

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
R E S E A R C H S O C I E T Y

"Long since, when all the docks were filled
with that sea beauty man has ceased to build"

J.Masefield

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol.XIII (New Series) No.1

January-March 1969

THE WRECK OF THE MISSOURI

On the 17th February 1886, the screw steamer MISSOURI owned by the Warren Line cleared from Boston for Liverpool. She had been on this run for five years carrying cattle and general cargo to Liverpool, a trip which took about twelve days on average.

A handsome iron built screw steamer, MISSOURI had come from the yard of James Connell on the Clyde in 1881. She had a length of 425ft., a gross tonnage of 3,332 and in addition to her engines she had a four masted barque rig. On this particular voyage she carried 395 head of cattle and 4,000 tons of general cargo, comprising bales of cotton, sacked flour, palm oil tallow, and a large quantity of provisions. In addition to the crew of 64, there were 18 cattlemen to look after the beasts. At a later date it transpired that there were also three stowaways aboard.

The Master of the MISSOURI, Captain Poland had commanded the vessel since she came into service. Before that he had spent six years in command of sailing vessels in the Indian Ocean. The Company had a very high regard of his capabilities.

By the 28th February MISSOURI had reached the Irish Sea, and at 8 p.m. was $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Tuskar Rock with a gale blowing. The course was NW/N which was subsequently altered to NE/E. By 11 p.m. the visibility had deteriorated badly due to heavy sleet and snow squalls. By 3.30 a.m. in the morning of 1st March Captain Poland reduced speed. The log was streamed to check the vessel's speed and a sounding taken with the lead line gave 29 fathoms. The failure of Captain Poland to make more use of the log and lead was criticized at the enquiry.

At 4.15 a.m. the course was altered to NE and almost immediately a warning gun was fired ahead of the vessel. The engines were put astern but it was too late and the vessel ran on to the rocks close to the South Stack, Holyhead.

At first it was thought it might be possible to get the vessel off, but at daybreak they began to lighten the vessel by getting some of the cattle off. During the course of the day she began to heel to starboard and by midnight, had fallen right over and slipped into deeper water. Those cattle still on board were lost. MISSOURI was now a total loss.

On 16th March an inquiry was held in Liverpool into the vessel's loss. By modern standards this is a very short time after the event, but being conducted by a local Marine Court, this could be organized. Mr. T.S. Raffles, Stipendiary Magistrate, was to judge with Captains Ward and French as assessors. On the following day it was announced that in spite of their great respect for the abilities of Captain Poland they regretfully found that he had not exercised sufficient care under the circumstances and his certificate would be suspended for six months, a lower grade to be granted in the meantime. Tribute was paid to the services rendered by the Holyhead Coastguard.

Steps were taken to salvage the cargo, but she was lying on her starboard side and the divers were hampered by strong

currents. Finally, the services of the Navy were invoked, and H.M.S. HOTSPUR arrived. A way was then blasted into the hull, and some cargo was salvaged. The ship was then abandoned to slip into deeper water and oblivion - but not completely. In 1964 members of the Liverpool Sub-aqua Club located the wreck, and are still exploring it for any items of historical interest, helped in their quest by the Liverpool Registrar of Shipping and the resources of the Libraries.

D.P.BRANIGAN

JANUARY MEETING

A most interesting paper was given by Mr. A. Baird to members of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society on Thursday 9th January 1969.

After a brief introduction by our Chairman, Mr. Baird described how in Stockholm after the last war, a Mr. Anders Franzen, clerk in the Swedish Admiralty, interested himself in details of ships which had capsized or foundered in the waters around Stockholm in the 1700's. He surveyed the harbour in great detail, working on the theory that ships sunk in deep water and in mud did not deteriorate so rapidly as those in soil or above land. After two years, he located the WASA, and obtained confirmation from Royal Swedish Naval Divers.

WASA was built in Sweden in 1628 during the 30 years Swedish War. She was some 160ft. long and of about 1,400 tons. This was considered enormous, particularly when compared to our MAYFLOWER of 85ft. and 400 tons. WASA had three masts, 5 decks, cannons 1 - 2 tons, and a crew of 133. She set off from her building dock to collect stores and money. On board were 300 soldiers together with women and children who were having a free sail out to the bar. There were probably about 423 souls on board. There was much dancing and music. At approximately 4 p.m. on Sunday, 10th August 1628 in clear weather, WASA moved away from the dock. After proceeding one

mile, the vessel met strong winds.

The cannons were then lashed, but the gun ports were all open, the vessel heeled over and water poured in through these ports. She immediately sank. The loss of life was thought to be high, although many small boats were swarming round the vessel picking up survivors.

The master was immediately arrested, and whilst enquiries were made, nothing came of them. An Englishman who was engineer to Charles I, Ian Bulmer, offered to raise the vessel, and he did in fact manage to right it, and this helped in the ultimate salvage.

In 1663 a Swedish Army officer offered to recover the 64 cannons. WASA was in 110ft. of water lying in clay. For this attempt a diving bell was made, and during the years 1664/5, 52 cannons were recovered, which was an incredible feat.

After a few years the loss of WASA was completely forgotten, until Mr. Franzen's work on the project. Many suggestions were made for raising the ship, from filling her with ping pong balls, freezing the water inside the hull, or by direct lift. The latter system was used with modification. Holes were made through the 15ft. of clay under the ship. Six inch hawsers were dragged under the hull, and the ends made fast to pontoons which were partly filled with water. These were then pumped out, lifting the hull clear in the process. This was then moved until it touched bottom again, when the process was repeated and from 110ft. she was now in 50ft. of water.

At this point frogmen caulked many holes, and it was seen that the deck was littered with the fouled anchors of many other ships. On 24th April 1961 in good weather, a great assembly gathered to watch the final raising. As she broke water, Franzen leapt aboard, and the ship was towed to a dry dock. It was seen that the vessel was constructed with beautiful lines and that there was a great deal of decoration and carving built into her.

A great deal of thought went into how her timbers could be preserved, and a roof was built over her at a semi-permanent berth with a museum alongside.

To preserve the hull, the timber is being continuously sprayed with chemicals. A number of the larger Oil Companies are providing these on an experimental basis.

The interior of the ship has provided a good idea of life in those times. The cooking arrangements were extremely primitive, some money was found, 21 lbs. of butter, pieces of cloth including some felt. No navigational instruments were found, only some tools and cooking utensils. There was the skeleton of a girl of between 14 and 15 years old, as well as of eleven men.

WASA is now open for inspection by the general public at a small fee, and with the sum collected, as well as money received from the Swedish King himself, the Swedish Government and Scientific Institutes, further research is being maintained with WASA.

The Society had previously had a showing of a film describing this salvage feat, and although Mr. Baird did not show any illustrations this evening, the paper was completed by descriptions of the vessel which certainly indicated his enthusiasm for the project he had so ably handled.

Doctor Chapman proposed a vote of thanks and this was seconded by Miss McKee. Doctor Chapman reminded members of the vast amount of research being done by the Dutch and Swedes into the WASA type of project, and suggested that it was time those interested in naval research in Britain should take up similar projects around our own coasts.

Our Chairman, Mr. W.P. Raine, in thanking our speaker for presenting his paper fully represented all members attending for the way in which Mr. Baird had given a real study in shipping research.

T.D. TOZER

TWO QUERIES

The following requests have been made by our country member Mr. Grahame Farr, 98 Combe Avenue, Portishead, Bristol:-

"Gibbs family - of Bristol and Liverpool. Can any member give me a family tree of this mercantile house? The original partners of Gibbs, Bright and Co. which played so great a part in the Liverpool-Australia trade were, according to the register of the GREAT BRITAIN - George Gibbs and Robert Bright of Bristol, with Tyndall Bright of Liverpool. Doubtless the later concern of Anthony Gibbs and Co. was connected with the same family. Particularly required, for a South African correspondent are details of birth, death and career of Thomas Gibbs who is said to have reached the rank of Captain R.N. and afterwards entered the fleet of the family".

and

"Liverpool Lifeboats - I have a considerable amount of data concerning the lifeboats formerly maintained by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, but I still seek a few photographs of these boats. Can any reader oblige?"

NEW NAMES FOR OLD

BRIONI	ex TUSKAR
BURLAND	ex OSCILLA
DELFINO	ex CABOURNE
GLENAFFRIC	ex NESTOR
HEYDER OMA	ex LAIRDSLOCH
MEDINA	ex MARCHON TRADER
ORIENTAL ESMERALDA	ex JAN ex RANGITANE
TARTAN PRINCE	ex EGRET
WESTERN PRINCE	ex MANCHESTER TRADER
XERXES II	ex RAMORE HEAD
APHRODITE	ex LEINSTER I

RESIGNATIONS

Mr. & Mrs. F.N. Cross
Captain & Mrs. E. Mobbs

whom we thank for their support of the Society.

ANNOUNCING OUR APRIL MEETING

As the date originally chosen falls so near to Easter and many of you will be away it has been decided to alter the date to the 17th APRIL - that is one week later than originally arranged. The place will be the Lecture Theatre of Liverpool Museums. Please make a careful note in your diaries.

The theme of the Exhibition is to be you and your particular activities and maritime interests and it is hoped that as many of you as possible will offer to produce your own treasures for exhibition such as photographs, drawings, models, relics or items of general interest whether it be a single item or several. We are sure you will get a lot of enjoyment from exhibiting and by so doing you will be contributing towards the success of the evening. Many offers have already been received but more are wanted.

A small sub-committee has been formed by the Council to plan the exact form of the exhibition and deal with the necessary arrangements, so please contact either Peter Welsh at Liverpool City Museums, William Brown Street, Liverpool 3, or Wilfred Raine, 11 Rumford Street, Liverpool 2, not later than the 15th March giving details of your offer.

Let this be a meeting where we can all get together and contribute towards making it a resounding success. Don't forget the alteration of date - and bring your friends.

RETIREMENTS

Sir Arnet Robinson retired as Chairman of Coast Lines Ltd. at the end of December 1968 and became their first President. He was presented with a rosewood table by directors and managers of the Group.

The new Chairman of the Company, Mr. K.W.C. Grand said at the presentation that Sir Arnet's outstanding grasp of great problems had been evident over the past twenty years or more. After the last War he had the enormous task not only of re-organization, but of building up from a position of devastation. "We are said to be in the midst of the container revolution" continued Mr. Grand, "yet over ten years ago Sir Arnet was responsible for the decision to form Link Line, the company's unit load service".

May we recall that it was Sir Arnet's honour to be host to H.M. The Queen at the opening of the new Langton Dock entrance a few years ago. His arduous work in matching the Coast Lines organization to the new and fast moving pattern of coastal marine communication, has earned a well merited retirement to someone we greatly esteem as President also of our Society. May he and Lady Robinson enjoy many years of happiness.

Another well earned retirement recently is that of our esteemed member Captain F.J. Durrant, who has been director and Marine Superintendent of Rea Towing Ltd. We wish him and Mrs. Durrant happy times in their new home in Sussex, appropriately named "Cedargarth".

W.P.R.

MERSEY NOTES

The former night passenger ship LEINSTER of the B. & I. Line, laid up in Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead late in 1968 sailed on the 31st December with the new name APHRODITE and registered at Famagusta.

At New Year 1969 the three Johnston Warren Tugs, FOYLEMORE, ROSSMORE and KILMORE were transferred to the fleet of Rea Towing Co. and painted in their colours. Their names are now FOYLEGARTH, ROSSGARTH and KILGARTH and they look particularly handsome in the colours of their new owners.

There was a report in the Liverpool Daily Post on 3rd January that B. & I. Line would be prepared to receive offers for the car ferry MUNSTER as not being wholly suitable for the route Liverpool/Dublin. This was however denied by a company spokesman two days later.

Wallasey Ferry employees staged a brief strike during the peak homegoing traffic on 2nd January. Next day a full strike was called, so that there were no boats between Liverpool and Seacombe.

On 24th January it was announced that the Menai Bridge local authority had asked Wallasey Corporation to take over the service previously operated by P. & A. Campbell of Cardiff, with ST.TRILLO between Llandudno and the Menai Straits. This idea has since been turned down by Wallasey Council, and the writer in common with many more local people who regularly use the ferries, wishes to see big improvements made in the Mersey ferries before consideration is given to any such scheme.

The two new Harrison Line vessels MAGICIAN and HISTORIAN are in service. They have a service speed of 19 knots.

The Greek steamer BELGION has been broken up recently at Split. She was at one time well known on the Mersey as the British and Continental's LESTRIS built at Aberdeen in 1946. Another well known ship in local waters was the POINTSMAN ex BASSETHOUND, recently demolished in Holland.

In a collision in fog on 11th February off Brunswick Dock, only slight damage was incurred by Papayanni's DARINIAN inward bound from Cyprus, and J.A. Gardner's coaster SAINT BLANE.

N.R.P.

LIVERPOOL - A FISHING PORT

The part played by the Port of Liverpool in the fishing industry is not well known and the following facts recounted by Mr. Miller, at the request of our Chairman, Mr. Raine, provide local historical significance.

"According to the records of Harley & Miller Ltd., still in business in Liverpool, steam trawling out of the port commenced in the 1880's. In 1889 the Liverpool Steam Fishing Company was formed. At that time J. Kelsall and Pratt Ellis each had a trawler fishing out of Liverpool, along with a couple owned by J. Duncan Son & Co. In 1901 the Liverpool Steam Fishing Company was taken over by Harley and Miller Ltd. When Fleetwood opened as a fishing port, all steam trawlers except those belonging to Harley and Miller and John Duncan, went up to be based there.

"Harley and Miller's catches were, up to the early 1920's landed in the north west corner of Canning Dock. Later, they moved to the southeast corner. J. Duncan's catches were landed in the north east corner until they finally sold out in 1937 to Harley and Miller.

"Up to the late 90's the old beam trawl was in use. This was then changed to the otter trawl using boards as kites to take the trawl down on to the seabed and keep the mouth of the net open.

"The fishing smacks used to land their catches in the Albert Dock. They received their supplies of ice from the Riverside Cold Store which was situated at the north side of Albert Dock. After this store closed, ice had to be brought by cart from Williamson Square. The last of the smacks, to the best of my knowledge, was the ROBERT ELSIE. We understand that she was sunk during the last war, and still lies at the bottom of a dock at the south end. There are still one or two cobbles sailing out of the port, but the amount of fish

landed is negligible. There are also a few shrimpers still sailing.

"The names of some of the trawlers owned by the Liverpool Steam Fishing Co. and later Harley & Miller were - HERON, GADWALL, KASHMERE, CARIAMA, POCHARD, JACANA, NANKEEN, JABOO, JOELAND, ANGLIA, DANIA, SMEW, GOOSANDER, GALLINULE, ANN MELVILLE, VALE OF LENNOX, WASHINGTON, CELTIA up to the first world war 1914.

"After the 1914-18 war came CARIAMA II, POCHARD II, EBOR COURT, EBOR ELSET, EBOR DOWNS, all built for the Admiralty and sold by them, not having been finished in time for service as minesweepers. From Milford Haven came the CLEOPATRA and CALIPH. The KASHMERE was lost in a storm in November 1900 in Liverpool Bay and never traced, all hands being drowned.

"JACANA was lost with all hands when fishing near the Smalls, off the Bristol Channel in August 1914 when the Home Fleet sailed at night from Queenstown to Portsmouth. She was sighted by other fishing boats before the Fleet passed, but was never seen again.

"The fishing fleet was gradually disposed of throughout the 30's until in 1938-39 the last five were sold to Milford Haven. J.Duncan sold the last three of their trawlers to Harley & Miller in 1937. There are now no trawlers sailing out of Liverpool. The reason for their disposal was the failure of the fishing around the Irish coast and the rising costs. Also to the fact that the Railways would not grant a rate comparable with that out of Fleetwood or Milford.

"The greatest number of trawlers sailing out of Liverpool in their heyday was sixteen, that is, twelve Harley and Miller and four J.Duncan. The bird on the flag was a heron, not a Liver bird as most people supposed".

We are most indebted to Mr. Miller for this interesting information.

On Thursday December 12th the Society met in the lecture theatre of Liverpool Museums to hear a talk by Mr. P.J. Welsh, a council member of the Society on "The Divided Circle". Mr. Welsh used this title to give a survey of the development of altitude finding instruments of navigation. Not only did he present a fine series of slides but also examples of instruments from the Museums' collection.

His talk commenced with a description of the work of Henry the Navigator in the fifteenth century who sent out expeditions to seek treasure. His ships pushed out into the North Atlantic and discovered the Canary and Azores Islands. After his death in 1460, the Portuguese coasted southwards to Cape Verde and much later in 1486 Bartholemew Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope. In the Mediterranean, sailors had navigated by the Pole Star which, of course, remains fixed in the heavens. An angle between the horizon and the Pole Star gives the observer's latitude, and this angle was found by a variety of instruments during the Middle Ages and onwards. One of these was the quadrant, not the reflecting quadrant of the 18th century, but the early quadrant with sighting vanes and plumb line. As the Portuguese coasted further down the African coast the Pole Star dipped lower in the sky and became more difficult to observe. Unfortunately there was no star marking the southern pole, so the navigator had to abandon the stars in favour of the sun on the meridian at noon.

But solar observations caused problems of dazzle and it was late in the 16th century before a fairly satisfactory altitude instrument was developed. This was the Davis backstaff of which more later. Before the backstaff, mariners had to use the cross staff which forced the observer to look at the sun, and slide vanes of different sizes up and down a measured staff. One end of the vane had to line up with the sun, the other end with the horizon. Earlier still the mariners' astrolabe was used, and was a very much simplified

version of the land astrolabe, used for a wide variety of purposes including fortune-telling and surveying. Columbus carried the cross staff and the mariners' astrolabe. Da Gama found that the Arabs used an instrument called a Kamal in their Indian Ocean voyages. Here, a series of rectangular plates were employed, from which one was selected, which fitted between the horizon and a star when held at a fixed distance from the eye, by means of a knotted string held in the teeth.

The speaker then developed his theme of the divided circle. Early instruments were large so that the scale could be more easily divided. At first these divisions were made by "pop" marks but these proved difficult to decipher if the sub-divisions were at all numerous. A great improvement was the sixteenth century invention of transversals by John Chancellor.

With the opening up of the Americas, more charts and mathematical tables were needed, and more accurate instruments were welcomed by navigators. Mr. Welsh commented on Waghenhaer's chart which has a most ornate title page showing navigators of the period holding instruments including the lead line, which is still of vital importance, particularly in northern waters.

A more accurate instrument appeared in 1594. This was the famous Davis backstaff, previously mentioned. The backstaff was operated away from the sun and depended on the sun's shadow falling on a vane. A full description would be impossible without a diagram and diagrams are precluded from N.N. & Q. At first the backstaff was rather crudely constructed and posed some dividing problems, but Edmund Gunter did much to improve the scales and backstaffs continued to be made until about 1740. They were used throughout the 18th century and indeed well into the nineteenth in the merchant service.

John Davis, after whom the backstaff was named, was the

famous Elizabethan navigator who gave his name to the Straits between Labrador and Greenland.

Mr. Welsh then gave some time to discussing the problem of longitude which increasingly exercised the minds of mariners and astronomers. Latitude was comparatively easy to find but the fixing of longitude depended on an accurate estimate of time on a prime meridian, such as Greenwich. In 1674 the Greenwich Observatory was founded with Flamsteed as the first Astronomer Royal. He worked out tables of lunar distances as a means of discovering longitude and these were indeed a satisfactory although complex method which endured until the perfection of the chronometer. An accurate timekeeper to record the time on the prime meridian was the only real solution to the longitude problem, and nothing at all suitable was available until the late 18th century. In the 16th century various types of sundial were developed to give reasonably accurate local time, but it was left to John Harrison to make a timekeeper which would keep the time of the prime meridian.

Flamsteed at Greenwich used a telescope and a large mural quadrant for his observations, the quadrant being excellently divided by Abraham Sharpe, who bisected the circle a large number of times.

The last part of Mr. Welsh's talk was given over to discussing the evolution of instrument makers who grew out of the skilled band of clockmakers. These instrument makers by the early 18th century, had grown into a separate establishment and one of their greatest problems was the division of the circle. Early attempts at the construction of a dividing machine or engine were made by Hindley, a Yorkshire clockmaker. This was in 1741. The great Jesse Ramsden completed his first dividing engine in 1763 and won a prize from the Board of Longitude for his work. This Board founded in 1714 was established to consider the best method of determining longitude and was empowered to offer prizes to those who had good solutions to offer.

Ramsden's engine would go far to perfect accurate scales for a marine timekeeper. Later he brought out a second improved engine and was soon in competition with other makers, John and Edward Troughton, later to become famous. This was in the mid 1760's and the Troughton brothers made a magnificent dividing engine, with which they were able to divide their reflecting circle. These enabled extremely accurate observations to be taken to solve the lunar distance method of longitude finding. But the Harrison chronometer won the Board's prize in the end and the reflecting circle was not needed. By this time the scales of sextants and reflecting circles were of silver, brass having been found too soft for accurate dividing. Mr. Welsh showed by a diagram how the silver was dovetailed into place. His choice of illustrative material was excellent, backed by examples of the instruments themselves which comprised a cross-staff, backstaff, mariners' astrolabe, Hadley quadrant and sextant, also a ring dial and a primitive quadrant. The cross-staff and astrolabe were replicas, the former being made by Mr. Welsh himself.

Mr. Welsh thanked by Dr. Gibson, seconded by Mr. Tozer and the proposal was carried with universal acclamation. A lively discussion followed on early navigational methods and several members surmised on how the Vikings made a landfall in Labrador.

E.W. P-T.

PERCH ROCK LANDFALL

Entering our port for the upper reaches past hosts of winking buoys, the goal is nearly made when a ship passes on her starboard hand the black Brazil Beacon, north of Perch Rock, and at the confluence of Crosby and Rock Channels. The black conical Rip Rap buoy, just east of Perch Rock, is next passed, and the writer would be interested to hear the origin of this name, used for at least 50 years.

Thence the course up River is to pass the Tower Buoy of black conical shape. This approximates closely to the position

where the Cork Steam Packet Co's INNISFALLEN became a war casualty in 1940. For a time a green wreck buoy marked the spot, but on disposal of the wreck, Tower Buoy was placed in position, presumably named after New Brighton Tower.

A slight southerly course change brings the Egg Black conical buoy off the starboard bow. This name is probably an abbreviation for Egremont, for it is eastward of the old ferry slip. Thence the course is along the Cheshire shore where River width and general configuration make buoyage unnecessary until entering Eastham or Garston Channels.

On the opposite bank, there is of course Dukes Buoy, off the dock of that name, now only used by small pleasure craft. This buoy marks the shallows off the Albert Dock Wall, and the Canning Dock entrance has been permanently blocked for many years.

When STORMONT carrying cattle from Belfast, was beached here after collision, a wreck buoy marked the spot, to be replaced by the red Dukes Buoy at a later date.

N.R.P.

NEW BRIGHTON 1900

From a Guide to Fort Perch Rock - "Up to 1907 when Teapot Row was taken over by the Council and demolished to make way for Victoria Gardens, opposite the Battery, pierrots and Christy minstrels had pitches on the sands in front. Teapot Row, popularly known as Ham-and-Egg Parade, was a line of little refreshment shops, leading to the old Palace Funfair. Men and women used to stand outside on the pavement, loudly urging passers-by to come inside for their meals. People ambitious for the betterment of local prestige deemed them a rather undignified nuisance, and now the narrow footway has been replaced by a spacious promenade". And as holidaymakers swarmed from the ferryboats, the one-legged man on the bicycle plunged into the Mersey from the topmost deck of the Pier, to cries of "Don't forget the Diver".

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
R E S E A R C H S O C I E T Y

"A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sails,
And bends the gallant mast"

Allan Cunningham

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol.XIII (New Series) No.2

April-June 1969

FROM COASTERS TO SUPER TANKERS

MEGARA of 210,000 tons arrived in British waters last October with a full cargo of crude oil from the Persian Gulf. With a draught of sixty-four feet, she lightened part of her cargo into the 70,000 ton DRUPA in Lyme Bay. Both DRUPA and DARINA have been fitted with special rubber fenders to lower when they make a sea rendezvous with their huge mates.

MEGARA then sailed round to Thameshaven to complete discharge - the largest ship ever to berth in a British port. The proud man who safely berthed her was Shell's appropriated Thames pilot, Mr.Jack Sibly, whose home was once in Liverpool, and who, before going to Trinity House, sailed out of this port in Blue Funnel Line ships.

In reminiscent mood Jack Sibly told me how he started his sea career in 1932 aboard a Liverpool coaster named FERRUM, learning the elements of seamanship.

It was a matter of one hatch, one winch, seven knots and six in the crew fending for themselves. She was the first ship whose articles he signed. Her skipper was from Cemaes Bay and is buried in the little cliff-edge cemetery of Llanbadrig. Says Mr. Sibly "After 37 years at sea I am still amazed at the way that little ship got around. I realize now, if I didn't then, how good the coastal seamen of that era were - she never took a pilot and radar was unknown. The skipper's bunk was the chart table, steering was in quarter points, only paraffin lamps, no real power, and no radio, not even a battery receiver. Yet we used to trade regularly to the west coast of Ireland, and in the depth of winter too.

"I remember that she had a red and white band round the funnel because I got the job of washing it over. We only carried a tank of fresh water abaft the funnel of about 60 gallons, so I was given a long handled scrubber and told to get on with it with salt water and washing powder.

"I cannot remember how the engineer got water for the boiler feed, but he must have had a supply somewhere.

"FERRUM is of an era that is past. The Dutch and Germans have the monopoly of the coastal trade now, and have fine motor coasters, all semi-automated, automatic steering etc. Except for the colliers, it is almost an event to see a British coaster in London these days, and as oil replaces coal even the colliers are very much fewer than before. Kipling's "Dirty British Coaster" is a thing of the past, but my goodness, they were dirty.

"Washing was an event in FERRUM, and bathing unknown as there were no facilities and only the most elementary form of toilet. When we arrived in Liverpool I used to go to the public baths in Bootle and get clean once again. But I learned to wash my clothes and scrub dungarees, and make do on a bucket-full of water a day for all purposes - all good things for a seaman of those days to know. Because I had been a scout and knew the rudiments of cooking, I was

much in demand and did most of the cooking for us all, such as it was.

"Best of all, I learned seamanship, how to steer and how to withstand weather. FERRUM had no wheelhouse, the bridge was open with canvas dodgers, and the wheel was connected to the quadrant with chains - no steering engine. That took strength and know-how to steer a straight course, quarter points and all, something I can still do.

"My next ship was Holt's AJAX in December 1932 and I found when we got to sea that though I was the very junior hand in the half-deck, I could hold my own with the other apprentices who had been at sea a couple of years, because of my time in FERRUM.

"The steering gear of AJAX was a dream compared to what I had been used to. I was 3rd and 2nd mate of the same ship during the war, did several Malta convoys with her and got away with it, as I think back, only by the grace of God.

"AJAX was a fine old ship and only scrapped a few years ago".

Jack Sibly is one of those people dedicated to the sea and particularly to "ship handling". Little could he have though in his coasting days of the challenge he would one day meet in guiding super tankers in our tidal waters.

N.R.P.

NEW NAMES FOR OLD

ARTA	ex IRISH FIR
DOURA	ex HORNBY GRANGE
EVDELOS	ex MOUNTSTEWART
ESK QUEEN	ex SPRIGHTLY
EXPERT	ex HUMBER (tug)
HEY DAROMA	ex LAIRDSLOCH (correction)
LENA	ex CITY OF BATH
MANDRAKI	ex ENGLISH PRINCE ex BEECHMORE
PANTELIS	ex TEMPLEHALL

NEW NAMES FOR OLD - Contd.

QUEBEC	ex ALICE BOWATER
SAN MARCO	ex LAIRDSCREST
SPYROS L	ex ANGELO
THEMISTOCLES	ex OTRA
TARTAR PRINCE	ex EGRET

FEBRUARY MEETING

Mr. T. Laird gave the Society a paper entitled "The Cunard Line" on Thursday, 13th February 1969. He commenced by saying that he was to review the famous shipping line over the period 1923 to 1966.

The Chairman, Sir Percy Bates, was described as the dynamic force behind the task of rebuilding Cunard's fortunes after the first World War, and the story of how he set about this is well known. Mr. Laird spoke briefly about the work of designing and building the two Queens. A great deal of Sir Percy's time was spent on this project, and there was no doubt that the famous pair were very successful financially. He saw both Queens reach fruition, but died one day before the first peacetime voyage of the Queen Elizabeth after her war exploits.

Following the first World War, when Cunard suffered a reduction from 18 vessels to 11, a large rebuilding programme was set in motion. Six new passenger vessels were built for the Canadian service, and five of a larger type for the New York run. However, after a few years the Canadian immigration laws were changed, and the trade eased off considerably.

The QUEEN ELIZABETH was later used in conjunction with CARONIA for cruising purposes. This did not prove altogether successful, for although all the first class cabins were fully booked, many of the others remained empty. The QUEEN ELIZABETH could sail with 850 passengers and still make a profit, but with the continual increase in crews' wages, the

cruises failed to make the impact necessary to keep these liners in service.

The North Atlantic Conference, made up of two units, one to Europe and the other to the Mediterranean always seems to operate in favour of the southern section. Sir Percy Bates in his day saw this, but was financially unable to stem it.

As with the Canadian Immigration laws the British Government also seemed to operate contrary to Cunard's plans, when they set up B.O.A.C. and B.E.A. after the last war. This air passenger development, inevitable as it was, greatly affected Cunard's plans for the Atlantic services.

There were staff problems ashore and afloat. When Cunard and White Star joined in the 30's, one third of Cunard staff had to go. Four fifths of the staff were then over 40 and of these half were over 50. They had recruited few permanent staff since 1931 and no recruitment of younger members was made until 1945. There was then a crash training programme, but it was found that National Service exemption worked against them. Men tended to stay until they were 26, the exemption limit, and after intensive training, leave for other employment. It was thought to cost approximately £1,500 to £2,000 to train a man, but with no ability to stay with the Company.

In the heyday of the QUEEN MARY she had approximately 81 first class certificated engineers on board. At the end of her life, she was sailing with less than half certificated. It was certainly thought now that if a training board had been instituted earlier than it was, then many of Cunard's crew troubles might not have arisen.

Mr. Laird thought this was particularly true in relation to the catering department. This was the largest group on board, and was always found to be susceptible to strike influence. A stronger bond was required but this was difficult when the trade, formerly so prosperous, was rapidly draining away. It was the death pangs of a dying era, and so Cunard Line, still with great plans for the future, was forced to act

with realism and make way for air travel.

Mr. Laird gave such an absorbing paper that with time running out, we could not have our customary question time to follow. Our Chairman, Mr.W.P.Raine, thanked Mr.Laird on behalf of all present for an enlightened insight into the management problems of this famous shipping company.

T. D. TOZER

THE WRECK OF THE TARA

An observer standing on the dockside under that well known Merseyside landmark, the Wellington Tower, as its several clocks recorded the hour of 5 p.m. on the afternoon of 22nd August 1868, might have seen the tug CONSTITUTION, her paddles churning up the grey Mersey water as she towed a wooden sailing vessel down river towards the open sea. The counter of the towed vessel informed the world that she was the TARA of Liverpool.

A ship rigged vessel of 1,017 tons register, the TARA had been built in Quebec in 1849. She was 164ft long by 36.6ft beam. Her owner was R.Wilson, a Liverpool timber merchant.

On this particular voyage she was ballasted with coal and salt instead of the usual solid ballast and was flying light in the water. She had a crew of 21 when she cleared the Wellington Dock, but of these only 6 were sober. Of the others the Master was to say, in the light of tragic hindsight, that whilst they might have got by on ordinary work, they were useless in an emergency. The pilot in his subsequent remarks seemed to think that the condition of the crew was not too bad. Reading between the lines this view suggests that the condition of the crews on many ships when they sailed must have been deplorable.

At the time when the tug set off with TARA in tow, the weather was moderate. The wind was SSE and light, but as they

went down the channel it began to increase rapidly in strength. By the time they dropped the pilot at the Bell Buoy, it was blowing hard.

When tug and tow were well out of the River, trouble began. The eleven inch hawser, which constituted the towline parted, leaving TARA to wallow helplessly. The Captain endeavoured to set some sail, and started setting his fore and main top-sails and spanker. The condition of his crew did not help to speed this operation.

Hailing the tug, he requested them to try and hold him to the windward side of the channel. The tug skipper replied that due to the weather conditions he could not reconnect the tow. He did not consider at the time that TARA was in any danger. As he could not be of any further use, he turned the tug about and returned to the docks.

TARA's Captain then endeavoured to set more sails, but between the weather and his crew, they were blown to rags before being properly set. The vessel was then driven to the lee side of the channel and orders were given to drop both bower anchors. Unknown to the Captain at the time, this order was not obeyed. Some time between 9 and 10 p.m. the vessel struck on the Jordan Spit, the sandbank at the northerly end of the channel.

There were no distress rockets on board. Efforts to make distress signals with paraffin soaked waste were not very successful. All hands gathered in the mizzen rigging but after breaking in half at about 11 p.m. the vessel broke up very fast. The Captain managed to hang on to a piece of wreckage and after several hours in the water, was picked up about five miles from the wreck by the paddle steamer COUNTESS OF GALLOWAY. He was the only survivor.

Undoubtedly the condition of TARA's crew at the time of sailing contributed a great deal to the tragedy. Lack of equipment, i.e. no rockets, probably helped. The tug was criticized for leaving the TARA but expert local opinion upheld her skipper's decision.

D.P.BRANIGAN

MERSEY NOTES

Chartered by Hovercraft Norwest Ltd., the Norwegian STELLA MARINA has commenced a passenger service daily between Fleetwood and Douglas, with Manx coastal cruises and some night cruises in Morecambe Bay. She arrived in the West Float in March for Board of Trade inspection.

In mid March it was announced that the M.D. & H.B. floating crane FENDER, laid up for some time in Morpeth Tongue, had been sold for re-use, probably in Bantry Bay. The crane was Clyde built for the Ministry of War Transport in 1943.

Also sold was the tug JOHN LAMEY for further service in Devon. For scrapping went the BLACK COCK, and the former Mersey tugs FLYING KESTREL and CASWELL. JOHN LAMEY, on conversion in 1957, was the first diesel driven tug on the Mersey.

On 22nd March, INNISFALLEN lately lying up for sale in Morpeth Tongue had her white funnel repainted red. The name was changed to POSEIDONIA and she soon left our port under Cyprian registry.

Early in March the new tug ELIZABETH HOWARD arrived from her Lowestoft builders to join the fleet of barge-towing vessels in the Seaforth Dock scheme. Her companions in this work are LADY HOWARD, ALISON HOWARD, and AMANDA HOWARD. KINGHOW is at present based at Dinmor, Anglesey.

On 18th April the Hamburg ocean-going tug PETER JOHANNESSEN berthed at Princes Stage after delivering a barge to Messrs. Howard.

New Brighton Lifeboat NORMAN CORLETT has now been equipped with radar.

The second voyage of the container ship MANCHESTER COURAGE commenced with the misfortune of ramming the Irlam Lock Gates on 18th March. This closed the upper reaches of the Manchester Ship Canal to large vessels for just one month, whilst a gate was lifted from under the ship, and masonry was repaired. Coasters could use a small lock at Irlam, but amongst the ships bottled up were WESTERN PRINCE, GOVERNOR, AUTHOR, MANCHESTER PORT, MANCHESTER RENOWN, MANCHESTER FREIGHTER and MANCHESTER PROGRESS. The cost of repairs alone was estimated at £300,000 Smiths Docks Ltd. of Middlesbrough secured the contract to repair the culprit.

The blue hulled, German built container ships for the Liverpool/Dublin service of B. & I. - KILDARE and TIPPERARY came into service in January and March respectively.

LEINSTER I running on the B. & I. passenger service until last October and then laid up in Morpeth Tongue, sailed on 31st December 1968 with the name APHRODITE and port of registry Famagusta.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary tug ACCORD was at Princes Stage early in February.

On 3rd May the German motorship EDUARD SCHUPP left Birkenhead with food and medical supplies for Biafra. Her loading was to be completed in Dublin.

Late in April, a collision occurred just west of the Bar Lightship between the German coaster HANNES KNUPPEL on charter to B. & I. and the tanker HAMILTON TRADER. Considerable anxiety was felt for contamination of Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales beaches, as a considerable quantity of crude oil was lost from the tanker.

The Cammell Laird-built bulk carrier STAR PINWOOD, in France Fenwick livery, completed her trials late in April, left Birkenhead on 1st May and arrived at Langesund near Oslo on 5th. A similar vessel named IRISH STAR is fitting out in Laird's wet basin.

On Sunday, 16th March, the B.B.C. item "Down Your Way" was broadcast as recorded in Connahs Quay. The old established shipping firm of Coppack Brothers was featured. Mention was made of their present coaster INDORITA, the oldest vessel trading in the Irish Sea, and of their latest acquisition in January 1969, the motor coaster VAUBAN, frequently seen in the Mersey these days.

On Easter Saturday a severe fire gutted the old New Brighton Tower building, and it is to be demolished. This red brick landmark, visible from the Mersey Bar will soon disappear. Three of its four pinnacles were consumed in the blaze. The tall steel tower was demolished in 1920/21, because of the heavy cost of maintenance.

In February, the coaster BALMORAL QUEEN had a severe engine room fire whilst in the Mersey and was towed to Morpeth Dock. Built as RAMBLER ROSE she dates from 1954.

The ocean going tug GRONINGEN arrived in the Mersey on Monday 12th May, having left Venice on 19th April with a rock cutter in tow, owned by Westminster Dredging Co.

N.R.P.

BROADSIDE LAUNCHING AT MARYPORT

One of the first references to broadside launching at Maryport is in the "Cumberland Pacquet" for 25th October, 1803, where it stated "Shiplaunch on the 3rd inst: a fine new ship was launched from the yard of Messrs. Fletcher Fawcett Peat and Co. called ANTHORN. The launching was not in the usual manner, the vessel descended the ways broadside foremost into the water, from a perpendicular height of between three and four feet".

Also in the same periodical for September 1822, a correspondent wrote to the paper commenting on a broadside launching

that took place in America on 11th August 1822, and which claimed to be the first. The writer went on to say that about sixteen years earlier (1806) a company of shipbuilders at Maryport, built vessels on the quay broadside to the harbour, and that a vessel called HAZARD was the first to be launched sideways. He continued that many ships had since been put into the water in the same manner, and therefore the adoption of this method could not be attributed to trans-Atlantic ingenuity.

The Whitehaven Custom House records show that a brigantine, the HAZARD of 215 tons was launched at Maryport in 1805. If indeed this was the first broadside launch from Maryport, a small clue may be obtained from the name of the vessel, however we have only this correspondent's word that this was the first instance.

The generally accepted vessel to come off the ways broadside was the AIREY, a barque built by John Peat, of 356 tons, launched in February 1837.

The reason for the broadside launching was explained by the late Doctor Crerar of Maryport, a keen marine historian, who noted that the construction of a drawbridge across the River Ellen, a little way below Peat's yard in 1834, made it necessary to launch broadside, there being insufficient room for the "run" after a conventional launch.

This may have been so at the time, but in later years much larger vessels were launched from the same yard in the conventional manner, as well as broadside, even when the drawbridge had been replaced by a swing bridge. The most probable explanation which comes to mind is that Peat's yard (later taken over by Ritson's) was a narrow yard flanking the river, which at this point is not more than 60ft wide. There was insufficient room to build and launch more than one vessel in the conventional manner, therefore they built alongside one another, one vessel to be launched in the conventional stern-first manner, the other broadside into the River Ellen.

Photographs taken last century show that in later years, three or four vessels were under construction at the same time, one on the broadside ways, and two on the conventional ways, bow to stern.

When the yard was taken over by Ritson's after the death of John Peat in 1840, the really large four posters were launched broadside into the River Ellen. Amongst these was the PETER IREDALE a four masted barque of 2,075 tons with dimensions 287ft x 39ft x 23ft, which was launched in 1890 for Peter Iredale and Porter of Liverpool. A year later she was followed by the AUCHENCAIRN, a sister ship of 2,040 tons.

The first iron ship to be launched broadside was the ELLENBANK, a ship of 1,428 tons which came off the ways in 1885. When one looks at the old site today and the narrowness of the river at this point, one cannot help but admire the courage of the builders who tipped 2,000 tons of ship into such a narrow waterway, in some cases with less than 6ft to spare either side. No wonder the children of Maryport were given a holiday from school to see the "big splash" and the game of chicken that was played by the more daring, of who was to be the last up Mote Hill on the opposite bank, without getting their feet wet.

From Ritson's yard, the largest vessel to be launched broadside was ACAMUS of 2,100 tons in 1897. After her, Ritsons built mostly smaller steamships, the last of which was LYCIDAS, a 500 tonner in 1902 which I believe may still be afloat under the Thai flag. After her launch the yard was taken over by William Walker who continued to build small coasting steamers, launching a dozen of them between 1905 and 1911, both broadside and endways. The yard was again taken over, this time by the Maryport Shipbuilding and Repair Company. The RHENASS was the last broadside launch to take place in 1914, followed later in the year by the SILVERBURN, launched endways. These two ships were the last of a long line of Maryport vessels, dating from 1765.

At the moment research into Maryport ships is far from

complete, and I am unable to state what percentage of vessels were launched broadside from the Peat - Ritson - Walker yard. In Maryport it is claimed that they pioneered broadside launching in this country, if not the world. It would be interesting to hear if any other yard launched ships earlier, using AIREY as a datum 354 tons 1837, but bearing in mind that HAZARD and ANTHORN of 1805 and 1803 have to be confirmed.

D.G.SYTHES

MARCH MEETING

The meeting on 13th March 1969 took the form of an illustrated talk entitled "Mersey Excursion Steamers" given by the vice-Chairman of the Society, Mr. W.B. Hallam. This was a description of the ships and excursion services which have operated from, and on the Mersey.

The coming of the steamship soon gave men wider horizons, and a curiosity to see what the land looked like from the River was satisfied to some extent by the provision of river cruises, operated principally by towing companies. The steamship also enabled regular services to be operated along the coast of North Wales, but with improved rail and road facilities, these gave way to seasonal services for the use of holidaymakers and, as the speed of ships improved, to local residents making day trips.

Taking river trips first, these, from their inception in the 1840's were referred to as "channel cruises". Mr. Hallam showed interesting photographs of the paddle tug UNITED STATES, built in 1857, with other vessels at Trafford Wharf, Manchester. This tug was owned by the United Steam Tug Co., of Liverpool and in 1895 was bought by The Alexandra Towing Co.Ltd. and renamed BROCKLEBANK, being scrapped at Garston two years later. The former Woodside ferry steamer CHESHIRE, in her guise as the AMERICA of the Liverpool Steam Tug Co. was also shown as a cruising vessel in Manchester Docks.

The speaker then described how the work of river cruising passed from the towing companies to Wallasey Corporation, who employed ROYAL IRIS in this work from 1923. Other vessels described were ROYAL DAFFODIL, FRANCIS STOREY, ROYAL DAFFODIL II, WALLASEY BELLE, and the present ROYAL IRIS.

The ferry to Eastham was a great attraction to Liverpool people, and PEARL, RUBY and SAPPHIRE were recalled in some detail. One fact frequently overlooked by historians was that of the naming of the three paddlers when requisitioned for war service as minesweepers in 1917. They became H.M.S. ROYAL PEARL, ROYAL RUBY and ROYAL SAPPHIRE, the prefix being dropped upon their return to peacetime duty in 1919.

North Wales services were briefly mentioned, and the ships illustrated were ST.ELVIES, SNOWDON, LA MARGUERITE, ST.TUDNO (1926), ST.SEIRIOL (1931) and the last survivor of the fleet ST.TRILLO, shown in the colours of her present owners P. & A. Campbell Ltd.

The service to Blackpool operated by the paddle steamer GREYHOUND was terminated in 1921, the ship herself being sold in 1923.

CALAIS DOUVRES, owned by Mr. Higginbottom of Birkenhead and operated with other ships to both Llandudno and Douglas provided a link for the speaker to show some historic Isle of Man vessels, including the four funnelled BEN MY CHREE of 1875, the fast QUEEN VICTORIA of 1887, and the MONA which was formerly the CALAIS DOUVRES and which was the last paddle steamer to be bought by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co.

The BEN MY CHREE of 1927 was fully described from the placing of the order in June 1926, to her final departure from the Mersey in 1965. The present Manx fleet was represented by colour slides of the car ferry MANX MAID, the MANXMAN, and a most unusual picture of the ships in winter quarters at Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead.

The final part of the talk was given over to coastal cruising which was a feature of the Mersey scene when Langlands' "Princesses" sailed from the port to the Western Highlands. An excellent picture of the PRINCESS VICTORIA, built 1895 and sunk 1915, was followed by one of MAGIC.

Built in 1893 by Harland & Wolff Ltd. at Belfast, mention of MAGIC enabled the speaker to refer to passenger services to Belfast and Dublin, which, although hardly in the excursion category, nevertheless gave much pleasure to holiday makers.

MAGIC after many successful years on the Belfast service, became a hospital ship in World War I, serving mainly at Scapa Flow, and in 1919 was renamed CLASSIC. In 1924 she became KILLARNEY, running between Cork and Fishguard, until her transfer to permanent cruising duties in 1931. After war service as a troopship and depotship she returned to Liverpool, but was sold to Greeks in 1946 who renamed her firstly ATTIKI, then ADRIAS and it was under this name that she was wrecked on Falconera Island in 1951.

Her successor in the Western Isles cruising service was LADY CONNAUGHT, which was renamed LADY KILLARNEY. It was appropriate that this ship should end her days in the cruising service, for it was as the PATRIOTIC she entered the Belfast/Liverpool service in 1911. In 1930 she became the LADY LEINSTER for the British and Irish Steam Packet Co. who in 1938 gave her a further change of name to LADY CONNAUGHT. Mr. Hallam illustrated her firstly as PATRIOTIC, then as LADY LEINSTER, and with two views of her as the LADY KILLARNEY, the final picture in the colours of Coast Lines, taken shortly before her departure for breaking up in 1956.

The final slide was of the new car ferry MUNSTER which on certain occasions has allowed day excursionists to travel in daylight and back to Dublin.

After refreshments there was much discussion on whether sea excursions would continue to be a feature of the port, and whether new forms of transport would take over, hovercraft

being given much thought.

The usual vote of thanks ended the meeting, proposed by Mr. R.B. Summerfield and seconded by Mr. W.P. Raine.

APRIL MEETING

This was devoted entirely to exhibiting members' own works and articles from their collections. These were most tastefully exhibited in the Museum, by kind permission of the Director, Mr. Hulme. Our Council member Mr. P.J. Welsh was subsequently congratulated by the Society's Chairman for the manner in which the displays had been blended in with each other, and with the Museum's own displays.

Amongst exhibits were some painted buckets from narrow boats, of Mr. E.W. Paget-Tomlinson, together with some of his drawings. Mr. R.B. Summerfield showed some of his paintings of H.M.S. LIVERPOOL, painted by Mr. E. Tufnell. There was a crest of H.M.S. LIVERPOOL, a print of H.M.S. VICTORY and the model of LIVERPOOL which the Society presented to Mr. Summerfield some time ago, on relinquishing the Chairmanship.

Mr. K.A. Griffin exhibited a fine oil painting of the BOUNTY attempting to round the Horn. This painting particularly caught most members eyes, for it was of striking beauty, the sea and sky being particularly realistic. Mr. W.P. Raine showed some of his Naval cutlasses, also a scrapbook he had acquired from a secondhand shop in Wallasey. It was thought this book had probably been part of the late Mr. E.A. Wood's compilation. Mr. Stuttard exhibited some waterline models, together with a compass, various photos, and shipping books of various ages.

Mr. N. Kennedy produced a German war map of 1914, together with a medal struck specially to commemorate the loss of the LUSITANIA. There was also a model of the Mersey ferryboat ETNA, which Mr. Kennedy made in 1934.

Mrs. N. Coughlan, who lives near Gravesend, sent some interesting photographs of sailing vessels including the two

Liverpool barques LOCH FERGUS and LOCH DOON in which her father was chief officer. Incidentally Mrs. Coughlan herself sailed round Cape Horn twice in the Aberdeen tea clipper LEUCADIA.

Mr. Hill produced some of his sketchbooks which were of great interest.

There were many more exhibits and to those who contributed the Chairman thanked one and all. A large number of the Society's members attended, including the Society's President, Sir Arnet Robinson, whose presence was much appreciated. A great deal of nautical lore and facts were exchanged, and some members particularly welcomed the short break to sit and have coffee between perambulations.

With this meeting, the Society ended the 1968/69 season, except for the Annual General Meeting fixed for Thursday, 15th May.

T. D. TOZER

THE DRAMA OF A VOYAGE TO THE BREAKERS

The bunkering tanker HEMSLEY I has been very familiar to Merseysiders for many years, and the ship has attracted attention recently because of her advanced age. She has kept Clarence Dock Power Station supplied with fuel loaded at Stanlow, topped up the fuel tanks of Isle of Man steamers, lightened ocean going tankers in the Mersey, and delivered oil to Heysham and other near seaports. She was built at Newcastle in 1916 as the Admiralty oiler SCOTOL, at a time when our warships were mostly changing from coal to oil.

Early in May 1969 it was announced that the end of the road had come for this grand old ship. On Saturday 10th, she left Birkenhead for Antwerp and a scrapyard in Belgium. Proceeding under her own steam, she encountered fog around midnight on Sunday. Then came the distress call by radio "Aground Lizard Head, right under the light, require immediate assistance". The Lizard, Coverack & Sennen lifeboats were launched but HEMSLEY I was lying amongst jagged rocks in Fox's Cove, between Padstow and Newquay, and the crew of twelve were able to

struggle up the cliffs to a bungalow. Three of them had to have attention in hospital at Truro. In view of the corrected position, the above three lifeboats returned to their Stations. Padstow Lifeboat was launched and the Dutch salvage tug TITAN was soon on the scene. At the time of writing, salvage is problematical.

N.R.P.

CUSTOM HOUSE SHIP REGISTERS

"The real stuff of British merchant shipping history is locked away in the statutory register books which have been compiled over nearly two centuries in the Custom Houses of the various fiscal Ports into which our coastline is divided.

"Comparatively few researchers have made use of this source, to which access is granted on certain conditions by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise, but the sheer immensity of the task of going through the massive manuscript volumes has proved a deterrent. It is therefore very pleasing to be able to announce that, through the courtesy of the Customs authorities, a scheme has been launched by the National Maritime Museum whereby copies of the registers...will in due course be available for study at the Museum and at the Custom House Library in London. Moreover, for an appropriate fee, photo copies will be available for regional libraries and archives, and for home study. Considering the hundreds of thousands of registers involved, the scheme will take a number of years to complete. Transcription will have to rely almost entirely on voluntary labour".

The above is an extract by our country member, Mr. Grahame Farr, from the "Mariner's Mirror" 1969. We are apt to rely entirely on Lloyd's Register or the Mercantile Navy List for our research projects, and so the nautical data being brought into the light of day from H.M. Customs archives offers an interesting prospect.

N.R.P.

WAYWARDNESS

"I suppose we can say the vessel was launched ahead of schedule" said the Chairman of Cammell Laird & Co. on Friday, 16th May when the chemical tanker SILVERHAWK took to the water

herself, owing to a mishap with the launching gear. The christening party gained the platform to observe the vessel already afloat in the Mersey, ten minutes before the appointed time.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting was held at the Lecture Theatre of Liverpool Museums at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, 15th May 1969. The usual business as outlined in the notice circulated to members was transacted expeditiously.

The following officers were elected :-

Chairman	Mr. P.J. Welsh
Vice Chairman	Mr. E.W. Paget-Tomlinson
Hon. Secretary	Mr. M.K. Stammers
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. T.D. Tozer
Archivist	Mr. A.N. Ryan
Council Members	Miss E.M.Hope, Mr.N.R.Pugh, Dr.P.N.Davies, Mr.W.B.Hallam and Mr.W.P.Raine

On relinquishing the Chair, Mr. W.P. Raine was warmly thanked for having steered the Society from strength to strength during his term of office, and congratulated for never having missed a meeting during this period. It was with considerable regret that our Chairman - Designate, Mr. W.B. Hallam could not accept office for the next three years owing to pressure of business and health reasons. Mr.P.J.Welsh, now on the Technical and Scientific staff of Liverpool Museums, was welcomed as our new Chairman, with Mr.Paget-Tomlinson to follow in this capacity in 1972.

In charge of Shipping at the Museums is Mr.M.K.Stammers, whom we welcome as Hon.Secretary of the Society, Mr.T.D.Tozer reverting to Hon.Treasurer. The Council members remain at five in number,

Considerable progress was reported in compiling the 1969/70 programme, which led to a short discussion.

Mr. Lear suggested an evening of several talks of short

duration. Captain Cummings thought we should always bear in mind when choosing speakers that research is the prime object of the Society. Both Mr. Raine and Dr. Davies commented on this aspect, mentioning the difficulty in securing specialist speakers in matters of research, but Capt. Cummings' remarks were certainly noted.

After the coffee break, we were treated to a very fine colour film of last year's Atlantic Yacht Race which started from Plymouth and ended at Newport News. The yachts, many being multi-hulled, assembled at Millbay and we were given close-up shots of SIR THOMAS LIPTON, PENDUIK IV and many others. Once they were in the open sea, we could appreciate the exhilarating speed of the trimarans in favourable winds.

Some of the boats encountered hurricane conditions which were faithfully portrayed, whilst we also had below-deck shots of lone yachtsmen taking cat-naps.

This film, promoted by Messrs. Watney Mann and Co., which I understand is a household name to TV viewers, is well worth seeing. I hesitate to make any point of criticism, yet why in such a pictorially excellent production do we have to endure the frightful caterwauling which is called incidental music? Fortunately the commentary won through, and this was a film I would not like to have missed.

The new Chairman ended the meeting by wishing members happy summer holidays, until in the autumn we meet again.

N.R.P.

* * * * *

Comments from readers of NEWS, NOTES & QUERIES are always welcomed by the Editor at 1 Walmer Road, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

* * * * *

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
R E S E A R C H S O C I E T Y

"Dawn sprang up from the darkness,
And in its quiet light,
Found us ready.
The first soft wind of the promised eastern sun
Left us steady
And searching the horizon.
For sight of speck, or smoke.
Suspense - and the morning revealed its emptiness".

Petty Officer Goldsborough
in HMS PENELOPE approaching
Malta, 1941.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol.XIII (New Series) No.3

July-September 1969

TWO SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CONTEMPORARIES

Samuel Pepys, Clerk of the Acts and full of responsibilities, was deeply shocked by the disaster which occurred in the summer of 1667 when the Dutch fleet sailed up the Thames and broke the boom on the Medway. He feared the accusations of an angry Parliament which might make him the scapegoat for faults resulting from the state of the Nation's economy.

There was a grim commentary on the times in the reports that seamen were saying they would fight the Dutch if the money already owing to them were paid. And there was talk of treachery although the great Lord Chancellor, Clarendon, said "Treachery - I wish we could prove there was anything of that sort in it, for that would imply some wit and thoughtfulness, but we are ruined merely by folly and neglect".

In due course Pepys defended himself and his office manfully before Parliament, so much so that Sir William Coventry said to him "Good morrow, Mr. Pepys, that must be Speaker of the Parliament House". They were strange days and as Pepys had written a little earlier "God knows what disorders we may fall into".

At this very time, there was a seaman of the name of Edward Barlow serving in the frigate MONKE lying at anchor in the stream off Limerick. He was a Cheshire lad who determined on a seafaring career and had been pressed after shipping aboard a privateer which had put into Portsmouth. The Navy had difficulty in getting men owing to the constant problem of paying them.

Whilst off Limerick, Barlow heard that the Dutch were at Sea. "Bad news of the Holanes fleet having been up the river of Chatham and had carried away the ROYAL CHARLES into Holland and burnt the guardships, and broken the chain, and that the Holenders had worn a Dutch flag at Shareness ... all being done by treachery". So he recorded it in his journal, a prized possession which has come down to us and been ably edited by Basil Lubbock and made the subject of an interesting commentary by Captain Course (A Seventeenth Century Mariner).

Barlow went back to the Merchant Service and sailed about the world facing many dangers and hardships. In later years he was very angry, when mate of a West Indian trader, to find himself liable for a share in the damage sustained by cargo due to bad weather and leakage. "A custom too long used in England to the oppression of poor seamen".

In the year of revolution (1688) when Pepys was fitting out the Fleet which it was hoped (wrongly as it happened) would prevent an invasion, "all to be dispatched as for life and death", Barlow was mate in a ship off the coast of Cochin China. He had no news of the flight of James II and the arrival of William until at St. Helena, homeward bound, he heard "of a great disturbance in England between King James

and his people, he endeavouring to bring into the land Popery". It was not until he reached the Downs in January 1690 that he heard the full story and that there was a new ruler.

In all the pages of Barlow's Journal (with its beautiful sketches of ports he had seen) he does not mention Pepys, who for part of the time was keeping his famous Diary. If they could have talked together what common ground they would have found - Pepys, brilliant, wise in the ways of men - Barlow, so skilled and experienced in his calling, but no doubt bemused by the actions of his superiors, filled with lively horror of the machinations of traitors. Each had something in common with the other, loyalty, a sense of responsibility and of justice. Strange that they should over a long period have been serving the sea together in their respective ways with no knowledge the one of the other, in this world.

A. S. MOUNTFIELD

THE WRECK OF HEMSLEY I

Whilst on holiday at Falmouth, Gordon Ditchfield reported:- "On the afternoon of Sunday 20th July, I went to Fox's Cove by car. It is about three miles southwest of Padstow, a desolate place. I walked to the top of the cliffs and then took a path above rugged inlets which have been eroded by Atlantic breakers driven by westerly winds. After walking about a mile, the tops of HEMSLEY I's masts became visible.

She is wedged between two rocks, having gone over another rock to get where she is. A rough pathway led down, but appeared slippery and there was no advantage in descending as any photos had to be taken from above. Several colour slides were secured. Once the winter comes with the usual gales, the ship's wooden bridge and the two masts seem likely to succumb. She was being pounded when I saw her; yet there was little wind - it was low tide with a heavy mist".

CHAMPION OF MERCHANT NAVY OFFICERS

Capt. W.H. Coombs died on 23rd June, at the age of 75, whilst making a passage in the Glen Line's CARDIGANSHIRE. He will long be remembered as a fighter from the 1920's onwards for the betterment of conditions for Merchant Navy Officers. He founded the Navigators and Engineer Officers Union, and introduced the Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund.

IRISH NOTES

The Public Works Bucket Dredger SISYPHUS, built by Fergusons of Port Glasgow in 1905 was deepening the entrance to the new harbour at Dunmore East, County Waterford in June 1969.

At the same time, the Dublin Port Authority's bucket dredger DEEPWORKER was operating off the new Ferryport. She was built by Lobnitz in 1920.

Contrary to a previous note regarding Aran Island services, GALWAY BAY ex CALSHOT has continued running this summer between Galway and Kilronan, with the NAOMH EANNA.

In June the writer was able to visit the maritime museum aboard the lightship GUILLEMOT at Wexford Quay. There is an entrance fee of two shillings, and the exhibits are worthy of inspection. The panelling in the accommodation and the workmanship in the construction of this vessel is a pleasure to behold.

A fleet of over twenty large German trawlers was working off southern Ireland in June, still catching herring out of the recognized season, and shipping them to Emden.

Leaving the Dublin Custom House quay at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. the small passenger vessel TARA makes cruises to Dublin Bay,

of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours duration. The charge is 8/- and refreshments are obtainable.

How many seamen with a host of memories and valuable shipping lore pass away, taking all this knowledge with them to the grave? Little or nothing may have been recorded, for so many are modest souls. The poignancy of this sombre thought came to me when I learned of the sudden death in July of Captain Desmond Carroll, Harbour Master and Lighthouse Keeper at Dunmore East. Only a few weeks previously, a considerable part of my holiday was spent in his genial company. Desmond spent his early years afloat with Elder Dempster Lines, later transferring to Irish Lights vessels, and serving in the Irish Naval Patrol during the last war. He reached retiring age in March but agreed to continue his duties until September when he was to retire to Dun Laoghaire. It was therefore with great sadness that Desmond was laid to rest, mourned by his beloved wife Freda, son David, by the Waterford Harbour Sailing Club, all the friendly Dunmore folk, fishermen, lifeboatmen, pilots and the many visiting yachtsmen who knew him. He had patience, tact, ability and a tremendous sense of service - a man one feels better for having known.

N.R.P.

CHARTER PARTIES

Mr. O'Hanlon has a book of Charter Party papers with references to about two hundred ships, from 1870 to 1877. He is undertaking the research into the histories of the ships mentioned. However, due to the enormous amount of material to be studied he would like some assistance. If any member can offer help in any way, would they please contact Mr. O'Hanlon, 116 Queens Road, Everton, Liverpool 6.

M.K.STAMMERS,
Secretary

THE PRESENT PORT OF LIVERPOOL

Sir Clifford Dove, Director-General of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board made the following points in a report to the Press in March 1969:-

"The Docks represent £400 million of assets - and that doesn't take into account the much-publicized Seaforth scheme, costing a further £30 million, due to be completed in 1971.

"I think getting Seaforth off the ground" said Sir Clifford "is the most important thing that has happened since the opening of the Gladstone, in fact it is probably the most important thing that has ever happened to the port. It marches with the modern economy of size.

"There are 530 acres of land catering for ten berths, and there's 52 feet of water. Seaforth will put Liverpool in the forefront of Britain's ports - just as the Gladstone did - as the country moves into a new era".

It is only recently that the Dock Board moved into the stevedoring business, and their Director-General is uncommitted either as employer or employee. "I have genuine sympathy with both sides" he said. "The dockers are still finding it hard to forget the past; the employers are finding it equally hard to convince their men that they really are interested in their welfare. The dockers did have a rough time you know. They never had one boss - it isn't very long ago since there were 150 employers or so - and they were hired out to a great many different people. There was never the feeling between master and employee there was in other trades. Decasualization has been a tremendous difference. It will take time for all the benefits to be felt, but progress is being made steadily. I am most pleased that we are spending nearly £2,000,000 on improving amenities".

INTERESTING COAST LINES CONVERSION

LANCASHIRE COAST which has reverted to her former name after making some voyages to the Mediterranean as TROJAN PRINCE, has undergone conversion, and wears the colours of Belfast Steamship Company. An extra deck has been built into the vessel, the stump masts have been removed and she now resembles BISON and BUFFALO. With a very large hold, she can carry cattle, or cars by side loading. Very long steel sections can also be carried. She has been fitted with stabilizing tanks which are reported to be very satisfactory.

Nevertheless, Coast Lines expect that expansion is likely to continue in the container-unit load field, and eighty per-cent of the cargo handled is now in unit form.

NEW NAMES FOR OLD

ARYA FAR	ex CLAN FARQUHARSON
ARDNEIL	ex CRUISER (tug)
APHRODITE	ex LEINSTER (2)
BEECHWOOD	ex BISHOPSGATE
CHERRYWOOD	ex SILVERCRAG
DERWENT	ex PERSIC
FELICIE	ex CITY OF BRISTOL
HARRY SHARMAN	ex JOHN LAMEY (tug)
LAJA	ex HOLTHILL
ODYSSEUS	ex ADRIA ex ULSTER PRINCE (2)
ORPHEUS	ex THESEUS ex MUNSTER (1)
POSEIDONIA	ex INNISFALLEN (2)
SILVERSHORE	ex ALDERSGATE
ST.MICHAEL	ex QUEEDA
SOLOH	ex BALMORAL QUEEN
SEMIRAMIS II	ex IRISH COAST
TEXACO LIVERPOOL	ex REGENT LIVERPOOL
WENDUYNE	ex APSLEYHALL
WILKAWA	ex AUSTRALIAN CITY
BRISSETTE	ex ELETTRA III

DUKES BUOY

The following has been received from Mr. W.B. Hallam:-

"In the last N.N. & Q. it was mentioned that the Dukes Buoy followed the Wreck Buoy as marking the place of the sinking of the STORMONT. This is not strictly correct. The wreck buoy was placed there to mark the remains of the ELIZABETH DAL which collided in the Mersey with the tanker JACKSONVILLE on 4th August 1944, being beached in that spot. I remember seeing the ship with her back broken. I think the title was changed to Dukes about the same time as the INNISFALLEN wreck buoy became the Tower. The STORMONT remains were to be seen at the bottom of Gower Street, on the shore. Other scrap brought ashore there came from the TACOMA CITY".

THE RAM

Walking round the port one often notices modern vessels built with ram-like bows, sometimes even with a warning painted on to the effect that a vessel has a ram bow which projects forward of the visible stem. Despite their aggressive look, these rams have a purely peaceful function in reducing the resistance offered to the vessel by the water as she steams along. In the event of a collision they can, however, do a good deal of underwater damage to the vessel they strike. One cannot help recalling the ram controversy which so bedeviled naval construction through the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The ram first came into being in classical times on the galleys in the Mediterranean. With the passing of these vessels and the coming of sailing ships, and subsequently gund, the ram rather fell back into history. Here it lay dormant until it was resurrected by the arrival of the steam propelled warship.

As a modern weapon the ram re-appeared in the American Civil War. Rams were improvised by both sides and during the fighting on the Mississippi some successes were achieved with them. The Confederates had two rams built in Birkenhead by Lairds, but the British Government prevented these from being delivered and they were subsequently purchased for the Navy. The chief effect of the rams in this war was psychological.

The event which really caught the public eye, however, was the ramming of the Italian ironclad RE D'ITALIA by the Austrian ironclad FERDINAND MAX at the battle of Lissa in 1866. The Italian ship sank rapidly, with heavy loss of life.

A good deal of fuss was made over this episode, although critics of the ram pointed out that the Italian ship was stationary, which was very different from trying to ram a ship capable of taking evasive action. Also that there was no effective watertight sub-division in the ship.

During the next twenty-seven years there were three cases of accidental "ramming" which tended to bolster up the case for the ram. The first of these was the ramming of the VANGUARD by the IRON DUKE in the Irish Sea in 1875, luckily without loss of life as VANGUARD stayed afloat for a couple of hours. The next two accidents did not have this happy accompaniment. When the German KONIG WILHELM collided with another vessel of her squadron off Folkestone in 1878, this latter, the GROSSER KURFURST sank rapidly with heavy casualties. And again in the collision between the VICTORIA and the CAMPERDOWN, the former which was rammed also sank with heavy loss.

As an argument against the value of the ram, the difficulty of ramming a vessel which was under control was exemplified during the war between Chile and Peru in 1879. In an engagement between the Peruvian INDEPENDENCIA and the smaller Chilean COVADONGA, the Peruvian ship made several unsuccessful attempts at ramming, and finished up by running herself on to a reef and becoming a total loss.

The cult of the ram ran its course through naval construction for the next thirty years. Ships sprouted strange exaggerated excrescences on their bows. The bows of some of the French ships were particularly striking.

Two interesting ships which resulted from this phase were the POLYPHEMUS and the KATAHDIN, the former built for the Royal Navy, the latter for the United States. The POLYPHEMUS which was built in 1881, had submerged torpedo tubes, whilst the American ship was a ram pure and simple. The American ship was not built until 1892 by which time it was apparent that the ram had been displaced by the torpedo which had made considerable improvements since its inception in 1870. After the turn of the century the ram as a weapon in itself vanished, and ramming as a means of sinking the enemy was relegated to the category of a last resource.

When in the 1930's ram bows once more appeared it was as an aid to speed and seaworthiness. But it is doubtful if these bows will ever reach the same degree of exaggeration as some of the nineteenth century warships.

D.P.BRANIGAN

FISHERY PATROL

On July 15th H.M.S. WOTTON put armed boarding parties on the French trawlers CAPRICE DES FLOTS and NOTRE DAME DE PITIE after they refused to heave to. At Peel Magistrates Court both skippers were fined £80 for illegal fishing and their catch valued in all at £1,900 was confiscated. Both trawlers were from Etel, Brittany, and charged with fishing within a 12-mile limit. Neither would stop when apprehended until compelled to do so, off the Isle of Man.

* * * * *

CRUISING TOWARDS EASTHAM

Big changes have occurred this year in the silting off New Brighton, making it impossible to use the ferry stage for berthing at low water. To keep the ferryboats employed during the summer months, at periods of extreme ebb, cruises of one hour's duration have been worked from Liverpool towards Eastham, at a charge of three shillings.

Many holiday-makers have been surprised to arrive at the Pierhead and find no service to New Brighton, but the up-river cruises made possible views of Cammell Laird's slipways, Tranmere Oil Terminal etc., which have only been seen on the rather more expensive dance cruises of ROYAL IRIS. So however damaging to the unfortunate New Brighton tradespeople, who seem to have fate heavily loaded against them, those who appreciate the upper reaches, and its wonderful views of our larger buildings, have been catered for better than for a long time.

In any case, New Brighton Tower building in its present half demolished state after the disastrous Easter fire, is not a pleasant sight in July. As the brickwork is removed, we get a glimpse of the huge steel frame which supported the mighty Tower of the early 1900's. This really is an aweinspiring demolition job.

Viewing the high-and-dry landing stage at low water from the promenade pier, I could not help comparing the tide line of about fifty years ago when we had glorious golden sands all the way from Perch Rock to Seacombe Ferry - of varying width it is true. The pensioners at Demesne Street bowling greens are loud in their confirmation of this.

The sandpump dredgers of the Hoveringham and Norwest Companies daily remove material from the vicinity of Rip Rap Buoy, and I have heard it alleged that the golden sands have slipped away to fill these holes. Be that as it may, the tideline of a more muddy type of sand is moving further into

the River and causing dangerous little islands as the flood tide sweeps in. The Beach Patrol are there to watch and warn.

When Wallasey Corporation drove the piles reclaiming the shore westwards of Perch Rock about 1930 to make its fine promenade and parade, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board warned that trouble would ensue. In fact as time went on, much of the sand against the new wall diminished, and groins were built to hold it. Altering the banks of a fast flowing river can cause effects difficult to predict.

The thought arises as to whether the Seaforth Dock Scheme could be the cause of New Brighton's latest misfortune in not being able to run the holiday seasons ferries at all tidal states. It may be that the sand bearing ebb tide is slowed down by the new projecting barrage at Port Radar, and silting occurs just where it is not wanted.

With the ferry struggling for existence in these last few years, it is to be hoped a remedy is found, as I for one would regret the loss of this amenity, relied on by young and old alike down the years.

N.R.P.

FERRY TOLLS

Fares on the Mersey ferries may soon be increased. For the last few years the charge has been 4d between Liverpool and Woodside, and 9d between Liverpool and Seacombe. To New Brighton 1/6d.

The south end of Woodside Stage is a particularly pleasant spot to view the Mersey whilst journeying. It is, however, disappointing to see how the once numerous seats have rotted away, without replacement. This applies to our railway stations also. Exchange Station has now not a single seat in the concourse. Whilst prices rise, this disregard for the maintenance of amenities is a feature of the age.

THE ONE O'CLOCK GUN

At twelve noon Greenwich mean time on Monday, 21st July, regular strollers at the Pierhead with watches in hand, or wrists raised, waited for the usual time check. There was no puff of smoke from Morpeth Dock wall; the pigeons did not take flight, for the gun was not fired and the 102-year old tradition was broken without a word of warning.

The reason - a "productivity deal" and for those who are baffled by this modern jargon, the reason is as follows. Dock Board men employed at Woodside Stage have been so reduced in number, that as from the above date none is available to make the daily journey to Morpeth Pierhead to load the charge in the Naval Hotchkiss gun. The actual firing has been done by remote control from Liverpool University's Tidal Institute, perhaps better known to readers as Bidston Observatory.

Mariners may have other means of checking their chronometers, but Liverpoolians have come to rely on, and indeed anticipate, the unique bang, even though for some time the gun has been on a five-day week. And still, from its Birkenhead bricked emplacement, it pokes its black muzzle across the swirling tide in the direction of Liverpool, silent and forlorn.

But all is not lost, for the Chairman of Liverpool's Arts Committee has asked the City Museum's Director, Mr.T.A. Hume, who has proved himself a great friend of our Society, to prepare a report on the continuance of the gun, tied in with the concept of the Maritime Museum, awaited for so long by the ship-minded people of Liverpool. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board say they will gladly give the Museum's Director any help they can in preserving the tradition. No time was lost by Mr. Hume in making his report. Whilst awaiting the Maritime Museum, any gesture of co-operation from Birkenhead on this issue would be most welcome. Now, we must await the outcome.

N.R.P.

MERSEY NOTES

There was a welcome of ships' whistles on 17th July for the tug MUMBLES, new from her builders Richard Dunstan Ltd. of Thorne, Yorks. Of a powerful design for handling super tankers, she is owned by the Alexandra Towing Company and it is planned to use her in South Wales ports later. In tonnage, she is, as the local press described her, the Mersey's largest tug, yet in length she is eleven feet shorter than AMANDA HOWARD.

A frequent visitor to our port has been ONWARD VENTURE, a small coastal tanker which served small west coast ports like Kirkcudbright, Workington, and has been seen in Peel, I.O.M. with oil for the electric generating station. In the early hours of 17th July ONWARD VENTURE had an engineroom fire, when off Micklam Point in Solway Firth. Her crew of four were taken off by Workington lifeboat, and the ship drifted ashore. Efforts were made by the tug SOLWAY to re-float her.

A strike of engineers aboard Mersey Pilot cutters and launches restricted pilotage facilities on 18th/19th July.

At 3.20 a.m. on 16th July the Spanish liner MONTE ANAGA outward bound with over ninety passengers for Las Palmas and Teneriffe, grounded close to C.29 black buoy in the Crosby Channel. The Rea tug MAPLEGARTH, in trying to render assistance, ran on to the revetment and lay at an acute angle. AMANDA HOWARD took off her crew and transferred them to WILLOWGARTH, until their own ship righted herself and re-floated on the flood tide at 11.25 a.m. The tug was then escorted to drydock. MONTE ANAGA was refloated with tug aid at 12.15 and returned to the Mersey for survey. Divers reported only slight damage and she sailed in the evening.

STAR PINWOOD - the 29,000 ton bulk carrier completed by Cammell Laird & Co., has arrived at Prince Rupert B.C. in late July, on her maiden voyage from Liverpool. She has the largest

hatch covers ever constructed, four 80ft x 69½ft and one 58ft x 40½ft. The two Munkloader travelling gantry bridge cranes are the most powerful ever fitted on shipboard and have a safe working load of 25 tons. Before her departure she berthed at Princes Stage for demonstration.

In our last issue was reported the collision beyond the Bar Lightvessel, between HAMILTON TRADER and HANNES KNUPPEL in April. On 24th June, in the early hours, there was a collision in the Crosby Channel between the British Transport Commission's dredger CRESSINGTON and HANNES KNUPPEL. CRESSINGTON, the sole dredger working at Garston Docks, was sunk with the loss of one of her crew. The German salvage firm of Ulrich Harms was commissioned to raise the wreck and sent round from Hamburg two interesting craft, MAGNUS II and MAGNUS V, self propelled pontoons with sheerlegs. They have propellers fore and aft, and bow thruster, and were accompanied by their attendant tugs ARGUS II and ARGUS V. On Saturday, 26th July, the two cranes with the wreck cradled in heavy hawsers, came into shallow water opposite Wallasey Town Hall, where patches were welded to CRESSINGTON's hull. The next evening, the wreck was safely put on the blocks in No.4 drydock at Rosebrae. On Monday 28th the German salvage craft berthed at Princes Stage prior to departure.

The Scottish puffer GLENFYNE was seen outward bound on 26th July, having made a voyage from Skye to Runcorn.

The grand old LADY OF MANN, with Captain Callow in command looks even more regal this year. A beautifully proportioned vessel and a credit to Messrs. Vickers and to her owners. Long may she grace the Mersey.

On Thursday, 7th August, and probably on other dates, she made an evening cruise from Douglas to the Calf of Man. This affords both natives and holiday-makers a chance to see the beautiful coastline.

The £4 million oil rig RIMROCK GULFTIDE took up position

fifteen miles from Blackpool early in August. She is serviced by a helicopter based on Blackpool, and two coasters from Heysham. The German tug PACIFIC and two Bugsier tugs brought the rig from the North Sea, with a short call at Falmouth.

N.R.P.

MEMBERSHIP

Our Society welcomes new members interested in ships and the sea. Each season we offer six or seven talks, mostly illustrated, at Liverpool Museums Lecture Theatre. These are given in the winter months and a quarterly copy of News, Notes & Queries is mailed to each member for an annual subscription of twenty shillings for adults. There are reduced fees for juniors and married couples, also for country members beyond a 40-mile radius of Liverpool. It is not necessary to be actively engaged in research - we encourage a club spirit of sociability. There is a coffee interval at all our meetings, and the customary date is the second Thursday in the month, at 7.30 p.m.

Enquiries to Mr. M.K. Stammers, Hon.Secretary,
Liverpool Nautical Research Society, c/o Liverpool
Corporation City Museums, William Brown Street, Liverpool.

* * * * *

All contributions to News, Notes and Queries will be gratefully received by the Editor - N.R.Pugh, 1 Walmer Road, Birkdale, Southport.

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
R E S E A R C H S O C I E T Y

"I must go down to the sea again,
To the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship,
And a star to steer her by.
The wheel's kick and the wind's song,
The white sails shaking,
A grey mist on the sea's face,
And a grey dawn breaking.

J.Masefield's "Sea Fever"

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol.XIII (New Series) No.4

October-December 1969

IT'S FUN FINDING OUT

By comparison with other branches of historical study, nautical research is of comparatively recent origin. It is, however, today gaining momentum as more societies and nautical museums come into being.

A lot of this research is of necessity a full time occupation requiring expenditure of time and money in travelling about to examine documents and manuscripts and becomes, one might say, a job for the professionals. Nevertheless a good deal of interesting and useful research can be done in this field in spare time with little or no expense, it being just a case of knowing where to look. With this object in mind, this article sets out to tell the interested reader the facilities which are readily available in the Liverpool area.

Most of these facilities are to be found in the Liverpool Corporation Libraries in William Brown Street. These libraries are open until 9 p.m. daily apart of course from Sundays and public holidays.

The Picton Library houses a complete set of Lloyds Registers which can be readily consulted. There is just one slight snag about Lloyds - in the early days the Register did not include ships in which they were not interested. It was not until the 1870's that they began to include all ships. This gap can be partly filled by the Liverpool Iron Register, a local society that thrived for some years in the middle of the nineteenth century. A set of these registers is held by Doctor Davies at the University. The Mercantile Navy List from 1920 onwards is also in the Picton.

The next useful facility is the Times Index held at the Picton Library. This runs from 1785 down to modern times. Most items of nautical events can be found listed in the sections "Admiralty Court", "Naval and Military Intelligence", "Shipping Intelligence" or "Wrecks". This index is intended for use with the micro-film copies of the Times in the Records Department on the 5th Floor. When you have located your item and taken note of the date and the locating code, you go up to the Records Department and ask for the relevant roll of film. This is placed in the projecting machine and run round until the required part is reached. If the item is too long to copy on the spot, or you wish to have a copy, this can be done almost while you wait for a small fee.

As well as the Times there are also micro films of all the local Liverpool papers, Post, Echo, Mercury, Albion, and Shipping Telegraph. These are not indexed, but very often the date from the Times enables an article to be located in the local press.

In addition to the micro-films of the papers there is also a set of films of the Wreck Registers from 1850 to 1898.

This is invaluable for pin-pointing date and place of wreck for British vessels. To back up these registers in the Picton Library almost adjacent to the Lloyds Registers are volumes of the annual Wreck Registers from 1880 to 1900. These volumes, in addition to giving all the wrecks, broken into groups for the different types of casualties, i.e. strandings, collisions, etc. also give an alphabetic list of the places where casualties have occurred and a map showing the places and types of casualties.

Adjacent to the Records Department is the Local History library. In the Marine Section is a useful set of Merchant Navy Association volumes from 1880 to 1920. Amongst other things, they list all the Board of Trade enquiries, giving a precis of each case. There is also a well-indexed set of "Sea Breezes".

Some useful magazines can be had on application at the counter of the Picton - the "Marine Engineer" from 1880 onwards is a very useful one, as it lists all launches and trials. There is an unfortunate gap at 1906-7.

In identifying old paintings and photographs it is sometimes useful to use the vessel's "number" which often appears on paintings and sometimes on photographs. Prior to 1855 the code used was Marryat's, which was a private code, so to speak, but approved by Lloyds and universally used. In 1855 came the first international code and the allocation of signal letters by the governments concerned.

Copies of Marryat's codebook can be consulted in the Commercial section of the library. There was a copy of the early International Code Book but this appears to have been mislaid recently. As far as British ships are concerned, numbers can always be identified by the

Registrar General at Cardiff, and from 1870 onwards Lloyd's have published the vessel's number in the Register.

This leads us to the facilities outside the Library and naturally this is the local Registrar of Shipping. The Registrar at Liverpool has a fine set of records going back to the eighteenth century where local ships are concerned, and is extremely helpful. The only thing is, if you want information on a certain ship give him all the information you can on time and place of build, official number and tonnage. This will save a lot of time and labour on his part. If the vessel is not local registry this information can be obtained from the Registrar General at Cardiff. In this case you will be asked to pay a small search fee.

As far as information from shipping companies and business concerns is involved, it is a matter of having contacts and is outside the scope of this article, except to say that most firms seem to be quite helpful.

Most of this article has referred to sources dealing with merchant vessels. Naval information is naturally much more restricted. There is a good set of Jane's, and also of Brassey's in the Picton.

This article is only a very brief summary of the facilities available, but if it helps to overcome that first question "Where do I start?" and to demonstrate that there is a mine of information to be unearthed with a little grubbing, it will have served its purpose. After all, the more people who start researching, the more information will go on record.

D.P.BRANIGAN

QUERY

If any reader has recollections of the Aberdeen Line steamship EURIPEDES completed in 1914, would they please write in. She was used as a troopship in the First World War, and became Shaw Savill's AKAROA in 1932.

Mr. Geoffrey S. Moss, managing director of Cammell Laird and Co. (Shipbuilders and Engineers) Ltd. spoke to the shipping press about the Company's fortunes. He said it was not generally realized that until five years ago Lairds were primarily shipbuilders and engineers. Today the shipbuilding and ship-repair companies were wholly owned subsidiaries of the parent company Cammell Laird and Company, and probably represented something less than one third of the total investment. This participation in a broadly based engineering group had opened up new vistas.

"Shipbuilders increasingly will become engineers with a capital 'E'", said Mr. Moss. "We will have to be capable of designing vessels as part of a transportation system providing facilities and overcoming problems arising from new products. Clients will not in the future ask us to build a ship but to solve a transportation problem for them".

He thought the industry was in the throes of a boom cycle at the present time with the building of bulk carriers and there was a danger that this market would be over-supplied. He continued "I can foresee a slump in the building of this type of vessel in the early 1970's".

In the second half of the 1970's Mr. Moss said Lairds were thinking in terms of increasing the physical size of ships they could build. They contemplated a building dock with quayside facilities to enable them to construct vessels of up to one million tons. He foresaw no difficulty in building ships of this size, and being able to leave the Mersey in ballast so long as Liverpool remained a great port and the river was dredged to present standards.

Mr. Moss, who is 43 years old, believes the shipbuilding industry has a bright future provided it can overcome the problems of the cyclic nature of demand for particular types of tonnage and can find the answers to the technical issues that will enable them to broaden their horizon. And just to underline his confidence that these objectives will be achieved, he added "If I did not think there was a good future, then I am still young enough to get out".

DUBLIN BAY CRUISE VESSEL TARA

I have to thank Mr. T.M. Stafford, Managing Director of Dublin Bay Cruisers Limited for the following. TARA was built at Southampton in 1948 and in 1950 operated between Bournemouth and Poole as a passenger ferry with the name POOLE BELLE. This name was later changed to GROSVENOR HOSTESS. In 1965, the Dublin Bay Company was formed and bought the ship, naming her TARA. She has operated since 1966 and many thousands of people including overseas visitors have enjoyed her trips. There is total accommodation for 150 passengers with lounge seating for 70 or 80, and she is often chartered for annual staff outings. In charge is Capt. Percy Sugg ex Superintendent of Dublin Port and Docks who has had many years of deep sea service. Total crew - 4. In 1966 she was fitted out by the Malahide Shipyard Ltd., when a new wheelhouse was fitted.

N.R.P.

MANX FISHERY 1969

The landings of herring in Manx ports has been the best for some years. During the last week in September, the Dutch motor vessel FEDALA landed empty barrels at Port St.Mary. Salting, packing and coopering was done by Irish labour from County Waterford once more. A cargo left on 25th in the Dutch motor vessel SANTA MARIA, and the Dutch luggers were not seen this year. Numerous trawlers were working just south of Douglas, and putting in to that port for the twice daily markots when complete. Battling their way round Langness against strong southwesterlies for Port St.Mary discharge, were boats from Peterhead, Buckie and Fraserburgh, like CONVALLERIA, CORONELLA, NIMROD, STAR OF HOPE, ARDELLE, FIDELIS, GOLDEN VENTURE, HONEY BEE.

Then there were the Northern Ireland boats CRYSTAL SEA, GREEN VALLEY, GREEN ISLE etc. - all well equipped.

Up to 1st October the Manx scallop boats were concentrating

on "queens" - a smaller size shellfish, but on that date will concentrate on the large type. Two new boats have joined the fleet at Port St. Mary - PEEP O' DAWN, a steel boat of the Ramsey-built "Warrior" type, and DAWN MAID, a wooden craft with wheelhouse aft - now rare in this work. Scallops are cleaned by female labour and the dump of waste shells on the beach below the factory is a constant attraction to holiday-makers.

N.R.P.

MERSEY WRECK CLEARANCE

The recent announcement by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board that they were going to blow up three wrecks as part of their deeper dredging scheme recalls the stories behind these sinkings.

The oldest of the wrecks is that of the CUMBRAE, an iron built steamer, owned by the Clyde Shipping Co., which was lost on the 11th December 1895 on passage from Belfast.

The afternoon of 11th was foggy and CUMBRAE was proceeding up channel in the neighbourhood of No.8 gas buoy when she heard the whistle of a big steamer ahead. Under the impression that the vessel ahead was on his port bow, the master of CUMBRAE turned his vessel to starboard. As she swung round, the White Star GERMANIC, travelling at about twelve knots slid out of the fog and struck the CUMBRAE between the focsl and No.1 Hatch. The time was 3.38 p.m. GERMANIC had sailed from the Landing Stage at 3 p.m. bound for U.S.A. with 200 passengers and Christmas mail. Despite the fog the pilot kept her at a speed of between 11 and 12 knots.

Immediately after the collision the master of the GERMANIC who had initially rung his engines to stop, kept her bows into the CUMBRAE whilst his crew threw ropes and ladders down to the deck of the stricken coaster. By this means all the CUMBRAE's

40 passengers and 28 crew were taken aboard GERMANIC, which then backed astern and dropped anchor.

As CUMBRAE did not show signs of sinking immediately, GERMANIC sent off a boat - she had lowered three in readiness immediately after the collision - with the Master and several of the CUMBRAE's crew to see if anything could be done in the way of salvage. However, before they reached her, she settled down and rested on the bottom, her masts and the top of her funnel visible above the surface.

With the combination of the fog and the short day it was now getting dark. Pulling up to the wreck, the boat party fixed an oil lamp to the funnel to warn other craft and then started back for GERMANIC. In the fog and darkness they failed to find her, and after pulling backwards and forwards in the channel for nearly two hours were finally picked up by the tug GAMECOCK.

Word of the collision having been carried back to the Landing Stage, Mr. Ismay and several White Star directors embarked in the tender MAGNETIC reaching GERMANIC about 7 p.m. A preliminary survey revealed that there was a hole in the bows of the liner, indeed a portion of the coaster's structure was embedded in it. She was ordered back to port entering Langton Dock for survey and repairs. The passengers and mail were re-embarked in ADRIATIC which had luckily just completed her survey lay-up.

At the subsequent case in the Admiralty Court in February 1896 the blame for the collision was shared between the CUMBRAE for altering course, and the pilot of GERMANIC for excessive speed in foggy conditions.

The second wreck in this area which the Dock Board have in mind is of a much more recent date.

On the evening of 21st November 1951 the J.S. Monks' coaster SEAVILLE was inward bound in the Mersey Channel with a general

cargo from Douglas. Built at Alloa in 1931, she was a steam coaster of 717 gross tons. The weather was bad with foggy patches. At about 8 p.m. when she was near Q15 buoy in the Queens Channel she came into collision with Hopper No.30 owned by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. The SEAVILLE was the rammed ship, being struck by the bows of the hopper just abaft the focsl on the port side. The hopper backed off into the darkness and anchored to ascertain the damage she had suffered.

SEAVILLE drifted off and began to heel rapidly to port. One member of the crew had been killed in his bunk when the after end of the focsl was stove in. The increasing heel made it impossible for the crew to launch the lifeboat. Things were looking rather black for them when the providential arrival of No.3 Pilot Boat, the JAMES H. BEAZLEY, saved the situation. Her master had come in to seek shelter behind the bank and seeing that something was amiss, he switched on his searchlight. By this time the SEAVILLE was in a bad way. The pilot cutter immediately lowered two boats which took off the eleven survivors shortly before SEAVILLE sank. Twenty minutes had elapsed since the collision. The hopper, which was damaged in the bows, but in no danger, returned to dock.

The third and most recent of the three wrecks occurred on the other side of the river, just abreast of Herculaneum Dock in fact. This was OUSEL, 1533 gross tons, owned by the British and Continental Steamship Co.

On the night of 7th January 1957, OUSEL, which was inward bound with a cargo of steel plates and sections, had anchored off Herculaneum Dock. At 1.50 a.m. on the morning of the 8th, the Second Officer who was keeping an anchor watch, suddenly became aware of a large ship bearing down on them. This vessel was the 14,000 ton Panamanian tanker LIVERPOOL which had come down the river from Eastham and was seeking an anchorage.

The LIVERPOOL struck the OUSEL on the port side in way of the engine room. Water poured in flooding the engine and boiler

rooms, and pouring down the tunnel, began to come up the emergency escape into the accommodation in the lower poop.

The crew streamed out on to the deck. By chance the tug NORTH QUAY happened to be passing. Her skipper brought her alongside the OUSEL and the master of the stricken vessel got everybody on board the tug. SALVOR which also happened to be handy, came on the scene and salvage operations got under way. It looked at first as if the OUSEL might be saved. Tugs arrived, the cable was slipped and OUSEL was towed into shallower water on the Rock Ferry side. But as she was towed over, she began to sink rapidly and came to rest on the edge of the channel.

There was consternation when she began to show signs of slipping back into the deeper water, and it took all the efforts of four tugs before she was securely lodged out of the fairway. Her stern was resting in 35ft of water although the superstructure was exposed.

The cargo was salvaged without too much trouble. The ship herself presented a more difficult problem. As she was some 36 years old she was not worth a great expenditure and not being in the fairway, the Dock Board were not concerned about her removal. So she was abandoned to settle into the mud until the projected development scheme brought her back into the news.

D.P.BRANIGAN

THE ONE O'CLOCK GUN

"Birkenhead Council has refused to help finance the town's one o'clock gun" reports the Liverpool Echo. The acting leader of the Council said he didn't think many people listen to the gun, and very few even knew where it is. It would mean sharing the £400 per year to keep the gun on. It seems probable that the gun will find a home in Liverpool Museums.

NEW NAMES FOR OLD

CAROLINE H	ex DURHAMEROCK
DANSBORG	ex KINDVIK
DRAGON CASTLE	ex CAMELOT ex BENALBANACH ex EMPIRE ATHELSTAN
DEUTERORNIS	ex DUNSTER ex TEMPLE LANE
ELLIE (Grk)	ex SAINT NICOLAS ex RUDRY ex LONDONBROOK
ETHEL SLEIGH	ex ALBERT MAERSK
FALMOUTH (Lib)	ex LA LOMA
FILICUDI	ex CHAILEY
GEORGIOS C	ex HUNTSFIELD
GEOGILOS	ex CAIRNGOWAN ex MANCHESTER ENGINEER ex CAIRNGOWAN
GEORGIOS V	ex GEORGE PEACOCK
HOWRA	ex LIMERICK
HOMER	ex MIDDLESEX TRADER
HERODEMOS	ex HERACLITOS ex OGUTA PALM ex LAGOS PALM ex LAGOSIAN
IMATACA (Venez)	ex GRECIAN MED ex HEATHMORE ex HICKORY MOUNT
IRINI	ex TEMPLE MAIN
JUWARA	ex SURREY
KAMINA	ex HOAN ex ELLIAN (built at Amlwch 1908)
KALYMNOS	ex PETROLA II ex ANONITY ex EMPIRE CAMPDEN
KIMEN	ex MARSWORTH ex BRIAR ROSE
LOMBARDY	ex MANCHESTER FREIGHTER ex CAIRNFORTH
MALDIVE EXPLORER	ex MATURATA
MALANCHA	ex ALAUNIA
MACHARDA	ex ANDANIA
MALDIVE TRANSPORT	ex DUNEIMIA
MARION	ex KAISA DAN
MARIO (Grk)	ex ORESTIS ex LISA ex KILKENNY ex ELGIN COAST ex LADY TENNANT (1904)
NEPTUNE GARNET	ex EDEN
NATA	ex ELLORA
ORIENTAL CARNAVAL	ex RANGITOTO
OCEAN JOY	ex MASKELTYA
PELOPS	ex TANTALUS

Contd..

PODEROZO	ex FORMBY (tug)
POLLO	ex MOBIL APEX
PRETTY	ex MAIDAN
PROESTOS	ex AMBERTON
PETROCLIS	ex ASSURITY
SAILOR PRINCE	ex VELARDE
SUMBER TUNAS II (Somali)	ex OCEAN TRUST ex VELAZQUEZ
SILVER SWAN (Somali)	ex BALTIC IMPORTER
SHORTHORN EXPRESS	ex HONTESTROOM
SAINT MICHAEL	ex QUEDA
SPARTA	ex IRISH WILLOW
STREPITOZO	ex CANADA (tug)
VENUS II	ex PRINCESS MAUD
VINCENCIA	ex JETTA DAN

MERSEY NOTES

On Saturday, 13th September, the Board of Trade Surveyors chartered the ROYAL IRIS for a 3-hour river cruise. Being well patronized, it was possible for a cheque of £45 to be presented to R.N.L.I. funds. There was dancing and organized games for the children. Our members Branigan, Pugh and Ditchfield took the air on the boatdeck, and when raffle time came, the latter won half a dozen wine glasses.

All Cammell Laird's building slips were seen to be occupied, with the bulk carrier STAR ACADIA nearing launching time. In the fitting out basin were the chemical carrier SILVERHAWK (the ship which launched herself), the dredger TRANSMUNDUM II, and the bulk carrier IRISH STAR.

The captain of ROYAL IRIS gave a commentary on the passing scene and pointed out the base of the oldest lighthouse on the Mersey, alongside the main Woodside passenger bridge. In all the years when I used to climb this slope to catch a bus I never noticed the cream coloured stump of the lighthouse.

On 5th September three salvage vessels arrived at Princes Landing Stage to carry out preliminary work on Mersey wreck clearance, as detailed elsewhere in this issue. They were the tug ORCA and the lifting vessels ZEELEEUW and BUFFEL of the Tak Bergings Company of Rotterdam.

Whilst this goes on, the launch in Holland has been reported of TAKLIFT I, which will undertake the main work. She is a wreck lifting vessel of 2,370 gross tons with two diesel engines driving variable pitch propellers. She will have an 800 ton sheerleg and 400 ton grab. Possibly something akin to the German MAGNUS craft which raised the CRESSINGTON so successfully this year.

Container carrying coasters find crossing the Irish Sea in the winter gales can be precarious. IRISHGATE on passage from Warrenpoint to Garston lost some of her deckload in October, and arrived with a heavy list. WIRRAL COAST on 8th November lost five containers off the Liverpool Bar, when on passage from Newry to Preston, and entered the Mersey with a heavy list, and damaged bulwarks. Two Alexandra tugs assisted her to a crane berth at West Float.

Also damaged in this November gale was the B. & I. car ferry LEINSTER which turned back after leaving Liverpool, with damage to forward doors, necessitating repairs by Harland & Wolff taking two weeks.

Storms were widespread and Limerick S.S. Co's ORANMORE broke down near Eddystone, and had tug assistance from Plymouth. The same Company's MULCAIR met the full force of the storm after leaving Limerick and sought shelter on the coast of Co. Clare.

On 11th November the Irish coaster MOSSVILLE ex CASTLE COMBE ex METEOR when on passage from Cork to Garston, and coming up on the Liverpool Bar anchorage at 5 a.m. collided with another vessel allegedly showing no lights. This was the

Russian SANGARLES - Archangel to Garston. The coaster was damaged in the bows, but there were no casualties.

Shell Co's DARINA and DRUPA are two lightening tankers often seen in the Mersey. It is reported that HALIA is also being converted for this work.

In September, we lost three steam tugs from Mersey service. CANADA and FORMBY were sold to Italy. BANGARTH left for Antwerp in tow of JACQUES LETZER, but unfortunately foundered in Cardigan Bay.

The ocean racing yacht SIR THOMAS LIPTON, which won last year's single handed race across the Atlantic entered Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead on 30th August. She is now being used on youth training cruises. She left on the following day for Holyhead.

On 11th October, a force of NATO warships visited our port. These were the German HAMBURG, Dutch ISAAC SWEERS and TJERK HIDDES, USS MCCAFFERY and HMS LEANDER. The American destroyer wished to careen for an inspection below her star-board waterline and entered Bidston Dock for this purpose.

HMS HECLA berthed in Morpeth Dock on 13th September, one of a group of six oceanographic and survey vessels. The others are HECATE, FOX, FAWN, BULLDOG and BEAGLE. The first four mentioned have all visited Birkenhead.

N.R.P.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. G.J. Holden

Mr. J.G. Wilson, O.B.E.

whom we are very pleased to welcome as members.

OCTOBER MEETING

At the Society's first meeting of the winter season, a talk was given by Mr. A. Lewery on Decorative Canal Painting.

Mr. Lewery began by briefly describing the development of canals from the building of the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal in the 1760's to a far-reaching network by 1800. This gave rise to long distance carrying which meant that the boat crews had to live on board. Originally the crew consisted of two men, but when canals were forced to cut their carrying rates to compete with the new railways, it was usual for a boatman to take his wife and family with him on the boat to help cut costs. It was then that the canal people became a completely separate community which developed its own traditions and customs including a unique style of decorating their boats.

There was no record of when boat painting began, but Mr. Lewery considered that it started when the family moved on to the boat and made it their home. In this way, they would try and introduce home comforts and take a pride in the appearance of their craft.

The hull was decorated with simple geometric patterns on areas where paintwork would not be damaged by loading or unloading cargoes. Particular attention was lavished on the boatman's tiny home (the box-like cabin aft) and his few possessions. The cabin was decorated outside with the name of the owner of the boat, and inside the walls of the cabin were grained and enlivened with painted panels (for instance, on the folding table-cum-cupboard door). There was always a lot of crochet work and lace edgings to the bed across the forward end of the cabin, and also decorative plates and polished brass. All this decoration was intended to give the illusion of having more space inside the cabin, by having a great many small things crammed into the available space. Important things like water cans, headlamps and stools were also painted. On the outside of the boat, panels depicted traditional castles and flower decoration.

Mr. Lewery thought the fashion of painting spread quickly and soon became a fixed convention, because the boatmen were a small separate community, cut off from the outside world, where everyone knew everyone else.

He illustrated his talk with slides and specimens of cans, dippers, table tops and other decorated boatware from his collection. He drew attention to the northern and southern styles of painting. The southern one, centred on Braunston, Northamptonshire was an abstract style based on a series of deft single brush strokes. This is particularly seen in the treatment of the flowers. The northern, or "knobstick" style was based on the Potteries and was far more realistic. Decorating boats was usually carried out by professional painters and was done whenever they went for a refit. As far as the boatman was concerned, it was the decorative qualities of the painting and not its realism that counted. The painters used a number of more or less standard motifs.

Mr. Lewery went on to look for possible sources of these motifs. He discounted gipsy decoration and fairground art as the one was too abstract and the other too brash and glamorous. A possible source was painted furniture and painted clock faces of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The ruined towers painted on many clock faces bore a distinct resemblance to the traditional castles of the narrow boat painter.

Painted furniture was a fashion of the aristocracy which was copied by the less rich, but the poorer furniture had vanished (except for grandfather clocks) through constant use. This kind of material may have provided the inspiration for the boat decorators.

After coffee, a lively discussion took place with members suggesting other sources of the narrow boat painter's style, such as the tinware of Birmingham, pottery from Staffordshire, or inn signs.

Mr. Paget-Tomlinson proposed the vote of thanks which was

seconded by Mr. R.B. Summerfield. This was carried by acclamation,

M.K.S.

CAPTAIN LORD OF THE CALIFORNIAN

- is a character readers will have read about in the efforts of the Mercantile Marine Service Association to clear his name, following adverse criticisms by Lord Mersey in the inquiry following the tragic loss of the liner TITANIC through striking an iceberg in 1912.

Far be it for me to comment on the inquiry, except to say that I knew Captain Lord in my youth extending over a period of at least twenty years. At first, he was in command of the Nitrate Producer's ANGLO CHILEAN. The trade was usually coal from South Wales to Chile, nitrate to Gulf ports, and cotton homewards again. He retired from the sea in 1927. Another ship he had commanded was Leyland's ANTILLIAN.

Never at any time, did I realize what had occurred in the Captain's career, for the incident was in the distant past. Well do I remember his pleasant, deep voice and his great knowledge of the shipping scene in retirement. Quiet in manner, abstemious in his living, and doubtless a cautious navigator, I had the utmost regard for him.

Sad indeed that writers and film producers should rake up the past in such a way that before he died, he felt forced to refute unjust and uncorroborated statements. If the CALIFORNIAN was in reach of the death throes of TITANIC - and this has never been proved - Captain Lord in CALIFORNIAN, himself stopped on the edge of an icefield, would not, in my opinion, be the man to shirk his duty in attempting rescue. As the upstanding officer that he was, the code of the sea would be paramount in Captain Lord's mind - of that I am sure.

N.R.P.

SOCIETY PROGRAMME

The following fixtures have been made for the remainder of the 1969/1970 season :-

Dec. 11th: H.M.S. ELTHAM - the story of an 18th
Century frigate. E.J.Priestley Esq.

1970

Jan. 8th: The Bibby Line E.W.Paget-Tomlinson Esq.

Feb. 12th: Talk by Dr. P.N.Davies (title to be announced)

Mar. 12th: Evening in the Museum's Planetarium, and members
discussion evening.

Apr. 9th: Deep Sea Diving (Illustrated) R.G.Loram Esq.

All meetings commence at 7.30 p.m.
and are held at Liverpool Museum,
William Brown Street.

CUSTOM HOUSE REGISTERS

Reference is made to our April-June issue of this year, and the extract quoted from the "Mariner's Mirror" by our country member Mr. Grahame Farr.

The Collector of Customs at Liverpool will be making available, statutory register books of British Merchant Shipping. There will be considerable scope for voluntary researchers, but owing to the hours when material will be available, it might appeal to our members in retirement. Mr. D.P. Branigan will be pleased to give information to interested members.

RANDOM NEWS ITEMS

PARAGUAY STAR, 10,722 tons, left London in tow of JOHANN PETERSEN for Hamburg where she is being broken up. She was built in 1948 by Cammell Laird and Co. and has been on the London/Buenos Aires route. She was recently damaged by fire.

British Rail's DUKE OF ROTHESAY formerly used on the Heysham/Belfast passenger service, was last year converted to a side-loading car ferry and transferred to the Fishguard/Rosslare route. She was built by Denny's, and now her two sisters DUKE OF ARGYLL and DUKE OF LANCASTER, built by Harland & Wolff are to be similarly modified. All date from 1956 and are turbine driven.

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Limpet mines planted by Egyptian frogmen, have damaged three Israeli ships at Eilat, Gulf of Aqaba. One of these is the HEY DAROMA, better known to us as LAIRDSLOCH. Built during the last war and painted grey, it was interesting to see how smart she looked in Burns Laird's colours when she maintained the passenger and cargo service between the Clyde and Londonderry when hostilities were ended.

SCOTTISH STAR, bottled up in the Bitter Lakes since the six-day war, has had her maintenance party withdrawn by the owners. The future is gravely in doubt for her, two Blue Funnel and one Port Line ships, as well as several of foreign flag.

TUGS

The Alexandra Towing Co's MUMBLES has now returned to service in the Swansea area. Their motor tug MARGAM ex CAEDMON CROSS is operating on the Mersey. She was built by Scotts, Bowling in 1953 and with dimensions 86' x 24' is smaller than their other units we are accustomed to.

Rea's BRACKENGARTH has had several months of operational success, and the arrival of her consort HOLLYGARTH is awaited. The latter is fitting out at Appledore.

In our last issue, the name change ARDNEIL ex CRUISER was given. This tug has been acquired for service at Ardrossan.

P O S T S C R I P T

WEDDING BELLS

Members of the Society will hear with joy of the quiet wedding on Saturday 29th November, of Mr. R.B. Summerfield to Miss E.M. Hope.

We rejoice in this happy occasion, remembering their long association with our Society for which each has done so much.

Ronald was by far our longest serving Chairman to date and a Founder Member. Betty made an excellent Treasurer and hostess at our meetings. She should make an equally able organizer of the beautiful new home they will occupy in the south of Mona's Isle.

The huge fleet of waterline ship models formerly housed in Woolton has now reached the new quarters, personally packed and transported by van driven by Ronald himself.

Betty is quite sure that the "little people" of Fairy Bridge have been shown ample respect. May our happy pair enjoy many years of bliss!

EDITOR