

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES,

VOLUME IV.

1954.

LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

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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

"All delight is in masts and oars and trim
ships to cross the stormy sea." - ODYSSEY.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES.

Vol. IV. No. 1

January, 1954

THE JANUARY AND FEBRUARY MEETINGS

The meeting on 8th December was devoted to "Mersey Memories, a talk by our Member, Mr. E. Jones, illustrated with an extensive collection of lantern slides made from his photographs taken during the latter years of the last and early years of the present century.

Against such backgrounds as New Brighton Tower (when it had a steel tower) and a Pier Head devoid of familiar buildings, we saw such sights as deepwater sail at anchor or in tow, barquentines and topsail schooners threading their ways through the ferry traffic and many of the slim liners which were once so well-known at the Landing Stage. There were views of yachting up-river, the disposal of wrecks down-river and tugboats wearing the house-colours of almost forgotten owners. The Navy of King Edward VII was represented by some of the cruisers which did such splendid service during the early days of the First World War. Mr. Jones also shewed some particularly good views of the popular old Isle of Man turbine-steamer "King Orry" during her service as an armed boarding-vessel.

Mr. Jones concluded his talk with a fine view of the arrival in the Mersey of the White Star liner "Olympic" on 1st June, 1911, prior to her taking up service on the Southampton-New York station.

On 12th January our Member, Major E.H. Pattinson, travelled from his home in Bowness-on-Windermere to read a paper "Old Windermere Steamers". Major Pattinson comes from a family long resident in the Lake District where both his father and grandfather had been interested in the local craft.

The introduction of steamers early in the 19th century was not without opposition around the Lake, the poet Wordsworth being one of the loudest in protest. However progress won and

in 1845 the first steamer, the paddler "Lady of the Lake", appeared. She was owned by the Windermere United Steam Yacht Company who followed with a second vessel, "Lord of the Isles", in 1846. Unfortunately she was destroyed by fire at Bowness in 1850. One of the many interesting photographs which Major Pattinson shewed was of the "Lady of the Lake" with the burned-out "Lord of the Isles" nearby.

The Windermere Iron Steam Yacht Company entered in competition in 1849 and so keen did the rivalry become that one of the contestants is said to have advertised pleasure-sailings for threepence with a glass of porter on the house, whereupon the other began to take people free. Such senseless competition, not uncommon in the mid-Victorian era, came to an end with the fusion of the two concerns into the Windermere United Steam Yacht Company which had the paddle-steamers "Fire Fly", "Dragonfly" and "Rothay" in service when they ordered their first screw steamer, the "Swan", from Rutherglen in 1869.

Major Pattinson brought for inspection the bell from the "Fire Fly" which had been built by McConochie & Claude in 1849, launched complete and with steam up. The Furness Railway took over the company in 1872 and added the "Cygnet" and "Teal" in 1879, the "Tern" in 1891, and "Swift" in 1900. These were the last steamers built for public use on Windermere.

Many graceful iron yachts were privately owned and illustrations shewed their engines and boilers amidships and open to the sky, each vessel having a spacious cabin aft with clerestory roof, broad windows and draped curtains. Some were owned by Barrow business men living round the Lake who would board them for Lakeside each morning, there to entrain for town and their respective offices.

MR. JOSEPH W. FOLEY

We record with sorrow the death at his home in Great Crosby after a short illness of our Member Mr. Joseph W. Foley. Mr. Foley joined the Society two years ago and on 12th December, 1952, read a paper "Three Liverpool Worthies" which has yet to appear in "Transactions". Mr. Foley will be remembered during his short period of membership as a regular attender at meetings who possessed the ability to convey scholarship with an entertaining personality.

NEW MEMBER

Widnes Public Library, E.T. Bryant Esq., F.L.A.

THOMAS ROYDEN & SONS, SHIPBUILDERS, 1818-1893

Sir Ernest B. Royden, Bart., President of the Society, has produced for private circulation a history of his family's shipbuilding activities in Liverpool. In addition there are notes on the industry as practised in neighbouring yards and an analysis of the reasons for its extinction on the Lancashire side of the Mersey.

The persistent legend that the Royden-built barque "Buckingham" was launched by Queen Victoria is again disproved. Members will recall an account of the ceremony with the names of the actual sponsors in "News, Notes and Queries", Volume I, No. 4, page 17, by Mr. J.S. Rees to whom, with his brother, the late Mr. W. Stewart Rees, Sir Ernest expresses his indebtedness for a complete list of vessels built by his family's firm, together with dimensional details and disposals.

MR. KEITH PENNY

Mr. Keith Penny has resigned his membership of Council consequent upon his taking up an appointment with the Australian National University, Canberra. In wishing him success, we take this opportunity of thanking him for his all too short period of Council service.

QUERIES

"RELIANCE" AND "PEGASUS"

Information wanted about David Corsar & Sons' "Reliance" or her sister-ship "Pegasus", preferably details of deck-houses, deck-fittings, paintwork, and dimensions of spars. The information given in Lloyds' Register and Lubbock's "Last of the Windjammers" has already been extracted.

G.F. Howard

JAMES LATHAM

Can any Member supply information about James Latham who lived from about 1800 to 1883, was an engineer with Fawcett, Preston & Company, and who seems to have played an important part in organising the Liverpool-Dublin packet service?

G.F. Howard

TIDAL MEASUREMENT

When was the rise and fall of the tide first measured accurately at Liverpool? It has been suggested to me that such measurements were made at Liverpool at an earlier date than anywhere else. Is this true?

A.N. Ryan

ANSWERS

MEASUREMENT OF TONNAGE

The different ways in which the tonnage of ships was measured are described in "American Neptune". Volume I, page 295; Volume V, page 223 and Volume VIII, page 99. The following notes are based on abstracts from these articles.

The basis of tonnage measurement seems to have been the wine "tun" of 252 gallons, which was found in practice to occupy (including the waste space between contiguous casks) 40 cubic feet. Tonnage was therefore originally a statement of the number of tuns of wine a ship should be able to carry, although it soon became a convenient measure of cargo-carrying capacity. It is interesting to find that the cargo capacity of ships in classical times was sometimes expressed in "amphorae", i.e. jars of wine.

By the beginning of the 17th century it had been discovered that tonnage could be expressed empirically as $T = \frac{K \times B \times D}{100}$ where T = tonnage, K = length of keel, b = breadth inside the planking and D = depth of hold, but Customs dues on merchant ships were charged on "tons and tonnage", which were reckoned as $\frac{4T}{3}$.

For purposes of rough calculation, the formula $T = \frac{K \times B \times D}{100}$ may be simplified. K was usually equal to about 3B, and D was equal to b/2. Tonnage may therefore be expressed as $T = \frac{3B^3}{200}$ and tons and tonnage as $\frac{B^3}{50}$.

There is an interesting reference to Liverpool ships in 1626-7 given by T.S. Willan in his book "The English Coasting Trade, 1600-1750", page 12. It is stated there that according to entries in the Exchequer King's Remembrancer Port Book (reference 1333/8) the average size of Liverpool coasters in the year 1626-1627 was 10.3 tons. They ranged from the "Providence" of 2 tons to the "Rebecca" of 60 tons which had sailed with a cargo of millstones for London. In the same year, the average size of ships going down the Severn from Gloucester was 24.3 tons.

G.F. Howard

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. IV. No.2.

March, 1954

THE MARCH MEETING

On 9th March our Member, Captain George Ayre, A.I.N.A., F.R.G.S., of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, read a paper on the organisation and work of the Lifeboat Service. He is Honorary Secretary of the New Brighton Station which, not unnaturally featured in his paper.

It will be unnecessary to remind Members that the Royal National Lifeboat Institution is supported entirely by voluntary contributions, and Captain Ayre gave a breakdown of the source of £100 income during the last financial year. Legacies accounted for nearly 50 per cent. He caused much amusement when paying tribute to the work of the Wallasey Ladies' Lifeboat Guild: "... they would get blood out of a stone!"

During the last century life-saving in Liverpool Bay was the responsibility not only of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution stations but also of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board who maintained a boat at the rear of the George's Landing Stage which, in case of emergency, would be taken to the scene by a tug. By a Board minute dated 9th April, 1894, the joint responsibilities were vested in the Institution to which the Board would pay £1,000 per annum. In spite of the drop in money values, this sum is the contribution today and goes towards the annual upkeep cost of the New Brighton station.

The New Brighton station is a "floating" one, the lifeboat lying off the pier on moorings subjected to stress of weather and tide not encountered by a housed craft. The "Norman B. Corlett", which cost £31,000, was presented by the Corlett family in 1950 in memory of a yachting tragedy which is still in the minds of most of us. She is constructed of oak and mahogany, diagonally planked with a double-skin, diesel-propelled and having every modern refinement for the saving of life, navigation and her own safety. A boarding boat at New Brighton landing-stage is a

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

necessity on a "floating" station and is suspended on mechanical operated davits presented by a well-known firm of manufacturers this type of equipment.

The headquarters are in Egerton Street, where most of the crew live, the committee room being above the stores. Mechanics alone are paid a full salary, coxwains and second coxwains a retaining fee and a small full-time staff administers the Institution from London, but 90 per cent of the labour of the Institution up and down the country is voluntary. The summons is the time-honoured signal of three maroons, and it has been known for the lifeboat to be passing the Rock Light within seven minutes of the firing of the third.

At the time of the take-over of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board's responsibilities, additional stations were maintained at Hilbre Island, Point of Ayre and Southport, but these have since been closed. Captain Ayre reminded his audience that no call is ever refused, however doubtful its authenticity, and that only the best is good enough for the lifeboat service.

Many questions were asked of Captain Ayre at the close of his paper and a vote of thanks accorded by Mr. John Smart was seconded by Mr. E.P. McManus.

ERRATUM

In the last issue of "News, Notes and Queries", the papers given by Mr. Jones and Major Pattinson were captioned as the January and February meetings. They were of course read in December and January, respectively.

NEW MEMBERS

T.W.F. Walker, Esq., Stratford-on-Avon.

Libraries:

Bebington. Wm. Lowndes, Esq., Librarian.
Birkenhead. Geo. Stratton, Esq., Librarian.
Bootle. A.R. Hardman, Esq., Director.
Liverpool University. (subscribing to
"Transactions" and "News, Notes and Queries")
K. Povey, Esq., Librarian.

At the last meeting of Council, one membership was declared lapsed.

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. IV. No.3.

May, 1954

THE APRIL MEETING

Research duties in London prevented Mr. Ryan from reading his paper "The Royal Navy during Nelson's Lifetime" in the 1953/54 Syllabus and we look forward to hearing it during next season. Captain Ayre's paper, reported in the March "News, Notes and Queries", was brought forward to 9th March leaving open the meeting on 13th April.

At short notice a discussion was arranged on "Shipping Casualties, Salvage, Rescue and Prevention" to which were invited Captain G.M. Whitman of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, Mr. Thomas A. Kelly, Chief Officer of the Liverpool Fire Service, Mr. G.R. Critchley, C.B.E., M.A., of the Liverpool and Glasgow Salvage Association and Lieut.Cdr. Ian Fraser, V.C., D.S.C., R.N.R., the distinguished underwater expert who needs no introduction. Commander Fraser found himself at the last moment unable to attend, having been called suddenly to an urgent job at Gloucester, but the Society had the opportunity of being host to his brother, Lieutenant Brian Fraser, R.N.R., who deputised at short notice. Mr. Critchley had every intention of attending but at the last moment had to go to a wreck on the Northeast coast. His chief assistant, Mr. Walter B. Cottrell, deputised for him and brought along an interesting album of salvage photographs.

After an introduction by the Chairman, Captain Whitman opened the discussion in general terms and followed with particular reference to the "Empress of Canada" and "Fulani" fires, still fresh in memory. He pointed out that whereas the circumstances appeared to be similar in the opening stages, later happenings were not the results of human judgment, but arose from factors, favourable for the "Fulani" but tragic for the "Empress", which governed subsequent events. The "Fulani" was, and happily still is, a cargo-liner whose trouble centre was easier of access to firefighters than that of the passenger-carrying "Empress" with her minutely subdivided superstructure. It was also possible for

the "Fulani" to be scuttled on an even keel when the fire was fought to a successful conclusion. The "Empress" on the other hand had accumulated a considerable weight of water in her superstructure when the decision was taken to let herself burn out in the belief that she would remain afloat and hold the list which she had taken. This was the outcome of a meeting convened on the spot between Dock Board officials, naval architects and Fire Service officers. As we know, the ship capsized against the quay for reasons which are still not quite clear; ports may have been open or cracked open with the heat, or the melting of leaden plumbing serving various disposal chutes may have made access for the murky waters of Gladstone Dock as she listed. Later, Captain Whitman answered criticisms alleging apparent neglect to open the superstructure to permit the lodged water to run out with an explanation of the difficulties encountered in using oxy-acetylene cutting apparatus against metal which has cold water on its far side.

He also answered criticisms that the "Empress of Canada" might have been towed out of the Gladstone Dock system instead of being allowed to obstruct a valuable berth. This would have meant her having to pass through the Hornby Lock, the only connection between the Gladstone and systems to the south. These in turn were and still are using the Gladstone system and its river entrance as their only means of access to the sea during the Canada Dock entrance reconstruction scheme. Had the "Empress" capsized in or near the Hornby Lock, shipping in docks from there as far south and including Brocklebank Dock would have been immobilised. Captain Whitman drew attention to the difficulties with which divers had had to contend during salvage operations with a visibility of nil in water which occasionally had a thin surface of ice.

Lieutenant Brian Fraser emphasised that whereas the "Empress of Canada" and "Fulani" were team jobs, much credit was due to one-man tasks, such as the salvage of bullion from ships, themselves beyond hope of recovery, and cited the "Egypt" and "Niagara" cases. He suggested that all concerned had much to learn from repeated lessons in the matter of ship fires in dock.

After giving some interesting details of the raising of the "Kronprins Frederik" at Harwich, Mr. Cottrell caused some amusement with a whimsical observation on a line that, after all people should not worry unduly as salvage was his bread and butter!

Chief Fire Officer Kelly suggested that the watch in port was not always as informed as it might be on a ship's layout, and firemen were often confronted with ignorance of factors which would govern their plans for dealing with an outbreak. Fire-fighting points aboard ship were frequently of a gauge which did not admit of unison with the equipment of shore-based brigades. He stated that his own staff included experienced seafaring men who had, he added, learned nothing new from a much-publicised training-course operated by the Royal Navy. Mentioning the "Empire Waveney" fire in 1946 when the National Fire Service was still in operation, he felt that credit should be allowed for the fact that this vessel was retained on an even keel.

Our Member Captain Ayre vigorously defended fire precautions aboard ship, both in port and at sea. Amongst other of our Members, Mr. Fletcher remarked on the equipping of fire patrols with portable apparatus which he felt would have little effect in an emergency; Mr. Smart spoke as the servant of a company responsible for the manufacture of ship's fire-fighting equipment and as an auxiliary of the Fire Service before, during and for some time after the Second World War; Mr. Lewis felt that the public had a lot of elementary lessons to learn on fire prevention in the home.

The "discussion" meeting is an innovation in the Society. Distinguished experts accepted invitations to place and support what were strongly felt and sometimes contradictory points of view. Members and guests were afforded the opportunity of learning something from informed sources more spontaneous than the usual channels of "public relations", and before and after the discussion were able to inspect photographs and documents bearing on the subject of the evening. Additional to the album which Mr. Cottrell had brought along, these included a series of photographs shewing all phases of the burning and subsequent salvage of the "Empress of Canada" and a collection of the well-known "Gibson" Cornish wreck photographs kindly loaned by the "Tre-Pol-Pen" Shiplovers' Society of Cornwall to whom our Society is greatly indebted.

MR. A. N. RYAN

Mr. A.N. Ryan, M.A., Honorary Secretary of the Society, has been elected to the Council of the Navy Records Society.

NEW MEMBERS

Norman Brocklebank, Esq., Wallasey.
Captain C.W. Vaughan, West Kirby.
Mrs. E. A. Worthy, Wallasey.

ANSWERS

FORMBY AS A PORT

Referring to a note under the heading "Tonnage Measurement" in "News, Notes and Queries", Volume III, number 5, too much importance should not be attached to the statement that Formby was once a port.

Up to the early 19th century the term was used loosely in the sense of a place where vessels could shelter, or take in or discharge goods and passengers, and the title "port" did not necessarily imply the quays, docks and loading-gear associated with the modern use of the term. The "wykes" of Yorkshire and the "porths" of North Wales were the sort of thing that was called a port in earlier times.

The proposed docks at Formby are mentioned in the Victoria County History of Lancaster (Volume III, page 45) though the source of the statement does not seem to be given. The proposal is a curious one because in the early 18th century Formby was an insignificant village in a remote, marshy and thinly populated part of the county, served by inadequate roads, with no industrial or agricultural hinterland within easy access and with an exposed shore. One wonders whether the scheme was meant seriously or whether some "wangle" lay behind it.

G.F. Howard

THE ELLESMERE-CHESTER CANAL

In reply to Mr. Keith Penny's enquiry in "News, Notes and Queries", Volume III, number 5, a reference to the early history of this waterway is contained in "The Hundred of Wirral", pages 231-2, W.W. Mortimer, 1847. I understand that Mr. Penny now has a copy of the reference part of which reads: "The company of proprietors of this navigation obtained their act of parliament in 1793, and the canal was cut under the superintendence of the late Mr. Telford, of Shrewsbury. The recent improvements have been completed by Mr. W.A. Provis, from designs by Mr. William Cubit, at an expense of upwards of £100,000."

K.P. Lewis

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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. IV. No.4July, 1954

FUTURE MEETINGS

Arrangements for the coming season are well in hand, and the following advance information is given to enable Members to note the dates of meetings which will be held on the second THURSDAY in each month on board "Landfall" in Canning Dock, Liverpool, commencing with the Annual General Meeting on 14th October and following with meetings on 11th November, 9th December, 13th January, 10th February, 10th March and 7th April.

An interesting series of papers is being arranged including that of Mr. A.N. Ryan, dealing with the Nelson period, a paper postponed from last season, and papers by Mr. E.W. Argyle, (Ships on Stamps) Mr. R.A. Stephenson, (Engineer with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board) Mr. J.R. Bigland, (Marine Insurance) and Mr. John S. Rees in collaboration with Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods.

The Society is extremely grateful to the Chairman, Captain Astbury, and the Committee of the Merseyside Master Mariners' Club, for again allowing us to use their Clubship "Landfall".

MR. JOHN AITON TODD

We record with great sorrow the death on 23rd July of Mr. John Aiton Todd, M.A., B.L., a Member of the Society for many years. Mr. Todd will be remembered for his work during the 1951/52 season when he undertook to hold the dual offices of Chairman and Honorary Secretary, into both of which appointments he threw his wholehearted zeal. Ill-health caused his withdrawal from active participation in the Society's affairs during the latter part of that season, but not before he had succeeded in gaining support for the Society's efforts in a wide field. This support has continued and is a worthy memorial to his work amongst us. He was made an Honorary Life Member earlier this year.

Mr. Todd was well-known on Merseyside, having been Principle of the Liverpool College of Commerce from 1923 to 1940. Born in Glasgow 79 years ago, he graduated at the University there and was admitted a solicitor at the early age of 21. Commerce was his main field of study and he specialised in the cotton trade, becoming Secretary of the Empire Cotton Growing Committee in 1917.

He was an authority on the history of the Liverpool Cotton Market and author of a widely-read work on the trade as practised in this city.

A few years ago Mr. Todd went to reside in a small house in Rock Park, Rock Ferry, and it is characteristic of his energetic nature that within a few months of his taking up residence he had started a line of research and amassed notes and documents on the history of personalities and property in that corner of Birkenhead.

To Mrs. Todd and family we extend our deepest sympathy.

BRIGADIER YOUNG'S GIFT

The Society is very fortunate in having been presented with a number of lantern slides by Brigadier Desmond Young of Sark, C.I. The slides belonged to his father, the late Commodore Sir Frederick W. Young, C.B.E., for many years Chief Salvage Officer of the Liverpool & Glasgow Salvage Association, and depict scenes from some of his most memorable salvage feats. It is hoped to project these slides at the Open Soiree during the coming season.

MR. J. H. HODSON

Mr. J.H. Hodson, a Member of the Council for two seasons, and until recently in charge of the newly-created Liverpool Records Office, has left Liverpool to take up an appointment in Chelmsford. Whilst remaining a Member of the Society, Mr. Hodson has had to resign from the Council. We wish him every happiness in his new post.

A LOCAL SERVICE TO MEMBERS

The Liverpool Records Office is located in the Picton Library, William Brown Street, and is now in charge of Mr. H. Taylor. It contains a wealth of information on matters pertaining to Liverpool and the surrounding district. There is an interesting collection of shipping books in the Commercial Reference Library in the basement of Derby House, Exchange Buildings, including five early volumes of Lloyds' Register placed there by the Society on permanent loan. The Library is in the charge of Mr. K. Hopkins.

NEW MEMBERS

T. W. Adams, Esq., Johannesburg.

Osgood Williams, Esq., (Hon. Curator of Steamship History,
Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass., U.S.A.)

Libraries:

St. Helens, Lancs. H.C. Caister Esq., F.L.A., F.R.S.A.

Widnes, Lancs. E.T. Bryant, Esq., F.L.A.

L I V E R P O O L N A U T I C A L
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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. IV. No.5.

September-October, 1954

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting was held on board the "Landfall" on Thursday, 14th October. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the past season were presented and adopted. The Chairman mentioned that it was very gratifying that the effective membership of the Society had practically doubled in two seasons, and that last season ended with no subscriptions outstanding. The Syllabus for 1954/55 was being printed and would be ready for circulation with the October issue of "News, Notes and Queries".

The following Office Bearers and Council Members were elected, or re-elected, for the season 1954/55:

CHAIRMAN:	R.B. Summerfield
HON. SECRETARY:	A.N. Ryan, M.A.
HON. TREASURER:	Miss E.M. Hope
HON. ARCHIVIST:	G.R. Sloman
COUNCIL:	Captain G. Ayre, A.I.N.A., F.R.G.S.
	A.M. Fletcher, B.Sc.
	K.P. Lewis
	T.D. Tozer
	J.A. Howard-Watson, F.R.G.S.,
	F.R.S.Lit., F.R.Hist.S.

THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

On 16th September, Members were afforded the opportunity of attending a meeting of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire at which a paper was read by Mr. Maurice M. Schofield, M.A. "The Rise and Fall of the Port of Lancaster, 1680-1860". Mr. Schofield's paper was much appreciated by those Members of our Society who attended, particularly the work which had gone into the preparation of the diagrammatic statistical data which Mr. Schofield presented in support.

MR. JAMES A PUGH

We record with sorrow the death of Mr. James A. Pugh of Irby, a Member of the Society since 1943. Mr. Pugh had been in indifferent health for some years but his death came very suddenly; he collapsed on a Liverpool railway-station.

We remember Mr. Pugh as a model-maker of modest disposition but great achievement in the use of metal for small fittings. In August 1931, his model of the Port Sanitary Authority's launch "Moyles" gained him one of the six major prizes awarded in a competition organised in connection with Liverpool's "Shipping Week" of that year. To Mrs. Pugh we extend our deep sympathy.

MR. C.J. BLACKBURN AND MR. E. CUTHBERT WOODS

Mr. C.J. Blackburn of Rock Ferry was seriously injured in a fall recently and Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods of Bowness-on-Windermere was hurt in a yachting accident. We understand that both gentlemen are making good progress and we take this opportunity to send them our best wishes.

DONATION

The Society acknowledges with grateful thanks a donation of £10 by our Vice-President, Mr. W. Ernest Corlett, towards the cost of printing "Transactions".

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. A.W. Beal, Neston.
Miss J.N. Dodge, Royal National Lifeboat Institution,
Liverpool.
Mr. Wm. Marshall, Waterloo.
Mrs. Wm. Marshall, Waterloo.
Mr. D.S. Rees, Liverpool.
Mr. Maurice M. Schofield, M.A., Widnes.
Mr. H.C. Timewell, London.

Mr. Rees is the son of Mr. J.S. Rees, a Founder Member and Vice-President of the Society.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

SOME EARLY 19TH CENTURY LIVERPOOL VESSELS

The following is an exact copy of a page in a book which has been lent to me by Mr. G.M. Bland, F.S.A., F.R.S.A., M.R.S.L., formerly City Librarian of Lancaster, and is reproduced with his permission:

Liverpool Feby 13 - 1816

Feby. Dimentions of Vessels enter^d for Graving Dk.

13	Vessels name	Captain	Length	Water F ^d	do.Aft	What Dk	G.Dk
	Brig Jane	Crookshank	85. 0	6.0	6. 3	Kings No 4	tides
16	Sch.Morning Star	Hadgley	72. 0	5.0	6. 6	Salt'hs No 3	Neaps
	Ship Jess and Flora		105. 0	7.0	10. 0	Kings	
18	Ship Raikes	Ray	108. 0	10.6	11. 0	Kings No 4	Neaps
March 2	Ship Ocean	T.Thompson	108. 0	7.6	8. 6	Old Dk.No 2	two N
May 1	Brig Aurora	Linac	82. 0			Georges No 3	Neaps
15	Brig Cunning ^m	Boyle.Owners	75. 0	7.6		Georges No 3	Tides
		Gibson & Ritson					
July 1	Ship Aurora	Cap ^t Baker	122. 0	9.6	10. 6	Kings No 4	Tides
" 3	Brig Dispatch	Cap ^t Scott	114. 0	9.8	11. 0	Georges No 2	Tides

There would appear to have been two vessels of the name of "Aurora".

J. S. Rees.

A PIER HEAD MEMORY

To-day the Mersey ferries take their time from the Liver clock which this year has been made to chime the quarters. Before the Pier Head buildings were erected, the masts of tall ships were to be seen in the George's Dock system between the Landing Stage approach and the Overhead Railway. The ferries were more numerous than now and took their departure cues from a clock which has long since ticked its last, at least on its original site. This was affixed to the westerly prospect of the Pier Head Baths, a long low building which stood between the south bridge and the new war memorial site.

The first indoor public swimming baths in the country, they were begun in 1826 and opened on 8th June, 1829. Until their demolition in 1906 to make way for redevelopment of the area, the baths were a landmark of their day as well as a cherished institution. The City of Liverpool Baths Committee has

recorded that the establishment cost £24,481 and that "the walk between the bath and the river was a regular congregatory place for unemployed dockers and seamen. There were many well-worn 'ollie' pitches and the lost marbles frequently fouled the pump suction much to the annoyance of the staff". Dr. John Masefield has referred to his impressions when a "Conway" boy: "... metal mouths ever spouting more green water; at the shallow end were gratings filled with the splash of falling fountains, the happy noise of water, startled every instant by a warning cry, followed by the wash of a plunge, as some great diver went in from the high board".

Five years after the opening, the face of the clock was lit by gas; a novelty indeed. Filling the baths was simplicity itself; a valve and filter from the rising tide. It is to be presumed that the building was entered from the centre, facing inland, and that it contained two plunges, for males and females respectively. The baths would appear to have been a swimming establishment only for there is no record of the often concomitant slipper baths and wash-house. That these omissions would point to a high class establishment is supported by a description at the time of the opening of the long-forgotten Paul Street Baths in 1846, provided, it was stated, for those for whom the Pier Head Baths were out of financial reach.

In 1857 a youth caught stealing from bathers' clothes received on conviction fourteen days in prison plus five years on the reformatory ship "Akbar", such was the rough justice of the times.

The Pier Head Baths had a long colonnade fronting tall windows thus recessed from outside gaze. A similar though smaller establishment erected on the Esplanade at Rock Ferry is still standing, though long since converted into cottages.

The Baths replaced a crude form of bathing tub, for such it was and little more, where the Prince's Dock now stands. In turn a new central baths was promised to take the place of the demolished Pier Head Baths, but like other promises in respect of this part of Liverpool, it remains unfulfilled.

A rockery stands where once young Liverpool Disported itself in Masefield's gurgling green water. The riverside walk is still there, but now the province of competing denominational factions. All that remains of the Baths lies deep beneath this local Hyde Park Corner, the lodgement whence powerful pumps take the salt waters of the Mersey uphill to the old baths in Cornwallis Street.

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

"All delight is in masts and oars and trim
ships to cross the stormy sea." - ODYSSEY.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

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November-December, 1954

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

On Thursday, 11th November, Mr. A.N. Ryan, M.A., of the Department of Modern History, Liverpool University, read a paper "The Navy in Nelson's Time". Mr. Ryan, who is Honorary Secretary of the Society, gave a survey of events in the Royal Navy between 1758, the year of Nelson's birth, until his death at Trafalgar in 1805, with a summary of the conditions under which both officers and ratings were recruited.

On the one hand, the period was full of great events giving birth to great personalities. On the other, Admiral Byng, a sacrifice to politics, had been court martialled and shot at Portsmouth the year before Nelson was born, the French, had effected a landing in Ireland and there were the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore. That at Spithead, mainly directed against the scale of pay, was well handled and in the main successful. The mutineers were calm in their conduct and promised that in the event of the French fleet being sighted, they would put to sea. The mutiny at the Nore was clumsy, badly handled and unsuccessful.

Mr. Ryan dwelt on the contemporary incidence of political influence within the Royal Navy. It was not uncommon for the First Lord to be a naval officer and for officers of the Senior Service as his political opponents to take their feuds from Parliament to the quarter deck.

The favourite mode of entry for a potential officer was for him to be entered on the books of a ship as "captain's servant" in which capacity his prospects depended upon the influence from ashore which could be brought to bear with his superiors. In the field of fiction, Marryat's "Midshipman Easy" started in this way. It was not however uncommon for a boy to be borne on the books of a ship but not actually to serve on board.

In 1733 the Naval Academy was opened at Portsmouth but was not popular; "book learning" was regarded with suspicion.

Another opening was commissioning from the lower deck, but men so advanced usually found their prospects restricted.

Many private fortunes were made by naval officers of the period out of prize money from the plundering of enemy trade, usually on the East and West Indies stations.

In time of peace entry to the lower deck was often by boys of poor circumstances recommended to the Marine Society from the magistrates under whose notice they came when, as often as not, their background had driven them to crime. Men were encouraged to join in time of war through the bounty system. "Lord Mayor's Men" were young bloods who, picked up drunk were given the alternative of service in the Navy to unwelcome publicity resulting from trial and conviction. Sufficient men were still not forthcoming to man the ships for the French wars and towards the end of the 18th century the Quota Acts laid the obligation on local authorities to supply a certain number for the King's service. Undesirables were rounded up but still the supply did not approach the demand, for this category found ways and means to avoid the conscription. An extended bounty system which encouraged a number of debtors, comparatively well-educated men, to join as some means of solving personal difficulties, may have brought into the service the brains behind the Spithead mutiny.

The crying need was for trained seamen and led to the impressment system which, as Mr. Ryan was at pains to point out, was not as arbitrary as popular fiction has since made it out to have been. But the net was widespread and sailings would frequently be delayed until the arrival of a convoy of merchantmen when their crews would be impressed.

Discipline with crews mustered in this way was harsh and based on fear. Flogging was the favourite punishment as it saved the manpower which would have been lost to the service by capital punishment or discharge with ignominy. When battle came, all fought hard and well, for a battle won was a step nearer victory and release.

Following Mr. Ryan's paper, Members were enabled to view the film "The Cruel Sea" on the kind invitation of the Chairman and Committee of the Merseyside Master Mariners' Club.

NEW MEMBERS

Colonel J.L. Finigan, D.S.O., T.D., J.P., Liverpool.
Mr. M.E. Fisk, Wallasey.
Mr. K.W. Green, Barnston.
Mr. C.E.C. Townsend, T.D., B.Sc., Croydon.
Mr. G.J. Walsh, Liverpool.
Mr. E.L. Ward, Liverpool.

RESIGNATION

Your Council has accepted with regret the resignation of Mr. J. H. Hodson, B.A. Mr. Hodson served on the Council from 1952 until early this year when he took a post with the Essex County Records Office. Whilst in Liverpool he was librarian with the Local History Department of the City Libraries, now the Liverpool Records Office, and the author of a paper "Some Aspects of the Liverpool Slave Trade" read before the Society on 13th March, 1953.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

LEASOWE LIGHTHOUSE

As Leasowe Lighthouse has recently been mentioned in the Wallasey press, it might be a suitable time to refute the statement that its foundations are bales of cotton from a ship which was wrecked in the vicinity when the builders were endeavouring to get satisfactory foundations. The only book in which this rumour appears that I have come across is "'Twixt Mersey and Dee" by the late Mrs. Hilda Gamlin (1897). Here also is stated that it is the oldest lighthouse still in use, that the date of its erection is not known, that it was built to replace one encroached upon by the waters, that the date 1763 was when the African slave traders made it over to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board was formed in 1857) and finally that the foundation is on bales of cotton.

I dealt with all except the last of these in a paper "Some History of the Coastwise Lights of Lancashire and Cheshire" which was printed the Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Volumes 96 (1944), 97 (1945) and 98 (1946).

Mr. J. S. Rees points out that the clay on which it is built makes quite a satisfactory foundation. Brookes' "Liverpool in the Last Quarter of the 18th Century", page 243 states that in 1784, eight bags of cotton were imported from the U.S.A. in an American vessel into Liverpool, which was seized by an officer of Customs under the impression that cotton was not grown in America. If Brookes is correct that the first cotton imported into Liverpool was in 1784 or 1785 in such small quantities, it is unlikely that in 1763, when the lighthouse was built, any ship would be approaching Liverpool carrying a sufficient cargo of cotton in bales for the purpose. Brookes goes on to say (page 244) "those eight bags caused something like a glut in the market as they lay in the warehouse of Messrs. Rathbone and Sons for several months ... and were finally sold to Messrs. Strutt of Derby."

Finally at this early period it was not pressed into "bales" but sent loose in bags or boxes which, in this form, would hardly be suitable for the purpose. Smithers "History of Liverpool", page 128, says: "In the year 1785 five bags, and in 1786 six bags of cotton only were imported from the U.S.A."

E. Cuthbert Woods

CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOVERNMENT MAIL STEAM PACKETS AT LIVERPOOL, 1826-1848

- 1826 Service by Post Office opened with "Comet" and "Etna" ("Aetna") built by Humble and Hurry at Liverpool, and "Dolphin" and "Thetis" built by Graham at Harwich.
- 1827 "Jonathan Hulls" purchased.
- 1833 "Jonathan Hulls" sold.
- 1834 "Richmond" built by Hunter and Dow, Glasgow.
- 1835 "Thetis" lengthened.
- 1836 "Royal Sovereign" transferred from Milford. "Comet" lengthened
- 1837 Service transferred to Navy. Vessels renamed: "Comet"--"Lucifer", "Dolphin"--"Shearwater", "Etna"--"Kite", "Richmond"--"Redwing", "Royal Sovereign"--"Monkey", "Thetis"--"Avon". "Colonsay" purchased and renamed "Urgent".
- 1838 "Merlin" and "Medusa" built at Pembroke Dockyard.
- 1839 "Avon" and "Kite" withdrawn.
- 1840 "Medina" built at Pembroke Dockyard. "Lucifer" and "Shearwater" withdrawn.
- 1841 "Monkey" withdrawn.
- 1847 "Redwing" sold. "Urgent" withdrawn.
- 1848 Service terminated. "Merlin", "Medusa" and "Medina" to Mediterranean packets.

- Notes:
1. "Jonathan Hulls" appears to have been "Sir John Moore" both before purchase and after sale.
 2. Parliamentary Paper 1838, No. 203 shews "Richmond" as built by Evans at Glasgow. As Evans built only at Rotherhithe until 1835, in which year he went abroad, the information in the P.P. appears to be in error.
 3. Information is required as to previous owners of "Colonsay"

C.E.C. Townsend.

(To be continued in the next issue).