a two column formation through the channel. The process of forming into two columns was soon underway. Admirals Syfret and Burrough were apparently unaware of the presence of enemy submarines. Soon the **Nigeria** was torpedoed by an Italian submarine. The anti-aircraft cruiser, HMS **Cairo**, was torpedoed in the stern. Close to **Nigeria**, the **Ohio** took her first hit...in the pump room, and severing her telemotor pipes so that her main steering became inoperable. HMS **Ashanti** came alongside the crippled **Nigeria** and Burrough, accompanied by some of his staff, transferred his flag to the destroyer.<sup>30</sup>



Approximate track of **Melbourne Star**, 10th to 13th August, 1942

“The convoy, in the process of executing Burrough’s order to form two columns at time of **Axum’s** attack (**Axum** was the Italian submarine commanded by Teneiente di Vascello Renato Ferrini, that torpedoed **Nigeria**, **Cairo**, and **Ohio** ), had achieved a degree of conformity and was in two loose lines at the fatal moment. The incomplete manoeuvre of changing stations quickly degenerated into disarray, however, as it was with the disaster affecting the convoy’s port column, an emergency turn to starboard, and collision avoidance. Captain MacFarlane’s **Melbourne Star** was not far astern of **Ohio**, which was immediately astern of the

**Port Chalmers**, when the tanker was hit. MacFarlane was compelled to throw his helm over and reverse his engines to avoid colliding with the vessels ahead of him. The transports following MacFarlane also drew out of their half-formed line ahead and sheered away from the obvious direction of the attack as they executed the emergency starboard turn. This forced those trying to form up in the starboard column further over to the south-east, and thus within a few minutes had the cumulative effect of destroying the hitherto tight formation”<sup>31</sup>

Separated from the main convoy in which several of the ships were blazing with towering piles of black smoke wreathing to the sky, MacFarlane could see no escorts anywhere near. They were otherwise engaged. Passing close to an American ship, the **Santa Elisa**, he hailed her by megaphone. ‘I’m going on to Malta!’ he shouted. Will you follow?’ The answer came ‘yes!’ and the **Santa Elisa** fell in astern. MacFarlane thought that another ship followed the American.”<sup>32</sup> Knight continued his narrative: “At this time, a signal had just been received from Admiral Syfret. ‘Proceed to your destination on your own or return to Gibraltar. It is up to you.’ Not exactly a signal to give you confidence. The Captain got in a huddle with us deck officers and the Chief Engineer (Mr. Harry Blandford). He and we realize the support of the whole crew is necessary, and the men need to decide what they want to do. The Petty Officers were dispatched and within fifteen minutes were back to say let’s go on to Malta. It was now about sunset and the light was failing.”

The chaotic nature of things is evident from 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer Knight’s comments. “What was our position? We had lost our plot because of the many zig zags we had taken. What ships were left were scattered over a large area? The Second Officer, the Captain and I decided where we were, and from there plotted a series of courses that would have to be taken to get around the minefield. The Second Officer would con the ship and I, using a stopwatch, told him which course to steer. Thank goodness we had a gyro compass; or it would have been very difficult. Soon the light of Cape Bon showed up, we’re in luck, and our line of attack (the course we charted and followed) is correct”. (Cape Bon is slightly north of Kelibia- editor’s note)

“We were cruising along and kicking-up the bottom. We drew thirty-five feet and had planned on thirty-seven to thirty-eight feet of water. We were so close to Cape Bon (on the starboard bow) that we went round the corner under the beam of light. Some fool on the shore must have heard us and started lobbing shells at us; some were tracers. We fixed him; a six-inch shell did the trick.”

In the early hours of the following morning, 13 August, MacFarlane saw great activity ahead, with many gun flashes and streams of colored tracer – red, gold, and pale green. An attack was being made on the convoy and he felt far from happy, particularly as the **Melbourne Star** was, he says, “giving a wonderful fireworks

display from her exhaust.”<sup>33</sup> Everything possible had been done to stop it, but without success.

Actually, between Cape Bon and Kelibia the convoy's vessels encountered another problem, that of powerful beams of light shining out to sea and illuminating all ships of the convoy and those of the enemy. “The master of the **Almeria Lykes** reported that the revolving beam at Cape Bon was sufficiently powerful to illuminate and silhouette any ship passing within ten miles of the shore.”<sup>34</sup>

The Tunisians, being neutral, were operating in a peacetime mode without any consideration being given to the unintended impact of these navigational aids.

As MacFarlane discovered later, the activity ahead that he had noted was a series of Italian E-Boat attacks on the convoy. They had been lying in wait off Kelibia on the Tunisian coast. Between 0100 and 0500 hours that morning, the cruiser HMS **Manchester** was torpedoed and sunk, as well as the merchant ships **Glenorchy**, **Wairangi**, **Almeria Lykes** and **Santa Elisa**, the last two being American.<sup>35</sup> (Taffrail, pp 92-93) The **Ohio** was again targeted by sixty Stuka dive bombers and was severely damaged, despite success in evading mines, conventional torpedoes, and some Italian parachute-delivered Motobombo FFs ( bomb/mine).<sup>36</sup> She was reduced to a speed of 4 knots. The **Melbourne Star** came upon the survivors of the **Glenorchy** but, reluctantly, the Captain decided against stopping to rescue them, fearing his stationary ship would become an easy target for the enemy.<sup>37</sup>

“The **Melbourne Star** steamed on, keeping well away to the southward, and eventually came up to a destroyer escort. MacFarlane kept zig-zagging trying to drop in astern of one of them; but, as he says, ‘none of them seemed to want us there, and we began to think we were nobody’s baby and had to keep pulling away. However, just as dawn began to break, I had permission from one of the destroyers to take station astern her, when another destroyer, HMS **Ashanti** came up on our starboard quarter.....’<sup>38</sup>

Knight recollected: “ We had a position to be in at 0700 in the morning but we got there at 0600; nothing in sight. Then a destroyer showed up flying an admiral’s flag (**Ashanti**)”.

**Ashanti** “signaled to me to turn around and rejoin the main body of the convoy which was astern of us. I replied “no, I am staying where I am.” The reply came back ‘I am the admiral.’ I had nothing more to say so I turned and rejoined the convoy.....”<sup>39</sup>

Knight has a slightly different recollection. He said, “The Admiral did not like it (MacFarlane’s response) and told us to stop where we were, and that others would join us”.

The destroyer which MacFarlane was going to follow had, unknown to the **Melbourne Star** at the time, lost its mine-sweeping capability and following it would also have put the merchant ship at risk.<sup>40</sup>

Sure enough a few ships did turn up and were formed into two lines led by the destroyer. (Whether **Ashanti** led, or whether the leading vessels were the cruisers HMS **Charbydis** and HMS **Kenya**, is unclear). "The **Melbourne Star** had taken station astern of the **Waimarama**, a large ship heavily laden with petrol and ammunition."<sup>41</sup> At 0810, as Captain MacFarlane describes it, a covey of dive bombers came screaming suddenly out of the sun and a stick of bombs fell on and around the **Waimarama**, which blew up with a roar and a sheet of flame, with clouds of billowing smoke, to disappear in a few seconds.<sup>42</sup>

In Mr. Knight's words, the attack happened slightly earlier. He writes, "About 0700 enemy aircraft found us and knocked hell out of us and sank one ship just ahead of us. This was of course the **Waimarama**."

MacFarlane wrote, "We were showered with debris from this ship. A piece of plating five feet long fell on board. The base of a steel ventilator, half an inch thick and 2 ½ feet high partly demolished one of our machine gun posts, a piece of angle iron at the same time narrowly missing a cadet. The sea was one sheet of fire and as we were so close we had to steam through it. I put the helm hard a'port and had to come down from where I was on the monkey island (where he had been conning the ship) to the bridge to save myself from being burnt."<sup>43</sup> A six-inch shell crashed into the roof of the captain's cabin.<sup>44</sup> He (MacFarlane) had little time to react, putting the **Melbourne Star's** helm hard a'port to avoid running into the blazing wreck of the **Waimarama**.<sup>45</sup> "With great presence of mind, Second Officer Richards, in the wheelhouse below, rang on full ahead, and the **Melbourne Star** passed through the burning sea."<sup>46</sup>

Third Officer Knight says, "I was off the bridge at that time and knew something had happened; we were straddled and the ship bounced around like a toy. Our engines stopped, I went aft and found an awful mess, guns unmanned, stuff from the ship that had blown up had landed on us, and the sea was on fire".

Apparently, the gun crews on the forecastle ran aft, though surrounded by flames. One author mentions the flames and comments on these almost igniting the deck cargo, whereas Knight maintains that other than two landing craft lashed to the deck, there was no deck cargo.<sup>47</sup> MacFarlane continued, "The flames were leaping mast-high, indeed air pilots reported that at times they reached 2,000 feet. The heat was terrific. The air was becoming drier every minute, as though the oxygen were being sucked out of it, as, in fact, it was."<sup>47</sup> The estimates as to the height of the flames appear to have been reported by RAF pilots based in Malta.

“As the ship passed through the grave of her companion (**Waimarama**) the fierce heat threatened to ignite her own cargo, the paint blistered, and the lifeboats caught fire..... One of her kerosene tanks ignited but in seconds she was through the worst of it.”<sup>49</sup>

Mr. Knight continued, “ I saw the Chief Engineer who said the safest place was forward. Men were jumping over the side and no amount of shouting at them could stop them. The Pied Piper of Hamelin came to mind and I wondered if I shouted to follow me that they would. They did and followed me all the way to the bow where I told them to stay, and that I was going to the bridge. On the bridge it was a shambles; the only one I found was the helmsman; he seemed to be relieved when he saw me. Phoning up the engine room, I found that we were taking no water, but that the compressed air was not enough to start the engines. They (engineer officers) said it would take a little while; so be it. The telegraphs were put on stop and then ‘slow ahead.’ The engine room would ring ‘slow ahead’ when they knew they could start the engines. This showed me how vulnerable we were when the diesels couldn’t get enough air to cause combustion. The Captain and Second Officer then arrived, much to my relief. He (MacFarlane) of course took over”. Once again, beset by the fog of war, it is impossible to determine whether the engines did or did not stop and if so, for how long.

MacFarlane, based on documents used by Taffrail has a slightly different account. The captain was of course well aware of the highly flammable and dangerous cargo aboard. Taffrail says, “Unable to see how he could prevent his ship from being blown-up, Captain MacFarlane had ordered all his men to go forward, which was a wise precaution. When the fire left by the **Waimarama** had been cleared he ordered everyone back to their stations, when it was reported that 36 men were missing. ‘These men,’ he writes, ‘thinking that the for’ard end of the ship had been struck, and being quite certain that if they stayed on board they would be blown up, jumped over the side.’ which in the circumstances was not altogether unnatural.”<sup>50</sup> Taffrail, using reports of MacFarlane, notes that 14 of the 36 were lost and the other 22 were rescued by a destroyer, HMS **Ledbury**.<sup>51</sup> Another account indicates only 33 men jumped overboard, albeit not in response to an order. Those who jumped were primarily members of crews for the 6-inch and Bofors guns.<sup>52</sup> Knight indicates that after a few hours to recover from their ordeal, the 22 were then sent over to the **Ohio** which had apparently lost some of its crew.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, air attacks continued, though enemy bombers were kept at a distance by short-range Spitfires operating from Malta and providing air cover for the remaining merchantmen.<sup>54</sup> Knight writes, “We had paravanes out and they (the mines) behaved themselves”.



**Melbourne Star** arriving Malta

Aircraft from Malta appeared overhead and the remaining merchant ships (**Melbourne Star**, **Rochester Castle**, **Port Chalmers**), shepherded by Royal Navy motor torpedo boats, and with minesweepers out front, steamed toward Malta while the cruisers and destroyers reversed course for Gibraltar.

Eventually, (at about 1800 hours, 13 August 1942) we reached the swept channel into Valetta Harbor.

Whether the **Melbourne Star** was the first or second to arrive remains unclear, confusion probably caused by misidentification of the **Melbourne Star** as the **Port Chalmers** in early photographs. Authors Ellis, Bradford, and the Maltese author, Joseph Attard, who was present at the time, indicate the **Melbourne Star** was the first to enter. Woodman claims she was second, placing him in agreement with Knight. Regardless, pictures of her arrival clearly show how the paint had been burned off the ship's sides.

A last minute incident with the Royal Navy occurred while the **Melbourne Star** was inbound. Knight recounts, " We were told to lift our paravanes and didn't do it promptly (see editor's note) The Navy got annoyed. Explaining that we had no crew to raise the paravanes, they sent us some ratings who did it for us. What a wonderful feeling it was to pass into the harbor and hear the band and the people on the battlements recognizing the ship from a year ago".

He related that upon entering the harbour at Valetta, the boards with the ship's name (on either side of the bridge) were turned so that the name would be visible. The remnants of the convoy had arrived on 15 August 1942, coinciding with the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, one of the holiest of all religious celebrations for the Maltese, to who the convoy's arrival was seen as truly miraculous, the so-called Miracle of Santa Marija."<sup>55</sup>

Jellison says the elation of the welcoming crowd was short-lived as the battered condition of the ships became apparent. The people grew strangely quiet as the realization dawned that there were no other incoming vessels (although the **Brisbane Star** and **Ohio** eventually arrived). It was soon apparent that thousands of tons of urgently needed supplies has not arrived.<sup>56</sup> About the only improvement in food supplies that occurred after the arrival of the August 1942 convoy was that the bread ration for males between sixteen and sixty was slightly raised. Spirits of the islanders and the troops improved but for several months to come, essential food supply stocks were maintained only by cargoes arriving via minelaying submarines and occasional other vessels such as fast minelayers which arrived quickly and just as quickly departed. Starting in late November 1942 and then in December, a total of three convoys finally delivered over 210,000 tons of long-sought supplies. The immediate results of the August convoy were seen in increased military activity on Malta made possible by the delivery of fuel by the convoy. Expanded submarine activity and air attacks by the RAF effectively interdicted much of the enemy shipping carrying materiel (fuel, tanks, armored cars, guns) needed by Axis forces in North Africa and hampered Rommel's ability to successfully wage war.

Knight writes that, "A tug had us alongside a wharf, we tied-up, and immediately a submarine was alongside wanting a fill of oil. The **Melbourne Star** and her sister ships were rapidly emptied of their cargoes. Only three of us made it through, though a few others limped in a few days later". (These were of course the **Ohio** and the **Brisbane Star**. Miraculously, most of the **Ohio's** cargo of fuel oil arrived, though the ship was declared a loss upon arrival, given the extent of damage). That night, having been sent ashore for billeting I tried to sleep in one of the dormitories in a cave, without success".

It should be recalled that at that time, given the air attacks, Malta's citizens and military personnel stationed there were normally housed in caves and tunnels in an effort to afford them a degree of protection from bombing.

Only five of the fourteen merchantmen that sailed to Malta from the United Kingdom actually reached their destination. Losses included nine merchant ships (7 British, 2 American), one aircraft carrier, two cruisers, and a destroyer. Sustaining damage due to enemy action were one aircraft carrier, 2 cruisers, and one destroyer.<sup>57</sup>

Official recognition of certain crew members of the **Melbourne Star** followed. Captain MacFarlane was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO), the Chief Officer with the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), five personnel were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM), and Third Officer George D. Knight, along with two fellow officers, was recognized by a "Mention in Despatches."



Continuing enemy air attacks prevented the departure of vessels such as the **Melbourne Star**. Knight would not leave Malta until 7 December 1942 when a convoy of empty ships, including the **Melbourne Star**, sailed for Port Said, Egypt.<sup>58</sup> Soon after arrival and unloading, the well-armed **Melbourne Star** was used as a floating ant-aircraft gun battery, using assets that were useful in countering the many air raids and supplementing shore-based batteries. Knight, whose additional duties included that of gunnery officer, said that the ship was connected by landline to Malta's War Headquarters and he was called every time an inbound flight of enemy aircraft was detected. The Royal Navy gun crews had left and Knight could not recall if any of the Army's Maritime Regiment gunners manned the weapons. His recollection is that the manning of the guns was mostly or perhaps entirely by the ship's crew.<sup>59</sup>

As for the **Melbourne Star** its luck would not long continue. With a different captain but with several of the crew aboard who had sailed to Malta in Operation Pedestal, the ship, then about 480 miles south-east of Bermuda, was struck on 2 April 1943 by two torpedoes launched from a U-boat, almost simultaneously. She was carrying a cargo of torpedoes, ammunition, and other war materiel. Practically the entire ship's company perished simultaneously and the shattered remains of the **Melbourne Star** went to the bottom in less than two minutes. So sudden was the attack and sinking that there was no opportunity to send an SOS. The eleven survivors were able to board two life rafts that had broken free. Only 4 crewmen survived aboard one raft, being rescued thirty-eight days later. The other raft was never seen or heard from again.<sup>60</sup>

On 21 April 1944, George Knight, now 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer of the **Royal Star**, survived the aerial attack and sinking of the ship approximately 30 miles off Algiers.

#### ENDNOTES

26. Bradford, *Siege: Malta 1940-1943*, 259.
27. Attard, *The Battle of Malta*, 207.
28. Actually, Knight is a little ahead of himself in this.
29. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 91.
30. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 411.
31. Ibid., 412.
32. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, p. 92.
33. Ibid., 93.
34. Smith, *Pedestal*, 151.
35. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 92-93.
36. Attard, *The Battle of Malta*, 206.
37. Phone call, editor to George Knight, 7 January 2011.
38. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 93.
39. Ibid., 93.
40. Phone call, editor to George Knight, 15 January 2011.
41. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 94.

42. Ibid., 94.
43. Ibid., 94.
44. Smith, *Pedestal*, 183.
45. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 435.
46. Ibid., 435-436.
47. Ibid., 436.
48. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 94.
49. Smith, *Pedestal*, 183.
50. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 94-95.
51. Woodman, *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*, 436.
52. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 94.
53. Phone call, editor to George Knight, 19 January 2011.
54. Smith, *Pedestal*, 188.
55. Jellison, *Besieged: The World War II Ordeal of Malta 1940-1942*, 256.
56. Ibid., 252-253.
57. Elliott, *The Cross and the Ensign*, 146.
58. Arnold Hague, *The Supply of Malta 1940-1942*  
([www.navalhistory.net/xAHMaltaSupply01.htm](http://www.navalhistory.net/xAHMaltaSupply01.htm)-United Kingdom: 2010, Revised)
59. Phone call, editor to George Knight, 24 January 2011.
60. Taffrail, *Blue Star Line at War 1939-1945*, 144.

## **Bibliography**

- Attard, Joseph. *The Battle of Malta*. Feltham: Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., 1982.
- Blue Star Line: *Blue Star's M.V. :Melbourne Star*" . [www.bluestarline.org/melbourne1.html](http://www.bluestarline.org/melbourne1.html). 2008
- Bradford, Ernle. *Siege: Malta 1940-1943*. New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc.,1986.
- Elliott, Peter. *The Cross and the Ensign*. Cambridge: Patrick Stephens Ltd., 1980.
- Hague, Arnold. *The Supply of Malta, 1940-1942*. [www.naval-history.net/xAHMaltaSupply01.htm](http://www.naval-history.net/xAHMaltaSupply01.htm)-United Kingdom\_2010 Revised.
- Jellison, Charles A. *Besieged: The World War II Ordeal of Malta, 1940-1942*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1984.
- Smith, Peter C. *Pedestal*. Bristol: Crecy Books Ltd., 1999.
- Taffrail (Taprell Dorling). *Blue Star Line at War, 1939-1945* .London: W. Foulsham & Co. Ltd., 1973.
- Woodman, Richard. *Malta Convoys 1940-1943*. London: John Murray, 2000.

[Editor's note: The following quotation is appropriate:-

*The Merchant Navy, with Allied comrades, night and day, in weather fair and foul, faces not only the ordinary perils of the sea but the sudden assaults of war from beneath the waters and from the sky. Your first task is to bring to port the cargoes vital for us at home and for our armies abroad, and we trust your tenacity and resolve to see this stern task through. We are a seafaring race, and we understand the call of the sea. We account you in these hard days worthy successors in a tradition of steadfast courage and high adventure, and we feel confident that that proud tradition of our island will be upheld today wherever the Ensign of a British Merchantman is flown.*

Mr. Winston Churchill's Message. July 1941.



The **Melbourne Star** in more normal times



The tanker **Ohio** arrives Malta at the end of Convoy WS21S. Picture Imperial War Museum

## To Serve the World on a Summer Evening

Come, evening sunlight, warmth of  
womb,  
Flood into my sitting-room,  
Flood across the Western sea  
And stir a Pilot's memory.

Take me back to Lynas Point,  
(My trencher fill, my glass anoint)  
And let me tell thee of the scene  
On many a balmy summer e'en,

When liners, as their trade they plied,  
Came handsomely and on the tide,  
For Liverpool from lands enchanted,  
And how men took it all for granted.

See you first the grand Cunard  
With New York mail-flag at her yard.  
The CPR next, from Quebec,  
The icy-scheduled, foggy trek.

A Clan Line Steamer from Ceylon,  
An Ellerman from Lebanon,  
A BP Tanker from Iran,  
And here's Blue Funnel, from Japan.

From Panama comes NZS,  
Home from Auckland, wool-express,  
And in her wake Shaw Savill who is  
Home from Sydney, via Suez.

An Anchor Liner from Bombay,  
A Houlder-boat from Uruguay,  
Blue Star with Argentinian cargo  
And PSN from Santiago.

An Elder Dempster from Accra,  
A Harrison from Zanzibar,  
A Brocklebank with tea, Madras,  
Intrepid Booth Line, from Manaus.

The sun it will be setting soon,  
Ah, here comes Bibby from Rangoon  
Each takes her Pilot from the Cutter,  
A routine matter, bread and butter.

What panorama was afforded!  
All in the daily log recorded.  
So, darling daughters at my knee,  
It was a wondrous life,  
D'you see?

Barrie Youde, 2002

# The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

## *THE BULLETIN*

Volume 57 No.2, September, 2013



The restored **Maid of the Loch** at Balloch Pier

See page 6

A Change of Watch	John Stokoe	Page	1
Remember those days....	Bill Ogle		5
The Upper Mersey Navigation Commission	Anthony J. Barratt		7
The Shipping Federation	John Stokoe		11
Liverpool Merchant Shipping Conference	The Editor		20
Book Review	The Editor		21
In Search of a Ship	Charles Dawson		27
Looking to the Future of Crew Welfare	Mission to Seafarers		29
Liverpool Underwriter's Ship-Register Books	David Eccles		30
Henry Hornby – boatbuilders of Wallasey	Harry Hignett		33
Shipwreck 1893	David Eccles		38
A Brief History of the Magazine <i>Sea Breezes</i>	Harry Hignett		41



The **Raymond V. Ingersoll** became the **MP.MPH.GDY-8** See page 6



East River wharves, New York in the 1830s See page 28



# The Liverpool Nautical Research Society



President:  
Mr. William J.Pape II

Vice-Presidents:  
Captain G.Cubbin,  
Mr. H.M.Hignett

Chairman:  
Captain R.Settle

Vice-Chairman:  
Mr. D.C.White

Council:  
I.Duckett (Talks Secretary), D.K.C.Eccles, D.Littler,  
Dr. E.S.Long, W.A.Ogle (Editor).

Honorary Officers:  
Secretary: J.Stokoe                      Treasurer: B.Groombridge

Web site: [www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](http://www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)

Contact details:  
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society  
Maritime Archives and Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Albert Dock  
Liverpool L3 4AQ  
United Kingdom.

[info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](mailto:info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)

# A CHANGE OF WATCH

By LNRS Secretary John Stokoe

Those of you who over the years have had the pleasure of listening to one of Sam Davidson's fascinating presentations when he shares his love of marine art will have some inkling of the interesting few hours I recently spent with Sam when he felt the time had come to 'change watch'.

From the moment of my arrival and Sam's infectious enthusiasm together with the literature spread on his table I instantly knew that for the next hour or two time would not matter as he and I plunged into the many varied aspects of art that



have held his interest over the years, particularly relating to sail. 'Why sail?' I hastened to ask. Well, according to Sam, on a powered vessel the engine remains completely out of sight whereas a sailing ship's behaviour can be so much more expressive.

Sam's introduction to our maritime heritage resulted from when, shortly after his retirement when he attended a meeting with the late and much missed Mike Stammers, former Keeper of the Maritime Museum. As a retired ENT surgeon and former Dean of Post Graduate Studies at the University of Liverpool, Sam's fascination for the maritime world stemmed from his boyhood recollections of the busy Mersey estuary. Sam had taken up

sailing and cruised various areas of the British coast especially the Irish Sea and the Clyde. These experiences, plus a father with a fondness for antiques, bred an early interest in maritime pictures that has deepened over the years and led to a fuller appreciation of the many practical considerations revealed in a maritime painting. Sam was hooked, completely hooked in fact. His interest in marine art blossomed and it wasn't just a question of looking at pictures of sailing ships, Sam was able to read so much into each artwork so that each was in effect relating a story to him.

Sam developed a critical eye and was knowledgeable to the extent that he wrote a number of books on this subject as well as being an expert contributor to many more. Add to that the fact that his reputation spread and he was, and still is,



regularly called upon for his expert personal opinion which unfailingly is highly respected.

The Society is extremely proud to have had the benefit of Sam's Presidency over these past sixteen years, as well as his involvement as a committed Member for many years beforehand. Taking into account our Vice President Graeme Cubbin's own words when Sam was offered the opportunity to serve as President, Graeme wrote *'the Society feels that the benefits of your knowledge, wisdom and experience would be dispensed willingly and in full measure whenever sound advice is needed'*. Without doubt, Sam has fulfilled every word of Graeme's view of some sixteen years ago.....and most certainly, even more.

Sam was happy to reflect on his years 'in office' reinforcing the importance of ensuring that the preservation of records of personal experiences at sea must be seen as invaluable. He remarked that thankfully the Society's own **Bulletin** journal goes such a long way in achieving this aspect. Otherwise, our maritime heritage spanning the many centuries could be easily lost for ever.

In recent times nonagenarian Sam has felt that the time was approaching to change the watch and for the Society to become vigilant for a worthy successor. Given that Sam's publications have involved many fruitful links with fellow authors and researchers in America, it is giving Sam the greatest of pleasure to hand over the Presidency of the Society to LNRS Life Member William J. Pape II.

Despite the considerable distance that exists between us, I have probably enjoyed a similar level of contact with Bill Pape as has been the case with Sam, particularly during these recent years. An occasion when this came to the fore was just a few weeks ago when Liverpool commemorated the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic. It was a time for both pride and reflection as to what went on all those years ago when Liverpool was at the forefront of receiving such invaluable aid from the United States. As a nation, and as a Society, I should hasten to add, we continue to value this special relationship.

We need to look much further back in time though to discover a link between the Pape family and our own area. Bill Pape's grandfather William J Pape was born in Liverpool in 1873. He was the son of Captain Robert Pape, an English merchant ship captain. Whilst William accompanied his father with other family members on a voyage to Japan, sadly Captain Pape died of Asiatic fever aboard his ship **Maitland** in Yokohama. The surviving family members returned to England and William was looked after by a close aunt and uncle who eventually took him with them over to America. His love of the written word was borne out with much of his hard earned pocket money being spent on buying books. His collection grew and grew and he was determined that all were to be shipped to America, even at the

expense of leaving behind most of his clothes. But it was a decision that he would never regret.

William (W.J.) graduated and, with his extraordinary writing ability he took employment as a fledgling reporter. After just a few years he became the City Editor of his newspaper, in fact becoming the youngest Editor in New Jersey. W.J.'s interest in the business side of newspaper publication increased and it wasn't very long before he took advantage of the opportunity to buy The Waterbury Republican in 1901. This respected newspaper has remained with the Pape family ever since. So, having established a strong Liverpool link we must turn our attention to the present Bill Pape, in other words William J Pape II.

Bill Pape, initially made contact with our Society around the turn of the millennium. It was at that time that one of our 'bloodhound' researchers Gordon Bodey delved into the story of the barque **Maitland** of which Captain Robert Pape had been the master. Gordon uncovered a tremendous amount of information and this resulted in a prominent article entitled *Captain Robert Pape and the Barque Maitland* being published in 'The Bulletin' in March 2002. The article was later revisited in December 2011 shortly after it was discovered within Society circles that an original artwork of **Maitland** was about to be sold by auction in America. This painting had been commissioned by Captain Gunderson a later master of the **Maitland**. The painting was by renowned marine artist William Howard Yorke and was painted in the artist's studio in Aigburth, Liverpool, ironically just a short distance from where 'W.J. The First' had originally lived. Yorke's work had become readily recognisable on stylistic grounds. Bill Pape's successful bid for this painting in August 2011 means that it now has pride of place in his office of the Waterbury Republican-American in Connecticut.



Bill Pape's own background is well deserving of mention. In true Pape tradition Bill spent time at sea during the early 1950s, graduating from the United States Naval Academy in 1953, and thereafter progressing to the award of an MBA Degree at Harvard School of Business Administration in 1959. Almost from then on Bill has held variety of managing and proprietary roles spanning some 54 years

within the Republican-American organisation ranging from Assistant Treasurer, Vice President, Publisher, Editor, President until at present as Chairman. In these positions he has demonstrated a vast portfolio of interest for championing community issues and commanding much respect throughout a wide variety of civic networks. To this we must certainly include his unstinting interest in LNRS ever since his initial contact many years ago and he is a true friend to our endeavours in preserving and promoting our maritime heritage.

We are most grateful and delighted that he has accepted our Council's invitation to become President. This is an important occasion in the history of the Society and I am quite certain that, without exception, all of our members both near and in all corners of the globe will want to wish Bill a calm sea and prosperous voyage throughout his term as Society President.

### LNRS Presentation Programme 2013 – 2014

Sept 19 <sup>th</sup>	Liverpool Tidal Institute and Coastal Flooding	Anna Carlsson-Hyslop
Oct 17 <sup>th</sup>	Wireless Operators of WW1	Willie Williamson
Nov 21 <sup>st</sup>	Development and growth of Ship Management Services	John Arkell
Dec 19 <sup>th</sup>	The wreck of the Primrose Hill in 1900	David Eccles
Jan 16 <sup>th</sup>	Vessels and owners in the NW coasting trades in the 18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> centuries	Peter Skidmore
Feb 14 <sup>th</sup>	Anchor Handling and Towing in the North Sea	Don Watt
Mar 20 <sup>th</sup>	The New Life Fleet	Tony Barratt
Apr 17 <sup>th</sup>	The four-masted, full rigged, ship 'Liverpool'	David White
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	The Hext Rogers Collection of WW 2 Convoy Drawings	Ian Duckett

## 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, 1972**

Built by William Denny & Bros. Ltd. at Dumbarton, and completed in March, 1951, the 14 knot turbine steamer **City of Karachi** (7,321 gross tons) has been sold by Ellerman Lines Ltd. She has been renamed **Kavo Kolones** and was handed over to her new Greek owners at Liverpool during May. The buyers are a growing Greek group of companies who have acquired a variety of ships in recent years including two other Ellerman liners, the **City of Liverpool** and the **City of New York**. Most of the vessels are registered in the names of separate companies and a number of former Dutch ships also figure prominently in the group.

The first ship of P&O's General Cargo Division to receive the company's new funnel marking was the motorship **Strathconon** (12,539gt) when she called at Royal Albert Dock, London, early in May. The funnel is blue, with the P&O logo upon it in white.

The latest addition to the fleet of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co. Ltd. has entered service; she is the oil-engined passenger and side-loading car ferry **Mona's Queen**, and is their first passenger vessel to be so powered.

It is sometimes quite remarkable how involved some casualties can become, as disaster seems to pile upon disaster, with more than one ship coming to grief at the same location. This occurred early in July near Karachi, when the Panamanian flag steamer **Isabena** (7,607 gt), capsized and sank in Karachi Roads. A former American Victory type ship, she had loaded 9,400 tons of bulk wheat ex the American tanker **Overseas Joyce**, which had lightened in the anchorage. The wheat was fairly evenly distributed over five holds, and the main cause of the capsizes was said to be bad weather with a heavy swell. Of the 38 crew, 33 were rescued by the Pakistan Navy, but five men, including the master, were missing. Unhappily one Pakistan Navy officer was also killed during the rescue. But that was not the end of the matter for some three weeks later the Pakistani motorship **Abasin** (8,989 gt), bound from Kuwait to Karachi, struck the wreck of the **Isabena**, sustaining such damage that necessitated her abandonment by her crew after she was beached about three miles from the harbour entrance.

The former Swedish ore/oil carrier **Soya Atlantic** has been converted by Boele's of Bolnes, Holland into the world's largest floating workshop and craneship. Now named **Orca**, she carries a crane capable of lifting 800 tons at a 90ft. radius, and is owned by the Panama Europe Shipping Company, Inc. of Panama.

## July to September, 1992

It is reported that Ben Line has sold its three remaining major container ships, with the resultant redundancy of 150 employees. The **Benarty (ex-City of Edinburgh)**, **Benalder** and **Benavon**; the latter two built at Kiel in 1972 and 1973 respectively; all are of 55,889 grt. The smaller vessel **Benvalla** will still operate under charter in the Far East, the majors have been purchased by the Danish East Asiatic Co.

The ubiquitous Liberty ships of World War II lost their grey anonymity at the end of that conflict and assumed the house colours and names of many leading shipping companies as an invaluable stop-gap pending the delivery of purpose-designed tonnage from yards with full order books. Fifty years later they have become “collector’s pieces”, like San Francisco’s **Jeremiah O’Brien** and New York’s **John W Brown**. Unexpectedly a rather truncated example has been found at Gdynia, Poland. Her bow has the reference (hardly a name) “**MP.MPH.GDY-8**”, presumably part of the book keeping of the people who are using her as a grain storage hulk. This Liberty was built in 1944 at Panama City as the **Raymond V Ingersoll** and three years later became the **Sneland I** of D/S A/S Vestland (Richard Amlie & Co. A/S), Haugesund. In August, 1959, she was reported sold to other trading buyers, who turned out to be the Polish Steamship Co., was renamed **Kopalnia Zabrze** and registered at Szczecin. In 1976 she was modified for her static duties. It is believed that she is to be removed from Gdynia, a certificate for towage having been issued. Beyond that, nothing further is known regarding a future for her.

The now derelict Loch Lomond excursion steamer **Maid of the Loch**, 555 grt, was launched in March, 1953, by A & J Inglis at Pointhouse, Glasgow, for the British Transport Commission and “broken down” into sections for carriage by road to Balloch and reassembly. A thoroughly conventional compound-engined paddler, she replaced the **Princess May** of 1898. Her length is 191ft., beam 28 ft. and she could steam at 13.5 knots carrying 1,000 passengers. It would seem that she was not a consistent money-earner and operated under the shadow of withdrawal. Whether she will ever sail again appears doubtful. It is unlikely that her future will be other than breaking-up at Balloch, the fate of her predecessor.

*(Editor’s note: Happily this is one prediction that did not come to pass. Her last commercial sailing was in August 1981 and then she lay abandoned until 1992. Purchased by Dumbarton District Council restoration was started, with the work taken over in 1995 by a newly formed charitable organisation (whose web site is [www.maidoftheloch.com](http://www.maidoftheloch.com)). This work continues and it is hoped that 2013 will see her in steam for the first time in 32 years!)*

# The Upper Mersey Navigation Commission

A summary of the presentation to the Society on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2013

By Society member Antony J Barratt

A short while ago I was asked to look through some of the papers of the late Bill Leathwood, of Runcorn. Bill was a former member of the Society and very knowledgeable about the Upper Mersey. The papers were submitted to various archives, but I took the liberty of copying those relating to the Commission, as it has been on my to-do list for some years. The talk and this article are primarily based on Bill's research.

The Upper Mersey estuary stretches from a line drawn between Garston and Bromborough to Warrington. After the Bridgewater Canal reached Runcorn in 1776 the Duke of Bridgewater considered carrying it across the river, to reach Liverpool, via an aqueduct, but this proved impractical with the technology of the time so passengers and cargo which required to be carried to or from Liverpool had to be carried by Mersey flats along the estuary.

The situation of the Duke and later his trustees becoming the unofficial navigation authority continued until 1861 when the trustees and a few of the other principle river users agreed to set up the Upper Mersey Dues Trust. Up until this time the Liverpool Dock Trustees (who were also the Town Council) collected navigation dues from vessel passing to the upper estuary, but spent little or no money on improving the upper river. As part of the legislation the Trust was allowed to buy the dues paid by up river vessels and apply it to maintaining the navigation. The price set out in the legislation was £105,000 using a calculation similar to that used by the MD&HB when they bought the dues from the Dock Trustees.

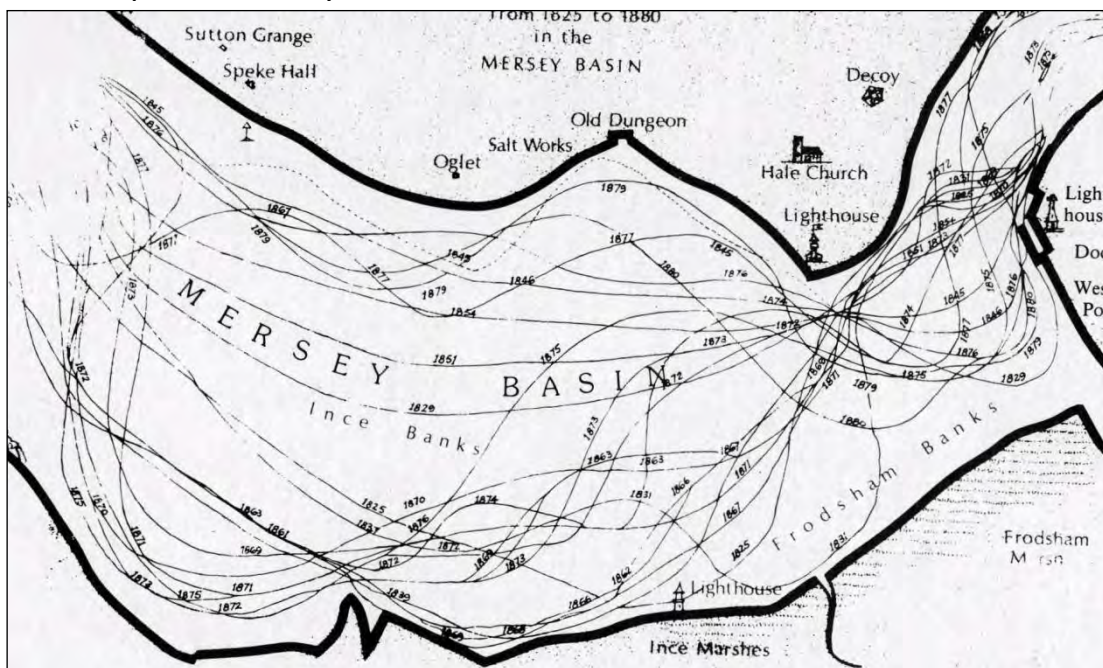
The new trust had to pay off the loan used to buy the dues as well to maintain and extend the buoyage scheme, which meant the Trust had to acquire a new buoy tender to replace the barge currently in use named **Tower**. This was achieved by chartering the tender **Preston** from 1867. The Bridgewater Canal Trustees still managed the service but the costs were spread more equally. In 1872 the Bridgewater Canal Trustees sold their interest in the canal to the Bridgewater Canal Navigation Co. who wanted to be rid of the cost and responsibility for the maintenance of the navigation. Legislation was therefore obtained, in 1876, for the setting up of the Upper Mersey Navigation Commission. The Commission took over ownership of the **Preston** and ordered a considerable number of buoys.

Today we are used to seeing an empty estuary but in the 1870s the situation was very different. Twice in 1875 there were substantial groundings off Runcorn. In March, 89 vessels were ashore off Runcorn and Widnes and in September the number was 103. In most groundings the craft would be got off, usually by their owners, but some were quickly swallowed by the sands. Where the

wreck was considered to be a hazard to navigation the MD&HB, on behalf of the Commission, would blow the wreck up.

The sands were treacherous and the channels would rapidly change requiring the buoy tender to move the buoys to the new channel, without delay. There were several ways of resurveying the river including from the riverbank. This involved observing the buoys at low water from the bank and seeing if any had shifted or were no longer in the right place. This could involve the dangerous practice of walking over the sand and mud banks to re-secure a buoy to its moorings or marking the position with a branch so that a boat could locate it on the incoming tide. Alternatively, a small boat could leave Runcorn observing the changes needed on the ebb tide and putting them right on the flood. The use of a lead line helped record depths of water. By the time the Commission was established the steam powered **Preston** made repositioning buoys somewhat easier than previously.

The map of the estuary below shows how dramatically the channels changed over a period of 55 years.



A map of the estuary showing the channel movements between 1825 & 1880

To carry out their work the Commission over its lifetime had four buoy tenders, namely the

<b>Preston</b>	Built circa 1861, and used 1867 - 1924
<b>Lady Windsor</b>	Purchased 1921, and used 1923 - 1933
<b>Jesse Wallwork</b>	Built 1913, Purchased 1933, and used 1933 -1963
<b>Jesse Wallwork II</b>	Built 1924, Purchased 1961, and used 1963 –1973

Occasionally a barge might have to be hired to cover refits and or repairs. The work of the tenders could be arduous and result not infrequently in hull damage. Even more at risk were the light vessels. For instance the lightship **Arthur**



**Sinclair**, off Ditton, received damage to either side of the bow from two separate collisions on two successive days in December 1908.

The Commission had 12 lightships although only two or three were in service at any one time. The light vessels had a crew of two who worked one week on the vessel and one week on the buoy tender. In the case of the **Jesse Wallwork** she had a crew of 10, one of whom had to be trained in the use of the sextant, for recording the co-ordinates of repositioned buoys. The light vessels which were basically flats with towers amidships had to be pumped out by the tender about once per week.

The light vessels were supplemented by buoys usually at least fifty in number and at various times three lighthouses namely Hale Head, Ince and Garston. Other organisations also operated lighthouses including the Weaver Navigation at Weston Point and the Shropshire Union Canal Company at Ellesmere Port. The light vessels were kept on station until channel movements rendered them superfluous.



A 'train' of barges leave Runcorn in the 1930s.

The other principle light vessel stations were at Ince, Oglet, and Ditton.

Hale Head lighthouse was the longest serving light having been commissioned in 1838 and decommissioned in 1958. Due to a crack in the tower structure the original tower was replaced in 1906. The tower and the rebuilt cottage are now in private hands as a residence.

The First World War had little effect on the Commission other than the problem of replacing men who had gone in to the services. The Second World War was very different, some men went to war, but at a local level all the navigation aids had to have the illumination reduced and or shielded from over-flying bombers. Even so, the Hale lighthouse was machine-gunned. A crashed Hurricane and an errant barrage balloon were also recovered.

For many years the service ran smoothly with few major changes. In the 1920s the lightships were retired and gas buoys introduced. Post war, however, there commenced a steady decline in the use of the upper estuary. By the end of the 1950s the trade on the upper part of the upper estuary had come to an end and with the opening of the Widnes Bridge the need to voyage to the West Bank Dock at



Widnes was unnecessary, as vessels could offload to road transport at Runcorn and this made using the Ship Canal more economical in both time and money

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 1970 Widnes, West Bank Dock closed; the Widnes Dock had closed in the 1933 and the St Helens Canal was abandoned in 1963. So in April 1973 the Commissioners gave notice of their intention to take in the remaining buoys from the 1<sup>st</sup> May. A number of the buoys were sold on to the harbours of Preston and Kings Lynn, whilst the **Jesse Wallwork II** became a diving tender for the MSC dredging Department.

### Nautical Trivia Quiz

1. What happened to Port Royal, the notorious pirate haven in Jamaica?
2. What flag do the citizens of the Faroe Island salute as their own?
3. What was set-up in 1921 by the ruler of Monaco, Prince Albert I?
4. Why were early French charts of limited value to English seafarers?
5. Who owned the first DEEP SEA commercial motor ship that sailed in 1910?
6. In the North East of England there is a ship built by Jamsetjee Bomanjee, Master Shipwright of Bombay Dockyard in 1817, that served the RN for many years, what is its name?
7. A volcanic eruption in 1961 caused the total evacuation of which island?
8. What did the "S" in Harry S Truman's name stand for?

.....answers on page 37

# The Shipping Federation

A summary of the presentation given on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013  
by LNRS Secretary John Stokoe

## The early strike-breaking years:

A period of deep hostility between employer and seafarer existed in the 1880s. Solid resistance by ship-owners to improving conditions at sea was being met by frequent ugly violence with no hope of mutual agreement. It therefore became essential for the Merchant Navy to be put into the hands of the Board of Trade resulting in the Government of the day being given much greater control of shipping than of any other UK industry.

Ship-owners' organisations were being introduced, an example of which was the Liverpool Ship-Owners Association. With the advent of steamships this was closely followed by the founding of the Liverpool Steamship Owners Association. Every ship-owner's paramount duty was and continues to be ensuring the safety of lives and property – by which we mean the ships themselves. Shipping companies were still left to determine their own freight rates and the fixing of seamen's wages.



Havelock Wilson (seated 3rd left) and colleagues

Wider afield around the UK there were similar moves afoot particularly in the north east of England and it was in this area that the greatest influence occurred culminating in the birth of the Shipping Federation in 1890. Ship-owners in that area were highly agitated by a dictatorial group of unionists imposing impossible demands. It was to be a

Sunderland man Havelock Wilson who's actions set in motion a train of events which led up to the founding of the Shipping Federation. Havelock Wilson was busily engaged in enrolling as many as possible into a Sailors' Union. Word was leaked that this union was determined to compel every ship's master and every seaman, including officers, to join this union. The various regional Ship-Owners' Associations quickly grouped together to counter what was seen as the gravest crisis the industry had ever faced. In less than one month – in two weeks in fact according to the records, the Shipping Federation was formed.

So what was the Federation about? It was founded as a fighting machine to counter strikes and it made no secret of this. The Federation was also keen to take

into account the protection of those seamen who did not believe in trades unionism. The Federation became strong in number with federated companies owning almost 90% of the total gross tonnage of the merchant navy. Federation offices were opened in all the major ports and newly appointed officials had an extremely difficult time when arranging the signing on of crews. These officials were subjected to insults, intimidation and in some cases injuries sustained from aggressive pickets.

The Federation introduced its own 'Ticket' which simply pledged the seaman to carry out his duties according to the Merchant Shipping Act alongside fellow crew members who were either union or non-union men. The holder of a 'Ticket' was entitled to employment at the recognised wage, in any vacancy and in any ship whose owner was affiliated to the Shipping Federation. Of course a Ticket could be suspended for disciplinary offences or completely withdrawn for repeated bad behaviour.

Reg. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**THE SHIPPING FEDERATION**  
LIMITED.

DISTRICT. \_\_\_\_\_ REGISTRY OFFICE. \_\_\_\_\_

**PARCHMENT REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Capacity \_\_\_\_\_ C. D. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION.						
Age.	Height.		Colour of Hair.	Eyes.	Complexion.	Other Personal Marks.
	ft.	in.				

Seaman's Signature. \_\_\_\_\_

### The Federation 'Ticket'

The Federation owned three vessels plus an ocean-going tug. These depot vessels provided housing and messing accommodation for Federation labour being transported by sea to various ports affected by disputes. The difficult role of the Federation officials can best be understood through the following typical example. To combat a seamen's strike in Portsmouth the Federation organised a trainload of

substitute seamen to travel from Newcastle to crew several ships lying in the Solent. The long train journey of almost three hundred miles attracted the consumption of a considerable amount of liquid refreshment with rather disastrous results. Drink was consumed to the point where, on arrival at Portsmouth, they announced that they did not wish to sail and defiantly squatted on their kitbags on the quayside. The escorted strike-breaking crew then worked themselves up to the point when they would gladly have pushed the Federation officials into the dock. Quick thinking was now essential and one of the officials asked the men if they had brought their sea-boots with them. Having immediately indicated that they were so equipped, the official then politely informed them that their boots would more than likely be worn out by the time they had walked back to Newcastle as a train would no longer be provided to take them home. The official also then gave an order for the tender which had been standing by to take the men to their ships to cast off. It was an action that immediately spurred the strike-breakers into scrambling aboard and accepting the short passage to the awaiting ships and subsequently to sign on for the voyage.

It is also on record that in an effort to overcome another seamen's strike, this time in Southampton, a Federation official travelled over to Cherbourg to await the arrival of the next incoming liner that was stopping off prior to crossing the English Channel to Southampton. Having interviewed all crew members to find out who was leaving the ship and who was staying aboard, the official then arranged to send off a radio message listing the numbers and categories of seamen needed for the next voyage. Here was an example of wireless telegraphy being used to aid strike breaking. By all accounts it was a considerable contribution to ensuring the fast turnaround of regular liner sailings from that port. This action then helped to eventually break that particular strike.

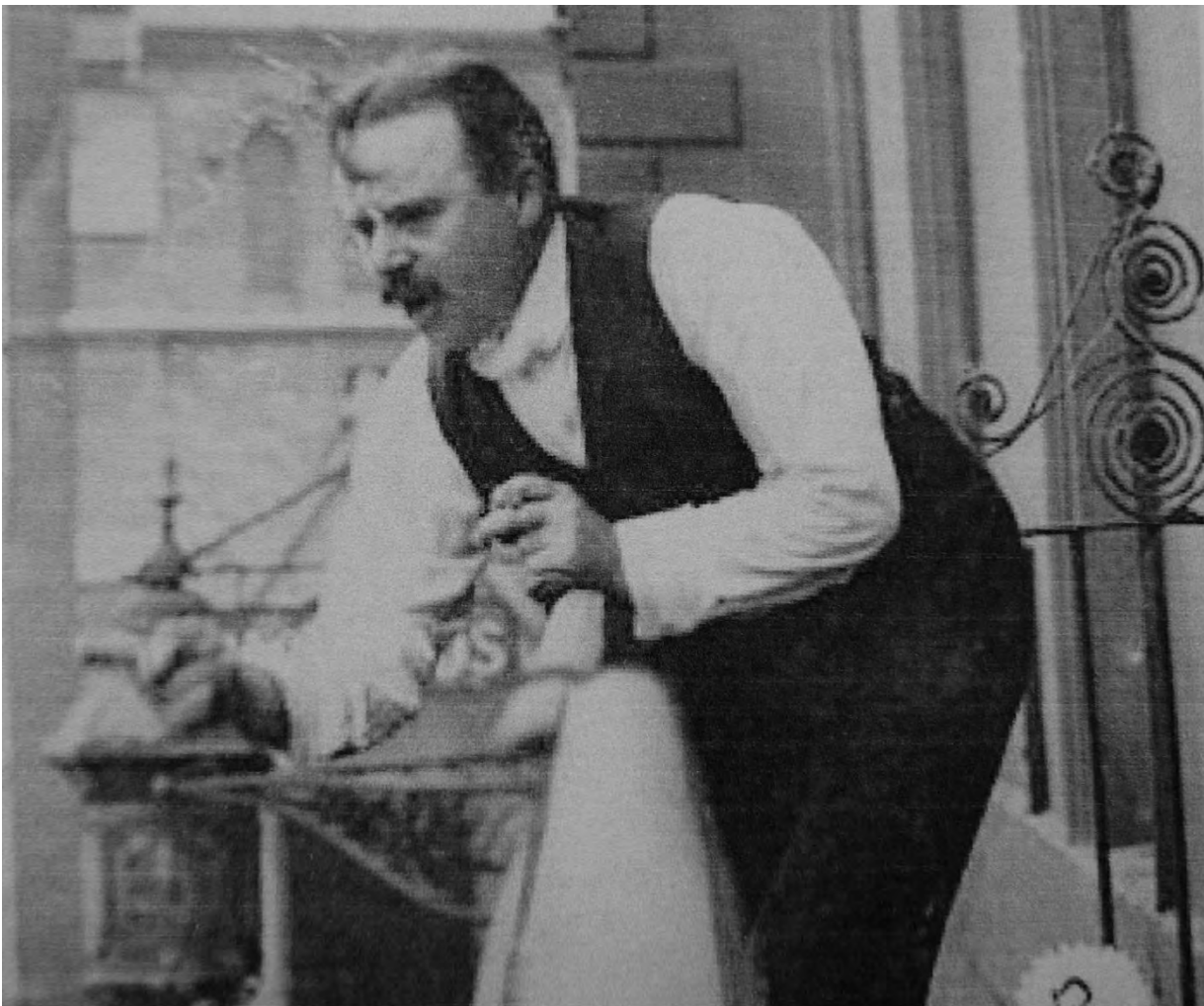
It would be 1911 before there was recognition of the Seamen's Union, some twenty-one years after the establishment of the Federation. It wasn't an easy route and during the 1911 dispute the Federation was as active as ever in ensuring that ships sailed on scheduled with full crews. Enter on the scene 'Captain' Edward Tupper soon to become the scourge of the Federation. His background was shrouded in mystery although it was understood that he had undertaken prominent roles in up to fifteen strikes across the globe with the fact that he had lost the cause in only one of these.

In concert with Havelock Wilson, who was still extremely active on the union front, Tupper focussed his attention on the Bristol Channel region and marshalled thousands of pickets to cover the very busy seafaring area from Cardiff to Swansea. Federation officials arranged transportation of strike-breakers to ships in these docks. The Federation also employed one of its own vessels the **Lady Jocelyn** to



house hundreds of the strike-breakers. Havelock Wilson, being faced with obdurate ship-owners and equally obdurate ships' captains, arranged for a galley cook to be signed on the Federation vessel. The cook's action on board quickly made sure that both the non-union crews and the ship's own officers would go down with acute food poisoning resulting in many men deserting the ship.

The unrest spread to Liverpool where there were riots and disturbances. Take for instance 'Red Sunday' when a transport dispute caused considerable disruption involving a quarter of a million strikers. Many assembled at St George's Hall when the Riot Act was read out by the Stipendiary Magistrate. Over ninety rioters were arrested and subsequently convicted and whilst being escorted to Liverpool Prison their mounted escort was attacked resulting in the shooting and killing of two protesters. The General Strike of 1926 brought about no relaxation and whilst the strike was in progress around twenty thousand strikebreaking seafarers were supplied to ships which would otherwise have been held up. Eventually settlements were reached and one of the bitterest strikes ever to occur in the UK came to an end. Even Tupper's attitude mellowed and as Seamen's Union National Organiser he became a genuine friend of Federation Chairman Basil Sanderson.



'Captain' Edward Tupper

'Captain' Tupper died in 1942 although it wasn't until some four years later that his ashes were consigned to the deep from aboard the **Queen Mary**. This was in 1946 in the presence of a considerable delegation of government representatives and ship-owners on their way to a Conference in Seattle. It would have pleased Tupper considerably to learn that even to the last he had the final word as some of his ashes blew back over many of the assembled delegates!

It is perhaps pertinent to take note of the pay strike called by the National Union of Seamen in May 1966 as it became the first official strike by seamen since 1911. This was also about pay and related conditions and challenged the Government's Incomes Policy. A State of Emergency was declared with allegations that the dispute had been inspired by the Communist Party. The strike continued for six weeks with a final settlement that did in fact exceed Government limits. When the strike collapsed the Seamen's Union tried to claim victory. However, on reflection this was recognised as completely hollow because from then on many British registered ships were to be transferred to flags of convenience with an undignified haste.

The industry had started to change quite suddenly. The advent of containerisation blew an ice cold wind in the direction of seafarers. Larger and fewer ships requiring smaller crews of a more general purpose nature and reducing all previous existing demarcation lines would become the new framework. This contraction in the size of the British fleet of merchant ships was accompanied by a considerable reduction in the numbers of seamen registered with the Federation. These changing conditions quickly brought about a swing to company rates of pay and conditions which were to succeed those which had been set nationally.

#### Vital training, war-time Initiatives and memories of 'The Pool':

The first part of this article explored the reasons for establishing the Shipping Federation amalgamating most British ship-owners against the disruptive actions of the newly formed Seamen's Union and the importance of ensuring ships were adequately crewed and not delayed through strike action. The Federation's roll in introducing essential training for all who would be taking up the sea as a career was regarded as being of equal importance.

During the pre-Shipping Federation days around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century a man just went to sea and probably stayed for his lifetime – of course life expectancy was far different then! It could be that such a decision had been entirely his own. However the sea had become particularly useful for a whole variety of purposes, take for example purely to get rid of a difficult or disruptive member of the family. One cannot overlook the fact that in those days a Magistrate might offer a young convicted offender a choice, that is a choice of going to prison... or going to sea, and

of course there were opportunities if a ship's master could be persuaded to accept a boy as a crew member on payment of a surety. Each of these approaches carried a common denominator that no matter which of the above applied there would be no direct pre-sea training available for these first-trippers.

Long before the Federation was established many initiatives were already in place. Readers will undoubtedly be aware of the prominence of HMS **Conway** which accepted its first cadets as far back as 1859 for a two year course which would then be recognised as the equivalent of one year's sea time towards eligibility for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate's examination. The **Conway** was berthed off Rock Ferry on the River Mersey. Further south, **Worcester** became a rival training facility anchored off Blackwall. Both of the above required fees and as such would exclude sea-going opportunities for the less well off. Although not competing in officer training, the **Indefatigable** took in her first trainees in 1864, then **Arethusa** in 1874 with the intention of equipping for either lower or mid deck careers. Shipping companies offered indentured apprenticeships although at that time sail remained the acknowledged training base. Unfortunately there was little if any organised instruction and involvement in day-to-day activities was considered instructive enough in its own right. The level of training relating to the Indenture was therefore not subject to a statutory standard. Mere sea time became the only training criterion for the business of a seaman.

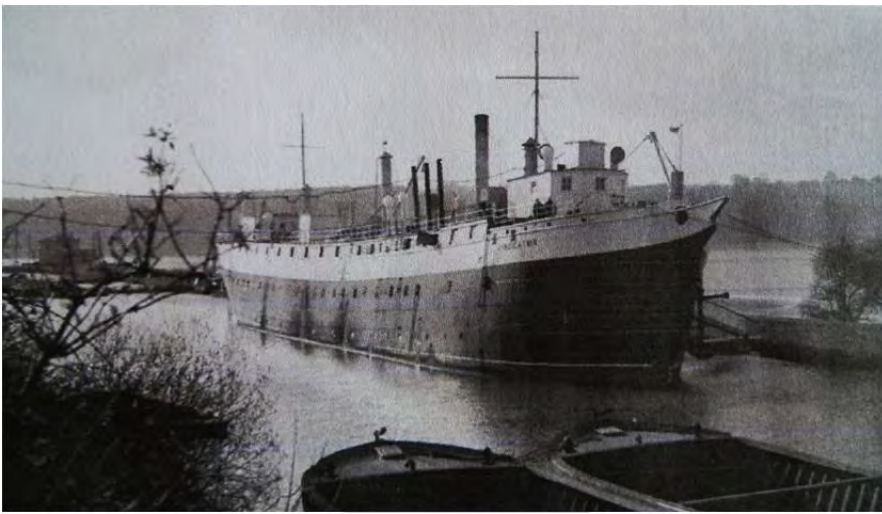
The 100 year history of The Shipping Federation encompassed two World Wars and in both of these its expertise in harnessing good organisation was paramount. In 1915 it was at the Federation's instigation that the Board of Trade issued a national notice that the efficient maintenance of the Merchant Navy was of vital importance with recruits doing just as good signing on British ships as they would by joining the army. The Federation initiated recruitment of around 1700 fishermen for the merchant service. Noting the considerable success of these endeavours was the Admiralty which then nipped in to recruit for the Royal Navy in direct competition with the Federation. Needless to say the supply of recruits quickly diminished.

Much experience was gained from what had been a very effective campaign and an important role for the Federation was now the transformation of the very



Gravesend Sea School

haphazard and wasteful methods of recruitment. An orderly system was vital and so its initial training venture focussed on the setting up of cookery schools where training was sorely needed. The Gravesend Sea School was established in 1918 to train both deck and catering boys and initially this venture was entirely funded by the Government. One year later the Shipping Federation assumed full responsibility and in return received a grant for each successful trainee. And it was successful to the extent that other Training Schools were quickly established for Firemen and for seamanship. All courses were strictly practical and no boy was ever accepted without parental or guardian approval and of course a good standard of physique was essential. The full course of training also provided food and accommodation which were free to each trainee and upon completion boys were found employment on board Federated ships.



The Vindicatrix

An important milestone in the evolving Federation history was the setting up of the National Maritime Board. It began to take shape during the national emergency of the First World War but was to be given formal footing at the beginning of 1920. It became an

experiment in industrial self government with clearly set objectives to secure closer co-operation between employers and seafarers, revising and maintaining a national rate of wages and conditions and promoting a single and jointly controlled source of supply of seamen. It was a considerable success and a formal review conducted in 1934 concluded that no other industry in the country had been as free from labour disputes as the shipping industry and this was entirely due to the workings of the NMB.

The **Vindicatrix** had been a three-masted fully rigged sailing ship built in 1893. Initially she had sailed as the **Arranmore** under the British flag before becoming German owned. She was acquired by the Federation in 1921. To begin with **Vindicatrix** was used as an accommodation vessel in London for those prepared to work during strike action. However a change of use was introduced in 1927 when she became the first of six Seamanship Schools operated by the Federation. It was necessary for her location to be changed throughout the Second



World War to Sharpness in Gloucestershire with the Gravesend premises being loaned to the Admiralty.

Once a shore side camp had been completed in 1945, at any one time up to 500 boys were being trained at TS **Vindicatrix**. In essence, deck boys received 3 months pre-sea training and this qualified them for a one month reduction in the sea service required to qualify as an Ordinary Seaman. Both the old Gravesend Sea School and TS **Vindicatrix** closed down in 1966 having been replaced by the new National Sea Training College at Gravesend. Many thousands of boys who trained through these facilities served out their time as Ordinary or Able Seamen and in some cases eventually becoming Mates and Masters.

No history of this nature would be complete without some recognition of the Shipping Federation's role during the Second World War. It almost goes without saying the amazing resilience of human nature enabling men, both young and old, after experiencing extreme depths of endurance, to return again and again with full knowledge of the hazards which awaited them. In 1940 the Minister of Shipping paid tribute to the Federation for its invaluable aid in organising the Merchant Navy's war effort. So what was this valuable aid?

In fact, it had started back in 1937 and designed to ensure that merchant ships would be adequately manned and seamen trained to defend their ships and themselves. Long before the outbreak the Federation was realising that without special precautions many merchant



Firemen's Training

seamen would prefer to serve their country by joining the Royal Navy. During that first year of hostilities there was a mad scramble for manpower by all essential industries causing vessels to be held up due to lack of crews. A Reserve Pool of seafarers was therefore established. Attached to this was a revolution in the sea-going conditions of employment. Seamen were prohibited from leaving the industry but were ensured pay and adequate leave between voyages. In highlighting this we should not overlook the disgraceful fact that a seaman's pay was automatically stopped on the day his ship was sunk by enemy action. In any event, the Federation's expertise in organising the supply of seamen since the First World War had been a great success. From 1940 delayed sailings were gradually being eliminated from around 8 sailing per week to less than 2 sailings. By 1943, records

indicate that only 2 sailings were delayed because of crew shortage during the entire year.

Combined with the above the Federation mounted intensive training schemes. Examples of this show stewards and firemen were being trained in deck duties and special attention provided for firemen to learn methods of smoke elimination so vital for the protection of convoy activity. The Federation played an important role in co-ordinating Gunnery Courses under the heading Merchant Navy Defence. There was also a relaxation in sea time necessary for certificates of competency for both Deck and Engineer Officers.

Most readers will be aware of the Federation's bread and butter operation known as the Merchant Navy Establishment or its more familiar title 'The Pool'.



The Federation office Mann Island, Liverpool  
(immediately prior to demolition)

Those were the days when company contracts with shipping lines were almost non-existent. At the end of a voyage a seaman would enjoy his spell of annual leave following which he would report to the Pool for his next ship. During the waiting

period in addition to Unemployment Benefit the seaman would also receive Establishment Benefit calculated on a daily basis with rates varying according to a rating's level of competence. Reporting frequencies were determined according to need. So, if there was a glut of 2<sup>nd</sup> Cook and Bakers on the Pool with little chance of signing on a ship in the immediate future, the reporting frequency might be arranged as weekly. However, when demand exceeded supply, ratings were required to attend the Pool every single day. We should not overlook the fact that the Federation also supplied officers to shipping companies with Junior, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineers, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mates, Chief Stewards and Electricians being the key ranks. In a similar fashion to the practices employed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Federation officials attended each signing-on session but the aggravation against them as was described earlier in this paper was thankfully no longer a feature.

With the advent of containerisation, multi-purpose crewing arrangements and dramatically changing trading patterns, the need for The Merchant Navy Establishment quickly diminished with British vessels now calling at the UK far less

frequently. The size of the British Merchant Fleet shrank from what had been around 2000 ships to just a few hundred, with many of these being short sea traders. Therefore, in 1975 The Shipping Federation combined with the Chamber of Shipping to form the General Council of British Shipping. There began a gradual contraction of those services that had been provided by the Federation and of course a considerable reduction in the number of seamen who were registered. The Federation staff themselves were reduced in number through redundancy as a consequence of the abolition of the National Maritime Board. In 1990 it was to be almost to the month that the 100 year existence of the Shipping Federation would be over. On reflection however it should be accepted that much had been achieved throughout this period.

*Sources        The Shipping Federation by L H Powell (1950)*  
*Various 'on-line' records for verification*  
*Data held within Merseyside Maritime Museum Archive Department*

## Liverpool Merchant Shipping Conference – 2 November, 2013

It has been confirmed that the conference will be held in Liverpool on Saturday 2nd November. It is a joint meeting with the World Ship Society's Merseyside Branch, the Liverpool Nautical Research Society and the Centre for Port and Maritime History. The venue is the Liverpool Seafarer's Centre, 20 Crosby Road South, Liverpool L22 1RQ. The meeting will begin at 10.30am with a quiz developed by Malcolm Cooper, followed by six presentations of approximately 40 minutes each, and should finish about 17.00. The subjects are:

*Liverpool-Welsh ship owners*, by Dr David Jenkins

*The building of Gladstone Dock* by Geoff Holmes

*Shipping companies' marketing as portrayed by their posters* by Nick White

*The 'Daniel Adamson'* by the Daniel Adamson Preservation Society

*Abnormal loads and heavy lifts* by Gordon Line

*Liverpool's importance for coastal shipping* by Roy Fenton

There will be a break for lunch, and refreshments can be bought at the Centre, which is readily accessible by road and public transport. Those attending will be asked to make a modest donation to cover costs. If you have not already done so, please register by writing to or e-mailing Roy Fenton, 18 Durrington Avenue, London SW20 8NT; [roy@rfenton.co.uk](mailto:roy@rfenton.co.uk). Nearer the time a detailed programme will be sent out to those registering.

## Book Review

*The Original Royal Princess*, By ANDREW SASSOLI-WALKER and SHARON POOLE, Stroud, Published by AMBERLEY PUBLISHING PLC. £19.99 (\$34.95 in the US)

When *Royal Princess* was named in Southampton by HRH The Princess of Wales in November 1984, she was the most advanced purpose-built luxury cruise ship ever conceived and constructed. Built at the beginning of the modern commercial age of cruising, she was the trend-setter of the cruise ship world and continues to hold a number of records, among them, the first contemporary cruise ship to have all outside cabins, and in 2010 as *Artemis*, the first British passenger ship to be commanded by a female captain, Sarah Breton. In the following years of service, she has taken passengers all over the globe in luxury and style, and it is hoped she has many more years of cruising ahead of her.

At 45,000 gross tons she is small in comparison with the super-liners of today, but when launched she was one of the largest cruise ships afloat. Her traditional ambiance and service standards have attracted a loyal following, not only among passengers, but also among her crew.

This book, written by Andrew Sassoli-Walker and Sharon Poole, celebrates the innovation in cruise ship design that *Royal Princess* / *Artemis* represented, and highlights her career with both Princess and P&O Cruises in the words of both passengers and crew. Fully illustrated throughout with many never before-seen colour images, it is a tribute to a unique and much-loved vessel.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Sharon Poole and Andrew Sassoli-Walker have an in-depth knowledge of ocean liners and this vessel in particular. Sharon has written several books and Andrew is an accomplished photographer.



## In Search of a Ship

by LNRS Member Charles Dawson

Few personal accounts describing voyages in the transatlantic sailing packets exist, so it was exciting to discover, quite by accident, one that had come from the pen of an English woman passenger, tucked away more or less out of sight at the end of her autobiography. She gave a fictitious name to the vessel upon which she sailed, and by doing so, led to a search for the identity of the ship that turned out to be as fascinating as the document itself.

The author's name was known from the start: it was Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) ("M" hereafter). She was descended from one of the Huguenot families who had sought refuge in England after 1685, when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes. She was an extraordinary woman; despite a frail childhood, and being handicapped by deafness, she had by the time she was thirty years old, already made quite a name and a little fortune for herself as a writer, although she is probably largely forgotten today. Among many other things, she wrote on the subject of "political economy" some twenty years before Marx, and popularised the concept in a serialized story that encompassed nine volumes over a period of two years. She also wrote a fine "Complete Guide to the English Lakes", the fifth Edition being published at Windermere in 1876; she resided at Ambleside.

The voyage M. described is her return from New York to Liverpool in 1836 after her convalescent visit to the USA, where she had also studied social conditions. The short but vivid account, which she entitled *A Month at Sea*, was appended to her autobiography, written in 1855 and published in Boston in 1877, "to amuse her friends", as she put it. She veiled the names of the passengers, like that of the ship herself, in pseudonyms, presumably to avoid hurting their feelings if they should happen to read her account. Some of them, the ladies particularly, do seem to have been rather cantankerous and do not escape the sharpness of her pen.

However, it is her description of everyday life aboard that fascinates most. Her account reveals, for instance, that a first-class passenger had the opportunity of going on board the vessel as she lay alongside the wharf on the East River, New York, in advance of her sailing - in this case some weeks before - in order to select her stateroom. Martineau had been exhorted by an experienced voyager to secure a berth on the starboard side of the ladies' cabin, to be away from the "scents and sounds of the steward's pantry".

The captain himself, whose name she gives as Bursley, wrote the names of his prospective passengers on slips of paper and pinned them to the curtains of the selected berths as a way of confirming their reservations. Upon selecting her



berth, M. was introduced to the stewardess, Margaret, a Scottish girl, "whose countenance and manner was most pleasing".

M. gives her ship the pseudonym **Eurydice** and describes her as "not so new, clean or so convenient as most of the line", adding that she had chosen it for other reasons. At the top of her list was the high character of the captain, who was a personal friend of some of the others of the party with whom she was travelling. The time of year was also convenient, since she did not relish a crossing in a mid-winter storm.

On 1st August 1836 at 11 a.m. all assembled on board the steamboat that was to take them to their ship. Coming aboard, M. found it strange to see water casks and black coal buckets bearing the ship's name all lined up on deck; in the more modern packets, these were usually hidden out of sight. Once all were aboard, the ship was towed out of the harbour by a steam-tug and by 4 p.m. they were off Sandy Hook. Some friends accompanied them as far as Sandy Hook and returned to New York by the tug.

M. gave up her berth to an invalid lady, and after the exchange found herself after all on the larboard side. The word port had been in use for quite a time by then, but did not become official until later in the century; the new word had been adopted with the aim of avoiding the confusion which could arise from the nearness in sound of larboard and starboard. M. shared her stateroom with an orphan girl who had been allowed by the captain's kindness to work her way over by assisting the stewardess. First-class passengers had food and drink supplied. Against *mal-de-mer*, or perhaps the thoughts of it, the ladies "found comfort in ginger lozenges".

The pilot is a no-nonsense man who gives short sharp orders: "No humbugging, haul away, boys" to the crew; and to the captain: "Due east, sir, and keep the white buoy off the weather bow". When the pilot leaves, the mate slips off quietly too, having become poorly, although it is only later that the captain discloses this privately to M. (who seems to have won his confidence) "for fear of alarming the other passengers". Because of the mate's disappearance, the second mate was promoted to first and the carpenter to second. No wonder the captain wanted to keep it quiet; most passengers were unlikely to understand that even a carpenter could be a sailor too.

M. reports that at first, the weather was warm and humid, and was surprised that there were so many flies on board, until she learned that there was a cow as well. M. describes August 4 as a heavenly day, perfect for sailing; wind fair, mild and balmy, the sea radiant in all directions. The captain gives the order to square the yards, "always a delightful sound". For a diversion the passengers assemble to look at the addresses on the letters in the mail-bags, which had been

opened on board for sorting. The most amusing were found to be those written by Irish immigrants to their folks back home. There was turkey for supper. The "Misses O'Brien" wore yellow spectacles, but there was no sign of the steerage passengers and M. wonders if they were hiding away out of the wind?

"Mr. Browning" shows M. the ship's position on the chart each day. He advises that it is best to eat well; he reckons that sea-sickness can be caused as much by neglecting food as for any other reason. A cat belonging to one of the passengers catches a mouse, and M. reflects that there is thereby a chance of unexpected provisions if the voyage proves to be overlong.

A group wants to play cards, but it is too warm in the staterooms, so all troop up on deck. Some remain in the round-house, a sort of "summer-house" on deck, built round the head of the companionway leading down into the cabin. The captain says it is unusually sultry. The sea is luminous and there are explosions of lightning from the cloudy west.

In contrast to the previous day, August 5 is disagreeable, damp and stifling, with much rain and rolling of the ship. The bag that "Mr. Browning" has is "like a huge stocking". He says that the ship is 4 points out of course; since she is too far south, there is no chance of seeing either icebergs or cod-boats. They are in a region of calms and light winds, so may be due for a long voyage. The "doctor" asks the captain whether the rain at sea is quite fresh. An interesting question! They see three flying fish. The captain, not averse to odd-jobbing, is mending locks.

On August 11 "Mr. Browning" now predicts fair winds. The weather has been deplorable and everyone hopes that he is right. The captain sends round champagne, accompanied by kind sayings and jokes, to cheer up everyone. Stars at last come out, but then the bad weather sets in once again. "Mr. Browning" praises the ship; he says so few he knows could stand up to such a wind under so much sail. The captain, again helping with the chores, orders the ham-bone put into the pea-soup and later unpacks a hundred towels.

August 12. Passed another ship and hailed her, but got no answer. She dallied in sight for three days. The finest pig is to be killed. The cow has not been milked for three days, owing to rough weather. A number of the passengers complain and threaten to report the captain. A whale is sighted, and they hear "splice the mainbrace" for the first time.

August 16. Casks of turpentine, which is the ship's main cargo, begin to leak and so does the ship, so there is plenty of pumping to be done and M. remembers that the ship's copper bottom should have been repaired at New York.

The next day the idle young men bet at cards, "since the weather is dry and they cannot bet upon the raindrops running down the cabin windows"; one of them loses \$16. The ship passes the English ship **St Vincent** of Bristol, 33 days out from

Jamaica. Approaching her, the captain veers to leeward, explaining that it is worth losing a little time to be civil. M. remarks what a press of sail she carried, but her bows were like a breakwater, so square and clumsy. A check in the registers suggests that she was the ship of 493 tons built at Bristol in 1804, so at that age she would be rather bluff.

August 20. Sailed 220 miles, which turned out to be their best day's run.

August 22. See some Irish earth; on sounding, they find sixty fathoms, and some sand comes up on the lead. "Mr. Browning" thinks it is not so "clean and neat" as American sand. M. observes that the incessant damp and salt ruin all fabrics and colours: "It is a piece of extravagance, which none but silly people are guilty of, to dress well at sea".

August 23. In the afternoon, they see a fishing-boat with dark brown sails and two men on board. Now they are only 12 miles from land, off Kinsale Head, near where the American packet ship **Albion** of New York, Capt. John Williams, was lost in 1822 with all her crew and passengers but two or three. The ladies discuss the "fees" they should pay to the stewardess - she depends solely on these.

August. 24. Now between Cork and Milford Haven, and out of sight of land once again.

August 25. NE gale and tacked all day. At noon saw the outline of the Dungarvan Mountains. Speak the ship **Georgia** of Boston, bound for New York. It is now possible with the glass to see houses in Tramore. The crew complain about the beef, which has gone sour because the stewards keep leaving the ice-box door open. The "ringleader" is to be shut up in the ice-house, which is now as warm as any other part of the ship.

Such are the recollections of her passage that M. includes in *A Month at Sea*. At times, it is difficult to know how much of the account was fact and how much fiction, but it soon becomes fairly certain that it is largely truthful and that behind the pseudonyms were real live people, some of pretty firm substance. "Mr. Browning" for example sounds far too knowledgeable about the sea, and did he not have a bag "like a huge stocking". It seems pretty likely that he was a mariner. Would the account offer other clues to true identities, perhaps even that of the vessel herself?

One helpful pointer comes from information M. gives elsewhere regarding her voyage out to the USA in 1834. She had sailed on the American packet ship **United States**, which left Liverpool on 4 August 1834 and took 42 days for the crossing. It was easy to confirm that this voyage was a real one, and that the **United States** was a ship of some real substance, for in February/March 1842 she made the sixth fastest crossing of the Atlantic by sail, 14 days, from New York to Liverpool.



So taking 1 August 1836 as the sailing date of **Eurydice** from New York, assuming that this was not fictitious even if the vessel's name was, and knowing that an eastbound vessel would complete the crossing in somewhat less time than one westbound, due to the prevailing winds, we were therefore on the lookout for an arrival in Liverpool some time at the end of August or the beginning of September 1836.

There was, of course, no **Eurydice** to be found in the relevant lists of arrivals in the Liverpool newspapers of the time. However, inveterate puzzle-solvers may already have jumped to the solution that took the writer a bit longer. It finally came out of the blue one day, and a check in the encyclopedic dictionary covering the classical myths confirmed that Eurydice was the wife of Orpheus. Perhaps this was the clue to the name of M's ship?

Sure enough, *Gore's General Advertiser*, one of the half dozen or so Liverpool newspapers of the time, announced on Thursday 1 September the arrival of the ship **Orpheus** "on Friday last". That would make the date 26 August, precisely the date which M. had evocatively recounted as the last day of their voyage: "Soon after breakfast we saw the floating lights and the castle at the mouth of the Mersey; then New Brighton, with its white houses, trim gardens and plantations; and then some golden harvest fields. The post-office boat was soon seen coming towards us - a sign we were expected".

The list of the names of the 19 passengers given in the newspaper report - seemingly only the first-class passengers were afforded this honour - gives us absolute confirmation that we have the correct ship: there amongst the names is that of Miss Harriet Martineau herself.

#### List of passengers from Gore's General Adviser

The following is a list of the passengers arrived on Friday last, by the **Orpheus**, from New York:- Professor Farrar and lady, of Cambridge; Mr. W. Dowson, merchant, Mobile; Mr. C.C. Hope, merchant, Liverpool; Mr. DeVaux, artist, Charleston; Mr. Higson, merchant, Manchester; Mr. Bar. Balmaribo, merchant, Geneva, New York; Dr. Hatch, Nicksburg; Mr. Ward, merchant, Boston; Mr. Mitlin, artist, Philadelphia; Mrs. Ormesby and two daughters, Yorkshire; Mrs. Vampalanen, New York; Miss Provost, New York; Miss Bersley, New York; Miss Harriet Martineau, London; Miss Tuckerman, Boston, and Captain Wilkes, of the United States Navy.

*Gore's General Adviser*, 1 September 1836

M. had given the captain his own name: he was Ira Bursley and his ship **Orpheus** is detailed by Cutler in *Greyhounds of the Sea* as being of 573 tons, 132' x 1', built by C. Bergh & Co, New York in 1832. On the voyage described she belonged to the Old Line of packets.

M. had written on 25 August that no telegraphic communication to Liverpool warning of their approach was possible from Holyhead, as they had passed the light in the dark. We can deduce from her later comment, in which she says they were expected in Liverpool, that when it became light during the morning of the 26 August, the ship's signal could be read by one of the chain of nine semaphore signal stations between Holyhead and Liverpool, and then duly passed on to confirm her approach.

The station at Liverpool which received the information from Bidston is described and illustrated by an interesting engraving by R. Wallis entitled Seacombe Slip, Liverpool, after a painting by the Liverpool artist Samuel Austin. To the left in the background, a lofty warehouse supports the apparatus of the telegraph, which



*Seacombe Slip, Liverpool*

was established under the superintendence of Barnard Lindsey Watson, who gave his name to the early Liverpool flag-code. It was claimed that so rapid was the interchange of signals between the signal stations along the Welsh coast that a

message could be conveyed to Liverpool from Holyhead in a matter of minutes – see map below.

"Mr. Browning", the man with the big kit-bag who was so knowledgeable about the sea, turned out to be none other than Acting Lieutenant Charles Wilkes (1798-1877) of the US Navy, who was related to the English politician of the same name. Lieutenant Wilkes was appointed to be in command of the US Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842, the first major one of its kind to circumnavigate the globe. Wilkes' voyage in **Orpheus** was made to arrange for the purchase in Europe of the

various scientific instruments that would be required for this great endeavour. Wilkes visited most of the instrument makers in London, and Harriet Martineau gave Wilkes a letter of introduction to Peter Barlow in London, whose work on the magnetic effects in iron ships particularly interested him. Wilkes later became notorious in England in November 1861, at the beginning of the American Civil War, over what became known in England as the **Trent** affair. By that time he had attained the rank of captain and was in command of the US sloop-of-war **San Jacinto**. Wilkes had rightly appreciated the sailing qualities of **Orpheus**. On this voyage to Liverpool, she had recorded eight fine day's runs, "overtaking everything", up to 20 August, when she logged her best day's run, 220 miles. She seemed capable of maintaining a steady 12 knots in heavy weather.



Holyhead – Liverpool Semaphore Telegraph Stations  
 Holyhead Mountain - Cefdhu - Point Lynas - Puffin Island - Gt. Ormes Head  
 - Lysfaen - Foryd - Voel Nant - Hilbre Island - Bidston - Liverpool

Several years after the voyage described by Harriet Martineau, **Orpheus** made the thirteenth fastest officially confirmed crossing by sail from New York to Liverpool, with Captain David G. Bailey in command: 16 days from 19 Nov to 5 Dec 1838. On that voyage she reached Cork in 12½ days, the fastest authenticated time on record for that transatlantic leg.

An illustration of **Orpheus** appears in the Peabody Museum catalogue, being a reproduction of an oil painting of 1837 by J. Pringle, showing her alongside the wharf in the East River, New York, where Harriet Martineau first inspected the quarters she hoped to occupy during the voyage. The ship is flying her Watson or Liverpool code 130, which helps confirm the date of the painting, since this code had a relatively short life (c.1826 - c.1843). It is this signal that would have been read to identify her as she passed the signal stations on the way in to Liverpool.

The painter J. Pringle would seem to have been James Fulton Pringle (1788-1847), who was born in Sydenham, Kent, England, immigrated to America in c. 1832 and settled in Brooklyn. One **Orpheus** passenger who never returned to America was the portrait painter James DeVaux of Charleston (1812-1844) who was making the traditional art tour of Europe and died in Rome in April 1844, only 32 years old.

## Looking to the future of crew welfare

The Mission to Seafarers has launched a global consultation with the major players in the shipping industry, to better inform welfare service development for seafarers and their families in need around the world for 2014 and beyond.

The consultation will inform the 5-year strategic Global Review which will underpin the work of the Mission's full-time welfare teams and volunteers in over 260 ports worldwide in 71 countries.

The Revd Andrew Wright, Secretary General of The Mission said: "We are asking the thought leaders in the shipping industry to share their valuable insights with us, and to contribute to the development of the Mission strategy for delivering welfare services which are fit for purpose, in the places where seafarers need us".

"Lloyd's Register has recently co-published Global Marine Trends 2030, a report which involves scenario planning for the future and sets out to map the key drivers that will shape the shipping landscape and infrastructure in 2030. In the coming decade, there is likely to be a significant reorientation of the industry, from western-centric to eastern-centric shipping routes, with new ports opening up in the Far East, Africa and South America. The Mission's survey, alongside industry reports, will help to inform the Mission's welfare provision and business plan for the future." "The economic downturn has been a period of great strain on the shipping industry and on the lives of seafarers, but new challenges and opportunities are on the horizon. We need to ensure that the seafarer's hard, and sometimes hazardous life is not forgotten, that global regulation is robust to protect standards and crew wellbeing, and our extensive portfolio of Mission welfare services is a balanced, efficient mix which will continue to be developed in the right place, at the right time. We would like to encourage the industry to support us and give their views." The questionnaire will close on Friday 9 August. The anonymous results of our survey will be published in the autumn 2013 during London International Shipping Week.

Source: The Mission to Seafarers

### THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

September	Mondays	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 30 <sup>th</sup>
October		7 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> , 28 <sup>th</sup>
November		4 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> .

## Liverpool Underwriters Ship-Register Books.

By LNRS Member D.K.C. Eccles

After the old Exchange Building which housed Liverpool Town Hall was destroyed by fire in 1795, Liverpool Underwriters transferred their meetings to the Exchange Coffee-house close by in Exchange Alley. Where, on January 8th 1802, they formed the Liverpool Underwriters Association (LUA) and rented office space at No. 9 Exchange Alley (owned by Liverpool Corporation) until it moved into the East Wing of the new Exchange Building when that opened in 1809.

The Liverpool Underwriters first ship-register was produced in 1815 when David Marshall (retained at £20 per year to survey damaged goods) was paid an extra £50 to maintain a register of foreign vessels after they were surveyed by John Cummins, the Association's surveyor of damaged ships. Similar to the Green ship-register used in London by Lloyd's underwriters, it was available for members only until replaced by the publication of Lloyds Register.

The first British Ship Register Book was introduced in London by a group of customers at Lloyd's Coffee House in 1760 with the publication of a green-backed Register for Underwriters use; followed in 1798 by a red-backed Register compiled by London shipowners for their own use. In 1834 these two Registers were amalgamated to form The Society of Lloyd's Register of British & Foreign Shipping aimed to establish rules of construction and classify vessels A, E. and I, according to underwriting risk. A fee was charged for a vessel to be entered into the Lloyd's Register book after its survey, by a master shipwright or mariner, employed to ensure Rules concerning size and type of timber were followed during new-vessel construction. Machinery was not inspected - but an Act of Parliament decreed steam boilers required survey every six months by a master engineer. The Lloyd's Register Book which contained information concerning a vessel's classification, name of master, owner and voyage description was made available to subscribers throughout the country including the Liverpool Underwriters Association from 1835.

Local concern was raised in 1841 when Lloyd's Register refused to classify Canadian-built vessels purchased by Liverpool shipowners. This compelled an elected committee of Liverpool underwriters, ship-owners, and ship-builders to establish the Society of the Liverpool Registry Book of Shipping with Francis Littlejohn, secretary and William Perkins ship-surveyor. Using Lloyd's Rules as their standard these and new vessels were surveyed for class before entry into the Liverpool Registry Book of Shipping which started publication in 1842. The Society surveyed ships for Liverpool owners until agreement was reached between the LUA and Lloyd's Register on April 30th 1845 to cease publication of the Liverpool Registry, and form a local Liverpool Committee of Lloyd's Register. The Liverpool Committee,

which consisted of six underwriters and six shipowners, was made responsible for all survey and business in the port but had to send copies of its reports and recommendations to London for consideration by a sub-committee before confirmation by the General Committee of Lloyd's Register. The apparent subordinate position accepted was due to the relative status of Liverpool and London with regard to wooden vessels classed by Lloyd's, as the Liverpool owned North Atlantic passenger mail steamers were built and surveyed to Board of Trade standard. In effect the Committee of the Society of the Liverpool Registry Book of Shipping never dissolved itself but continued to meet twice a week at No. 7 Old Church Yard with its secretary and surveyor employed by Lloyd's Register.

Iron vessels had been in service over thirty years before Lloyd's Register established Lloyd's Rules for Iron Built Vessels in 1855. Based on ships in service which had thick floors and shell plating, they allowed its highest class 'Aa1' to stand for 12 years, providing that intermediate surveys proved at least 3/4 of the original plate thickness remained. The Liverpool Committee recommended the Register Book should be altered to contain extra information concerning iron vessels but this was ignored by the London Committee. Lacking information in Lloyd's Register Book, the LUA engaged John Jordan, a Liverpool consulting engineer, to obtain extra information which was recorded in a private Iron Vessel Book published in 1856. They later engaged him to survey vessels under construction before the issue of a 'Certificate of Ship Construction' after the Liverpool ship-owners complained Lloyd's rules had not been suitably adapted for change from wood to iron ship-construction. To appease Liverpool ship-owners Lloyd's Register obtained the assistance of John Jordan to modify its 'Rules for Iron Vessels' the following year, but refused any alteration in its Register book.

This did not satisfy the LUA which formed the Liverpool Iron Register in 1858. Managed by three underwriters, three ship-owners and the chairman of the Liverpool Underwriters, the Liverpool Shipowners and the Liverpool Steamship owners' Associations with John Jordan as ship surveyor its aim was to establish fresh rules for the construction of iron vessels based in dimensions. This opposed the Lloyd's rules which had been inherited from wooden vessels and were based on cubic capacity.

In 1862 the Liverpool Iron Register committee reformed to include half Underwriters, the other half Ship-owners and ship-builders to become the Liverpool Underwriters Registry for Iron Vessels, with ship-builder Thomas B. Royden appointed chairman and John Jordan senior surveyor. It classed iron vessels (A+1) for 20, (A1) for 18 and (A) for 16 years with two years added if an extra bulkhead was fitted. The rules allowed a 10% reduction in weight of frames and shell plates,

and a reduction of 2% in total weight of iron was claimed for vessels built to the Liverpool rules.

Two registers were maintained, Red for ships built under survey which required a four-year periodic survey to maintain class, and Black for vessels already in service which required bi-annual survey.

## Henry B. Hornby - Boat Builders of Wallasey

By Harry Hignett

Although only a small Wallasey firm, it was renowned worldwide for building craft to operate for large international companies in the most inaccessible places - among them, Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean and Ascension Island in the Atlantic.

The signboard at the entrance to their premises in Gorsey Lane, Wallasey, stated "Established 1863" before Henry Hornby was born. In fact the business began, not in Wallasey, but in Birkenhead. William Dickinson, a boat builder, took over a small yard from a partnership in Cathcart Street, and with the enthusiasm of youth soon built up a thriving business. He used what appears to be a common system of employing apprentices who, after a year or so and under supervision, were able to produce excellent boats at a very reasonable cost. At the end of their time very few apprentices felt encouraged to remain as fully-fledged workmen. Fortunately other work was available in the rapidly growing steamship industry of Merseyside, especially from the British & West African Steam Navigation Co. later to be known as Elder Dempster & Co. In an enormous expansion of trade to West Africa, Elder Dempsters required numerous small craft to ply the local waterways and rivers, not only to carry their agents and local staff, but also to carry homeward material to the coast for loading onto sea-going steamers.

Henry B. Hornby, born 1877, was apprenticed to William Dickinson in 1892. Ending his five years and entitled to full wages, he was not happy with the terms of work and wages offered by Dickinson. In 1901 he learned of a couple of orders for repairing lifeboats of a steamer damaged in heavy weather, moved in, obtained the work and promptly left Dickinson's employ. He began by taking over a small rundown yard of another boat builder, near where the former "Penny Bridge" crossed the entrance to the now filled-in Bidston Dock: a suitable foundation for gathering further work. Never a shy man and always eager for work, he called at



Elder Dempster's office asking for orders for river launches. An astute manager ordered three such craft, and noting the boat builder's youthful appearance added, "Next time, young man, tell Henry Hornby to come along himself!" Henry was too embarrassed to let the manager know the truth. However on delivery of the launches he collected an order for ten surf boats. These had to be very strong in construction and able to carry cargo through a heavy West African swell to and from ships at anchor a mile or so offshore. The craft had also to withstand being driven against a ship's side whilst carrying up to a ton and half of cargo and then run up the shore through the surf.

Although orders varied, for a couple of decades the building of surfboats provided the bread and butter work for the yard and Henry even visited West Africa to study the work of the boats. On his return he set to work with a fairly young W.H. Comben (naval architect) to design a special flexible frame, which reduced the damage caused by striking the hulls of the large steamers.

A former Apprentice, the late Fred Samples, of New Brighton, whose indentures covered the years 1923-28, gave a picture of the working life of the boat builders. He describes Henry as "looking rather like General Montgomery". The boats were built in two or three corrugated iron sheds. In winter the open-sided sheds were freezing; in summer the sun on the corrugated iron roofs created almost unbearably heated conditions. To hold the hull frames in position before being fixed by clamps and then nailed, cord/string supports were tied to nails driven into the roof or ceiling above the boat under construction. There was little headroom so journeymen or apprentices had to bend low over the boat to carry out the work and soon learned not to raise their heads before stepping clear of the boat. There was a steaming shed - for steaming long timbers planks and frames, which were then easily twisted into shape and fitted and pinned to the hull. And over the office was the architects' drawing office.

Henry's method of managing the yard was carried out with meticulous attention to detail. Daily, during the lunch break and immediately after the day's work he would walk around the boat-hulls being worked looking for both existing and potential faults, marking them with a pencil or chalk. His wrath was visible whenever the fault or detail had not been remedied when he made his next 'round'.

The boats were placed in the pool above the bridge when ready for testing or delivery. The larger boats, such as the many 75 ton barges, were dragged to the pool and floated but were too high; they had to be filled with water to float under the bridge for delivery. Samples said that in his first year at Hornby's, he and another apprentice had to fill a barge using buckets. The same buckets were used to bail out the barge after passing under the bridge. When Fred ended his apprenticeship in 1928 during the great depression, work was difficult to find and

he had several periods of temporary work in the yard and similar periods on the dole, but ultimately obtained a permanent appointment with Wallasey Ferries.

In 1923, Dickinson retired, handing over his papers, order book and equipment to Hornby's. This may be the reason that the notice board at the entrance to the yard stated "Established 1863".

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in 1924 received permission to cut out and build the Bidston Dock. Henry was given notice to find new premises, which he did, on Poulton Road near to the junction with Gorsey Lane. Coinciding with the move Henry died, leaving his son, Robert, to continue running the firm. There was little loss of business however for the yard received a considerable amount of orders from the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board which may have been in lieu of compensation for the enforced moving of premises. The work was in the form of



Surf boats being taken for shipment

launches for river and dock work and for the punts for the Liverpool Pilot Service. The yard also built many gig-boats for the men who handled the mooring lines of the large steamers using the docks. There were also quite a few orders for yachts and other pleasure craft. Enough work to take on a couple of trainee naval architects working under Comben in an expanded drawing office on top of the main office at the entrance to the yard.

In another direction, Hornby's built many rowing boats for hire on small lakes, such as Raby Mere, West Kirby, New Brighton and Southport. They also produced small electric and petrol-engined motorboats for hire on the West Kirby and New Brighton lakes. The new premises were quite a distance from water and at the top of a hill. The boats for trial were carried to the nearest dock, East Float, by horse and cart and put in the water by a small crane. Every new type of boat was given extensive trial in the Birkenhead Docks and, if intended as harbour craft, in the River, locking out of the Docks with large commercial vessels. Boats for overseas were occasionally sent under their own power to the overseas transporting vessel in Liverpool or Birkenhead docks. The heavy surfboats were sent by horse and cart via Wallasey Ferries from Seacombe across to the Elder Dempster berths.

There were sufficient numbers of passenger vessels being completed to provide adequate work for the yard in the 1930s and the firm prospered.

In 1938 Robert Hornby was called to London by the Admiralty and asked to join an embryo Advisory Committee to plan and oversee war production of small

craft for the Royal Navy and the other services. Robert and his son Albert (then his assistant) were in a position to produce launches, ferries and pinnaces for the Navy and lifeboats for the Merchant Navy in addition to the normal work of river launches for harbour work. Post-War contacts gave the firm encouragement to expand their activities into a worldwide scene. At home Hornby's tendered for and received orders for launches for Trinity House and UK ports. The Cable & Wireless Company ordered craft for their bases in remote places such as Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Ascension Island in the South Atlantic and in the West Indies. Hornby's also built harbour launches for the Colonial governments.

Until 1955 the building of surf-boats for the West African services of the Elder Dempster Line continued. But the West African governments, encouraged by the UK government, began to build the surf-boats themselves in West Africa and at the same time new ports, e.g. Takoradi, were being established, thereby reducing the need for surf boats.

One interesting facet of the work of the yard was that every so often, when in the neighbourhood, groups of gypsies, perhaps running fairgrounds would call at Hornby's to have their caravans repaired, refitted or modified. The work gave the apprentices experience in intricate carvings. The gypsies must have had a form of agreement with Albert Hornby, for those workers I was able to interview, thought that the travellers would not normally have afforded to pay the costs of the work. Certainly this type of work was not an important item for the workers.

In the early 1960s the new glass-reinforced plastics made multiple orders of small craft much easier and cheaper. Wooden craft were too expensive to produce and not cheap to maintain. The large passenger vessels were rapidly reducing in numbers, the firm of H. Hornby & Son Ltd., no longer had orders sufficient to compete in the boat-building business. By 1963 it was obvious the firm would not continue much longer and by 1965 had closed down.

### Just a thought...

A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.... what more can I say.....

## Alan McClelland BA MSc

### The Editor

A notable event took place at the recent Annual General Meeting of the Society. Alan McClelland, probably the most long-standing member and also the longest serving Member of Council, announced his decision to step down from office. Chairman David White paid tribute to Alan for his major contribution spanning 57 years of membership and announced that Council was delighted to confer Honorary Life Membership in recognition of all that he had done for the Society.



Alan's interest in ships and the sea arose from walks around the dock estate and trips on the Overhead Railway as a small boy with his father. After initially joining the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, Alan later decided that his future lay in the academic world; so becoming a teacher and progressing to the position of Headteacher at

a major Liverpool Secondary School, by which time his research interests acted as a vital form of relaxation. He joined the Society in 1956, and his specific research interests have included the development of the purpose-built tramp ship from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the S.D.14; the employment of British owned small ships in deep sea trades in the 1960s and Liverpool's links with the confederacy during the American Civil War. Part of this research led to a dissertation for an MSc in the History of Science and Technology. Between April, 1966 and March, 2009 a total of 48 papers written by Alan were published in the Bulletin. Alan has fond memories of Society meetings aboard **Landfall** berthed in Canning Dock in the 1960s.

Some members will undoubtedly recall receiving letters or cards from Alan. These have always been easily recognisable through his rather distinctive handwriting but more to the point the delightful pen and ink sketches of ships and shipping, illustrations which Alan had carefully prepared to enhance many of his fascinating presentations to the Society of which there have been many over the years. Our Society remains fortunate in having a core group of long serving Members/research mentors on hand and happy to assist the research endeavours of Members and also those not directly associated with LNRS. Alan has always been a key player in offering his enthusiastic support as well as being invaluable in advising on Society protocol from time to time. It is hoped that for many years to come the Society will continue to benefit from Alan's ready wisdom and dry wit.

## Answers to Nautical Trivia Quiz on page 10

1. It fell into the sea during a 1692 earthquake and Tsunami.
2. The Danish Flag. They are citizens of Denmark, Faroe is the Viking word for sheep!
3. The International Hydrographic Office (IHO)
4. Originally all French Charts were based on the longitude of the Paris Observatory, creating a difference of 2 degrees and 20 minutes from Greenwich, they did not come into line with Greenwich until 1916!
5. Contrary to popular myth, it was NOT the Danish Asiatic's ship the **Sealandia**, but a Shell taker called **Vulcanus**.
6. HMS **Trincomalee**.
7. Tristan da Cunha, where the boast is that it is the most isolated/remotest island in the world; within 2 years of the eruption ceasing most of its inhabitants had returned from the UK.
8. Nothing, his middle name was 'S.'

### Shipwreck 1893.

By L.N.R.S. Member David Eccles

When the American barque **Alexander Gibson** arrived at Belfast from Port Townsend on July 6th 1893, her master, Captain G. Wilson, reported he was off Pitcairn Island on April 30 when islanders informed him that a ship was ashore on Oeno Island with the crew in distress. He proceeded there and found the British Ship **Bowdon** grounded on the North side of the reef, and took all the men off the wreck before returning to Pitcairn Island to land some islanders, also some British crew who refused passage home, before continuing his voyage to Belfast with Captain John Law, two officers, the carpenter, two seamen and four apprentices from the **Bowdon** on board. Five days after the survivors were landed at Belfast, fresh news concerning the wreck was received by Lloyd's Agent when the Glasgow Ship **Queen Victoria** arrived off Queenstown from San Francisco. She reported sighting the **Bowdon** on May 4, ashore on Oeno Island with no sign of life, and when boarded by the Chief Officer he found all provisions and outfit had been removed and all the hatches open, but with the cargo of wheat intact.

Reporting the loss of his ship when he landed at Belfast, Captain John Law lodged this Deposition at the Board Of Trade office -

*Report of John Law, master of the ship Bowdon, of Liverpool, 1,624 tons, from San Francisco March 22nd bound for Falmouth or Cork with about 2,462 tons cargo of wheat. Proceeded and all went well till about 1.00 am on the 26th April, excepting that on the day of sailing at about 10.00 am the main-topsail-yard broke in two at the slings. The weather was fine, but there must have been a kink in the chain. No person was injured and the voyage proceeded. At noon on the 25th April the mate and I took observations to ascertain our position 23'9S latitude, and 130'12W longitude. The wind was then about N.E., but about 6.30 pm it became unsteady, blowing a light breeze about N.E. by E. to N.N.E. and so continued up till 1.00 am on the 26th April. At noon on the 25th I set the course S.E.-1/2-E. by the standard compass, which was equal to E.S.E. by the wheel compass aft, and that course was steered all the time till a few minutes before 1.00 am on the 26th April. At that time I was in charge on deck, the second mate was on watch on the poop, E. Jones AB was at the wheel, T.W. Brown AB was on the fore-topsail-yard on the lookout, and Bevan AB was also on lookout on the forecastle head. At a few minutes before 1.00 am I saw something that looked like land a little on the starboard bow, and apparently from four to five miles distance. The wind was then N.N.E. and I luffed the ship to the wind. The ship was under full sail. I then ran forward to ascertain what was ahead. The second mate then sang out 'Breakers ahead, a little on the weather bow'. I then ordered the helm hard up, ran aft and helped to let go the after staysail halliards, and had all hands called on deck. About five or ten minutes later after that the ship stranded on a reef called Oeno, Pitcairn Island bearing south about 2.1/2 points true. The position of the ship when she struck was not ascertained by observation. After stranding all sail was taken in and the vessel sounded. She made no water for a while, but by and by during the day the water came in and gained rapidly in spite of the pumps. At about noon on the 26th the two mates and the greater part of the crew left the ship for Pitcairn Island leaving two crewmen on board with me, but we left the following morning about 9.00 am when the ship was nearly full of water, and sailed to Pitcairn Island. Four men remained on Oeno, but they afterwards went to Pitcairn. I subsequently returned with assistance to the ship, but failed to get her off, and on May 1<sup>st</sup> was taken aboard the Alexander Gibson, of Thomastown, Maine, and brought to this port, where we arrived today with nine of the crew of the ship.*

*Signed John Law.*

*Belfast July 26th 1893.*

Two weeks after the survivors were landed in the United Kingdom, the official investigation into the circumstances leading to the loss of the **Bowdon** was held at St George's Hall, Liverpool, on August 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 1893.

The court was told the **Bowdon** was an iron built sailing ship that was manned by twenty-four crew when she sailed from Liverpool on September 2nd 1892 for San Francisco with a cargo of coal. She carried five compasses, one of which, the Standard located on the bridge, was adjusted in the River Mersey before departure. She also carried three chronometers, two of which agreed when checked by Time Ball on the day the vessel departed from San Francisco, and observation of the ships position was checked off the Whistling-Buoy.

The first warning of the proximity of land was given by the sound of birds a little before 1.0am on the 26th April, and the Master, fancying that he saw land, sent the Second Mate aloft to the foretopsail yard to lookout, who quickly reported breakers ahead, and a little on the port bow about two miles distant. The ship then going 3 knots through the water, the helm was ported at once, but she paid off no further than S.S.W. when she stranded outside the breakers on the Northern side of Oeno Island, about 1.10 am on the morning of the 26th April, within ten minutes after the land was first seen. The sails were clewed up and the boats cleared away, pumps sounded and no water found, a start was made to jettison cargo (about 15 tons being thrown overboard), and an attempt made to carry out an anchor to heave the ship off was abandoned due to the heavy ground swell. At 5 am the ship was making water fast, and by 9 o'clock she had 9 feet in her. At 10am a boat with four men visited the island, and at noon two boats in charge of two senior Mates were sent to Pitcairn Island for assistance, leaving the Master, steward, and carpenter on board the vessel overnight, but they left the ship with 16 feet of water in her at 9am on the 27th April and proceeded to Pitcairn Island, arriving there on the 28th. The next day the wind shifting S.E. all the crew went back to Oeno Island, accompanied by twelve Islanders, and on the 30th April, Captain Law refused to abandon the ship when offered passage in the ship **Simla** that hove-to off the Atoll. On the 1st of May, finding that nothing could be done to save the ship or cargo, abandonment was decided upon, and when the American Barque **Alexander Gibson** hove in sight, communication was made, and all the ships company were taken on board.

The evidence elicited before the Court established the fact that the ship had been carefully navigated; that the errors of the compasses were known and properly applied; that due allowance was made for current, based upon the assumption that the position fixed by observation on the noon previous to the casualty was correct; that due precaution had been taken with regard to placing lookouts, but that the look-out aloft must have been inefficient, inasmuch as the land was seen first from the quarter-deck. Under these circumstances, and as the courses steered would have



taken the ship 65 miles to the Eastward of Oeno Island, the court considered the chronometer to have been in error, and the position derived there from on the 25th of April incorrect, hence the stranding. Considering the circumstances, the Master had taken all practicable measures to save the ship after the stranding, but was in default in not having verified his position by further observations on the 25th (although he had taken afternoon sights), knowing that he was in the vicinity of land. The Master was cautioned but his Certificate was not dealt with.

NOTE. This research was in response to a request from Mr John Saville of Wallasey for information concerning his grandfather John Saville who was one of the apprentices on this voyage.

## A Brief History of the magazine *Sea Breezes*

By Society Member Harry Hignett

*SEA BREEZES* had its origins as a house magazine for the Pacific Steam Navigation Company shortly after the end of WWI. Predictably the contents in the first two years tended to concentrate on activities of the Company. Then, in 1922, a long series of articles on the wartime saga of the very successful German raider **Moeve** brought feedback from the readers listing about 28 British vessels sunk or captured by the raider. Amongst the replies correspondents occasionally referred to the sailing vessels which so often used the waters around South America. The response gave the editor, T.E. Edwardes, more material and the magazine began to thrive especially in Liverpool and the Leadenhall Street district of London. Alas T.E. Edwardes died in 1925.

In the same year P.S.N.C. relinquished control, selling the journal to a local publisher. In November 1925 a new editor, Captain F.W. Siddall was appointed. A former master mariner with a full and eventful career, who served his time in the sailing vessel **Stronsa**, then transferred to steam and at the outbreak of WWI he joined the Royal Navy, serving in warships of several types, finally commanding a sloop. He also served in the mystery "Q" ships, and when twice blown up with his ship was mentioned in despatches on both occasions.

On taking over the editorship, Captain Siddall insisted on printing correct details; his guiding hand is noticeable immediately when the indexes

become comprehensive and accurate. The magazine's circulation continued to increase - from 5,000 per issue in 1925 to 6,000 in 1926. By the mid 1930's *SEA BREEZES* had considerable numbers of readers from Germany, France and the Netherlands in addition to English-speaking countries worldwide. At the end of a decade of publication *SEA BREEZES* was recognised as the prime international magazine for ship lovers.

The outstanding interest of *SEA BREEZES* readers between the Wars was in the sailing vessels, thus in the pages we find details of those vessels, ships, barques, brigs, schooners and their speeds, fast passages, damage suffered in heavy weather: perhaps described as graceful, sturdy, slow, stately, rusty, flying along in a strong breeze. These vessels were recognised to be a disappearing phenomenon. Every issue which mentioned, or carried, a query about a specific vessel spurred those with memories to answer with relevant information. And so the editorial format evolved. With a monthly piece entitled "*Signal Station*", reporting sightings and other details of the major sailing vessels of the time and their cargoes. The reader could note the progress of those proud ships across the oceans and perhaps round Cape Horn. In the same issues the "*Sailing Ships Roll of Honour*" were fleet histories of the companies operating those vessels which had all but disappeared.

Captain Siddall died in 1932. He was succeeded by Lt. Commander J. Francis Hall R.N.R. who remained until the magazine ceased publication during WW2. *SEA BREEZES* resumed in 1946 with a slightly new format and a new series under C. J. Bonwick. He resigned to take up the editorship of another magazine in 1956 when Craig J.M. Carter from the now defunct shipping newspaper "*Journal of Commerce*" became editor. In 1986 Craig Carter retired to be succeeded by C.H. Milsom (a former radio officer) also from the "*Journal of Commerce*". Harry Milsom died suddenly in December 1995, his place being taken by Captain A.C. Douglas, a former master of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company vessels. The organisation shaped by Craig Carter and further moulded by Harry Milsom to cope with an ever-changing shipping scene, was so well-founded that Andrew Douglas taking over the post at short notice was hardly noticeable, but, we may understand, not without several headaches. Subsequently production was transferred to the Isle of Man when the publication came under the wing of Hamish Ross, another Steam Packet stalwart.

Bound copies of this iconic journal are maintained at Merseyside Maritime Museum, where society members are working to produce a compilation of the annual summaries of vessels mentioned which will enormously benefit future research. To date the exercise has covered the period from 1920 to 1956.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society  
(Founded in 1938)

# THE BULLETIN

Volume 57 No.3, December, 2013



**Agamemnon**, Ocean Steamship Company's first ship, at the end of her maiden voyage at Gravesend, London, October, 1866 See page 5  
Ocean Archives, courtesy National Museums, Liverpool

<b>Maid of the Loch</b>	Bill Ogle	Page	1
Remember those days....	Bill Ogle		3
The Great Venture of our Lives	Tony Melling		5
The Liverpool Underwriter's Registry	David Eccles		10
New Zealand Lamb	Blue Star 'Gangway'		15
Book Review	The Editor		18
The Archaeology of ss <b>Mediator</b>	D. Knepper, W. Nagelkerken and R. Hayes		19
Wireless Operators of World War I	Willie Williamson		24
<b>Rowena</b>	John Richardson		26
Ship Crosses Northwest Passage	The Editor		31
The <b>Monowai</b> in Wartime	Brian Smith		35



S.S. **Mediator** on the bottom of the harbour in Curaçao, November 2007. The top of the stem stands about 5 meters above the bottom sediments. See page 19



12, Holly Road, Fairfield, Liverpool was Alfred Holt's first married residence. See page 5  
Author's photograph

# The Liverpool Nautical Research Society



President:  
Mr. William J.Pape II

Vice-Presidents:  
Captain G.Cubbin,  
Mr. H.M.Hignett

Chairman:  
Captain R.Settle

Vice-Chairman:  
Mr. D.C.White

Council:  
I.Duckett (Talks Secretary), D.K.C.Eccles, D.Littler,  
Dr. E.S.Long, W.A.Ogle (Editor).

Honorary Officers:  
Secretary: J.Stokoe                      Treasurer: B.Groombridge

Web site: [www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](http://www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)

Contact details:  
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society  
Maritime Archives and Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Albert Dock  
Liverpool L3 4AQ  
United Kingdom.

[info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](mailto:info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)



# Maid of the Loch

by Bill Ogle

Mention of this historic steamer in the previous edition of the Bulletin has prompted some interest, and hence these up to date notes, extracted from the web site ([www.maidoftheloch.com](http://www.maidoftheloch.com)) are now added.

The last in a long line of paddle steamers that sailed Loch Lomond from around 1818, the **Maid of the Loch** was launched on 5th March, 1953, to become Britain's largest ever inland waterway vessel. With capacity for 1,000 passengers, she plied her trade for almost 30 years before harsh economics brought her time to an end. She was finally laid up after her last commercial sailing on 31st August, 1981.

A series of attempts to bring her back into service under a succession of owners were all unsuccessful until she was bought by Dumbarton District Council in 1992 and the long road back to her former glory was begun. In 1985, a group of local enthusiasts supported by the council set up a charitable organisation, The Loch Lomond Steamship Company, to take over ownership and carry on restoration.



A recent picture of **Maid of the Loch**

Courtesy Ian Duckett

As a result of a huge effort the **Maid** became ready for static operation with a cafe/bar and function suite in autumn 2000. Key to the **Maid** sailing again was the rebuilding of the Balloch Steam Slipway, the means by which the ship is hauled out of the water for overhaul. The Grade 1 listed building, built in 1902, adjacent to Balloch Pier, had fallen into disrepair. Thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Enterprise, Dumbartonshire Council and volunteer work by LLSC, a £620,000 rebuild was completed on budget. The **Maid** was winched out of the water on 27th June 2006 in a satisfactory test of the slipway.

One of the **Maid's** special features is her magnificent two-cylinder diagonal steam engine which has been patiently restored and now awaits for only a new boiler to finally power it back to life.

**Maid of the Loch** is open to the public from Easter through to October and Saturdays only through the winter. The Balloch Steam Slipway has "in steam" weekends throughout the summer. Admission to both is free.

In her new livery of red, white and black the **Maid of the Loch** awaits the day when she will return the romance of steam to this iconic loch.

#### **Maid of the Loch** - some vital statistics

Length: 191 feet; Breadth: 28.1 feet; Tonnage: 555 gross

Engines: Steam, compound, diagonal

Speed: 13.75 knots Passengers: 1000

#### The Monday Facility

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

December	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	
January	6 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>
February	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>

### Christmas Lunch

An informal lunch is being arranged by members and will be held on Tuesday 10th December, at 1230. The venue is the Maritime Dining Room at Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool. The cost will be from £16 (2 course) and £20 (3 course) for members and guests; pre-booking is necessary and details are available from the Hon. Secretary at:

[info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](mailto:info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)



## Remember Those Days .....

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

### October to December, 1973

Recently news was received that the two Cunarders **Franconia** and **Carmania** are to fly the Russian flag. The announcement came out in a curiously roundabout way, as if those involved in the deal were ashamed of it, for at no time was it stated that the Russians had bought the two liners, laid-up for over 12 months in the River Fal.

However there seems to be a good future for the 20,747-ton liner **Reina del Mar**, which has been operated on a charter basis by the Union-Castle Mail Steamship Co. Ltd. during the past nine years. She was due to be handed back to her owners Royal Mail Lines Ltd. next year on the expiry of the charter, has now been bought by the Union Castle Line, and will continue to operate her successful cruises.

An unexpected sale recorded recently was the Spanish owned **Monte Anaga** (6,813 gross tons), familiar on the Liverpool - Canary Islands run for the past 10 years. She has been sold by the Naviera Aznar S.A., Bilbao to the Mexican Navy, for use as a training ship, and will become the largest ship in the Mexican Navy. Built in 1959 by the Cia. Euskalduna, Bilbao she paid a big part in the development of the Aznar Line's service between Liverpool and the Canaries. This is a continuation of that founded towards the end of the last century by Yeoward Brothers of Liverpool and carried on by them until the 1950s.

Signs are that the tide is beginning to turn for the Port of Liverpool. Since the beginning of October, record timber cargoes have been, one being the largest cargo of British Columbian packaged timber ever to be discharged at any British port. This was brought in by the Greek bulk carrier **Georgios Xylas** (18,634 gross tons) which docked from Vancouver. She was quickly followed by the largest cargo of Russian timber to be discharged at Liverpool which arrived in the Soviet timber carrier **Nikolai Novikov** (10,185 gross tons), making her third voyage since completion at Gdansk, Poland, earlier this year.

The famous record breaking liner **United States** is again in the news with her future under consideration. She was withdrawn from service in November, 1969 and bought by the United States Maritime Administration. Bids now being examined include: operating her as a trans-Atlantic cruise service; a low-cost Atlantic service; as a static retirement community; cruising the Eastern seaboard between Canada and the Caribbean; a base for a roving world-wide trade-fair or as a religious mission. In the event of these bids being unacceptable, she will probably remain in strategic reserve.

## October to December, 1993

In 1932 the Belgian Government ordered from Cockerills' Hoboken yard a motorship for its Ostend-Dover service. The launch in September, 1933, was performed by King Leopold's infant son Prince Baudouin, after whom the ship was named. The **Prince Baudouin** sailed on her maiden crossing on August 12th, 1934. With her stumpy funnel and unraked masts she was a contrast to the graceful steamers in the Straits of Dover fleet but her real claim to distinction lay in performance. Her top speed of  $25\frac{1}{4}$  knots made her the fastest diesel-powered ship afloat, a feature being the capability to equal full forward speed when running astern. Model makers Basset-Lowke Ltd. were celebrating their 25th anniversary and suggested that the boy prince might like to accept a working model of the ship named after him. The presentation was made by the British Ambassador Sir Edmund Ovey and the youngster was reported as having been delighted with the gift. Subsequent motorships built for the Channel crossing were to the general design of the **Prince Baudouin**, including in 1965 a **Roi Badouin**. Sadly, King Baudouin died in July at the comparatively early age of 63. One wonders, has the Basset-Lowke model survived?

The MAIB report into the grounding of the **Queen Elizabeth 2** off Cape Cod last year has been published. Concluding that the immediate causes were waters shallower than charted, an over-estimation of the height of the tide, and an under-estimation of the effect of squat - the increase in proportion to her speed of travel in a vessel's draught which can occur when sailing in confined waters. The report states that the effects of squat were about one-foot greater than had been estimated and the height of tide over-estimated by about 2 feet.

At a ceremony on Egerton Dock, Birkenhead the restored and re-erected mizzen mast of the former training ship **Conway** has been dedicated to the memory of the 11,000 cadets who passed through the school. Little of the original mast survived after the Conway was first wrecked in the Menai Strait in April, 1953, and then caught fire in October, 1956. Members of the Conway Club's Vancouver branch organised replacement spars and wood for blending into sound sections of the original and these were shipped free of charge from Canada. Some 600 people attended the dedication ceremony which was conducted by the Rev Canon Ken Peters, of the Mersey Mission to Seamen.

On July 21st the tanker **Avon** (43,622 grt) ran ashore near Gosport, Hampshire having apparently suffered engine failure. Between 1964 and 1968 her forward and aft sections, with her steam turbine plant, were built at Vegesack, Germany and the amidships cargo element built at Yokohama. She was operated by Mobil Oil until 1975 when converted from deep-sea transportation to an offshore role and renamed **Matco Avon**. She stranded whilst under tow to the breaker's.

# The Great Venture of Our Lives

## Alfred Holt and the Ocean Steam Ship Company

by L.N.R.S. Member Tony Melling

Part 1: 1829-1853

This first part of the account of the experiences of Alfred Holt and the Ocean Steam Ship Company deals with his early life, education and family background. It concludes with the crucial dilemma that Holt had to address in order to make the steam ship commercially viable: steam engine design.

Alfred Holt was the most successful Liverpool ship owner of the nineteenth century. With his younger brother in partnership, he founded the Ocean Steam Ship Company (popularly known as the Blue Funnel Line) in January, 1865. He engineered



*Alfred Holt (1829 – 1911) from a painting by  
Robert Edward Morrison*

*Courtesy National Museums Liverpool*

and helped to design a fleet of steamships as a new corporate venture by enhancing the technical initiatives of his contemporaries. By the time he died in 1911, Ocean Steam Ship had grown to sixty-two efficient, modern and safe vessels. His education had taught Holt the importance of attention to minute detail in the engineering design of his ships. He demanded the highest standards of effort and behaviour from all those who worked with and for him. As a resolute mercantile entrepreneur, he applied the Victorian standards of financial honesty, strong self-discipline, and corporate self-sufficiency. He cared for those who worked for him, but was uncompromising to any who fell below his commercial or operational standards. He could be conservative in his business decisions sometimes to the point of stubbornness, and

on occasions failed to adapt to the new commercial or design conditions of the day.

Typical of the entrepreneurs of his era, Holt did not make decisions based on consensus; he enjoyed corporate leadership and retaining commercial initiative. He had the ego of the self-made man. On the other hand, his journals record several tributes to contemporaries whom Holt credits with significant contributions to his 'great venture'. He often employed his strong sense of humour against himself; evidence that he was both resilient in his self-confidence and realistic about his own mistakes. Following his own father's example, Alfred Holt was also a committed

family man. He shared his father's sense of social welfare and recognised the appalling living conditions of the Liverpool urban poor. He also supported many of the national campaigns of his father, such as Catholic emancipation and free trade. He was born into a strongly Unitarian family and in common with others of his faith made these Christian values the basis of his commercial and family life.

### Early Life and Education

Alfred Holt was born on 13 June 1829 in the cottage his father rented in Rake Lane<sup>1</sup> (now Durning Road) from Robert Durning, his brother-in-law. Alfred's parents, George and Emma, sent Alfred to Mr Brown's Day School at High Street, Edge Hill when he was five years old. Two years later, in 1836, Alfred was moved to a school run by the 'three Miss Hunts' in Gateacre, his mother's old school<sup>2</sup>. His father understood that a Unitarian minister in Knutsford also ran a strong residential school, so after only two years, Alfred was despatched to Mr. Green's School at Heathfield in 1838<sup>3</sup>. He stayed there for six years, from the age of nine until he was fifteen, Alfred trying to run away more than once. On one particular occasion he had resourcefulness to make his way home on foot from Gateacre to Rake Lane. He was promptly returned by his father<sup>4</sup>. Alfred was given a solid general education and an insight in mechanical objects. A school friend possessed a working model steam engine and this fired his enthusiasm; another school friend's father learnt about this and gave him one as a present. From this point, Alfred developed an enthusiasm for engineering design that never left him. George commented about this several times in his diary, pointing to one occasion when his fifteen year old son took apart and reassembled the steam engine on his office floor in India Buildings<sup>5</sup>.

In January 1845, at the age of fifteen, Alfred came under the direction of Mr. Donald Cameron at his small boarding school in Daulby Street. Although Cameron appears to have been an unpopular master, Alfred credited him with instilling a strong sense of self-discipline and the importance of attending to the smallest detail when undertaking any project or enterprise. Alfred later said that Mr Cameron



*Alfred's father, George Holt Senior (1790 – 1861)  
From a painting by Philip Westcott  
Courtesy National Museums, Liverpool (Sudley)*

taught him “the enormous power of perfect accuracy in everything”<sup>6</sup>, a skill later crucial in both the technical and operational prosperity of Ocean Steam Ship Company. Later that year, Alfred was allowed to start a six year apprenticeship with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company, under the engineer Edward Woods, at Edge Hill. Woods knew immediately that he had somebody who needed no coaxing or persuasion. Alfred approached his apprenticeship with a missionary zeal, Alfred himself asserting “I never could have enough of the Railway; early or late, night time or Sunday, I was there if there was anything to be seen or done..... Whenever I could get away from the office, and, failing other opportunities, at night, I was on a locomotive.”<sup>7</sup> Alfred’s enthusiasm and commitment vindicated the choice he made and the trust his parents had placed in him. Alfred’s apprenticeship with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company had given him a valuable wealth of engineering expertise. It must also have developed a confidence in his ability to evaluate existing designs and create improvements.

### **The ‘Consulting Engineer’ on Mercantile Matters**

Alfred left Edward Woods at the end of his apprenticeship in 1851 and now had to find an occupation to apply his new skills. A crucial point in his life had been his parents’ willingness to back his choice of career in 1845. A second turning point now proved as crucial in pushing Alfred in the maritime direction. His logical career move was in railway engineering, but the industry was going through a recession after the ‘railway mania’ of only a few years before. His brother George (four years his elder) had helped to found the Lamport and Holt Shipping Line and Alfred had done useful design work on their new ship, the steamer **Scamander**. When William Lamport suggested he take up a clerk’s job in the shipping line, Alfred accepted in June 1851, clearly intending this to be only a temporary role, before he took up a permanent career in the railway industry<sup>8</sup>.



*Philip Henry Holt (1830 – 1914) in old age  
Ocean Archives.*

*Courtesy National Museums, Liverpool*

Shipping companies were beginning to slowly replace sailing ships with steamships; the beautiful but more expensive simplicity of sail being transcended by

cheaper, more reliable steam. The following month, Lamport and Holt's second steam ship, the **Orontes** awaited new engines and fitting out in Liverpool. Alfred helped this process and was asked to sail on her maiden voyage to the Eastern Mediterranean in August. This voyage gave him valuable experience in marine engineering and the operation of a steam ship at sea. This experience changed Alfred's life. He took up his father's offer to set up an office in India Buildings as a "consulting engineer", in the spacious new building in Water Street that the latter had built to house his cotton brokerage, banking and insurance interests<sup>9</sup>. Alfred entered his office in January, 1852 at the age of twenty-two and based himself there for the rest of his life. It became the headquarters of the Ocean Steam Ship Company and was to be ideal for the purpose.

By the 1850s, the commercial development of steamships revolved around design and technology, not the acquisition of business capital, overseas contacts, or sea-going expertise<sup>10</sup>. Alfred Holt was liaising more and more at this time with his younger brother, Philip, about the issues affecting steamship viability. Alfred knew these had to be resolved before any planning could begin on the commercial



aspects. He told Philip he considered these to be the steam ship design, problems of the screw propeller especially the shafting, a safe and efficient compound engine design and the unique potential of building ships in iron, rather than in wood<sup>11</sup>. The issue of steam ship design was interrelated with the use of iron. Its strength and flexibility enabled much bigger vessels to be

constructed. However iron ships of the most economical design had to be a combination of length, beam, and displacement and Alfred Holt only arrived at his preferred design in the early 1860s. In the meantime, he would study existing applications and draw his own conclusions.

### **The Nub of the Issue**

The most difficult issue to resolve was the optimum mechanical efficiency of the steam engine. Alfred knew from his railway experience that boiler design was crucial in safely building and holding a sufficient pressure of steam to drive the engine, not only at the optimum speed, but also with the minimum use of coal. He had seen this done with the use of 'compounding', the use of two or more cylinders to expand the storage of steam at different pressures to maintain a maximum boiler pressure but to prevent it becoming unsafe. John Elder was to apply this principle to marine engines in 1854-1856, but not on anything like the scale and efficiency

required to make the compound engine viable for deep sea ships<sup>12</sup>. A second related problem was one of coal consumption. Marine engines consumed an average of 4-6 lbs of coal per horse-power per hour. This was too expensive to make ocean travel viable and make a profit on the cargo<sup>13</sup>.

The space required for the amount of coal needed for this consumption would also fatally limit the cargo space. Finally, there was insufficient coal bunking stations in the right locations at sea for this level of coal usage. On the other hand, by 1864 Randolph and Elder had applied the compound engine to their steam ships, employing great pressure in a small cylinder and small pressure in a large one. They had reduced fuel consumption to just over 2 lbs of coal per horse-power per hour and had sailed cargo ships around Cape Horn, to the Pacific coast of South America<sup>14</sup>. Alfred Holt needed to travel further with his ships, but this example helped to convince him that long distance trade was potentially viable with the use of the compound steam engine. He recognised there were engineering problems to be overcome and a sufficient cargo payload to be devised. Despite the success of Randolph and Elder, these design and technology issues had to be rigorously resolved before steam travel could command the shipping routes of the world.

To be concluded.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Fragmentary Autobiography of Alfred Holt (privately printed, 1911), Papers of the Durning and Holt Families, 920 DUR/1/1-2, Liverpool Central Library; p.4
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.10
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.11
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.11
- <sup>5</sup> George Holt, Snr, MSS., Diary, Papers of the Durning and Holt families, 920 DUR/1/1-2, Liverpool Central Library; 30 January 1845
- <sup>6</sup> Fragmentary Autobiography of Alfred Holt (n. 1 above), p.15
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.21
- <sup>8</sup> George Holt MSS., Diary, (n.5 above), p. 70
- <sup>9</sup> AH Autobiography gives the date as 1 January 1852, but George Holt records this as 18 January 1852.
- <sup>10</sup> Hyde, F.E., A History of Alfred Holt and Company of Liverpool from 1865 to 1914, Liverpool University Press, 1957, p.13.
- <sup>11</sup> Minutes of Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers, LI, Part 1(1878), Session 1877-1878. No. 1511 'A Review of the Progress of Steam Shipping during the last quarter of a century', by Alfred Holt.
- <sup>12</sup> Hyde, F.E., (n. 10 above), p.15
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.15
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.16



# The Liverpool Underwriters Registry 1862 - 1885

by L.N.R.S. Member David Eccles

The Liverpool Iron Registry was reformed in 1862 to become the Liverpool Underwriters Registry for Iron Vessels with shipbuilder Thomas B. Royden appointed Chairman and marine engineer & shipbuilder John Jordan its senior surveyor. It classed iron vessels (A+I) for twenty years, (AI) for eighteen years and (A) for 16 years, with two years added if an extra bulkhead was fitted. Two registers were maintained - RED for ships building under survey which required a four-year periodic survey to maintain class, and BLACK for vessels in service that required biennial survey. The cost of survey for a vessel on the Red register was six pence a ton, and for the Black register it ranged from two guineas for a 200ton vessel to a maximum of ten guineas for a vessel above 1,500 tons. With surveyors located at Liverpool, Glasgow and Sunderland, it cost one guinea for the periodic survey in dry-dock. The first issue of the Underwriters' List of Iron Vessels which only included vessels Classed Red or Black at Liverpool was published in 1862. Its format was designed by underwriters and included the vessel's dimensions. Due to easy communication between its surveyors and Liverpool management, the Underwriters' Registry soon gained the confidence of ship-owners from other ports with the result that 138 vessels were awarded Class in its first year, with many others building 'Liverpool Red'.

By 1870, the Iron Registry, as it was known, was well established with four surveyors at Liverpool, four on the North-East coast, two on the Clyde, and one in London. The senior surveyor at each location possessed wide experience and the Registry had gained a good reputation as its rules were more flexible than those of Lloyds, the Committee favouring 'continuous' as opposed to an expensive 'extensive' survey. That year the Underwriters List of Iron Vessels was enlarged by publishing information on all iron and composite vessels above 50 gross tons for which trustworthy information could be obtained, and information on un-Classed vessels was being collected by the committee for future inclusion.

After consultation with its Liverpool Committee, Lloyd's again modified its Rules for Iron Ships early in 1870 and amended its symbols to notate (100.A1) as its highest class. During a tour of shipyards in the North-East of England and Scotland that year, a Lloyd's visiting committee was told that if Lloyd's rules had not been modified then very few ships would be building for them, as many 'Liverpool Red' vessels were also constructed to Lloyd's rules for entry in both Registers.

At the request of the London Committee of Lloyd's Register, a meeting took place in Liverpool on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1870 between representatives of Lloyd's Register and the Iron Registry to discuss a merger. Agreement was formerly reached between them, but when representatives of the Liverpool Steamship Owners failed to turn up

for a meeting in London the following day, it led to the merger being rejected five months later at a full Lloyd's Committee meeting held in London on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. This meeting did agree to the formation of a new Lloyd's Liverpool Committee consisting of four members each of the Liverpool Underwriters, Liverpool Shipowners, and the Liverpool Steamship Owners Associations, who with the chairman of the Shipbuilders Association would all sit on the London Committee. Formed on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1871 it was given a £300 annual allowance to form a sub-committee to assign vessels for Class after survey in the Liverpool district (which covered all ports from Chester to Lancaster, including the River Dee and the Isle of Man), before submitting its reports to London for confirmation.

The heavy loss in seamen's lives was first brought to the attention of Derby MP Mr Samuel Plimsoll in 1868 by Newcastle ship-owner James Hall. Questions raised in Parliament concerning this loss of life led to the formation of a Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships which sat in 1873. Giving evidence to the Royal Commission in June of that year concerning iron shipbuilding in Liverpool, Samuel Plimsoll stated - "concerning one ship the plates were so warped that they could not bring the edges close up with the rivets, so they just nobble them and make them a little larger than the hole and the cement covers it all up". After this statement was heard a telegram was sent to 26 Russell Street, Liverpool, addressed to Mr R. Knight, General Secretary of the Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders Society of the United Kingdom, demanding his presence in London so that he could be questioned by the Royal Commission. Mr Knight was met on his arrival at London by Mr Samuel Plimsoll's solicitor, and was shown the MP's statement and asked to confirm this when he gave his evidence. He replied that he could not do so, but that he was very anxious to be questioned by the commissioners to enable the truth to be heard. Mr Knight told Samuel Plimsoll's solicitor that the vessel concerned Classed 100.A1 by Lloyds Register was the London registered steamer **Brighton**, built at Sunderland in 1872 by J. Blumer & Company. This steamer made her maiden voyage to Gibraltar with coal before loading 1,000 tons of sulphur at Pomaron for Garston arriving there leaking badly on January 27<sup>th</sup> 1873. After discharging cargo she then spent seven weeks in Herculaneum dry-dock under repair. He had personally examined the vessel and considered her badly built as he could pass a mechanic's steel rule between the frames and side plating in many places. During construction the plates had not been properly formed and it soon became obvious to the shipbuilder the vessel would require re-riveting if the plates were forced up to the frames using five-pound riveting hammers. Instructions were given to the men to use two-pound hammers to 'nobble' the rivets in their holes and not bother to close the plate to the frame. Although the completed hull was made water-tight the foremen and inspectors knew the rivets would soon loosen when the vessel began to strain at sea.

After voicing these facts Mr Knight was not asked to appear before the Royal Commission. He did, however, write a letter to the editor of the Liverpool Daily Courier on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1873 stating - "I have some experience in iron shipbuilding, in this port and many others in the UK, and have no hesitation in saying that the vessels built on the Mersey are not surpassed for workmanship by any built elsewhere. I know that in some places men engaged as iron shipbuilders who were never trained to it, because they will work for a little less wages than the skilled mechanic, and the result is so much bad work. This would be prevented if all vessels were built under inspection, and practical men engaged as inspectors"

In November 1873 the Royal Commission called on Mr Weymouth, Secretary of Lloyd's Register of Shipping, to give statistics concerning ocean-going steamships lost between 1<sup>st</sup> January 1872 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 1873. He presented four tables, including this one:-

<u>Total of No of ships</u>	<u>Abandoned</u>	<u>Foundered</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Loss.</u>
3,000 Unclassed	5	5	4	14	0.47
1,500 Lloyd's Register	2	7	7	16	1.14
700 Liverpool Register	3	2	9	14	2.00
Total	10	14	20	44	

This table gave the impression that Liverpool Iron Registry vessels were unsafe. Mr Weymouth said about the Lloyd's Register losses "Some of our finest ships were lost last winter coming from America. The loss was not from unseaworthiness of the ship, but very likely from the cargo shifting, the vessels being deeply laden with wheat"

After this was reported in THE TIMES, the Secretary to the Underwriters Registry for Iron Vessels Mr W.W. Rundell, wrote to the editor on November 20<sup>th</sup> 1873 enclosing the following table:-

Losses	Grain	Iron-Ore	Coal	General	Total
Unclassed	5	1	1	7	14
Lloyd's Register	4	2	5	5	16
Liverpool Registry	11	1	2	0	14
Total	20	4	8	12	44

This showed that eleven Liverpool Registry vessels were lost carrying grain and only four from Lloyd's Register. Mr Rundell agreed with Mr Weymouth's statement concerning

these, adding;- "it is recorded that rather than comply with the regulations of the Port Warden, the shipmaster paid the penalty of £40. Some very soon paid as penalty for this neglect, their own lives and the lives of their crew ".

After the Royal Commission hearing, opinions expressed by the Liverpool Committee of Lloyd's Register were given careful consideration in London, and the reason for the Iron Registry almost ceased. Representatives of the Board of Trade, Lloyd's Register of Shipping and The Underwriters Registry for Iron Vessels met in 1875 to agree freeboard calculations based on the rule of 'three inches per foot depth of hold' used by Lloyd's Register and 'three tenths hull displacement' derived by John Jordan and used by the Iron Registry.

The result of the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships was the 1876 Merchant Shipping Act which made the cutting of the Freeboard Line into a ships hull compulsory. Known as the "Plimsoll Mark" it is cut at mid-length to indicate the minimum distance permitted between loaded water level and the main deck to provide the vessel with sufficient reserve buoyancy.

Although the three Liverpool Associations which had representatives serving on both Lloyd's and the Iron Registry committees were having difficulty finding members with time to manage the Iron Registry, talk of merging the two did not reoccur until a shipbuilding slump in 1884. Fear was raised that competition might entice surveyors to relax standards to retain business. An approach was made by the Iron Registry to discuss merger with Lloyd's Register which resulted in a number of meetings in London early in 1885 between the deputy chairman of the Iron Registry and the secretary of Lloyd's Register.

Having the welfare of its three clerks and seventeen surveyors as its main priority, agreement was finally reached by which the Iron Registry staff would be enrolled into Lloyd's Register Pension Fund (which had been established the previous year) and re-employed at their same salaries. In addition the surveyors received a sum of money which ranged from £60 to £340 to compensate them for loss of pension whilst serving on the Iron Registry. These sums were paid from the Iron Registry's £19,000 fund before it was transferred to Lloyd's Register.

The terms of amalgamation were signed on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1885 by Mr B Weymouth for Lloyd's Register and Mr W W Rundell for the Underwriters Registry of Iron Vessels. In accordance with these terms, the Underwriters List of Iron Vessels, which was supplied to over 1,000 subscribers throughout Europe, the British Empire and the United States, ceased publication, and all Iron Registry funds were transferred to Lloyd's Register.

To protect the interest of the owners of the 1,066 vessels Classed by the Iron Registry, its chairman Mr Alfred Holt and his deputy Mr RN Dale became members of Lloyd's General Committee and Sub-committee for Surveys which met in London.

They were also both members of the Liverpool Committee which sat twice a week at Oriel Chambers, Liverpool. The chief surveyor, Mr West, remained in charge of the Iron Registry surveyors, and all Iron Registry vessels were awarded Lloyd's highest Class free of charge.

Since its amalgamation with the Underwriters Registry for Iron Vessels in 1885, Lloyd's Register has become one of the worlds most respected classification societies, and today the term "At Lloyd's" is synonymous with top quality - but that had not always been true.

*The Liverpool Red Registers form part of the Liverpool Underwriters Association collection held at the Merseyside Maritime Museum Archives & Library.*

## Writing@Sea with New Creative Writing Competition

from the M.N.A. Circular

Enter the Marine Society and Nautilus Telegraph's new creative writing competition and you could walk away with £1000 or a Kobo Aura and Kobo gift vouchers. The competition is open to serving and non-serving seafarers and is free to enter.

The charity is organising a creative writing competition with Nautilus Telegraph to help promote its latest online course Writing@Sea, which follows the award winning Maths@Sea up-skilling programme. The competition theme is Life at Sea and you are invited to enter your poem (maximum limit 80 lines or 800 words) or short story (maximum limit 3,000 words).

Taking part is easy. Just send your poem or short story with the entry form to: Writing@Sea Creative Writing Competition, MSSC, 202 Lambeth Road, London, SE1 7JW or email [competitions@ms-sc.org](mailto:competitions@ms-sc.org) . Find out more about the competition and Writing@Sea here: [www.marine-society.org](http://www.marine-society.org) where you can also see all the terms and conditions. The closing date is 31 December 2013, and the winner will be announced in January 2014. Our team of judges are: Mark Windsor, Marine Society Director of Lifelong Learning, and authors, Howard Cunnell, Jeremy Reed, Colin Darch and Bob Jackman.

Enquiries: Francesca Toma, communications team: 020 7654 7043 [ftoma@ms-sc.org](mailto:ftoma@ms-sc.org)

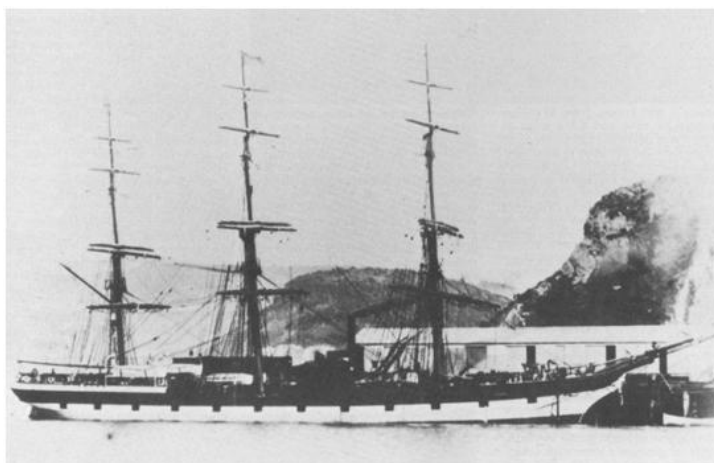
## New Zealand Lamb - in the modern marketplace

published in the Blue Star 'Gangway' (1976)

New Zealand sheepmeat has been shipped to the United Kingdom for some 130 years, a trade which has continued uninterrupted even through two world wars. Ships and the crews who sail them have played an essential part in the development of the New Zealand lamb trade. They still do, for apart from a small volume of air-freighted chilled meat, all New Zealand lamb and mutton exported to Europe still arrives by sea. That 'salt water pipeline' of vessels is as essential today as it was when the sailing ship **Dunedin** set sail on 15 February 1882 from Port Chalmers, bound for London with the first cargo of refrigerated New Zealand meat.

Western Europe, and the EEC in particular, is far from self-sufficient in sheepmeat and imports between 25-30 per cent of supplies from New Zealand. Although the production of European lamb and mutton increases annually, the continent will remain a high volume market for New Zealand exports for the foreseeable future.

The European market for sheepmeat is changing and the New Zealand



*The **Dunedin** being loaded at Port Chalmers in 1882.*

exporting industry is adapting to meet challenges from competitive meats, poultry and other foods. Nonetheless, in the short term the overwhelming majority of lamb and mutton exported to Europe is likely to be in carcass form with a growing proportion in 'primal cuts'. That is the core of New Zealand's export business: as a supplier of raw material which is further broken down and

processed in the markets to which it is shipped.

Arguably New Zealand's greatest asset is her ability to supply lamb and mutton in high volume to any part of the world. Certainly no other country can equal it. A good example is the growing amount of lamb being shipped from New Zealand to Great Witchingham Hall, Norfolk — the headquarters of the Bernard Matthews organisation, famous for its turkey.

In 1982 the Meat Producers' Board has negotiated a contract to supply Bernard Matthews with up to 20,000 tonnes a year of boneless lamb for his company's new boneless roast. When the news was announced, British farmers

were understandably disappointed — but none of the UK companies approached by Matthews for supplies could meet the specification.

New Zealand was the obvious choice and when the products come fully on-stream they will add a new dimension to lamb eating in Britain, for they virtually eliminate waste, are easy to cook and, most importantly, easy to carve because the bones have been removed.

The Board was sufficiently certain the Matthews lamb roast was a winner to build a £12 million production plant in Waipukuroa, North Island, to produce the finished roasts and ship them to the UK. Sales to date justify that faith: demand for the 1¼lb roasts has been exceptionally high and the only complaint from most supermarkets is that as fast as they fill the freezer cabinets their customers empty them!

The Matthews product is popular because, unlike many of its rivals, the meat is not minced and reconstituted but is prime whole muscle, shaped and produced according to the manufacturer's patented process. It requires considerable butchery skill to prepare the raw material for the boneless roast and it is precisely because it is of such high quality that the product has been so much more successful than its imitators.

Although tastes in different markets vary they all tend to share common threads. Many consumers, for example, will no longer accept meat which looks too fatty which is why the Board is continually refining the grading systems for mutton and lamb to encourage farmers to produce leaner carcasses. Those that pay heed to the new standards will benefit whilst those that do not will find themselves receiving much less for their overfat stock.

Convenience is another feature that, on an international basis, influences the form in which meat is bought. Partly because of the increase in the number of working women, few households are prepared to spend more than an hour or so a day during the working week in the kitchen.

In the densely populated conurbations of Europe's great cities, London especially, 'family meals' are becoming a thing of the past, especially in the commuter belt. Sundays offer about the only regular opportunity for the household to sit down and take a meal together.

In Britain household sizes, too, have changed. More than half the UK's 19.5 million households house only one or two persons and, in consequence, the demand for meat in a form which satisfies the needs of people who live alone or share with just one other is substantial.

The supermarkets have reacted by the way they have prepared their New Zealand lamb to sell it in a wider range of weights and sizes that take account of this



need. This has triggered the growth of another behind-the-scenes industry — the pre-packer.

Pre-packers are equipped with high speed bandsaws and fast-moving production lines; one of the largest companies cuts a million lamb carcasses a year for a range of customers. Usually, the carcasses are sawn to individual customer's specifications, wrapped, ticketed, priced and delivered, and the speed at which these firms can supply finished cuts ready for retail sale is remarkable.

This highlights another advantage of New Zealand lamb — namely that because it is shipped here hard frozen it can be safely stored until it is needed and then cut with great accuracy—more so than if in a thawed state.

In New Zealand itself there is a small but growing trend to de-bone carcasses before exporting them, adding value to the product. In 1985 around 5,000 tonnes was shipped to the UK in this form, about four per cent of the total.

The figure is higher in the EEC. For example most of the 9-10,000 tonnes of lamb consumed by West Germans annually has been further processed. The West Germans, in common with most Europeans, are not traditionally lamb-eaters, but the Board is gradually weaning them on to the taste by offering them a very sophisticated lean meat range of cuts.

One plus factor in Germany is the presence of many thousands of 'guest workers' from Yugoslavia, Turkey and, to a lesser extent, Italy; countries where lamb is prized as a delicate and tasty red meat. So the opportunities for expanding sales are great.

Prospects are pretty good for mutton as well. Mutton has always been overshadowed by lamb but it is a growing business for us in Europe, particularly for manufacturing purposes. New Zealand's success with mutton in Europe has been made possible because she can supply it boneless. The UK is one of the two largest boneless mutton markets in the world and demand rises each year. Again, it is the sheer scale of the New Zealand meat industry which gives it the edge.

So we have advanced a great deal since the **Dunedin** berthed unnoticed in London on Queen Victoria's birthday in 1882. The fact that so much New Zealand sheepmeat is now transported in refrigerated containerised vessels has greatly improved our quality assurance.

In the UK and our other markets we are competing against fresh lamb. So the presentation of our brand has to be good. There is no doubt that the development of refrigerated ships with greater capacities, such as those operated by Blue Star Line, has contributed to New Zealand maintaining its competitiveness in Europe and elsewhere. The history of New Zealand's largest single export industry and the sea are inextricably intertwined. Provided need and benefit continue, they will remain so.

## Review – from the Nautilus Telegraph

21 Centuries of Marine Pilotage,

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

Jeremy Mills Publishing, £15

SBN97809S749170Q

Some three decades after it first appeared, this history of the UK Maritime Pilots' Association has been revised and updated to cover the somewhat dramatic developments that have affected the profession since the 1980s.

The history of marine pilotage is a fascinating one and Harry Hignett delves back as far as an account written by a Greek-Egyptian merchant in 64 AD to show the long traditions of using local seafaring skills to ensure the safe passage of vessels in potentially dangerous areas.

The book explains how the term 'pilot' was brought to the UK by the Spanish and Portuguese — who in turn had taken it from a Greek term for navigation — and how it replaces the older northern European term, lodesman.

Looking at the development of pilotage in the British Isles from around 1000 AD, Hignett traces the way in which it was mirrored by the emergence of guilds, the creation of Trinity House and the evolution of maritime regulations — such as the 12<sup>th</sup> century Laws of Oleron, among the earliest rules for the safety of life at sea.

All of this is most relevant in the contemporary context of the commercial and political pressures upon pilotage. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a succession of Parliamentary inquiries and resulting legislation that sought to uphold high standards and improve the organisation of pilotage services — with the 1835 inquiry warning that any move to make pilotage entirely optional would 'hold out a boon to the foolhardy'.

The controversy over compulsory pilotage was one of the factors that led to the creation of a national association for pilots. Commercial pressures and legal protection also loomed large, and the inaugural meeting of the UK Pilot s' Association in June 1884 took place against a backdrop of incidents in which pilots had been harshly disciplined. Throughout the cycles of war and economic downturn, the story underlines recurring themes affecting pilotage — not least the diverse practices of local ports, the provision of pensions and safety problems, such as the poor state of many pilot ladders.

The book tells how the UKPA came to merge with the Transport & General Workers' Union after several decades of 'turf wars' and, moving into more recent times, explains the impact of the 1987 Pilotage Act and the repercussions of the Sea Empress disaster.

It has to be said that the final sections of the book are somewhat disjointed and lack the clear narrative structure of the first three parts, being largely made up of reports from various conferences and meetings. However, the final few pages include a very thoughtful contribution by pilot-turned-lawyer Barrie Youde, who raises very serious contemporary concerns over the safety regime in UK ports and demonstrates the continued need for effective lobbying and organisation. As UKMPA honorary president Lord Tony Berkeley notes in the introduction there is no substitute for such collective working to preserve and enhance 'the highest professional standards in an era when maritime skills generally are in decline'.

With Europe poised to launch a new bid to liberate port services, including pilotage, the lessons of history offered by this book should be carefully considered by Brussels in the coming months.

## The Archaeology of S.S. **Mediator**, a Steamship of the Harrison Line Sunk in Curaçao, Dutch Caribbean by Dennis Knepper, Dr. Wil Nagelkerken, and Raymond Hayes

In 1884, several shipping lines made regular stops at the island of Curaçao, in the southern Caribbean. Among the lines were the Dutch Nederlandse KWIM Dienst; the American Red D Line; the German Hamburg-Amerika Line; the Dutch Holland America Line, Ltd.; and the English J. & R. Harrison Line (Hyde 1967). One of the ships of Harrison's line calling at Curaçao at that time was the steamship S.S. **Mediator**. Built in 1872 by R. & J. Evans of Liverpool for the ship owners Hargrove, Ferguson and Company, **Mediator** was originally christened S. S. **Dahlia**. Records from Harrison's indicate that the vessel was 300.3 feet (91.53 meters) long, 34.4 feet (10.58 meters) wide and 14.8 feet (7.68 meters) deep, with a little more than 2,011 tons gross contents. The ship had three holds, three decks, two masts with functioning sails, and was propelled by two compound steam-engines made by G. Forrester & Company. The engines produced only 225 horsepower each, yet the ship could reach a cruising speed of 11 knots (20.5 km/hour). As **Dahlia**, the ship saw regular service between England and India, sailing around the Cape of Good Hope (Merseyside Museum 1876).

**Dahlia** was sold to the J. & R. Harrison Line for £25,000 on August 17, 1876. She was re-christened S.S. **Mediator**, joining Harrison's fleet of ships named after trades and professions, and began regular trans-Atlantic crossings (Merseyside Museum 1876). **Mediator** departed Liverpool on what was to be her final crossing on June 14, 1884, under Captain R. Ellis. She carried 1,158 tons of general cargo, stopping first at Barbados on June 30 where, according to a contemporary account in

the local newspaper *Curaçaosche Courant*, 91 tons of freight were unloaded. She continued to Trinidad on July 1, unloading 162 tons of cargo; La Guaira (Venezuela) on July 3, unloading 55 tons; and Porto Cabello (Venezuela) on July 4, unloading 25 tons. She arrived at Curaçao early on the morning of July 5, 1884.

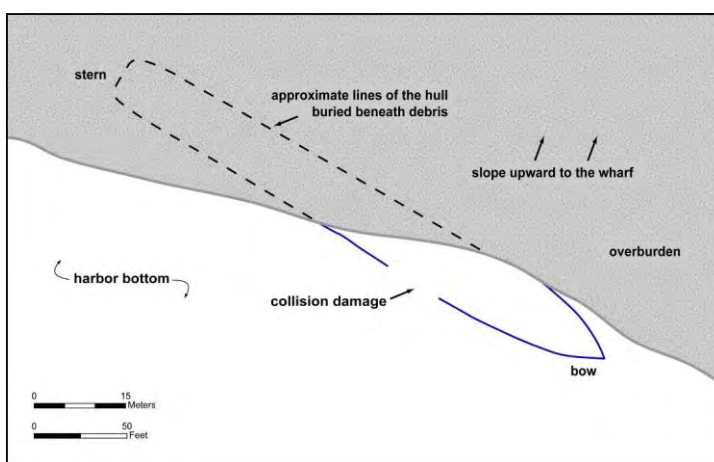
According to a separate newspaper account, **Mediator** was at her mooring at around two o'clock that afternoon when the Hamburg-Amerika Line vessel **Thuringia** entered the harbor, was swept off course, and collided with her. A gash opened in the starboard side of **Mediator**'s hull below the water line. She began to take on water rapidly, and steam began escaping immediately from her boiler:

*"About sixty workers tried to salvage the valuable cargo as much as possible with the help of a few men of the crew. The goods that had been loaded in Curaçao were all placed safely in an entrepôt. However, at about half past four came again the shrill and painful sound of steam escaping: "e ta agonize" [it is dying] the crowd muttered, and indeed the **Mediator** was approaching her last moments...Suddenly she slipped off from the rock, where she had found a support, more to the middle of the harbour, and in less than a minute the colossal steamship was swallowed up by the waters."*

*"The vessel itself was irretrievably lost. The sea penetrated holds and inner decks through an opening 8 feet long and 2 or 3 feet wide, starting a short, but very heavy fight with the fires. Smoke and steam billowed upwards from the turbulent waves in thick clouds, in turn black or white as snow, while live coals and boiling water flew out of the funnel; and soon the **Mediator** disappeared into the depths."*

(Amigoe di Curaçao, July 12, 1884; translated by the authors).

For over a century, the **Mediator** lay undisturbed and unrecognised on the harbour bottom, slowly blanketed by an accumulation of coral sand and rubble, old tires, and assorted other debris. She had



settled upright near the base of a short slope leading down from the wharf edge in water 20-25 meters deep, and over the decades debris moving down the slope slowly buried much of her length. The remains of the **Mediator** were discovered in 1986, the bow still upright in the water. Since that time, archaeologists and volunteer divers from Curaçao, Holland, and the United States have been documenting the wreck site under the direction of Dr. Wil Nagelkerken, of the Foundation for Marine Archaeology, Curaçao (STIMACUR). The work has involved

gradually clearing the hull of overburden, mapping and photo-documenting the site, and developing plans for protecting the site from further damage from modern harbour traffic. The work has been slow due in large part to the amount of debris that has collected over the wreck in the almost 130 years that it has been on the bottom.

Communication with the Harrison Line offices in 1986, prior to the line's final transferral to P&O Nedlloyd in 2000, indicated that no drawings or plans of the *Mediator* were known to have survived. And so, one of the goals of our investigation has been to determine the layout of the ship, to verify the location of the engine room and, if practical, examine the engine. On our recent visit to the Merseyside Maritime Museum in the spring of 2011, we were fortunate to find the next best thing to construction plans—the cargo plan of S.S. **Dahlia**, a drawing to scale that shows the distribution of cargo holds aboard the vessel. From this we can map out the various holds and the exact locations of features like the engine room, funnel, and masts.

Visibility in the harbour is poor, often limited to a meter or less, so photography is challenging. Nevertheless, conditions do ameliorate on occasion, and with persistence and skill, volunteers have produced excellent photographs of some sections of the site. Still, perspectives of the site must rely on drawings and maps.

The upper part of the bow stands clear of the bottom, but none of the superstructure or deck features remain. Sand, rock and debris have rolled down the sharp incline from the wharf or quay wall that lies 20 meters away, and this material has buried most of the port side of the hull as well as the after portion of the ship beyond the engine room. Measurements taken on remnants of the deck show that the vessel lists to starboard at about a 20 degree angle at the bow and about 45 degrees amidships, indicating that the hull is twisted.

Several interpretations have been advanced for the varying orientation of the deck. For example, heavy debris from the incline may be pushing unevenly against the hull. Alternatively, the hull may have twisted on impact with the bottom. Reports from the period of the **Mediator's** sinking indicate that the vessel was struck near the bow. Although now somewhat covered by silt build-up, evidence of the collision can be seen in the form of a large breach in the starboard side of the hull beginning at a distance about 20 meters from the bow. As the bow filled with water, air trapped in the stern compartments may have forced the stern upward somewhat so that the vessel struck the hard coral bottom bow first. In addition, the ship may also have been rolling slightly to starboard due to the location of the collision damage, which would have allowed compartments on that side of the hull to fill more quickly. The vessel would have been heavy when it sank, since it was still laden with a large amount of cargo. The **Mediator** had a narrow hull, and so, as it struck

bottom, angular momentum may have forced the aft section to continue rolling after the bow came to rest, imparting the twist to the hull that we apparently see today.

Although there is no detailed documentary record of salvage activities, it is clear that the wreck would have been a hazard to navigation in its condition



*Diver inspecting frames on the port side of **Mediator***

immediately after the collision and sinking. Portions of the superstructure, such as the funnel, masts, rigging, derricks, and other high-standing equipment, may even have remained at or above the surface of the water. Salvage and clearing of the ship's superstructure would thus have been undertaken relatively soon after the sinking. Removal of the superstructure would likely have been accomplished with chains or grapnels dragged along the deck to dislodge and pull down any upright debris. The amount and type of damage presently observed in the bow and midships areas of the wreck

are consistent with this kind of activity.

A number of artifacts have been recovered from the site, although the amount of debris in the overburden that has been collecting since the vessel sank has often made it difficult to determine whether or not particular items were actually from the nineteenth-century wreck. Stoneware mineral water bottles have been found on the site, for example, but our research indicates that they date to the early-twentieth century, a few decades later than the sinking of the **Mediator**. Coal is common on the wreck and was probably part of the fuel for the ship's boilers or, possibly, was cargo destined for coaling stations along the ship's route. A cask of bronze nails and a crate of hand-painted plates and bowls may also have been part of the ship's cargo, while a bronze horn was probably used on the **Mediator** itself.

The Curaçao Maritime Museum opened an exhibit in February 2003 entitled "Treasures of the Deep" that included artifacts recovered from the **Mediator** site. Among the artifacts were bottles, dinnerware, ceramics, brass fittings, spikes, and coal found at the site. As an archaeological site, the **Mediator** provides an excellent subject for public education, representing the physical remains of an important part of the maritime history of the island. There are no plans to raise the vessel. Instead, preservation in place has been proposed as an effective and economical way to

capture and maintain the educational and historical value of this important underwater cultural resource. Tests have been initiated to determine whether sacrificial anodes might be helpful in slowing deterioration of the metal remains. Lying within the harbour, the site is protected from unauthorized diving. All of the work that has been conducted at the site has been under the auspices of the Executive Council of the Island Government and the Curaçao Ports Authority; the latter exercises physical control over the site and its environs. Guided tours of the site are provided to the interested public by volunteers.

### Acknowledgements

*The Foundation for Marine Archaeology, Curaçao (STIMACUR—Stichting Mariene Archeologie, Curaçao) conducts maritime and underwater archaeological research in and around Curaçao, as well as other islands of the former Netherlands Antilles, and throughout the Caribbean. François van der Hoeven and Theo van der Giessen have managed the **Mediator** project for STIMACUR and coordinated volunteer efforts at the site. John Moore, Merseyside Maritime Museum, graciously gave of his time to help guide us through the museum archives, assisted by John Winrow and Lorna Hyland. Underwater photographs are by John Dohmen.*

## Nautical Trivia Quiz

1. In April 1971, two British persons, John Fairfax and Sylvia Cook, did what?
2. The largest inland vessel was commissioned on 25th July 1976, of course in the US, what was her name?
3. This ship of oak, was built in Chatham in 1759, involved in a number of maritime battles, was renovated by public subscription in 1922, can still be visited today, 250+ years later, what is her name?
4. Where was the largest wreck removed from?
5. Who caused the Royal Navy to change from coal fired ships to oil fired ships?
6. In Bergen Norway, cruise ships berth alongside a very ancient wharf (ancient as in age), what connection has this with a very aggressive trading system and its name?
7. The British Post Office established four postal packet ports from 1680 onwards which were they?
8. Jackass, Macaroni and emperor are all species of which bird?

Answers on page 30 .....



# Wireless Operators of World War I

A summary of the presentation to the Society  
on 17th October, 2013 by L.N.R.S. Member W.G. Williamson

Mr Williamson began his presentation by explaining that the subject of his talk had evolved from families of wireless operators requesting information about their relatives. The presentation used archive material such as diaries, log books or messages received during the conflict that gave a representation of the conditions existing at that time.

At the start of the conflict the British Merchant Navy had 12,600 vessels and employed some 270,000 personnel. The deprivations of the Imperial German Navy throughout the four years of the war resulted in the loss of half of that fleet and nearly 13,000 seafarers.

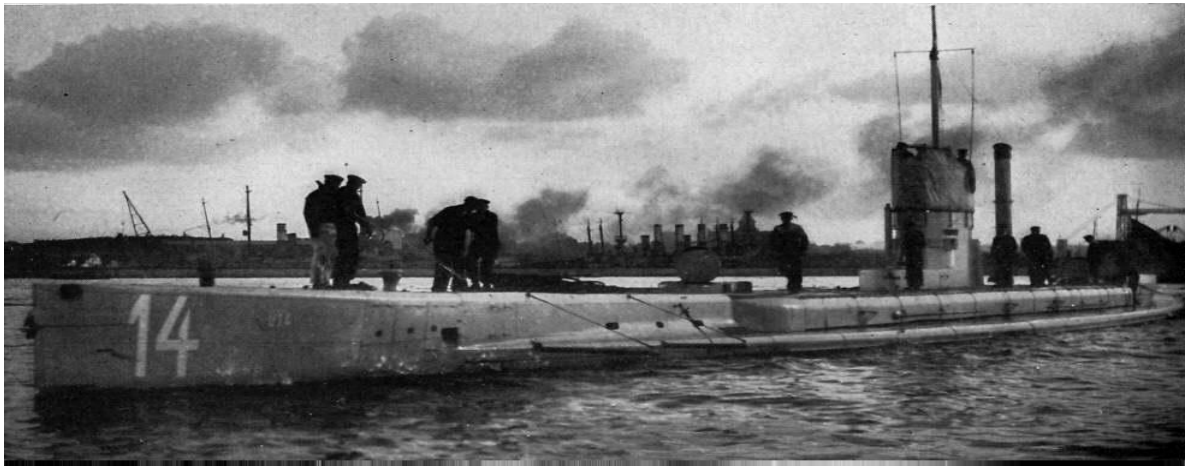
A copy of the message received onboard the **Calgarian** on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1914 from the Admiralty requiring that British vessels should not enter German Ports indicated the tense situation then facing the Merchant Navy was used to open the presentation. Referring to the wireless log book of Wireless Operator Jim Stone, the second W.O. on the RMS **Olympic**, the speaker explained the conditions existing in the North Atlantic at the start of hostilities and the fear held in many British minds of possible threat from German cruisers. In fact at that time they were in the South Atlantic.

In the interests of fairness Mr Williamson described the situation from the German viewpoint, facing the difficulty of having only 29 U-boats available and initially being obliged to observe the international rules of war as expressed in Part IV, Article 22 of the Treaty for the Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armaments. It states as follows:

1. In their action with regard to merchant ships, submarines must conform to the rules of international law to which surface vessels are subject.
2. In particular, except in the case of persistent refusal to stop on being duly summoned, or of active resistance to visit or search, a warship, whether surface vessel or submarine, may not sink or render incapable of navigation a merchant vessel without having first placed passengers, crew and ship's papers in a place of safety. For this purpose the ship's boats are not regarded as a place of safety unless the safety of the passengers and crew is assured, in the existing sea and weather conditions, by the proximity of land, or the presence of another vessel which is in a position to take them on board.

Due to their restricted range the U-boat activities were confined mainly to UK waters, and achieved their results by a mixture of shelling, contact mines and

torpedoes. Germany adopted unrestricted submarine warfare in the spring of 1917 which was initially very successful, sinking a major part of Britain-bound shipping. Nevertheless with the introduction of escorted convoys shipping losses declined and in the end the German strategy failed to destroy sufficient Allied shipping. An armistice became effective on 11 November 1918 and all surviving German submarines were surrendered. Of the 360 submarines that had been built, 178 were lost but more than 11 million tons of shipping had been destroyed.



*U 14 was captured from the French navy, converted and survived the war in the Austro-Hungarian navy and was then returned to France for further service*

Continuing the Wireless Operator theme the experiences of the grandly named Cecil George St. Pierre Bunbury were described, his trip on the ss **Gleneden** being of particular interest. An attack by a U-boat in the Irish Sea was successfully prevented by the expedient actions of a Petty Officer gunner on board. The ship survived a further two U-boat attacks and duly arrived safely at Salonika.

The demand for operators was high so the expansion of training particularly for young men aged between 16 and 17 years 9 months was discussed. This led to the career of W.O. Leo Elford who went to sea aged 16½ in 1917. He experienced three collisions, ran aground once, suffered several U-boat attacks and experienced severe weather damage to his ships during his brief sea going career.

A coded message indicating the end of World War I was then used to illustrate the career of WO Ronald Loasby Wright which he received when serving on the ss **Francis**. He had begun training as a W.O. in 1917, was at sea when the war ended and subsequently returned to his civilian occupation of a tailor. During WW 2 he was a Squadron Leader in the RAFVR and commanded an RAF cadet unit in Nottingham.

The presentation ended by showing photographs of other WWI operators who contributed to the conflict. This included the story of Harold Gill a young man

who aged 15 joined the RN as a boy telegraphist and his two year voyage on the Armed Merchant Cruiser **City of London**.

Mr Williamson was particularly happy that the sons of WO Wright and RN Telegraphist Gill were able to be present during his talk, and in conclusion of the presentation paid tribute to the 173 wireless operators who lost their lives during this conflict, the first “wireless war.”

## **Rowena**

Submitted by Society Member John Richardson

In the early 1860s before the days of the Suez Canal, Greenock born Donald Currie (who was educated at a Belfast business school) operated the Castle Packet Company; this firm traded from the UK to Calcutta via the Cape of Good Hope. His iron sailing ships were all about the same size of just over 1,000 tons, and with the post-fix of ‘Castle’ these ships were – **Arundel** – **Carisbrooke** – **Caernarvon** – **Kenilworth** – **Pembroke** – **Roslin** – **Stirling** – **Tantallon** and **Warwick**. But this trade was substantially curtailed when the Suez Canal opened in 1870. Donald Currie’s ships then started on the run to South Africa instead, and later became the Castle Mail Packet Company. From 1876 the mail contract to South Africa was awarded jointly to the Castle Mail Packet Company and the Union Line. After a period of intense competition and later co-operation between the two companies, which included transporting troops and military equipment during the Boer War, the Union Line and Castle Shipping Line merged in March 1900, thus creating the Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company Ltd, with Castle Shipping Line taking over the fleet.

However, before this famous amalgamation took place, when Donald Currie decided to operate a steamer fleet, he had a four masted iron ship named **Cluny Castle** built by Barclay Curle. That ship was 1,986 gross tons with the measurements of 276ft. x 41ft. x 24ft. Like all the ships of the highly respected Castle line, the **Cluny Castle** was fitted out with all the latest gear, and that included a steam windlass and two steam deck winches as well as a donkey man in the crew. From South Wales the ship would take 3,500 tons of coal to Calcutta and bring jute back to the mills of Dundee. The well found ship **Cluny Castle** which carried 28 sailors had also been designed to carry 150 emigrants on cheap fares to South Africa. With the exception of the **Warwick Castle** which was sold to J Chambers of Liverpool in 1870, his eight other iron ships were sold between 1883 -1890. The **Arundel Castle** was the first ship of the Castle line, and the first of five ships that went to Charles Barrie to be re-named **Chittagong**.

But in 1889 the **Cluny Castle** which was one of the last two sailing ships in

the company was sold to Ferguson, Letham & Co of Glasgow and re-named **Rowena**. The only other sailing ship remaining in the company was the **Carisbrook Castle**. Eight years later in 1897 **Rowena** was sold to James Rae of Greenock, but because he wanted to operate a smaller crew, he had the yards from the jigger mast removed and the ship converted to a four masted barque. In 1901 another Ferguson of Glasgow bought the ship, and then in 1905 the Welshman William Thomas bought her and had the ship registered in Liverpool. Although the **Rowena** became a general tramp sailing ship, her main trading route under William Thomas was from the UK to the West Coast of South America. The normal cargo from the UK was to San Francisco with coal and then nitrates, grain or timber back to the UK. But because the ship was partly dismasted in the North Atlantic in 1907, she was re-rigged as a bald headed barque at Philadelphia when under the command of Captain Cadwalader.

*This article was written by one of **Rowena's** Apprentices and updated by Captain Meyer.*

This tale is by JH Wood, an apprentice who tells of a long and arduous passage from Vancouver to London. The story itself is about tobacco, an item which during the windjammer years was a most important commodity on every ship. Indeed, during their long spells at sea it was quite often the only pleasure the sailors had.

**Rowena** like all other ships carried a large stock of duty free tobacco in her slop chest, and when at sea in the second dog watch of each Saturday, the hands would lay aft to collect their bond issue. Prices varied from ship to ship, and the captain who owned the bond could sell his goods at any price he wanted to. At the time of the bond issue, both captain and steward would officiate as the crew signed for their goods, or if they couldn't read and write, as was the case with most sailors, they would make their mark with a cross for what they had received.

In addition to being smoked in pipes, tobacco was also used for chewing and particularly when sailors were at the wheel. Smoking was never allowed on ships when on the captain's poop-deck, so a spittoon or bucket was usually placed near the wheel grating for the convenience of the tobacco chewing helmsman. The junior boy of each watch would empty this spittoon at regular periods. Tobacco was also used as currency because ready money was seldom if ever found on ships; it was also used for bartering and gambling in games of crib or poker.

Gambling was a much favoured pastime with the foc'sle crowd, and this sport which was normally played on the forward hatch took place during the dog watches. This was because under the four on and four off system with dog watches, it was the only time the hands could congregate, weather permitting of course. On a fine evening during a gambling session in or around the sailor's foc'sle, the raised voices

of the gamblers could be heard all over the ship, this was as they called out their stakes of 'Faithful Lover' or some other brand name plug of tobacco.

In the spring of 1909, the **Rowena** was under the command of the Captain Cadwalader who came from Anglesey, with him he had Mr H Parry-Jones from the same place as his first mate. At that particular time the ship lay at the saw mills of Vancouver where she was loading timber for the UK. For the purpose of loading the huge squared off baulks of timber which were too large to go down any of the cargo hatches, it was the normal practice on most timber carrying ships to cut bow-ports to facilitate their stowage in the 'tween deck..

The captain was an extremely thrifty man, and in his efforts of saving money to the extreme, he never bothered with the usual employment of a shore night watchman, so it was the general practice of an apprentice to perform this duty. On one particular evening when I was the night watchman, the steward approached me and asked if I'd like some shore sausages for my supper. This was most unusual; 'shore grub' sausages as well for the night watchman's supper – unheard of - if indeed there was any grub for the night watch man, it always consisted of any left overs from the previous meal. Any suspicions I had of such a generous offer were quickly forgotten when the steward told me I could even go and cook the sausages in the galley. Indeed, the galley was always locked at night. This I did, and of course it had the desired effect of keeping me out of the way for a while as the sausages were being cooked. All went well during my turn of night watchman duty and quite naturally I thought that was that and it was the end of the matter. However, during the course of the following morning the Old Man sent for me. He was in a towering rage and wanted to know what kind of a night watch I'd kept. It then transpired that our friend the steward had skinned out, and in doing so had taken most of the bond contents with him. I decided not to mention his gift of sausages during my interrogation, saying only, that in view of the fact that the steward lived aft, and quite close to the captain, he must have gone over the stern with his goods. But this excuse wasn't much good and the captain went on ranting and raving about my poor qualities as a watchman. He called me quite a lot of other rude things ... all of which meant the same thing about my parents and my birthright.

I was to learn at a later date that the desertion of the steward was to have severe repercussions on the ship. Incidentally, the steward wasn't replaced. The cook was promoted to cook-steward, while the cabin boy filled in so to speak. By employing this arrangement, the thrifty and parsimonious captain was then able to save on the steward's wages, and in doing so he was able to make up some of his losses from the slop chest. Needless to say and as was the normal procedure, it was while we were at Vancouver that most of the sailors had packed their bags and gone with the crimps and their runners. Such desertions by sailors often left a captain

with a huge headache, but in some cases he was happy to see them go. This was especially when the ship never had a charter, and when the crew would either have to be paid off or kept on wages. Indeed, there were many ships that were laid up for a year or more awaiting a cargo. But when it came to manning his ship again, the services of the boarding house masters had to be sought – and they were not cheap!

As a consequence one of the crimps had contacted Captain Cadwalader with a view to supplying him with a crew, and a few days later with loading complete we moved out into midstream to await the boarding-house master. He arrived by tug with his bodyguards and a number of inebriated sailors to replace those who'd earlier backed out. But later on we discovered that those replacements were hardly sailors at all, they didn't know one end of the ship from the other; amongst them were a couple of lumber men and a soldier. Later in the day after they'd regained consciousness, they all said they had been waylaid, and on coming around discovered to their horror that they'd been Shanghai'd. Nevertheless, after a few days at sea they all seemed to be adapting quite well with the watches. As we sailed South towards Cape Horn and home, the ship appeared to be taking in water, we therefore had the job of manning the pumps for much of every watch. Murmurings amongst the crowd began as they swung those big pump wheels around, their suggestions being that the Old Man should make for the nearest port and have the problem of the leak seen to. Eventually, after much scratching of heads and searches in the hold the mystery was solved. Indeed, that leak was found to be coming from one of the newly constructed bow ports which had not been properly battened down. The leaking port was extremely difficult to reach, but by being rather on the slim or skinny side, I who was the chosen one who had to crawl over the squared off baulks of timber and remedy the situation.

After slowly sailing south and rounding Cape Horn, and with the ship shortening the distance to her London destination, an on board rumor began which implied there was a shortage of tobacco on the ship. This of course was with regard to the steward who'd departed with much of the bond contents. On the following bond issue some of the sailors began to hoard their tobacco by drawing as much as they could get from the captain. On hearing of this Captain Cadwalader put everyone on half rations. This proved to be most unpopular, and what had been a happy ship quickly changed to one of discontent. Leisure time was never again the same again with the tobacco shortage, and many of the sailors found it difficult to pass the time away. One of the sailors died, and although his death had been due to natural causes, the crew believed a good smoke would have saved him.

Caught in windless areas of the Atlantic for weeks on end, the length of the passage increased which would have surely made us overdue and possibly posted as missing, as a result the situation on board became worse. Eventually, it was no

longer possible for the non smokers or chewers to swap a little of their baccy for someone else's whack of Sunday plum duff. Soon afterwards the tobacco gave out completely - there was no more left on board. Some of the more ingenious members of the crew then began making tobacco substitutes; they scoured the timber in the hold for pieces of bark, then crushed and mixed it with other things. Some of the ingredients used with the tree bark consisted of coffee dregs, hard tack biscuit crumbs, crushed fish bone or anything else they could think of to give some kind of satisfaction. To make matters even worse, and despite the fact that the same ship had once done the same passage in 102 days, it was so long that the food began to give out. We were placed on our Board of Trade scale rations and fed on 'substitutes.' At long last, however, and after what seemed to have been a lifetime, we dropped anchor at Falmouth where we were to receive our orders. The passage had taken 173 days but the sailors could at last get their tobacco. The ordeal of a tobacco less ship didn't really affect me because I didn't smoke – or chew tobacco

William Thomas kept the **Rowena** tramping, but in 1917 when U Boats were taking a terrible toll on shipping, and especially with sailing ships, she was sold to V Sundmann of Helsingfors who two years later in 1919 passed her on to AB Finlandecia. Sold on yet again in 1921 to JF Gadd from the same port, the new owner sailed the ship as her master. Sold on yet again, and for the very last time, the **Rowena** went to an Australian who sent her out with just one cargo to Adelaide. After discharging, the Australian owner then had her towed to Semaphore Island. Her iron hull was still in good condition but because there were no cargoes for sail any more, the **Rowena** was hulked in 1922 for use as coal storage barge. **Rowena** was eventually broken up in 1924 at the age of 41 years.

## Answers to Nautical Trivia Quiz on page 23

1. They rowed the **Britannia II** across the Pacific from San Francisco in 362 days.
2. **Mississippi Queen** on the Mississippi River.
3. HMS **Victory**, she has been in drydock for 89 years!
4. Bantry Bay, the removal of the remains of 120K ton French tanker **Betelgeuse**.
5. The First Sea Lord, Admiral Jackie Fisher and this led to the creation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company later known as BP.
6. The wharf is where the Hansa League had an outpost for trading in the 13th century.
7. Harwich, Dover, Holyhead, and Falmouth.
8. Penguins.



## Is this a record?

By LNRS Member Cliff Moore

I joined the Cunard liner **Scythia** in January, 1953, and on board we had an old electrician named Jimmy Whalen. He was quite a character who always had a big smile on his face. **Scythia** was one of three ships plying the Southampton - Canada run, a three-week round trip. Jimmy had joined the ship when she was first commissioned in 1921, and he had given unbroken service for the whole of the ensuing 32 years.

I left the ship in 1953 to see the coronation, then I was transferred to the **Queen Mary**, but was still able to follow Jimmy's progress. **Scythia** was broken up in the late 1950s and Jimmy stayed to the end. So my question for Society members is:

Does any member know of a longer serving crew member than Jimmy?

## Ship crosses Northwest Passage, sails into history (Again)

From the MNA Circular

Two recent articles make an interesting "pairing". Firstly the bulk carrier **Nordic Orion** in September, 2013; and secondly the tanker **Manhattan** in 1969

Last week the bulk carrier **Nordic Orion** passed through the Northwest Passage and into Baffin Bay, sailing into history as it went. The ship – a 225-metre, ice-strengthened carrier loaded with B.C. coal bound for Finland – became the first bulk carrier to make the voyage, which has lured explorers for more than a century and has long been eyed as a commercial route.

Until the **Nordic Orion**, however, the passage was travelled mostly by icebreakers, tugs and small cargo ships hauling supplies to northern communities, as well as adventurers undertaking the journey in rowboats and even Jet Skis. With a commercial bulk carrier now having passed through the route, discussions about Arctic sovereignty and marine infrastructure have become more than theoretical.

"The Canadian government needs to take a firm stand on shipping via the Northwest passage in order to safeguard the environment and to enforce Canada's sovereignty," James Given, president of the Seafarers' International Union of Canada, said Wednesday in an e-mail. "There must be a net benefit to Canada, and Canadian stakeholders in the shipping industry, not just an open door to Flag of

Convenience Shipping to increase their profit margins by shaving miles off their shipping routes.”

The SIU represents sailors working in Canadian waters and on vessels delivering cargo to the United States, Europe and South America. By sailing through the Northwest Passage, the **Nordic Orion** was able to trim about 1,000 nautical miles from the usual route through the Panama Canal. It was also able to carry about 25 per cent more coal, given how shallow the canal is.

Transport Canada, along with the Canadian Coast Guard, monitored the vessel while it was in the Northwest Passage, and the ship was required to provide daily position and ice conditions to Nordreg, a Coast Guard agency.

The **Nordic Orion** is owned by Nordic Bulk Carriers, a Danish company that has staked its future on Arctic shipping. In 2010, it became the first non-Russian company to use the Northern Route when it shipped iron ore from Norway to China.

This is the first time the company has sent one of its vessels through the Northwest Passage. It left Vancouver on Sept. 6, loaded with metallurgical coal. Port Metro Vancouver says the **Nordic Orion** loaded at Neptune Terminals, which is partly owned by Vancouver-based Teck Corp., one of the world’s biggest producers of metallurgical coal. Metallurgical coal is used primarily in steel making, while thermal coal is used in electricity plants.

Neither Neptune Terminals nor Teck would comment on the sailing, citing customer confidentiality, and Teck said it does not use the Northwest Passage. But shipping agents say most coal is sold on a “freight on board” basis, which means that the customer takes ownership of the product as soon as it is loaded on the ship, and that Teck would not monitor or even necessarily know which route the coal would take to its final destination.

While shipping agents in Vancouver and around the world are mulling potential implications for shipping commodities, others have voiced concerns about the lack of environmental and safety infrastructure in Canada’s North. In a recent article, Michael Byers, an international law expert at the University of British Columbia, noted that Canada does not have a single port along the Northwest Passage but that Russia, by comparison, has 16 deep water ports along its Arctic coastline.

Source : The Globe and Mail

However the **Manhattan** made this arctic voyage in 1969; although very much under “trial conditions”. When the 115,000 deadweight ton tanker departed Delaware Bay in August 1969, she was setting out on a voyage of discovery that would test the viability of modern technology in the most inhospitable of marine environments.

A major oil find at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's northern coastline in 1968 begged the question - “What is the optimum route for getting this oil to market -

pipeline or tankers?" As the US East Coast was the likely destination, consideration was given to the use of icebreaking tankers to carry crude oil from Prudhoe Bay on a 4,400-mile journey through the Northwest Passage to the New York/Philadelphia area. A little less than half this distance would be through ice cover. Because there was no previous experience of such voyages and model simulation would be impossible, it was decided that the only way to test the feasibility of year round tanker transportation through the high Arctic at approximately 76° north latitude was to conduct a major experiment with a large ship in ice.

Exxon provided the primary financial backing for the project, with BP and Arco, two of the oil company's North Slope partners, supplying additional funding, and the **Manhattan** was taken on charter. At the time, she was the only twin-propeller tanker of over 100,000 dwt in service and the ship's short cargo tank lengths and Class C steel deck and upper hull plating were deemed especially suitable for the experiment. Nevertheless, extensive modification work would be necessary to prepare the vessel for Arctic service, including strengthening the hull, installing an icebreaker bow and beefing up the propellers and rudder, as well as their support and protective arrangements. With Exxon as the project leader and ship operator, Sun Shipbuilding of Chester, Pennsylvania was chosen to coordinate the work of several US shipyards on the seven-month conversion, and 10,000 tonnes of steel were ordered to augment the ship's hull. The hull reinforcement featured the provision of an ice belt in way of the ship's waterline and a double hull structure to protect the engine, boiler room and steering gear areas.

When **Manhattan** departed on her epic voyage, 126 people were onboard, comprising crew, engineers, scientists, US Congressmen, Canadian Members of Parliament and media, and her tanks were full of water to simulate a laden voyage. As she approached the ice fields, the tanker was joined by two icebreakers, one Canadian and one American. Initially, the ice was new, brackish with salt and weak, but it wasn't long before hard-set floes of second- year ice, with the salt leached out and refrozen following the summer melt, was encountered. **Manhattan** was able to maintain speed in ice up to 4 feet thick, but ice of uniform thickness on the route was rare. For the most part the ship had to deal with second-year ice, characterised by ridges and blocks of ice extending sometimes as much as 50 feet below the waterline, for which ramming was necessary. The **Manhattan** experiment - termed the world's biggest ship model test - cost \$54 million to carry out (about \$250 million in today's money). A return voyage was made to further study the ship's capabilities in ice, and the results of both voyages were utilised in a model basin testing programme that considered the feasibility of icebreaking tankers of up to 300,000 dwt. The tests showed that such tankers would require propulsive power four to five times greater than that required for a conventional tanker. Furthermore,

the entire hull structure of such ships would need to be constructed of low-temperature steels able to withstand the effects of an Arctic winter without becoming brittle. “**Manhattan's** two Arctic voyages were highly successful in providing valuable data on the performance of large ships in ice and showed that the operation of icebreaking tankers was a technically and commercially feasible option,” comments William O (Bill) Gray, Exxon's manager for the Manhattan project and now a maritime industry consultant.

In October 1970 the oil companies decided that the pipeline alternatives represented the optimum route for Alaskan North Slope oil and the tanker studies were suspended. “In view of current discussions on the viability of the Northern Sea Route in the Russian Arctic to halve the distance between Europe and Asia, the **Manhattan** voyages have relevance today,” points out Bill Gray. “While such a route is not an option for voyages that start and finish in ice free waters, I believe that under the right circumstances icebreaking tankers could be competitive for exploiting large oil or gas fields situated in the Arctic polar region.” **Manhattan** was built in the US for the Greek shipowner Niarchos and, on her delivery in January 1962, she was the largest ship afloat. This distinction lasted five weeks before the next ship on the world's busy tanker production line at the time usurped the role. Sailing with a 45-man crew, **Manhattan** was employed primarily carrying gasoline on US domestic routes and in the grain export trades in the 1960s. Following her Arctic adventure, the ship returned to the grain trades for several years, before an ironic twist of fate brought her back to Alaska in 1977. This time it was southern Alaska, however, as she loaded North Slope oil that had been piped across Alaska to Valdez for transport to US West Coast refineries. The tanker's working life drew to premature close in 1987 when a typhoon drove her aground in the Far East and she was subsequently scrapped. **Manhattan** sported her distinctive icebreaker bow until the very end. Source : The tanker newsletter / Auke Visser's International Esso Tankers site

## Lesson

A young engineer was leaving the office one evening when he found his boss standing in front of a shredder with a piece of paper in his hand.

'Listen,' said the boss. 'This is a very sensitive and important document and my secretary is not here. Can you make this thing work?'

'Certainly,' said the young engineer. He turned on the machine, inserted the paper and pressed the start button.

'Excellent, excellent!' said the boss as his paper disappeared inside the machine. 'I just need one copy.'

Lesson: never ever assume that your boss knows what he's doing.

## The **Monowai** in War Time

By L.N.R.S. Member Brian Smith (N.Z)

Although the **Monowai** retired from the trans-Tasman service in 1960, the name will be long remembered by New Zealand soldiers and sailors of both World Wars. If the Union Steam Ship Company has a shipping Roll of Honour, then the name **Monowai** must occupy a very proud place upon it - one of the first N.Z.E.F troopships in 1914, and an armed merchant cruiser in 1940.

The first **Monowai** had a gross tonnage of 3,433, less than one-third of the present ship of that name.

Six days after the First World War broke out, the **Monowai** and **Moeraki** were chartered by the New Zealand Government, these Union Company ships being the first N.Z.E.F. transports. Sailing from Auckland with a small cruiser escort, they initially carried troops to German Samoa which was occupied without fighting on August 30, 1914.

Six weeks later, the Main Body of the N.Z.E.F. sailed for Egypt in 10 troopships, chartered from four shipping companies. It was an honour for the Union Company that the flagship of this convoy was the **Maunganui**, well known to thousands of trans-Tasman passengers in the days of peace.

Later, two of the company's other passenger liners, **Maheno** and **Marama**, were converted into hospital ships, between them carrying 47,000 New Zealand sick and wounded. While the **Maheno** was evacuating wounded from Anzac in 1915, she had the unusual experience of being frequently struck by spent Turkish bullets fired from the Gallipoli hills.

A total of 100,444 soldiers and nurses served overseas in the 1<sup>st</sup> N.Z.E.F., 61,813 being conveyed in Union Company ships, as well as 45,000 British troops. In addition, more than 10,000 New Zealand horses were transported to theatres of war.

To many of that generation, nostalgic memories will be revived in these eighteen names that flew the U.S.S. Company flag; **Monowai, Moeraki, Maunganui, Tahiti, Limerick, Willochra, Talune, Aparima, Warrimoo, Waitomo, Tofua, Waitemata, Navua, Waihora, Mokoia, Manuka, Maheno, Marama.**

One of the best known and fastest ships, the **Wahine**, indirectly took part in the Gallipoli campaign when she became a despatch vessel in the Mediterranean. Later, she was converted into a minelayer, commissioned in July, 1916, and became H.M.S **Wahine**, performing invaluable war service by laying 11,378 mines in the North Sea. More varied and widespread, with greater ship losses, was the experience of the Union Company during 1939-1945 when their ships transported 874,185 soldiers, sailors and airmen to and from various Allied ports.



ss **Monowai** 1924 - 1960

picture courtesy the author

Of sentimental interest to New Zealanders was the conversion of the **Maunganui** - the Main Body flagship of 1914 -to a hospital ship for 2<sup>nd</sup> N.Z. E. F. sick and wounded. Part of the **Maunganui's** war service was the carrying of British and other Dominion casualties on special voyages, besides the rescue of survivors from ships sunk by the enemy.

In the final months of the war, this grand old ship served in the Pacific, her last wartime duty being a voyage to and from England with convalescent New Zealanders.

Ten of the Union Company's were lost during World War II. First to be sunk by enemy action was the 13,500 ton liner **Niagara**, who ran into a minefield laid in the Hauraki Gulf by the German minelayer, **Orion**.

Although no lives were lost, 2,500,000 pounds in gold nuggets went to the bottom, as well as half New Zealand's stock of ammunition which was being sent to England to help make good that lost during the retreat to Dunkirk.

Incidentally, nearly all the gold was later recovered from the sunken liner, lying 438 feet below surface, in a remarkable salvage operation, graphically described in a book called, "Gold from the Sea."

An irreplaceable loss to the Union Company was the bombing and sinking by enemy aircraft of the **Awatea** while taking part in the North African landings in November, 1942. This six-year-old trans-Tasman express liner was the pride of the company's fleet. She commenced her war service in December, 1939, by carrying from Wellington to Sydney the advance guard of the 2<sup>nd</sup> N.Z.E.F.

Many thousands of British and Dominion servicemen were carried to and from various ports, either alone or in fast convoys, as the **Awatea's** top speed exceeded 22 knots. Her final epic flight in the Mediterranean where she was sunk was officially recognised by the award of 17 decorations to Captain G. B. Morgan and members of her crew.

A quotation from the official account makes proud reading: "The **Awatea** was leaving the anchorage of Bougie (North Africa) when she was attacked by several waves of German bombers. She fought back gallantly with all her anti-aircraft guns, but was hit several times. Badly damaged and heavily on fire, the ship had to be abandoned off Cape Carbon and sank during the night.

"Some of her crew got away in lifeboats and others were taken off by a destroyer. In his report on the loss of his ship, Captain G. B. Morgan said his crew behaved splendidly, standing up bravely to the heavy bombing, and served their guns with the spirit of veterans."

With the retirement of the **Monowai**, it is appropriate that some of her service in the Second World War should be recalled. It began on October 21, 1939, when she was taken over from the Union Steam Ship Company by the Government for conversion to an armed merchant cruiser. She was commissioned as H.M.N.Z.S. **Monowai** on August 30, 1940.

Flying the White Ensign and commanded by Captain H. P. V. McClintock, R.N., she was manned by a largely New Zealand crew. An encounter with a Japanese submarine outside Suva harbour was her first action. Later, for nearly three years, she was engaged on convoy escort duties both in the Pacific and Atlantic.

Then, in preparation for the Allied invasion of Europe, the **Monowai** was converted into an infantry landing ship and on D-Day, landed 1,800 commando troops on the Normandy beaches. She made 45 more voyages across the Channel, carrying a total of 73,000 troops.

This is a brief account of the Union Steam Ship Company's part in providing troop transports, hospital ships and offensive naval vessels in two World Wars. But the casualties were heavy.

Eight ships were sunk by enemy action in the First World War, and ten in the second. Those who served in Union Company ships during those arduous and dangerous years have reason to be proud of their record.



(Founded in 1938)

# THE BULLETIN

Volume 57 No.4, March, 2014



**Nestor**, Ocean's fourth ship at Gravesend in 1868, the year she was built.  
Ocean Archives                      Courtesy National Museums, Liverpool

A Tribute to Caledon Shipbuilders	Captain S. Roscoe	Page	4
Book Review	A. Melling		6
Remember those days....	W A Ogle		7
The Great Venture of our Lives–Part 2	A. Melling		9
Clearing up a Headache	H.M. Hignett		18
The Last Voyage of the <b>Cambrian Hills</b>	J. Richardson		19
The Stad Ship Tunnel	M.N.A. Circular		25
Admiralty Merchant Shipping Instructions	W.G. Williamson		26
Container Shipping: a secretive industry	Rose George		30
When a Freak Wave met the <b>QE2</b>	Captain R.W. Warwick		38
The Larrinaga Mail Steamer <b>Leon</b>	D.K.C. Eccles		41
Leeds – Liverpool Canal (1790)	H.M. Hignett		44



**Maersk Kendal** at Bremerhaven in 2008

Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons  
See page 30



**Cambrian Hills** alongside at Newcastle (N.S.W.)

Courtesy Newcastle Region Library.  
See page 19

# The Liverpool Nautical Research Society



President:  
Mr. William J.Pape II

Vice-Presidents:  
Captain G.Cubbin,  
Mr. H.M.Hignett

Chairman:  
Captain R.Settle

Vice-Chairman:  
Mr. D.C. White

Council:  
I.Duckett (Treasurer), D.K.C.Eccles, D.Littler,  
Dr. E.S.Long, W.A.Ogle (Editor).

Honorary Officers:  
Secretary: J.Stokoe                      Treasurer: B.Groombridge

Web site:                      [www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](http://www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)

Contact details:  
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society  
Maritime Archives and Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Albert Dock  
Liverpool L3 4AQ  
United Kingdom.

[info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org](mailto:info@liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org)



# A Lasting Tribute To Caledon Ship Builders

by LNRS Member Captain Stephen Roscoe

During November 2011, as our cruise ship departed Puerto Chacabuco in Chile, I noticed a beached hulk on our starboard side. Something about its structure stirred my memory of a time long past. The hulk's counter stern, straight stem bow, positioning of a mid-ship mast and a fore-mast. Even though the after mast was down the apparent size of the ship and layout in general terms was vaguely familiar.



**Vina del Mar**

Picture courtesy Daniel Ferreira, Chile

I made a few enquiries of our Chilean Pilot about this abandoned hulk. He informed me the name of the vessel was **Vina del Mar**, a Chilean ship which had been beached there for decades. To his astonishment I informed him I recalled the same ship when she was still in operation, albeit near the end of her sea going days.

With the aid of a lap top computer I was able to show the pilot a photo of her taken at 'Arica' in 1960 during my apprenticeship with The Pacific Steam Navigation Company (PSNC). I recalled a remark made by one of the old hands on my ship, stating **Vina del Mar** had once belonged to PSNC engaged in their coastal service on the West Coast of South America. This remark prompted me to take the photo to show my father, as he had sailed with PSNC during the 1920s. On viewing the photo he verified the same.

Details      **Vina del Mar**: call sign CBVM

Built 1911 as **Andorinha** by Caledon Shipbuilding Co. at Dundee for Yeoward Bros of Liverpool, for their Liverpool – Madeira – Canary island service.

Cost £40,000

Engined by Lilybank Foundry.

Single Screw Triple Expansion; 3cyls: 321 NHP; Steam Pressure: 180lb;

3 single ended boilers, 9 furnaces.

Trial speed off Auchmithie – 13.265 knots.

Passengers 97. Crew 52. Service speed 12 knots. Tonnage: 2,548g 1,422n

l.o.a. 290ft 1in (88.42m) x 41ft 8in (12.7m) x 17ft (5.18m)

In 1917 PSNC acquired **Andorinha** and renamed her **Champerico**. The ship's overall appearance since built had altered little throughout her working life.

**Champerico** was positioned on the coastal passenger cargo service plying the Peruvian and Central American coasts. She remained in PSNC's service until sold to Torres y Ward Cia. of Valparaiso in 1934 and renamed **Vina del Mar**. During this decade she was transferred to the Chilean State Railways. In 1950 their entire fleet was transferred into 'Empresa Maritima del Estado de Chilena', the State Marine. Funnel colours: Buff with a Red Band bisected horizontally with a White Band.

**Vina del Mar** ceased to be classified by Lloyds in 1960. It is believed she went aground July 1963 whilst laid up at Chacubuco. Since then there have been a large number of recorded seismic events in the region of Puerto Aysen and Puerto Chacubuco. On the 21st April 2007 a quake registering 6.2 on the Richter scale lasting roughly 30 seconds struck the region producing major landslides around the Aysen Fjord.

These landslides plunging into the Fjord caused a series of huge waves along the shore line destroying piers, houses and sweeping ten people to their death. Only three bodies were recovered. With Puerto Chacubuco located within this area, it is reasonable to assume the **Vina del Mar** would have been affected in some way by this event. Information to whether it was or wasn't, I cannot confirm. However what clear is having being laid up, abandoned for fifty years in such an extreme, remote and harsh environment, together with its prolific seismic activity the fact she still remains, stands as a fitting tribute/monument to the Caledon Ship Builders of Dundee.

References:      red-duster.co.uk  
Merchant Fleets – Duncan Haws  
Friends of Dundee City Archives  
MercoPress – Revista Geologica de Chile

# Book Review

Submitted by L.N.R.S. Member Tony Melling

Mersey Ferries Through Time: Ian Collard  
2013 – Amberley Publishing  
96 pages – 180 illustrations – paperback  
ISBN 978 1 4456 1333 8 £14.99

Did you know that:

- two Mersey Ferry ships took part in a courageous wartime assault at Zeebrugge in 1918, in which 11 VCs were awarded for bravery?
- the Mersey Ferries once carried over 30 million passengers a year between Liverpool and Wallasey?
- the New Brighton Ferry was founded by an Everton builder in 1830?

These details and many more can be found in this illustrated account of the Mersey Ferries, from its inception in 1150 on behalf of the new Benedictine Priory at Woodside, Birkenhead to the less romantic, more regulated but perhaps even more cherished activities of the present day.

Ian Collard summarises the history of the Birkenhead and Wallasey Ferries in separate chapters, concluding with a final chapter on the years between 1969 and 2012. Each give a brief overview, concentrating on the more accessible detail available of events in the 19th and 20th centuries. To be realistic, 73 of the 96 pages are devoted to mainly photographic images of ferry boats, piers, landing stages and ferry terminals. It should be therefore described as essentially a visual record of a ferry service once crucial to the greater Liverpool transport system, operating on at least four distinct services across the River Mersey.

The high water mark reached in the year ending March 1920, when the combined Seacombe, Egremont and New Brighton Ferries carried 32 million passengers emphasises how important this service has been to the development of both Liverpool and the Wirral Peninsula. The more chastened modern day operations which carry around 600,000 passengers and lose £1 million a year also highlights how Liverpool has changed, with a reduced population and the advent of competing rail and road transport systems.

Those readers searching for a more detailed account of the history of the Mersey Ferries need to look elsewhere. The book is sketchy on the pre-Victorian background (both written and visual) and the images are undated and not presented chronologically. On the other hand, Ian Collard's nostalgic compilation does attempt to recapture the romance of the 'ferries across the Mersey'.

## Remember Those Days .....

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

### January to March, 1974

After refit at Swan Hunter's North Shields yard, the first of the two ex-Cunard liners **Franconia** and **Carmania** left the yard for Southampton under the Russian flag. Now the **Fedor Shalyapin**, the former **Franconia** subsequently sailed for Auckland and Sydney, via the Panama Canal on charter to CTC Lines. **Carmania**, now **Leonid Sobinov**, is due to sail for Australia on February 26. The M.D. of CTC Lines praised the yard for "an amazing job against a very tight schedule.

Undoubtedly the largest ship to fly the British flag is the giant tanker **Globtik London** with a deadweight of 483,939 tons. The ultra large crude carrier (ULCC) has been built at the Kure shipyard of Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries and was launched last June. Her length is 1,220 ft. and beam is 190 ft. Propulsion is by an I.H.I. turbine set developing 45,000 s.h.p. for a service speed of 14.7 knots. Despite her size she carries a crew of only 38.

British Transport Group have decided to take the Clyde paddle steamer **Waverley**, operated by Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd., out of service. She will not be sold to shipbreakers and her owners are prepared to discuss her future with the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society, or any organisation interested in preserving the vessel as a reminder of bygone days on the Clyde.

During August, September and October, 1974 Dowie & Marwood of 18 Water Street Liverpool were offering cruises of 11 – 15 days duration operated by the 17,000 ton **Uganda** of British India Line.

Other "snippets" from the ferry scene include that the state-assisted Orkney companies, the Orkney Shipping Co. Ltd., and Bremner & Co. Ltd. of Stromness, are to merge. Hoverlloyd's Ramsgate – Calais hovercraft service has done well in 1973, with vehicle numbers up by 17% and passengers by 13%. And European Ferries recorded two firsts last year; carrying more than 2 million passengers, and over 500,000 vehicles on their services from Dover and Southampton.

After a great deal of speculation, the container ship **Remuera**, 31,000 tons deadweight, has been handed over by Swan Hunters to the P & O Group. She is described as the world's largest and fastest refrigerated container vessel, and was the subject of much controversy. She is the sole survivor of an order for four ships planned to handle all the containerised cargo between the U.K. and New Zealand. However plans for the replacement of conventional ships by these giant vessels were cancelled.



## January to March, 1994

Better news comes from the Fred Olsen Group who are planning to consolidate and streamline their tanker fleet by forming a new company to control the seven vessels plus two currently being built at Belfast in the yard controlled by them. This move would seem to indicate that at least some shipowners now see a brighter future.

The Queen named the 36,000 dwt tanker **JO Selje** at Glasgow during the autumn, the ship being built for JO Tankers, of Norway, at Kvaerner's Govan yard. She is supposedly the world's most environmentally friendly tanker. Selje means willow in Norwegian and JO Tankers are owned by J.O. Odfjell of Kokstad. A couple of years ago one of the major shipping directories listed a fleet of 17 vessels, most of which were named after trees, often in the English form and prefixed by "JO". Nearly all were chemical tankers built in the 1980s. Two of the Navy's last wooden ships have been decommissioned after 40 years service. H.M.S. **Sheraton** and H.M.S. **Brinton** were built of mahogany but conditions on them were far from luxurious – one mess deck, one shower and two toilets had to be shared by 26 men; but they were said to be ships that had warmth and comradeship. Only two of the class now remain, H.M.S. **Nurton** and H.M.S. **Wilton**. H.M.S. **Sheraton** had a Sheraton Hotel crest on her superstructure despite the conditions being far removed from hotel standards. Not to be outdone by others of the class, H.M.S. **Brinton** was nicknamed the "banana boat" because she carried a giant fibre-glass banana on her bridge front which was donated by Geest in the 1970s as an answer to her sister-ship, H.M.S. **Bronington**, then commanded by Prince Charles, which carried a royal crest.

Until recently not too many people, outside the military, have had the opportunity to experience a trip on a submarine but there is now a passenger carrying submarine available, operating dives out of seven tourist ports. Even those who have sailed on military submarines never had the chance to look out of a view port and watch the undersea world!. The boats are based at Grand Cayman Island and Barbados in the West Indies; Aruba, off the coast of Venezuela; St Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands; Kona and Waikiki in Hawaii; and Guam, between Australia and Japan. The submarines take passengers on tours, both day and night, and average 12 dives a day. The three crew members receive special training from the parent company and are qualified by the regulatory agencies. The vessel is positively buoyant and, in the event of a power failure, would automatically surface. As an additional safety feature, the boats have sufficient life support systems for passengers and crew to stay submerged for up to 72 hours. Having carried over 1 million passengers, the submarines have a perfect safety record. These truly undersea space-craft, 80 tons, 65 feet overall in length, with a beam of 13 feet and draft of 8 feet carry 46 passengers.

# The Great Venture of Our Lives

## Alfred Holt and the Ocean Steam Ship Company

by L.N.R.S. Member Tony Melling

### Part 2: 1853–1869

This second episode on Alfred Holt focuses on his early experiments in ship and engine design, his initial involvement in ship ownership, and his planning for and creation of the Ocean Steam Ship Company. It concludes with the dramatic success of the company in justifying the engineering and commercial principles of its Liverpool owners.

#### The Early Ship Owner

Alfred Holt's growing reputation by 1853 alerted Thomas Ainsworth of Cleator, who was redesigning his small steamer, the **Alpha**. Holt's expertise convinced Ainsworth that a joint venture with additional steamers would be successful. Alfred's father put up half of the capital and the result was the **Dumbarton Youth**, a purpose-built screw steamer with the distinction of being the first to have the famous 'blue funnel' so revered by succeeding mariners. She became so profitable that a second ship, the **Cleator** was built at the Brunswick Dock and was hired to the French government for use in the Crimean War, at "an outrageous rate of pay", as Holt was later to confess<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, these were the standard charter rates offered by governments and the Holts merely accepted what they were given. This spurred the construction of a larger ship, the **Saladin** (535 tons and launched in 1855), but before she was ready peace was declared and government chartering came to an end.



Alfred Holt in 1854, aged 25  
Painted by William Westcott  
Ocean Archives,

Alfred was now in partnership with his younger brother, Philip and they now decided to test both his engineering principles and the profitability of the **Saladin** by putting her into the West Indian trade. Getting a viable cargo for what was traditionally a subsidised route was difficult. Alfred almost gave up the enterprise to pursue a career as a cotton broker in his father's firm, but then he

managed to get a good cargo and a group of emigrants. She reached Jamaica in eighteen days and secured a healthy homeward cargo to return with. As a bonus, survivors from a United States 'man-of-war' boarded at Kingston and paid their passage home, so overall, a very successful first voyage! Alfred and Philip now saw healthy profits in the West Indian Trade and placed contracts with Scott of Greenock for another vessel, the **Plantagenet**. She was built in 1857 and was joined in due course by the **Talisman**, **Askalon** and the **Crusader**<sup>16</sup>. Each vessel proved profitable, but as time went on, it became clear to Holt that his operation was being threatened by greater competition from bigger and better resourced shipping companies. His father had died in 1861, and Alfred must have realised he was much more commercially vulnerable in the face of fearless company rivalry. His cargoes and therefore his profits began to decline, to a point where the trade ceased to be viable. The Holt brothers realised that not only was the West Indian trade saturated, but that all the major Atlantic trade routes were congested with aggressively competitive shipping companies. Making a profit on routes west of the British Isles, unless heavily subsidised, had become impossible, so Alfred Holt sold all his ships (except the **Cleator**) to the West India and Pacific Steamship Company in 1864.

### The East Beckons

The brothers reviewed their finances and commercial prospects and concluded that the most enticing shipping routes lay east of the Cape of Good Hope<sup>17</sup>. By the same token, these routes were also held by the conventional wisdom of seasoned merchants to be the most problematical for steam ships. The issues of engine design and efficiency and overall steam ship profitability had convinced ship owners that the 'China trade' was reserved for the clipper ships. This was reflected by the confidence of Samuel Rathbone at the time: "steamers may occupy the Mediterranean, may tentatively go to Brazil and the River Plate, but China at least is safe for sailing ships."<sup>18</sup> Only by rigorous trials based on good design would Holt overturn this orthodoxy, but this is precisely what he set out to do. The two brothers decided to conduct trials on the **Cleator**, to test Alfred's engineering theories.

Making use of the latest thinking, Alfred came up with a new tandem type compound engine with a single crank (with a small and large cylinder side by side). With other design improvements, he was therefore able to establish a working pressure of 70lb per square inch, instead of the 10lb that was conventional in most other ships of the time. Understandably, this massively increased the engine productivity and fuel efficiency. If this design proved reliable, it would transform the prospects for steam ships over considerable distances. It could enable steamers to compete with sailing ships for the first time on long voyages. By December 1864, the **Cleator** was ready for sea trials

with her new compound steam engine. She sailed along the English coast, to France, and even as far as Archangel and twice to Brazil.

The results of the trials were as spectacular as they were thorough; the new engine achieved a boiler pressure of 60lb per inch, while the fuel consumption dropped by 40 per cent<sup>19</sup>. The engines proved reliable and the designs were conclusively vindicated. This performance convinced Alfred and Philip Holt to plan a new steam ship service to China, “the great venture of our lives”, as Alfred later described it.<sup>20</sup> This was a venture no other ship owner or merchant in Europe had achieved up to this point. The Holts would indeed be making maritime history if they could pull it off. Moreover, they had to move quickly. Alfred Holt must have realised that eventually others would master the technology and marshal the resources to present a stern challenge to their Far East adventure, once the brothers proved what was possible. What had seemed impossible could very soon become commercially enticing to avaricious competitors.

### 'The Most Noteworthy Event of My Life'

Alfred and Philip therefore in 1865 plunged £156,000 investment in three identical steamships of around 2,000 tons each with Scott's of Greenock. The **Agamemnon**, **Ajax** and **Achilles** were completed in 1866; Alfred himself commented after the sea trials of the **Agamemnon** that her coal consumption “as far as I know is not approached by any vessel afloat.”<sup>21</sup> Not only was the compound tandem engine proving a brilliant success; the improved hull design also appeared to be a factor in the new ships' stability and performance. A momentous event had already occurred. On 11 January 1865, the Ocean Steam Ship Company was registered, even before orders were placed for the three new steam ships. Its establishment was viewed by Holt as “the most noteworthy event in my life.”<sup>22</sup> Virtually a year later, Alfred issued his first public circular, inviting merchants to book cargo space on his new steamers, for the forthcoming maiden voyages to China. Although its official operations began on 1 July 1866, the **Agamemnon** had already sailed on 19 April. Her Captain, Isaac Middleton, first met Alfred twelve years before when he had Thomas Ainsworth's **Alpha** under his command. The two men struck up an enduring friendship based on mutual respect and Alfred trusted Middleton more than any other sea captain for his new venture. Middleton stayed with Ocean for



Alfred Holt in middle age  
Ocean archives

the rest of his career.

It is interesting that Alfred Holt chose another Ainsworth feature from 1853: the distinctive blue funnel worn by the **Dumbarton Youth**. From this point, Holts' ships were to be more commonly referred to as 'the Blue Funnel Line'. The very pleasing black top and powder blue funnel was to become a familiar sight in Far Eastern ports for over a hundred years<sup>23</sup>. Equally memorable was the decision to name all Blue Funnel ships from Homer's Odyssey. They likened the great adventures undertaken by these Greek heroes to their own romantic adventures in the Orient; remote, unknown and uncertain. They named their ships after Homeric characters who were, as Alfred himself said, "human, male, and on the whole good"<sup>24</sup>. This is somewhat ironic, when



Isaac Middleton, Captain of the **Agamemnon**. Ocean Archives National Museums, Liverpool

you remember that ships are referred to as 'she'! The Holts were also trying to invest in this new enterprise something of the moral purpose of their Unitarian faith. They expected those they

employed to exercise self-discipline, hard work, restraint, and loyalty to others in their professional duties. Their Unitarian upbringing gave them a sense of personal responsibility in making their enterprise as successful as humanly possible, but it also gave them a sense of social responsibility to others in the way they exercised their wealth and commercial power. In return, they looked to their employees at all levels to live up to the standards set in this new company, to work hard and fulfil their individual potential as part of a bold new pioneering enterprise.

These Unitarian principles were exemplified in the way Alfred Holt oversaw the design and construction of Ocean ships with Scotts of Greenock and Andrew Leslie of Hebburn, Newcastle-on-Tyne. He made repeated visits to the shipyards to check on the build at each stage. He attended to the smallest detail, to drive down running costs, maximise stability at sea and achieve the optimum carrying capacity. Holt ships became famous for their seaworthiness and stability in bad weather. In 1874, Alfred found himself in the ironic situation of opposing new government regulations designed to improve the safe loading of ships, because they laid down a lower standard of safety than those enforced in his own company!<sup>25</sup> This was based on a determination by both brothers to achieve the highest possible standards in naval design, safety considerations and mechanical reliability. Unlike any other shipping line, their vessels were not built to the requirements of Lloyds but to a standard that became known as

‘Holts’ Standard’ or ‘Holts’ Class’. This was the application of principles that evolved over the early years of the company from a partnership of design between the Holts, their own naval architects and their principal shipbuilders. This ‘Holts’ Standard’ was both a conservative and a creative discipline. It strove for excellence, yet always looked for ways of improving hull, engine and machinery design. The great achievement of the Holts was that they implanted these principles in the company to create an esprit de corps, which remained until the Blue Funnel Line ceased to exist in the late twentieth century.

### **Ocean Steam Ship Begins**

The **Agamemnon** left Liverpool on 19th April 1866, the first voyage by an Ocean steamship. She was a square-rigged barque, with sails fitted as a precaution against the possibility of engine problems. **Agamemnon** spent 190 days on the voyage and steamed a total distance of 28,400 miles, calling at Mauritius (to refuel), Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai. She called at the same ports on return, with an additional stop at Foochow to load the tea crop, arriving at London on 26<sup>th</sup> October<sup>26</sup>. It should not be underestimated what an achievement this first voyage signified. **Agamemnon** sailed for 8,500 miles before being able to take on coal at Mauritius, sailing around the Cape to do so. The early years of Blue Funnel, before the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, were truly pioneering ones. Ship owners considered the voyage too long, hazardous and unprofitable.

The freight charges were higher on steam ships than sailing ships because they were more expensive to operate. Competition was still fierce, many believing that the Holts would not be able to make the shipping line profitable. What the Holts hoped for was a commercial advantage derived from a quicker and more reliable voyage for merchants’ cargoes. On the other hand, it was by no means certain they would succeed. The homeward voyages of the new Holt steamers often returned only partially loaded or even empty, before they put in place a reliable network of shipping agents.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was in commercial terms a double-edged sword. It shaved 3000 miles off the voyage and reduced it by around 12 days, with obvious cost benefits. It provided a clear advantage over the sailing ship for the first time, alerting merchants to the attractions of the Blue Funnel Line. It also made it much easier to reach the coal bunkering stations in the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the Suez Canal also encouraged competing ship owners to look again at long distance steam travel. Ocean was now proving that the **Agamemnon**’s maiden voyage time could be dramatically reduced. A fair average time for the round trip to China and back via the Canal



1, INDIA BUILDINGS,

LIVERPOOL, 16th January, 1866.

I beg to inform you that I am about to establish a line of Screw Steamers from Liverpool to China. The first vessel will be the "Agamemnon," Captain MIDDLETON, 1672 tons, nett register, now nearly ready for sea, and intended to sail about the 20th of March. The exact day of sailing will be advertised when I obtain delivery from the builders, but I expect it will not be far from this date.

The "Agamemnon" will be followed by the "Ajax" and "Achilles," similar vessels. The service I propose these vessels to perform is somewhat as follows:—

*Outwards*—To proceed direct to Mauritius, calling there for a few hours only, to land and receive specie, parcels, and passengers only;

Thence to Penang, where the stay will probably be about 36 hours;

„ Singapore, staying about 3 days;

„ Hong Kong, „ 4 „

„ Shanghae, where the voyage will end.

The length of voyage from Liverpool to each of the above ports (including detention in ports) is expected to be:—

To Mauritius .....	39 days.
„ Penang .....	54 „
„ Singapore .....	57 „
„ Hong Kong .....	66 „
„ Shanghae .....	76 „

*Homewards*—The same route will be taken, and in addition, a call of 5 or 6 days will be made at Foo-choo-foo; and the call at Mauritius will be lengthened to about 2 days.

The length of the homeward voyage to England is therefore expected to be (including detention in ports):—

From Shanghae .....	77 days.
„ Foo-choo-foo .....	69 „
„ Hong Kong .....	65 „
„ Singapore .....	57 „
„ Penang .....	54 „
„ Mauritius .....	38 „

Additions to these ports of call may be made from time to time; but if done, care will be taken to avoid any material lengthening of the voyage.

RATES OF FREIGHT—*Outwards*—£6, and 10 per cent. per ton of 40 cubic feet.

„ *Homewards*—The rate will vary according to sailing vessel rates, the intention being to ask a small advance on these.

All the Steamers have been built on the Clyde; they are of full power; and will steam the whole passage, both out and home.

Every precaution which experience suggests has been taken to fit them for the safe conveyance of valuable cargo.

The Captains have all been many years in my employ, and are well accustomed to the care and navigation of Steamers.

Though principally intended for Cargo, each vessel has accommodation for about 40 Cabin Passengers. Cabin Passengers only will be carried.

The rates of Passage Money will be about three-fourths of those charged by the Overland Route.

My hope is to establish a reliable line of Steamers, which will carry Cargo, at moderate rates of freight, both safely and at tolerable speed.

I shall be glad to give any further information.

Yours respectfully,

ALFRED HOLT.

was 55 days out and 60 days on the return leg (a total of 115 days, compared to the **Agamemnon's** 190 days).

Therefore, the Holt brothers knew that much stronger competition for their fledgling shipping line was on the horizon. Their immediate response was to strengthen their service by building five new ships. The **Priam**, **Sarpedon**, **Ulysses**, **Hector** and **Menelaus** all became operational between 1869 and 1871.



Similar in design and tonnage to the first three steam ships, they reflected the growing trade with China. A further four ships, the **Antenor**, **Deucalion**, **Glaucus** and **Patroclus** were added to the fleet between 1872 and 1873<sup>27</sup>. These latter four were a clear recognition by the Holts that a greater share of the cargo trade was moving their way and at the same time they introduced regular weekly sailings to China. The Holts were now at the stage of planning for



An older Alfred Holt enjoys his garden in 1911, shortly before his death.

increased cargoes; in addition, a growing fleet needed cover for repairs and servicing to enable their sailing schedules to be maintained. In 1875 therefore, three new ships were ordered, again of similar design and size to the existing fleet, the **Orestes**, **Stentor** and **Anchises**.<sup>28</sup> At this point in the company's history, the outward leg was limited to mixed cargoes of cotton and woollen goods and returned to London mainly with tea, tin and tobacco<sup>29</sup>. Until the trade with China grew, the Holts had to compete strongly to attract cargo, especially on the outward leg because as yet the Chinese markets had not opened up to European traders. In this regard, shipping agents became crucial to trade with the Far East. They were usually based (in this case) in the Far East and would act as the crucial 'middle man' in a trading transaction. To shipping companies, they were valuable in making sure the trade continued to

flow. In other words, they oiled the machinery of commerce.

In terms of profitability, the company was going from strength to strength. Ocean made profits every year, from almost as soon as the Blue Funnel Line began. From a gross profit of £84,000 in 1869, this steadily grew and in only six years had reached £145,000. Although various annual expenses in these years of around £50,000 had to be deducted, income from other sources also yielded £70,000 a year. When one considers there was also £283,000 in the reserves (a massive figure in those days), then one begins to appreciate how promising the financial prospects for Ocean Steam Ship had become<sup>30</sup>. Ocean's financial independence can be gauged by firstly, its decision to carry all the insurance risk for its ships from 1873. Secondly, through the medium of its Strategic Reserve Fund, it carried the entire risk of the fleet itself. Moreover, the Holts were able to decide on building up the fleet on the basis of future profitability and not on the judgment of outside investors. They had the capital reserves to call on when new ships were needed. Their financial self-sufficiency was indeed very unusual.

## 'The Almost Perfect Performance'

A symbolic achievement of the early Holt ships occurred in 1869, in the battle between sail and steam to see which ships could get the new season's tea crop from China to the London market first. Tea was still the most important homeward cargo from China. Up to this point, the popular wisdom held that the romantic 'tea clippers' would outrun the new steamers on the home leg. The merchants were convinced the clippers would win and paid them a premium cargo rate to do so. These meant handsome profits if they put the new crop in the hands of London merchants first. The results were as remarkable as they were surprising. **Agamemnon** made the passage in 77 days from Hankow, 8 days quicker than the clipper **Earl King**, which carried less than half the steamer's cargo. **Achilles** completed the passage between Foochow and London in 62 days, leaving China on 16 July 1869. The clipper



Ocean Steam Ship's **Cyclops** II, built 1906, in the River Mersey.  
Courtesy National Museums, Liverpool

ship **West Indian** sailed from Foochow 8 days before the **Achilles**, but arrived in London 8 days after her, on 24 September 1869. To rub salt in the wound, **Achilles** brought home nearly twice as much of the new crop in her holds than her clipper competitor<sup>31</sup>. The Blue Funnel ships alone had conclusively answered Rathbone's contention in the early 1860's, that "China is safe for sailing ships"!

Alfred Holt was ecstatic. He wrote on 13 October 1869, "a very great pride and pleasure to me this year has been the almost perfect performance of four of our China steamers with new tea."<sup>32</sup> The days of the tea clipper were numbered and Alfred Holt's steam ships, more than any other, helped to convince the merchant community to look to this new form of marine technology.

By the time of his death, Alfred Holt had established his place in British maritime history by establishing a successful shipping line which maintained high standards of reliability and service. But to him, the crowning achievement was the fleet itself. Shortly before his death, he is thought to have reflected that he would be able to account to God as the fruits of his life's work thus: "These are my ships."<sup>33</sup>

## References

- 15 AH Autobiography (n. 9 above), p.29
- 16 Ibid., p.33– p.34
- 17 Ibid., p. 45
- 18 Ibid., p.46
- 19 Ibid., p.47
- 20 Ibid., p.48
- 21 Alfred Holt, Diary, Book A, Papers of Alfred Holt, 920, HOL/2/52, Liverpool Central Library, 24–31 March 1866.
- 22 AH Autobiography (n.15 above), p.49
- 23 Ibid., p.26
- 24 Smith, Crosbie; Higginson, Ian; and Wolstenholme, Phillip, *The Moral Economy of the Ocean Steamship*, Society for the History of Technology, 2003, p.447.
- 25 Evidence given by Mr. Alfred Holt before the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships, May 1874, Final Report of Commissioners: Vol. II, Minutes of Evidence and Appendix 1874, Cd. 1027–1, p.328.
- 26 Alfred Holt, Diary, (n.21 above), 24th/25th October, 1866.
- 27 Falkus, Malcolm, *The Blue Funnel Legend*, London, MacMillan, 1990, pp.101–109.
- 28 Hyde, F.E., (n.12 above), p.25
- 29 Ibid., p.27
- 30 Ibid., p.37
- 31 Ibid., pp.38–39
- 32 Alfred Holt, Diary, (n.26 above), 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1869.
- 33 Le Fleming, H. M., *Ships of the Blue Funnel Line*, Southampton, 1961

# Clearing up a Headache

Submitted by Society Member Harry Hignett

The **Northern Star** had just left Tahiti bound for Fiji, which were calls on her “Round the World” voyage. Some of the crew had been able to enjoy a run ashore and returned somewhat worse for drink. One, a steward, decided to go up to the top deck and have a swim in the bathing pool against all rules. In fact the swimming pool would be filled the following day.

Therefore the steward dived in to a dry pool, and was immediately dragged out and taken to the ship’s hospital with a lump on his head. The ship’s surgeon ( a consultant eye surgeon before retiring to take up work on **Northern Star**), kept a strict watch on the steward’s injury. Thirty-six hours later he saw in the patient’s eyes a deterioration indicating increased pressure on the brain. It was necessary for an operation to relieve the pressure, however there was at least a day’s steaming to reach a hospital where the operation could be made.

The surgeon decided that he should relieve the pressure and cast around for a suitable drill. The carpenter did not have a suitable drill. The surgeon then approached the chief engineer who pointed out that the engine-room drill was too heavy, awkward and not necessarily the cleanest. However the latter suggested that the chief electrician had bought a light electric drill for his own use at home a week earlier at Los Angeles. When approached the electrician still had the drill unopened in its original sealed plastic wrapping and, in addition, had a separate packet of drill bits, willingly offering the drill for the operation. The surgeon promptly took up the offer and in a couple hours was able to relieve the pressure saving the steward from a dire fate. The latter was left in Auckland a couple of days later.

The **Northern Star** arrived at Southampton six weeks later and the news of the incident brought a number of national newspaper reporters to meet the ship and interview the surgeon. They gathered at the end of the passenger gangway anticipating the disembarkation of the surgeon, but they did not notice him slipping quietly ashore via the crew’s gangway.

## THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

March	Mondays	3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st
April		7th, 14th, 28th
May		12th, 19th,

# The Last Voyage of the **Cambrian Hills**

by L.N.R.S. Member John Richardson

This story was written by GCA Archer who joined the ship in 1904 as an apprentice.

The **Cambrian Hills** was an 1882 product of A Rodger & Co of Port Glasgow and was a three masted full rigged ship of 1,700 gross and 1,632 nett tons. With a length of 261 feet and a beam of 38 feet, she could carry 3,500 tons; the vessel was owned by William Thomas and registered at Liverpool. The ship had pleasing lines in carrying double t'gallants on the fore and main, with just single t'gallant on the mizzen, and all were nicely proportioned. The three courses clewed up to the quarters, and when all her canvas had a harbour stow she had a distinctive appearance. Indeed, she looked a really smart ship.

The vessel was at the time under the command of Captain W Williams, and with him he had Mr JH Owen as mate, Mr EL Phillips as second mate, and the senior apprentice Mr EH Humphreys as third mate. Then there was the carpenter, cook, steward, 14 ABs, and four apprentices making a full complement of 25 hands. The voyage began at Newport with a full cargo of coal, and she left on the evening tide on 16 May 1904 bound for Caleta Coloso. I was a first trip apprentice, and having joined a few days earlier had arrived with new kit and a few hopeful illusions. However, the latter was soon to be rudely shattered in a very short space of time! The half-deck with its four bunks was situated under the poop-deck, forward on the starboard side. Its occupants were Hutchinson a third tripper, Roberts a second tripper and then Malcolm and I who were the green horns. Because Mr Humphreys was the senior apprentice he was acting as the third mate and dined in the saloon. The passage out was made in 85 days, and this was considered as being a good run in mid winter. There was only one event of note that I can remember, and this occurred on the outward passage some days after rounding 'Cape Stiff.'

We were bowling along at 10 knots with a strong wind on the port quarter, and because the ship was making a good northing she had already reached the warmer climes. The lookout was relieved at 5 a.m. in order to make some coffee for himself but when he returned to the foc'sle head his relief was absent. He immediately raised the alarm but after a hasty search of the ship there was no sign of him. The second mate who was on watch called the master, he in turn decided nothing in the circumstances could be done for any rescue attempt; this was due to the time which had elapsed since the man's disappearance, the speed of the ship, and the fact that it was dark. The missing AB was a middle aged Briton of secluded nature; he held himself aloof from any sing-songs or other simple amusements such as we had. The general opinion

was he'd deliberately gone overboard in a fit of depression; this was when all except the second mate and helmsman were at coffee; I was on watch at the time. However, this sad event had an impression on all of us, for whatever his temperament he was still one of us.

Arriving at Caleta Coloso we dropped anchor at 1.40 pm on 9 August 1904 where there were three other vessels already at their moorings, the German **Reinbeck**, **AD Bordes** of Chile, and the Italian **Principessa Napola**. After having discharged part of the cargo by basket, we left on Saturday 17 September 1904 for Iquique. There was enough of the cargo left in the ship as stiffening and did not therefore necessitate the sending down of the royal yards. The day before we left a kedge anchor was run out; then on sailing day, we were able to heave the ship around after the bower anchor had been raised, we then stood off in the breeze. At 9 pm in the dark, on Monday September 19, we dropped anchor at Iquique. The next morning was a real eye-opener for me, for here were dozens of ships all laid in tiers and in all sorts of trim. Amongst the tiered vessels were two of William Thomas's ships, the four masted barques **Crocodile** and the **Kate Thomas**. To our dismay we were told that the remainder of the coal had to be discharged in bags, this was not fun, as the ones who had to do it were well aware.

By the Tuesday we'd moved onto the pier, and in due course took on nitrate stiffening. We finished our discharging, and by Friday November 22 our loading was complete. The loading had been stretched out over two months, and this was apparently the normal thing. On the evening of November 26, we hoisted our Southern Cross lights, cheered the ships in port, and then went aft for our grog. We then turned in full of anticipation for the homeward passage. On Sunday November 26, we sailed for Le Havre, with a full cargo of nitrates for the government of France.

After we'd rounded the Horn and were washing down the decks in the Atlantic, a knife fight between two ABs occurred. The gladiators were Julius, a big heavily built Finn with a huge smile, and a man who was quite a power when hauling on a rope. He was a general favourite with all except for his watch mate Scottie; a small wiry man of uncertain temperament. These two had been at loggerheads for quite some time, and the culmination of it all came on this particular morning. After a heated argument and a tussle between the two, and before anyone could intervene, Scottie drew his knife and aimed a blow at the abdomen of Julius. Fortunately, the big Finn spun around resulting in the blade entering his buttock making a deep wound. Scottie was overpowered; the wounded sailor who was bleeding profusely was bandaged up. Julius was then laid up, his mattress and blankets were brought to the upper sail locker, and there he remained until he was able to resume his duties. Previous to this incident, Scottie had been noted grinding his knife to a fine point; this may or

may not have been for the premeditated purpose of a duel with Julius. Nevertheless, that was generally believed to be the case.

In the performance of their duties sailors have to carry knives, but there has never been a reason for those knives to be sharpened to a point. Indeed, and except for the galley, there is no task on any ship that requires a point to be on any sailor's knife. Therefore, it was common practice on ships for the first mate to occasionally inspect the sailor's knives, and if any of them are found sharpened to a point he would promptly break the end off.

Scottie was of much smaller stature and of a physical disadvantage to Julius. What the outcome of this affair was after our arrival home I cannot say, because other events which supervened put this affair completely in the background as it were. I went to another ship and never met any of my shipmates again to discuss the incident.

Drawing into the northern latitudes in late February 1905, some spells of bad weather were experienced; in one stiff blow when on the port tack we lost our longboat. By early March we were nearing the English Channel, and everybody was looking forward to the ship's arrival at Le Havre. The heavy weather continued, and the cloud which obscured the sun made Captain Williams an anxious man.

On the night of Wednesday March 8, when 101 days out, we were hove to under storm canvas – three lower topsails, a foresail, and a fore topmast staysail; at the time, there was a SW gale blowing with thick rainy weather. At 4 a.m. on the 9th the foresail was furled, then during the 4 – 8 watch, the wind veered to WNW. Still blowing hard, it gave better visibility except for when the hail storms descended upon us.

At 8 am when in 50° 42'N and 7° 17'W, the master decided to square away and run for his projected course; all hands were kept on deck. The helm was put up, and the mizzen yards checked in a little, but quite strangely, the ship refused to pay off. The foresail was then loosened with still no reply. It was at this stage that the master decided to wait awhile. The mizzen yards were braced up again, the wheel relieved, and the second mate's watch went below. My watch mate Hutchinson and I had a breakfast of coffee and biscuits, and as it was 'vittles day' we had nothing else and turned in.

When nicely under the blankets another squall came down; however after it had passed over the increased list seemed to remain although it was hard to define; owing to the ship's labouring, she certainly wasn't behaving normally. Soon after I heard a lot of commotion in the upper sail locker which adjoined the half-deck; a hatchway situated there gave access to the 'tween deck. The noise of feet clambering down the iron ladder was followed a minute later, by the same feet making a most hurried return. A few moments later a shrill whistle was followed by the cry



“All hands on deck ... take to the boats ... abandon ship!”

Hutchinson and I were dumbfounded, startled or not we quickly tumbled out of our nice warm bunks and especially on hearing the word ‘boats.’ We found in our hurried dressing that the list was something of a hindrance. Then when we arrived on deck, we discovered that the lee rail was tending to become awash with the lee scuppers well flooded through the freeing ports. It later transpired that Captain Williams had gone into the hold, only to find with horror and amazement, about five feet of water in the lee bilge; hence the hurried steps we’d heard.

The mate’s watch attempted to get the lifeboat away from atop the forward deck house on the starboard side; in doing so they used the fore t’gallant halyards. This proved too much for their powers and with the rolling of the ship the boat smashed up against the deckhouse. During this operation a young Negro AB named West, suffered severe facial injuries. The only boats now remaining were the two on the skids and the gig. By this time the boat falls had been cleared from their sea stow and the lifeboat made ready for hoisting; the port watch then came from forward to assist. Captain Williams took charge of the boat’s launch, whilst the first and second mates and two ABs busied themselves with the gig on the other side which wasn’t too much bother.

The lee rail was now awash, and the water was right up to the hatches. The ship was clearly doomed! The launching of the lifeboat proved to be a heavy task, the overriding factor was that no risks whatsoever could be taken. Indeed, getting the davits and boat swung out against the increasing list was only achieved by a group of desperate men. In being lowered, the boats had to be eased from off the ship’s side with the oars and capstan bars, and four ABs went into the boat for this purpose. The steward then hurriedly threw tinned corned beef and biscuits wrapped in the cabin table cloth into the bottom of the boat, this was as the boat was being lowered on its falls.

Considerable excitement and consternation reigned during this hazardous operation. Here was our last seaworthy boat in the process of being launched, down the weather side of a heavily listing rolling ship.... and, into a big sea! By skillful management and much shouting to boot, the boat was successfully floated and the falls cast off, she was then manoeuvred around to the stern. No risk was taken to bring the boat alongside again; the end of the lee main brace was passed over to the boat’s crew and they hung her off over the lee quarter. With four men in the gig and four in the lifeboat, the remaining 16 of us had to go hand over hand along the lee brace to make the lifeboat, each of us receiving a good ducking.

I remember well casting off my sea-boots for the passage down the rope, then the rise and fall of the sea as it jerked the rope from my hand. I found

myself floundering and scared. However, the boat surged towards me and I was hooked and pulled aboard to safety though thoroughly cold and wet. One by one the remaining crew members came along the rope with varying fortunes, until the last man Captain Williams came aboard as cold and as wet as the rest of us. The gig then came towards us as they had no provisions, so we threw them some of our corned beef and biscuits, they then made their way to leeward. No time was lost; we cast off and ran carefully some way down the lee side of the heavily listing ship.

The captain then headed the boat clear. I can't remember whether or not we streamed a sea anchor; the time was now about 10 a.m. Nobody had saved anything except himself; all we had was what we stood up in, and those who'd received a good soaking shivered in the cold. The boat was leaking, and to bale her out two tins of corned beef were opened and their contents passed around; the hard tack biscuits had become wet, although at this time there was no need for them. About 20 minutes after we'd cast off, the **Cambrian Hills** heeled over, and slowly went down broadside on. As the sea lifted us on each swell we watched this calamitous spectacle. The lower yards dipped first, and so on in turn until they reached the lower topsail yards which were set and soon to disappear. Then there was an explosion, and debris flew into the air and dropped. It was the end of the **Cambrian Hills**. A sad sight if one thinks back to just a couple of hours previously when the ship was sailing along quite normally. Now our home had vanished before our eyes, and even the strongest nerved amongst us must have felt we wouldn't last long if help didn't come quickly. The poor Negro Mr West moaned in agony at his injuries in a manner now hard to express. We were cold and wet with bitter wind and hail squalls as well as the heavy seas that pounded our overcrowded deeply laden boat. Some little time elapsed before someone cried out. "Ship Ahoy!" Those in the gig must have also sighted her because they'd hoisted a flag bent on to on an oar, and then ran off to leeward towards the approaching vessel. The sombre silence then changed to a cheer that gave vent to our feelings. As she made slow headway into the heavy seas it took about an hour before the sighted ship reached us when we found it was the Elders and Fyffe steamer **Oracabessa**. Luckily and on a clear horizon, she'd spotted the last moments of the **Cambrian Hills** as she sank and then made her way towards us. The gig's crew were the first to be picked up, and then after the steamer had placed herself to windward of us we went alongside her. The rescuer's ropes were cast towards us, and willing hands secured our boat alongside, then when we climbed their pilot and Jacob's Ladders, they helped us aboard. Some of our chaps who were suffering cramp had to be hauled aboard whilst the rest of us struggled up the ladders. As each of us climbed over the rail we were given a stiff tot of brandy; mine gave me quite a kick, however it didn't stop me from shivering. When we were

all aboard the boats were cast adrift and the Banana Boat turned around and steamed towards Queenstown in Ireland to land us.

Aboard the **Oracabessa** every kindness was shown and the crew even gave up their bunks for us. Most of us turned in while our clothes were being dried in the stokehold. It took me a long time to get rid of the shivers, even when I was in a nice warm bunk in an equally warm foc'sle. Such needs of clothing as we had came from the ship's slop chest and some members of the crew. I was given a pair of boots by someone and these were all I needed. At about 11 p.m. on the same day, the **Oracabessa** made the entrance of Queenstown harbour; then somewhere off Roche point we were transferred to the sailing pilot cutter **Maid of Erin**. When we were all aboard we gave three cheers to our rescuers, the steamer then resumed her passage.

The 3002 nett ton SS **Oracabessa** had been built as the **Carlisle City** in 1903 for Furness Withy before being sold to Elders & Fyffe. Sold to W. Garthwaite and registered in Hartlepool she retained her name until sold in 1916 to Sociadad Anon Martinelli of Rio de Janeiro and renamed **Belem** in 1925. Sold to Lloyd National, Martinelli with the same name but scrapped in 1932

The pilot cutter tacked her way up the harbour and during which time I was below relishing the hot coffee that was on offer and the luxury of milk in it as well as bloaters and best butter on bread. Those who'd been on the old ration scale of provisions were able to appreciate our great gusto at this sample of shore grub. The pilots were just as helpful and obliging as the crew from the banana boat and did all they could. In the early hours of Friday morning we were all landed and taken to the Sailor's Home. We must have been a queer looking lot in all our different rigs as we disembarked from the pilot boat.

At the Sailor's Home they were awaiting our arrival and we were given beds without any fuss. Captain Williams and Mr Owen went to Liverpool soon afterwards and on the following day the rest of us left for Cork on the 4 pm train. There we boarded the steamer **Kenmare** and after a miserable passage across the Irish Sea arrived at Liverpool on the Sunday afternoon. We were met and taken to the Sailor's Home in Canning Place where previous arrangements had also been made to receive us. A day or so later I went home.

At Solva and Newgate in St. Brides Bay, Pembrokeshire, wreckage from the **Cambrian Hills** was later washed ashore. Amongst the items recovered were our lifeboat, several spars, and part of the chartroom with the bell bearing the name **Cambrian Hills** still attached. At the Board of Trade inquiry regarding the cause of the foundering, the master and crew were absolved from all blame. The **Cambrian Hills** was deemed to have been entirely seaworthy and properly found when she'd left Iquique. The most likely cause of her loss being she'd sprung a leak due to the constant heavy weather.

# Stad Ship Tunnel

M.N.A. Circular

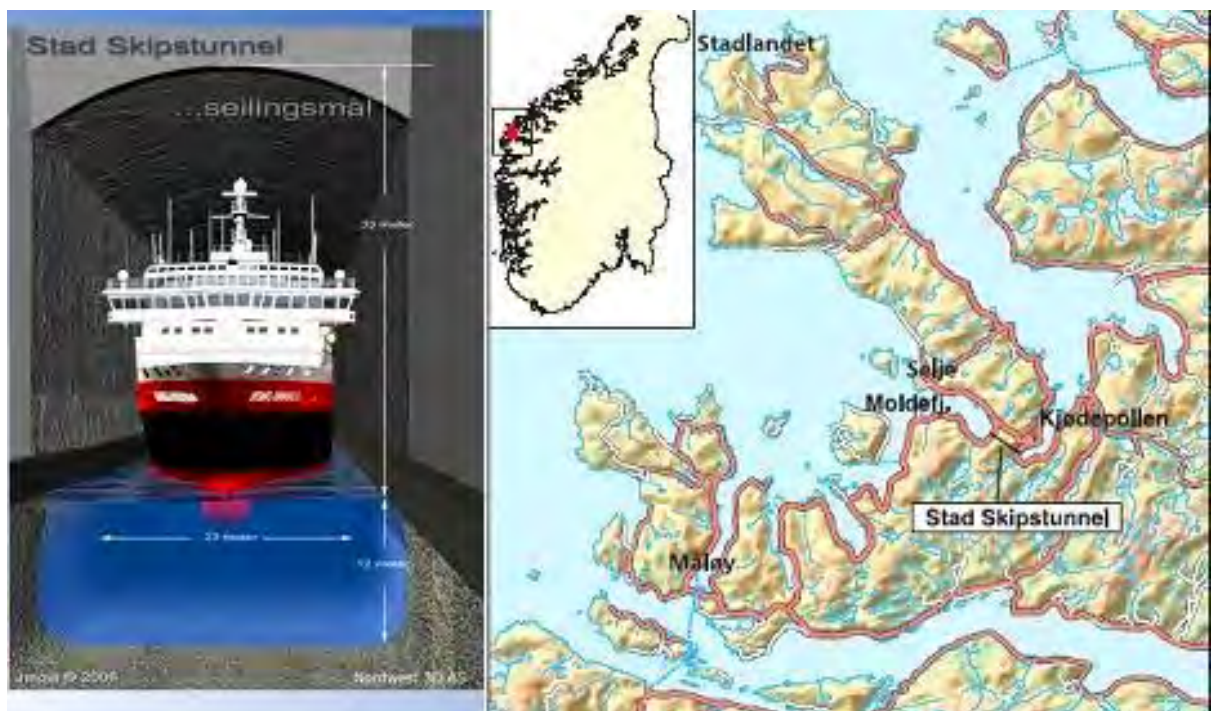
The First Ship Tunnel in the World The Stad Ship Tunnel is a proposed ship tunnel that would bypass the Stad Peninsula in Selje, Norway – one of the most exposed and dangerous areas for ships along the coast of Norway.

The western coast of Norway is dangerous for ship traffic and the proposed ship tunnel aims at making the journey much safer and quicker.

According to the reports, the Norwegian Government has backed the plan for construction the Stad Ship tunnel. Once made, the one-of-its-kind channel will be the First Ship Tunnel in the World. According to the Norwegian Government, the ship tunnel would reduce accident risks and improve the condition of sailors sailing in the region. The ambitious proposed ship tunnel would be 49 m high, 36 meter wide, and 1700 m in length.

It is expected that the project will cost approximately 1.7 billion NKR (\$290 million) and may start by 2018 if everything falls into place. The 12 meters deep tunnel when made will boost safety of ships by reducing the effects of weather and would run through solid rock.

Source – Marine Insight



# Admiralty Merchant Shipping Instructions (AMSI)

Guard Book for 1944

by L.N.R.S. Member W.G. Williamson

In June 1939 the Admiralty Trade Division established the Defensively Equipped Merchant Ship (DEMS) organisation and in the first six months of the Second World War some 1,900 ships had been equipped with defensive armaments. By the end of 1940 this had increased to 3,400 vessels.

A variety of armaments were fitted to merchant vessels, typically a 4" deck gun at the stern. Guns were mounted as either low angle (LA) or high angle (HA). LA weapons were for use against surfaced U-boats or surface raiders and HA weapons for anti-aircraft use. Various less conventional weapons involving rockets and other projectiles could also be found on board merchant ships.

Royal Navy, Royal Marine or Army personnel, generally gunnery specialists, maintained, loaded and fired these weapons, backed up of course by members of the merchant ships crews. Collectively they were known as DEMS or DEMS gunners and they had their own organisation ashore within the Admiralty to look after their interests and requirements. As part of the overall remit to deal with all aspects of merchant ship defence the Admiralty issued weekly instructions for DEMS people.

Copies of some of these instructions are available in the Maritime Museum Library and they make for interesting reading. It is worth noting that the instructions were marked RESTRICTED for official use only. They contained an indication that, "these instructions are to be communicated to Officers and DEMS Ratings, who should always be permitted to refer to them as requisite"

The instructions cover a wide range of subject matter and after nearly seventy years it offers insights into how gunnery duties were carried out on MN ships. A separate booklet called Admiralty Merchant-Ship Defence Instructions (ADMI) of May 1944 forms part of the instructions. This ADMI has nine chapters and this gives a flavour of the range of topics discussed, as listed below:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Chapter 1. | Defence against U-boats, Raiders and E-boats      |
| Chapter 2. | Defence against aircraft including balloons       |
| Chapter 3. | DEMS Organisation, Personnel and Victualling      |
| Chapter 4. | Training, Practices and Tests                     |
| Chapter 5. | Armament, Ammunition and Stores (including smoke) |
| Chapter 6. | Care and maintenance of Defensive Equipment       |
| Chapter 7. | Mine Defence – Degaussing and Paravanes           |
| Chapter 8. | Books forms and Reports                           |
| Chapter 9. | Miscellaneous.                                    |

Some extracts from this publication are given below in no particular order. For example, reassurance is given as to the status of merchant ships and the use of weapons for defensive purposes.

- a) To resist capture the Master has the definite right to use his defensive armament
- b) By using force to resist capture a ship does not lose her non-combatant status. There is a distinct difference between the exercise of the right to self-protection and the act of cruising the seas in an armed vessel for the purposes of attacking enemy vessels. A defensively armed merchant vessel must not in any circumstances interfere with or obstruct the free passage of other merchant vessels or fishing craft whether they are friendly, neutral or hostile.

Instructions were also given to Masters as to their responsibilities when acting as Commodore of a convoy:-

To take charge of the convoy or section subject to orders of Senior Officer Escort; He is responsible for its internal organisation, cruising order and conduct at sea, for its safe navigation and its readiness to defend itself if attacked. Other advice offered including when arriving in narrow waters he ends convoy control by the signal "proceed independently."

A rather unusual item concerned the payment of overtime to MN personnel for defence duties, as this extract from AMDI 37 shows.

1. As many members of the MN crew as possible should be detailed to assist manning the defensive equipment and as U-boat and aircraft lookouts.
2. Reports indicate that, when at cruising stations sufficient men are not always detailed owing to the necessity of sometimes having to pay "overtime."
3. Masters should not hesitate to use members of the crew for this reason, as arrangements for the payment of "overtime" have been made with the ship owners and the small cost involved is either,
  - a) borne by the MO WT, or
  - b) taken into account when the rates for hire on the terms of the charter party agreed.

Supply of Revolvers. Revolvers are supplied as follows:

- a) Rescue ships. 2 per vessel
- b) Personnel transport. 2 per vessel
- c) Ships with native crew. 2 per vessel
- d) DEMS Gunnery officers, when embarked (personal issue) 1 per officer.

The revolvers came with a leather holster, webbing and a lanyard that went round the neck so that the pistol was not lost. Each pistol was issued with 60 rounds of ammunition.

A section was headed "Destruction of Enemy Aircraft." This explained that merchant ships were well able to be effective against enemy aircraft if vigorous anti-aircraft fire was maintained. A table showing these successes was shown.

Totals for MN ships and fishing vessels.

	<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
April 1940 to October 1942	97	46	109
October 1942 to October 1943	22	2	6

Sometimes the instructions are written in a rather world weary tone as in under "Preparing to fire" it says, "muzzle covers are always to be removed before firing." Relating to PACs (a rocket propelled projectile), "To prevent danger from the lid flying about when jerked off by the rocket, it is to be secured by a lanyard to one of the handles of the canister."

In relation to security, how about, "Reports of indiscretions on the part of officers and crews of British Merchant ships continue to be received." Advice given included, Do not mention by post, telephone or any other means :-

- Routing instructions
- Convoy arrangements
- Convoy assembly points
- Escorts and movements of HM ships
- Nature of cargo
- Arrival or sailing dates.

Agents of enemy and unfriendly countries are to be found in all neutral ports. They may be passengers on board ship, waiters, bar tenders, **harlots** (my emphasis), casual acquaintances, or they may actually be hidden.

A merchant ships course and position are to be regarded as secret and must not be made known to any person other than the Master, Chief Officer, Officer of the Watch and the W/T operator on watch.

DEMS gunners on "sabotage watch" in port were entitled to the sum of 4 shillings for each completed 8 hours of duty. The cost was borne by the MOWT.

As an ex Radio Officer the section headed, "Shipping casualties – Rescue organisation" was of interest.

- MN officers and men should be made aware of the steps taken to ensure their safety when their ships are damaged or sunk.
- Immediately on receipt of an SOS signal a rescue tug is despatched. To broadcast help was coming and its ETA at the scene might endanger the tug and ruin all chance of salvage. The authority dispatching the tug however indicates that distress is realised by acknowledging the SOS signal.
- When SOS received, all warships in the vicinity are informed and the RAF assist whenever flying conditions permit.
- When available rescue ships are allocated to convoys.

Ships often streamed torpedo nets that must have affected their speed. The effectiveness of using such nets has been questioned but this seems to have been answered by this statement: Net Defences. 70% of ships using nets against torpedo attack were found to be effective.



It is often recorded that recognition given to crews of merchant ships during the war was sparse or even non-existent. It is therefore pleasant to record that a message by Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery and intended for posting on ships notice boards is included in the ADSL. The Field-Marshal is fulsome in his praise of the efforts of Merchant Navy personnel in transporting troops and supplies to the D-Day landings in Normandy. Further, he explicitly states that without the efforts of the MN in continuing to supply the Army with food, fuel and ammunition there would have been significant problems, he writes,

"In addition to the normal risks of war, you have also had to contend with a period of very bad weather, which has at times made the unloading of ships a very hazardous affair. However, knowing the very urgent requirements of the armies ashore, the sailors never failed us; and, owing to their untiring efforts, we have now built up on shore two great armies, with all the immense mass of equipment and supplies which are essential for the modern battle.

For all this we are most grateful. And we would like to express our great admiration for the magnificent work your sailors have done to make our job on land possible. I would be grateful if you would thank them for me, and from every Allied soldier in Normandy.

#### References:

Maritime Archives and Library Information sheet No 71

See file B/Bibby/7/4/10 for more information.

## Nautical Trivia Quiz

1. What is the name of Jordan's main and only port?
2. The capital of Iceland is Reykjavik, where is it on the island?
3. The "Gooney Bird" was first flown in 1930 and only one was made, the evolution of the aircraft, through another three versions was so successful that 11,000 were made between 1939 and 1949, what was its common name in the US and UK?
4. Which Country is the top tea drinking country in the world?
5. What caused the IMO regulations to be amended in 1992?
6. Why is 22nd May celebrated as National Maritime Day in the USA?
7. Brunel's **Great Western**, launched in Bristol, did not have a champagne bottle cracked on her bow, what kind of wine was used?
8. What cloud formations are not observed in Antarctica?

Answers on page ... 39

# Container shipping: the secretive industry

First published in the The Telegraph on September 6, 2013

The world of container shipping is crucial to our everyday existence, yet few people have any idea what happens on the high seas. In an extract from her new book, Rose George delves inside this fascinating and secretive industry

Here I am on a Friday in June, looking up at a giant ship that will carry me from Felixstowe to Singapore, for five weeks and 9,288 nautical miles through the Pillars of Hercules, pirate waters and weather. I stop at the bottom of the ship's gangway, waiting for an escort, stilled and awed by the immensity of this thing, much of her the colour of a summer-day sky, so blue; her bottom painted dull red; her name **Maersk Kendal** written large on her side. Everything in a modern container port is enormous, overwhelming, crushing. Kendal of course, but also the thundering trucks, the giant boxes in many colours, the massive gantry cranes that straddle the quay, reaching up 10 storeys and over to ships that stretch three football pitches in length. There are hardly any humans to be seen.

When the journalist Henry Mayhew visited London's docks in 1849, he found 'decayed and bankrupt master butchers, master bakers, publicans, grocers, old soldiers, old sailors, Polish refugees, broken-down gentlemen, discharged lawyers' clerks, suspended Government clerks, almsmen, pensioners, servants, thieves'.

This terminal is a place where humans are hidden in crane or truck cabs, where everything is clamorous machines. The public is not allowed on this ship, nor even on this dock. There are no ordinary citizens to witness the workings of an industry that is one of the most fundamental to their daily existence. These ships and boxes belong to a business that feeds, clothes, warms and supplies us. They have fuelled if not created globalisation. They are the reason behind your cheap T-shirt and reasonably priced television. But who looks beyond a television now and sees the ship that carried it? Who cares about the men who brought your breakfast cereal through winter storms? How ironic that the more ships have grown in size and consequence, the more their place in our imagination has shrunk.

Nearly everything is transported by sea. Sometimes on trains I play a numbers game. The game is to reckon how many clothes and possessions and how much food has been transported by ship. The beads around the woman's neck; the man's iPhone. Her Sri Lankan-made skirt and blouse; his printed-in-China book. Trade carried by sea has grown fourfold since 1970 and is still growing. In 2011 the 360 commercial ports of America took in goods worth \$1.73 trillion, or 80 times the value of all American trade in 1960.

There are more than 100,000 ships at sea carrying all the solids, liquids and gases that we need to live. Only 6,000 are container vessels like **Kendal**, but they make up for this small proportion by their dizzying capacity. The biggest container ship can carry 15,000 boxes. It can hold 746 million bananas, one for every European, on one ship. If the containers of the Danish company Maersk were lined up, they would stretch 11,000 miles, more than halfway round the planet. If they were stacked instead, they would be 1,500 miles high, 7,530 Eiffel Towers. If **Kendal** discharged her containers on to trucks, the line of traffic would be 60 miles long.

Trade has always travelled and the world has always traded. Ours, though, is the era of extreme interdependence. Hardly any nation is now self-sufficient. In 2011 Britain shipped in half of its gas. Every day 38 million metric tons of crude oil sets off by sea somewhere, although you may not notice it. As in Los Angeles and New York, London has moved its working docks out of the city, away from residents. Ships are bigger now and need deeper harbours, so they call at Newark or Tilbury or Felixstowe, not Liverpool or South Street. Security concerns have hidden ports further, behind barbed wire and badge-wearing and keeping out.

To reach this quayside in Felixstowe, I had to pass through several gatekeepers and passport controllers, and past radiation-detecting gates alarmed by naturally radioactive cargo such as cat litter and broccoli. It is harder to wander into the world of shipping now, so people don't. The chief of the Royal Navy who is known as the First Sea Lord, says we suffer from 'sea blindness'.

We travel by cheap flights, not liners. The sea is a distance to be flown over, a downward backdrop between take-off and landing, a blue expanse that soothes on the moving flight map as the plane jerks over it. It is for leisure and beaches and fish and chips, not for use or work. Perhaps we believe that everything travels by air, or that it does so magically and instantaneously like information (which is actually transmitted by cables on the seabed), not by hefty ships that travel more slowly than pensioners drive. You could trace the flight of the ocean from our consciousness in the pages of great newspapers. Fifty years ago, the shipping news was news. Cargo departures were reported daily.

Now the most necessary business on the planet has mostly been shunted into the pages of specialised trade papers such as Lloyd's List and the Journal of Commerce, fine publications, but out of the reach of most when a subscription to Lloyd's List costs £1,785 a year.

In 1965 shipping was so central to daily life in London that when Winston Churchill's funeral barge left Tower Pier, it embarked in front of dock cranes that dipped their jibs, movingly, out of respect. The cranes are gone now or immobile, garden furniture for wharves that house apartments or indifferent

restaurants. Humans have sent goods by water for at least 4,000 years. In the 15th century BC Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt sent a fleet to the Land of Punt and brought back panther skins and ebony, frankincense and dancing pygmies.

Perhaps Hatshepsut counts as the first shipping tycoon, before the Romans, Phoenicians and Greeks took over. She was the only Egyptian queen who preferred to be called king. Shipping history is full of such treats and treasures. Cardamom, silk, ginger and gold, ivory and saffron. The routes of spice, tea and salt, of amber and incense. There were trade winds, sailor towns and sails, chaos and colour.

Now there are freight routes, turnarounds and boxes and the cool mechanics of modern industry, but there is still intrigue and fortune. There are wealthy tycoons still, Norse, Greek and Danish, belonging to family companies who maintain a privacy that makes a Swiss banker seem verbose. Publicly listed shipping companies are still a minority. Even shipping people admit that their industry is clubby, insular, difficult. In this business it is considered normal that the official Greek ship-owners' association refuses to say how many members it has, because it can.

Maersk is different. It must be, because it is letting me on to its working ship, where no members of the public are allowed. Even Maersk officers are no longer permitted to take family members to sea, because of concerns about their safety from pirates. But Maersk is known for risks, at least in the places where its name is known at all, which is in shipping and Denmark. I find Maersk fascinating. It is the Coca-Cola of freight with none of the fame. Its parent company, AP Møller-Maersk, is the largest company in Denmark, its sales equal to 20 per cent of Denmark's GDP; its ships use more oil than the entire nation. I like the fact that Maersk is not a household name outside the pages of Lloyd's List; I like that Maersk is a first name. It's like a massive global corporation named Derek. For much of its recent history the company was run by Arnold Maersk Mc-Kinney Møller, the son of the founder, a pleasingly eccentric patriarch who stayed working until he died in 2012 aged 98. Møller was known for his firm control of his company; for walking up five flights of stairs to his office (although when he reached 94 he allowed his driver to carry his briefcase up); for being one of only three commoners to receive the Order of the Elephant; and for driving around Copenhagen in a modest car although he was one of the two richest people in Denmark. (The other inherited Lego.)

Reuters, in a profile of Maersk, describes it as 'active primarily in the marine transportation sector'. Behind that 'primarily' are multitudes. Founded in 1904 with one ship named Svendborg, Maersk now operates the largest container shipping company in the world, with a fleet of 600 vessels. It also has the vast and dizzying interests of a global corporation. It is active in 130 countries and has 117,000 employees. It is looking for and drilling for oil and

gas in Denmark, Angola and Kazakhstan. If you have visited Denmark, you have probably shopped in a Maersk-owned supermarket.

You can save in a Maersk-owned bank. The list of its companies and subsidiaries is 12 pages long, double columns. Its revenues in 2011 amounted to \$60.2 billion, only slightly less than Microsoft's. Microsoft provides the software that runs computers; Maersk brings us the computers. One is infamous; somehow the other is mostly invisible.

This is remarkable, given the size of the company's ambition. Maersk is known for its experiments with economies of scale. **Emma Maersk**, its E-class ship (rated according to an internal classification system), was built in 2005, and excited the industry partly because she could carry at least 15,000 containers. Triple-E-class ships, expected in 2014, will carry 18,000, and be able to fit a full-sized American football pitch, an ice-hockey arena and a basketball court in their holds, if they care to. **Emma** was envied by naval architects and engineers, but her arrival in Felixstowe in December 2006 also caught the public imagination. Along with her 150 tons of New Zealand lamb and 138,000 tins of cat food, she carried 12,800 MP3 players, 33,000 cocktail shakers and two million Christmas decorations.

At her most laden, **Kendal** carries 6,188 boring TEUs, or twenty-foot-equivalent units. TEU is a mundane name for something that changed the world, but so is 'the internet'. I watch a crane lifting a TEU into the air, its cables dancing it across on to the ship, thudding it into place, then retracting with serpentine loops. It would be balletic if it weren't for the thuds.

Before containers, transport costs ate as much as 25 per cent of the value of whatever was being shipped. With the extreme efficiencies that intermodality brought, costs were reduced to a pittance. A sweater can now travel 3,000 miles for 2.5 cents; it costs a cent to send a can of beer. Shipping is so cheap that it makes more financial sense for Scottish cod to be sent 10,000 miles to China to be filleted.

I have met well-meaning men and too few women in boardrooms across London and New York who complain about widespread ignorance of shipping. They want a better public image for an industry that in Britain alone employs 634,900 people, contributes £8.45 billion in tax and generates two per cent of the national economy, more than restaurants, take-away food and civil engineering combined, and only just behind the construction industry.

They despair that shipping only emerges with drama and disaster: a cruise ship sinking, or another oil spill and blackened birds. They would like people to know such names as the **Wec Vermeer**, arrived from Leixões and heading for Rotterdam, not just **Exxon Valdez** and **Titanic**. They provide statistics showing how the dark days of oil spills are over. Between 1972 and 1981, there were 223 spills. Over the past decade, there were 63. Each year

'more oil is poured down the drain by car mechanics changing engine oil than is spilt by the world's fleet of oil tankers'.

Yet that invisibility is useful, too. There are few industries as defiantly opaque as this one. Even offshore bankers have not developed a system as intricately elusive as the flag of convenience, where ships can fly the flag of a state that has nothing to do with its owner, cargo, crew or route.

Look at the stern of ships and you will see they name their home ports as Panama City and Monrovia, not Le Havre or Hamburg, though neither crew nor ship will have ever been to Liberia or Panama. To the International Chamber of Shipping, which thinks 'flags of convenience' too pejorative (it prefers the sanitised term 'open registries'), there is 'nothing inherently wrong' with this system. A former US Coast Guard commander preferred to call it 'managed anarchy'. **Kendal** has also 'flagged out' in this way, but to the national registry of the United Kingdom. She flies the Red Ensign, the maritime Union flag. This makes her a rarity. After the Second World War, the great powers in shipping were Britain and America.

In 1961 Britain had 142,462 working seafarers. America owned 1,268 ships. Now British seafarers number about 24,000 and there are fewer than 100 ocean-going American-flagged ships. At a nautical seminar held on a tall ship, a proper old sailing vessel in Glasgow, a tanker captain told the following anecdote, which got laughs, but was sad: when online forms offer him drop-down options to describe his career, he selects 'shipping', and is then given a choice: DHL or TNT?

Two men have descended from **Kendal** to fetch me. They look Asian and exhausted, so they are typical crew (although the captain and chief engineer are British). The benefits of flagging out vary according to registry, but there will always be lower taxes, laxer labour laws and no requirement to pay expensive American or British crews protected by unions and legislation. Now the citizens of rich countries own ships. Greece has the most, then Japan and Germany but they are sailed by the cheap labour of Filipinos, Bangladeshis, Chinese, Indonesians. They are the ones who clean your cruise cabin and work in the engine room, who bring your gas, soy beans, perfumes and medicine. Seafaring can be a good life. And it can go wrong with the speed of a wave. On paper the seas are tightly controlled. The Dutch scholar Grotius's 1609 concept of *mare liberum* still mostly holds: a free sea that belongs to no state but in which each state has some rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is known as the umbrella convention with reason: its 320 articles, excluding annexes, aim to create 'a legal order for the seas and oceans, which will facilitate international communication and promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilisation of their resources, the conservation of their

living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment’.

Nations that ratify it (America has not, disliking its deep-sea-mining regulations) have a right to a 12-mile boundary from their coastline, and also to a 200-mile 'exclusive economic zone'. Beyond that is the high sea. The International Maritime Organization, a UN agency, has passed dozens of regulations since the 1940s to regulate ships, crews and safety, more than most UN agencies. The International Labour Organization looks out for seafarers' rights. There is also an International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which resolves any boundary disputes.

The sea, though, dissolves paper. In practice, the ocean is still the world's wildest place, both because of its fearsome natural danger and because of how easy it is out there to slip out of the boundaries of law and civilisation that seem so firm ashore. Television crime dramas now frequently use ports as a visual shorthand for a place of criminal, suspicious activity. I don't know why they don't just go to sea. If something goes wrong in international waters, there is no police force, no union official to assist. Imagine you have a problem on a ship while you are on that ship. Who do you complain to, when you are employed by a Manila manning agency on a ship owned by an American, flagged by Panama and managed by a Cypriot, in international waters?

Or imagine you are a 19-year-old South African woman named Akhona Geveza, fresh out of maritime college, the first in your family to reach higher education, the household earner and hope. In 2010 you go to sea as an apprentice navigator on a good ship, **Safmarine Kariba**, run by a good company, Safmarine. On 23 June your shipmate reports to your captain that you have been raped by the Ukrainian first officer. He summons you and the officer to his cabin the next day at 11am, as if an alleged rape is a regular human resources matter.

But you don't turn up, because you are already dead in the sea. The Croatian police, whose jurisdiction covered the sea Geveza was found in, concluded she had committed suicide. She had been in a relationship that was 'consensual but rough'. An inquiry by Safmarine also concluded suicide, and found no evidence of harassment or abuse. According to sea law that was all that could be demanded.

Reporters from South Africa's Sunday Times then interviewed other cadets from the same maritime school. They found that two had been made pregnant by senior officers; two male cadets had been raped; and there was a widespread atmosphere of intimidation. A female cadet said embarking on a ship was like being dropped in the middle of a game park. 'When we arrived,' one said, 'we were told that the captain is our god. He can marry you, baptise



you and even bury you without anybody's permission. We were told that the sea is no-man's land and that what happens at sea, stays at sea.'

Other workers and migrants have hard lives. But they have phone lines and internet access, unlike seafarers. They have union representatives, a police force, firefighters, all the safety nets of society. Only 12 per cent of a ship's crew have freely available internet access at sea. Two-thirds have no access at all. Mobile phones don't work either. Lawyers who work for seafarers' rights describe an industry that is global but also uniquely mobile, and difficult to govern, police or rule. They are careful to say that most owners are scrupulous, but for the unscrupulous ones, there is no better place to be than here.

For the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), a global union representing four million transport workers, the maritime and fishing industries 'continue to allow astonishing abuses of human rights of those working in the sector... Seafarers and fishers are routinely made to work in conditions that would not be considered acceptable in civilised society.' If that sounds like typically combative union rhetoric, ITF will point to, for a start, the £20 million they recovered in 2010 of wages unpaid to seafarers who had earned the money. The blankness of that blue sea on our maps of the earth applies to the people who work on it too: buy your Fairtrade coffee beans, by all means, but don't assume that Fairtrade governs the conditions of the people who fetch it to you.

You would be mistaken. The great Norwegian-American seafarer unionist Andrew Furuseth known as Lincoln of the Sea for his cheekbones and achievements was once threatened with prison for violating an injunction during a 1904 strike. 'You can throw me in jail,' he responded. 'But you can't give me narrower quarters than, as a seaman, I've always lived in, or a coarser food than I've always eaten, or make me lonelier than I've always been.' More than a century on, seafarers still regularly joke that their job is like being in prison with a salary.

That is not accurate. When the academic Erol Kahveci surveyed British prison literature while researching conditions at sea, he found that 'the provision of leisure, recreation, religious service and communication facilities are better in UK prisons than... on many ships our respondents worked aboard.' The International Maritime Organisation once published a brochure about shipping, entitled 'A Safe and Friendly Business'. Shipping has certainly become safer, but not always friendlier.

In this safe and friendly business, 544 seafarers are being held hostage by Somali pirates. I try to translate that into other transport industries: 544 bus drivers, or 544 cab drivers, or nearly two jumbo jets of passengers, mutilated and tortured for years for doing their job. When 33 Chilean miners were trapped underground for 69 days in 2010, there was a media frenzy; 1,500 journalists

went to Chile, and even now the BBC news website dedicates a special page to their drama, long after its conclusion. The 24 men on MV **Iceberg** held captive for 1,000 days were given no special page and nothing much more than silence and disregard.

The men from **Kendal** are ready to go. They advise me to hold the gangway rail tightly: 'One hand for you, miss, and one for the ship.' I have travelled plenty and strangely on land: to Saddam Hussein's birthday party in Tikrit, to Bhutanese football matches blessed by Buddhist monks, down sewers and through vast slums.

I look at this gangway, leading up four storeys of height to 39 days at sea, six ports, two oceans, five seas and the most compellingly foreign environment I'm ever likely to encounter. Lead on, able seamen. I will follow.

\* [Deep Sea and Foreign Going: Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry that Brings You 90% of Everything by Rose George](#) (Portobello, £14.99)

## Super Slow Steaming can save 85pc in Fuel Consumption

MNA Circular, November 2013

SLOW steaming, extra slow steaming and super slow steaming are here to stay, says New York's Marine Propulsion journal, because of the big savings they provide as well as the vast quantity of excess tonnage it absorbs.

Designed to go 25 knots, the typical 7,000-TEU vessel reduced to 12 knots, can save 210 tons of fuel a day – 85 per cent or US\$126,000 based on a \$600 per ton bunker price, said the report.

Moreover, 1.27 million TEU has been taken out of the market by virtue of slow steaming since January 2009, with 260,000 TEU removed in the last year, according to Alphaliner.

Larger ships require greater laytimes, and longer round trips also contribute to the removal of capacity, which together meant that 6.2 per cent of the world fleet capacity was withdrawn last year through slow steaming, said the report

Source : Asian Shipper

# When a freak wave met the **QE2**

From Capt R.W. Warwick, a former master of the **Queen Elizabeth 2**

First published in Sea Breezes

After clearing Bishops Rock early on the morning of September 8, 1995, a Great Circle course was set for New York via Cape Race on the south coast of Newfoundland. During the passage the weather situation for the whole of the Atlantic was monitored regularly and accordingly the movement of hurricane "Luis" had been plotted since the voyage began.

As the hurricane left the Caribbean area it soon became apparent there was a chance that it would pass close to the course of the QE2. On September 10 the Great Circle course was abandoned and course altered to SW'ly to increase the distance from the predicted path of the storm, which was estimated to pass ahead of the **QE2** at 11 pm that evening.

In a morning speech to the passengers I informed them of the proximity of "Luis". I updated our situation late in the afternoon and told them we expected to feel the effects of the storm some time after dinner and also warned them of the danger of going out on deck as the wind became stronger. At the same time the crew were ordered to prepare for unfavourable weather conditions.

By the time dinner was over on Sunday evening, the winds had strengthened to more than 50 knots. The wind force was far greater than anticipated and despite the storm being more than 140 miles away the wind speed was recorded at well over 100 knots. The strength of the wind caused the ship to list seven degrees when on the port beam of the liner. By this time "Luis" was making a forward speed estimated at between 40 and 50 knots.

As it headed NW'ly the wind soon started to move from the port beam to the bow and we began to encounter very heavy head seas. At the same time it became necessary to start reducing the speed of the ship and by 0145 on Monday morning the **QE2** was hove to and riding out 30 - 40 ft. waves.

It was a dark night and visibility was considerably affected by the storm. The sea was nearly white in appearance with foam and driving spray lashing the ship. Waves were continuously breaking over the fore deck, leaving it awash for minutes at a time.

At 0210 the rogue wave was sighted right ahead looming out of the darkness; it looked as though we were heading straight for the white cliffs of Dover.

The wave seemed to take ages to reach us, but it was probably less than a minute before it broke with tremendous force over the bow of the

**QE2.** An incredible shudder went through the ship followed a few moments later by two smaller shudders. At the same time the sea was cascading all over the fore part of the ship, including the bridge, and it was several seconds before the water had drained away from the wheelhouse windows and vision ahead was restored.

The **QE2** withstood the wrath of the ocean despite the severity of the impact and the weight of hundreds of tons of water landing on the bow. There was some superficial damage such as bent railings and buckled deck plating but nothing that would not be reasonable to expect under such dire circumstances.

Sometimes it can be quite difficult to gauge wave-height but in this case the crest of the wave was more-or-less level with our line of sight on the bridge, which has a height of eye of 95ft. above the sea surface. The presence of the rogue wave was also recorded by Canadian weather buoys moored in the vicinity which measured the height as 98ft.

In my 38 years at sea this was the largest wave I ever encountered and I cannot begin to imagine what effect it would have had on a smaller vessel – all I can say is that I was glad I was on board the **QE2**!

## Answers to Nautical Trivia Quiz on page 29

1. Aqaba
2. On SW corner
3. DC3 and Dakota.
4. Ireland
5. The fire aboard the ferry Scandinavian Star in the North Sea in April 1990.
6. It celebrates the sailing of the Savannah on its first voyage across the Atlantic in 1819.
7. A demijohn of Madeira wine
8. Cumulus cloud formations

Just think....

The **Titanic** was built by professionals, and the **Ark** by amateurs!

# We was brung up proper!

Congratulations to everyone born in the 1930s, 40s, 50's and 60's

We survived mothers who smoked and drank Sherry, and lived in houses made of asbestos...they took aspirin, ate cheese, bread and dripping, raw egg products, loads of bacon and processed meat, tuna from a can, and didn't get tested for diabetes or cervical cancer.

Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright coloured lead-based paints.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

Take away food was just fish and chips, no pizza shops, McDonalds or KFC.

The shops closed at 5.00pm and didn't open on a Sunday, but we didn't starve!

We could collect old drink bottles and cash them in at the corner store and buy Toffees, Gobstoppers and Bubble Gum.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back before dark. No one was able to reach us all day. And we were okay.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of old prams and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. We built tree houses and dens and played in river beds with matchbox cars.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo Wii , X-boxes, no video games at all, no 999 channels on Sky, no video/dvd films, or colour TV, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.....WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

Only girls had pierced ears!

You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns at Easter time....

Mum didn't have to go to work to help dad make ends meet because we didn't need to keep up with the Jones's!

Our teachers used to hit us with canes and gym shoes and throw the blackboard rubber at us if they thought we weren't concentrating ...

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned HOW TO DEAL WITH IT ALL !

# Larrinaga Mail Steamer **Leon** (1873)

by L.N.R.S Member David Eccles

It is very difficult finding any description of the Spanish cargo-passenger steamers owned by Olano-Larrinaga that worked cargo in Bramley-Moore Dock, Liverpool one hundred and forty years ago. However they were all built to Lloyd's highest class under the supervision of Liverpool Consulting Engineer G S Goodwin, who was responsible for appointing the ships engineers, including the chief and second who were required by Spanish law to have their British Board of Trade certificates endorsed by the Spanish authorities.

One of these steamers was the Bilbao registered **Leon** built at Sunderland in 1873 by William Doxford & Sons for Compania de Navegacion a Vapor Olano, Larrinaga y Cia, but managed from Liverpool by Olano, Larrinaga & Company, general merchants. It is noted from Lloyd's Register that the 2,555 gross ton steamer had a 212ft poop-deck and 47ft forecastle, from Lloyd's Engineer's Certificate her cast-iron propeller was 18ft diameter by 23ft pitch and was driven by a compound surface-condensing engine turning at 50 rpm, with superheated steam supplied at 70psi by two double-ended multi-tubular boilers. The Doxford Ship Particulars Register kept at Tyne & Wear Archives informs that Ship No.56 named **Leon** had a cargo capacity of 3,000 tons, bunker capacity 590 tons and was arranged with passenger accommodation. Further information obtained from the Sunderland Times dated 27th June 1873 gives the following:-

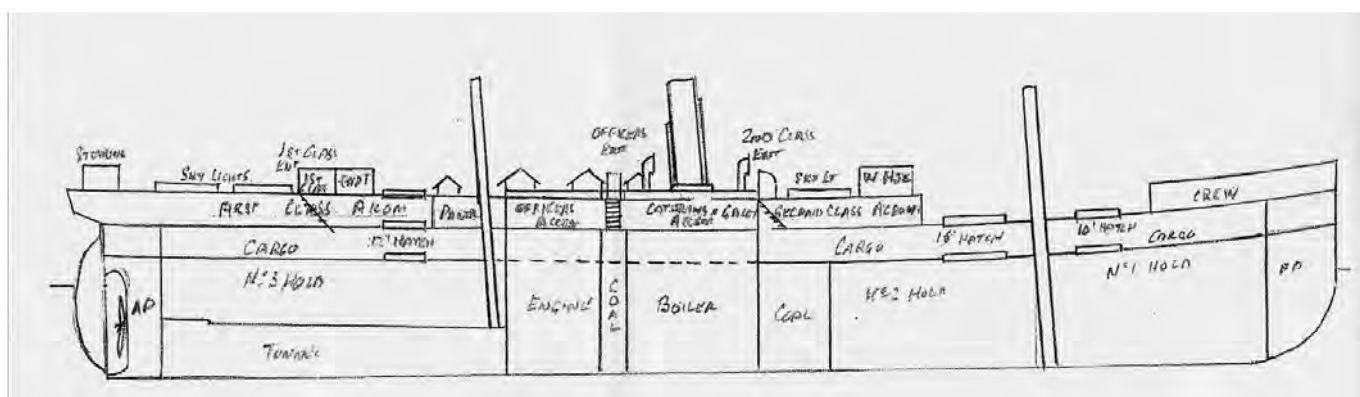
The **Leon** has accommodation for 100 first, 57 second and 30 steerage class passengers, and has room for 600 to 700 troops. She is fitted in first class style with all the latest improvements. The principle saloon is approached from deck by a spacious stairway with sides of polished oak and palisters of ornamental wood with gilded brackets and mouldings. The saloon 80ft long, 15ft wide and 8ft high has sides of polished maple with mouldings and surbase of walnut. A mahogany table 70ft long with swinging trays above takes up the centre space, with red-leather covered settees lining the sides, a curtain at the after end conceals a small altar. Crimson damask curtains each side of the saloon conceal first-class sleeping berths, the doors of which have Corinthian columns surmounted by a curved and gilded capitol of burnished gold which displays the coats of arms of Bilbao and the Larrinaga Company. Each bed-berth has a wire-sprung mattress which can be enclosed by damask curtains and is fitted with concave lighting under control of an attendant. Couches and easy seats are provided, and passengers can communicate with stewards by electric bell. These are also fitted in the saloon, captain's apartment, smoke-room and other departments of the ship. For use in the tropics long Punkahs are arranged each side of the saloon skylight. These are

longitudinal fans 70ft long by 18ins depth suspended by swivel rods which are rotated by an engine to send cool air through the saloon and berths.

Forward of the saloon is the Camara de Senora, the ladies apartment, part of which is for bed-berths, lavatories etc. Passing a few yards forward is a steward's pantry, on either side of which are berths for the officers and engineers, fitted in polished oak. Moving forward after a glance at the engines, we pass the galley, containing a large range, steam-ovens, pans etc, with berths for cooks, baker and stewards arranged each side.

A few yards further amidships the 2nd class cabin is entered. This is 45ft long, 14ft wide and panelled in pitch-pine and teak with mouldings of polished pine. It has two large skylights, a large central table, and damask curtained sleeping berths at the sides. The bathrooms with conveniences are located in a passageway each side of this cabin. Right forward are berths for a crew of 50 and the steerage passengers. Though to a land-mans eye the steerage cabin is not all that could be desired, the accommodation compares favourably with that in many similar ships.

The forward part of the forecastle contains pens to house livestock. Returning aft to the main saloon a staircase leads to the spar-deck with the captain's dayroom and bedroom furnished in polished mahogany on the right. Aft is a large house for the steering gear, and communication between the Captain, helmsman and engineers is by electric indicator.



Laden with a cargo that included textiles, manufactured goods and machinery, the **Leon** departed Bramley-Moore Dock, Liverpool on her maiden voyage to Manila on November 15th 1873, calling at Santander, Cadiz, and Barcelona to embark Spanish passengers and mail, before proceeding via the Suez Canal to Manila, calling at Aden and Singapore en-route for coal. She loaded a return cargo of sugar, hemp, tropical wood, and spices for Liverpool before embarking passengers and mail to be landed in Spain, calling at the same ports, loading wine for Liverpool at Cadiz en-route.

Except for one voyage to Cuba in 1877, this was her trading pattern for the next eight years until the following report was printed in Lloyd's List dated Lisbon, 7th January 1881;—



The British steamer **Herelda** and Spanish steamer **Leon** were in collision twelve miles off Cape Roca yesterday about 3.00am. The former was almost cut in two and sank immediately, her crew (22 in all) got on board the **Leon** which also sank in about 15 minutes, all those on board taking to the boats.

There was no loss of life during this incident. That day one lifeboat with seven Spanish and eleven British on board landed safely on the sandy beach at Cascaes, another lifeboat containing fourteen Spanish and nine British was picked up by the Liverpool steamer **Irene Morris** and landed that day at Lisbon, and the remaining eighteen Spanish and two British were landed at Folkstone the following week from the steamer **Liddersdale**, who reported that:

At 8.30 am on January 6th, five miles off Cape Roca in company with **Irene Morris** saw her stop, then saw large lifeboat full of men pulling towards her. A few minutes later saw another boat on our starboard bow heading towards a sandy beach. Another boat was then seen on port bow and saw she was showing a white flag from an oar, slowed and took all men on board from the boat, damaged when it had been struck by a yardarm from the sinking ship, causing serious injury to some of the men.

## THE LOGICAL THINKING OF ENGINEERS

A vicar, a doctor and an engineer were waiting at the first tee for a particularly slow group of golfers.

The engineer fumed, "What's with these guys? We've been waiting for 15 minutes!"

The doctor chimed in, "I don't know, but I've never seen such a pantomime!"

The vicar said, "Hey, here's the greens keeper. Let's have a word with him."

"Hey George! What's happening with that group ahead of us?"

The greens keeper replied, "Oh, yes, that's a group of blind fire-fighters. They all lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime."

The group was silent for a moment. The vicar said, "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight."

The doctor said, "Good idea. And I'm going to call my optician pal and see if there's anything he can do for them."

The engineer said, "So why can't they play at night?"

# Leeds and Liverpool Canal

From Gore's Directory – 1790

submitted by Harry Hignett

The Wigan Packet sails every Morning (except Sunday) at Eight o'Clock, for Wigan and the intermediate places, where it arrives at Four o'Clock the same afternoon.

From Liverpool at Eight o'Clock in the Morning, and arrives at:–

Red Lion, in Maghull, at Half past Ten o'Clock.

Halsall Warehouse, at Twelve o'Clock.

Burscough Warehouse, at Quarter past One o'Clock.

Appley Warehouse, at Half past Two o'Clock.

Wigan, at Four o'Clock

To sail from Wigan at Seven O'clock in the Morning.

Arrives at Appley Warehouse at Half past Eight o'Clock.

Burscough Warehouse at Half past Eight o'Clock

Halsall Warehouse, at Eleven o'Clock

Red Lion, Maghull, at Twelve o'Clock.

Liverpool, at Three o'Clock in the Afternoon

Rates and Fares by the Liverpool and Wigan Packets:–

- Six Miles and under, Front Room, 6d. Back room 4d.
- Twelve Miles, and above six Miles (excepting to Maghull, going from Liverpool, being a place for changing horses), the same price as for Twelve Miles, Front Room, 1s., Back Room, 8d.
- Eighteen Miles, and above Twelve Miles (excepting to Halsall Warehouse, for the same reason as above), Front Room, 1s. 6d., Back Room, 1s.
- Twenty-four Miles, and above Eighteen, Front Room, 2s. Back Room, 1s. 4d.
- Thirty Miles, and above Twenty-four, Front Room, 2s 6d. Back Room 1s. 8d.
- Thirty-five Miles, or to Wigan or Liverpool, Front Room 3s. Back Room 2s.

Each passenger to be allowed 28lbs. Luggage; and if he has more, to pay for all it shall exceed after the Rate of 1s. per cwt. to any Part of the Line.

Children, Two years old and under to be allowed to go, with their Friends at free cost, but Children above that Age, and not exceeding Ten Years old, to pay Half Price.

Mr. J.W. Close, Clerk to the Packets, 30, Denison Street