

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES,

VOLUME 5.

1955.

LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

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ERRATA

The page numbers of issue number 4, November, 1955, should read: 13, 14, 15 and 16, not 12, 13, 14 and 15. In issue number 3, June, 1955, page 10, last line should refer to H.M. Sloop "Avenger", not "Adventure". The above index incorporates these amendments. On both issues 3 and 4, the page numbers and the title "News, Notes and Queries" have been accidentally transposed so that the page numbers fall inside the folds of any binding instead of appearing at the outer edge of each sheet.

These errors occurred in the typing of the original draft and were in no way the fault of the Society's duplicating contractors.

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. V. No.1

January, 1955

THE DECEMBER AND JANUARY MEETINGS

On Thursday, 9th December, the Society was host to the distinguished local philatelist, Mr. E.W. Argyle, who read a paper "Research on Ship Stamps". Mr. Argyle who is well-known as a contributor to local journals on stamps bearing maritime subjects within their designs, opened with an apology for presuming to speak on Research before the Society. His modesty was unnecessary, for his knowledge of shipping history as a complement to his own specialised branch of Philately is well known.

Coming to the subject of his paper, Mr. Argyle suggested that the relationship between the stamp proper and its maritime decoration was often an uneasy one. The ship or ships depicted sometimes had no connection with the country of issue, and he passed round as an example a Peruvian stamp bearing a picture of a North Atlantic liner of the 19th century. The ships themselves were not always above criticism, and he shewed a design made up of a composite vessel which had features of the British motorship "Reina del Pacifico" and the Italian "Conta Biancomano". An apparently ship-rigged vessel depicted on a St. Helena Issue, bore no relation under examination to anything afloat; the tiny sketch shewed a streamlined stern to the ship's otherwise early 19th century outline, yards slung abaft the masts and those on the main so swung as to be trapped between shrouds and mast.

A Newfoundland issue illustrated what purported to be Cabot's "Matthew" leaving the Avon and a United States stamp bore what was entitled "Columbus' Flagship". The ships were identical. Another picture shewed a vessel known as an oil-burner in the process of taking on wood fuel.

A four-funnelled liner off New York had, from the position of her accompanying tender and presumed direction, the Manhattan shore on the wrong side. At first it was thought that the stamp's design had been based on a print made from a negative in reverse, but the chance acquisition of a German postcard revealed the origin. The view was in the first place of the liner

"Kronprinz Wilhelm" arriving at New York with Prince Henry aboard and accompanied by a German warship. The appearance of the latter did not appeal to the American post office authorities, and was replaced by a sketched-in view of Manhattan, on the wrong side. In greater detail were Mr. Argyle's comments on a picture of Captain Cook landing in Wiue in 1774. A non-existent mountainous background had been introduced and palm-trees which were not brought to the island until a later period, from Samoa. The number of men accompanying the great navigator did not tally with Captain Cook's diary.

No picture is known to exist of the "Sea Venture" from which Sir George Somers colonised Bermuda, and a stated picture of her on a stamp is in fact a random selection from Furstenbach's "Mercata Navales". From the same source came another stamp shewing a two-masted schooner; Mr. Argyle produced the photo origin which depicted two single-masted craft which had been sketched as one by the designer.

In proposing a vote of thanks, a Vice-President of the Society, Mr. G. Lysaght Finigan, suggested that in view of its educational significance, Mr. Argyle's work should be brought to the notice of a wider field. The proposal was seconded by Mr. John S. Rees, also a Vice-President. The meeting closed with a general inspection of leaves from Mr. Argyle's collection. These are beautifully lettered backgrounds to the actual issues, giving analytical notes and, where possible, illustrations which have been the bases of designs.

On Thursday, 13th January, a joint paper was presented by two of our Vice-Presidents, Mr. John S. Rees and Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods, F.R.Hist.Soc.: "Was the River Alt (Formby) ever a possible rival to the River Mersey for the first Dock".

The paper derived from correspondence which has appeared in "News, Notes and Queries".

Mr. Woods opened for the possibility and drew attention to the researches of the late Canon Hulme of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire who visited the Formby district in 1865 and interviewed one Tommy Rimmer who had stated that when the first dock was to be built on the Mersey, there was discussion as to whether it should in fact be built at Liverpool or at Formby, but that as the foundations were not good at the latter place, Liverpool was chosen. A Dr. Sumner who died in 1883 aged 84 had spoken of the remains of a harbour on the site of the later Altcar Rifle Range. A Parchment discovered in a church giving a list of payers of a local tax indicated a settlement at the mouth of the Alt of

something like one thousand inhabitants.

Mr. Rees, in opposition, considered that ships belonging to Formby would be fishing craft and mentioned barrels of herring seized for non-payment of town dues. He stressed the importance of Liverpool from the 17th century. The Mersey had been made navigable as far as Warrington in 1694 and about this time had a population of over five thousand and 102 vessels registered in the port. The tobacco trade with Virginia was being built up, and in 1709 the Act for the building of the first dock was obtained. Regulations were made for the mooring of vessels in the Mersey. Probably most important of all, Nicholas Blundell, the local diarist, makes no mention of Formby as a possible port. He was very ship-conscious and witnessed the first vessel entering the new dock at Liverpool.

In proposing a vote of thanks, Captain Ayre referred to the dangerous lee shore clear of the Mersey during prevailing westerly winds, and mentioned plans, as yet unfulfilled, to extend the Gladstone system even further northwards towards Crosby. Seconding, Mr. Tozer mentioned a personal re-awakened interest in the Formby area resulting from the paper and reminded the meeting of Bunbury which had been intended as the main port of Western Australia before its unsuitability became apparent and led to the development of Perth and Fremantle. Amongst later speakers were Mr. A.M. Fletcher and Mr. J.A. Howard-Watson.

CAPTAIN E.W.C. BEGGS

We extend our good wishes to Captain E.W.C. Beggs on his recovery from recent illness. We shall not embarrass Captain Beggs by revealing his age, but we are sure that he will forgive us if, from feelings of pride, we acknowledge him as one of the Grand Old Men of the Society and congratulate him on his energy.

NEW MEMBERS

Miss Lucy Mossman, S.R.N., Liverpool.
Mr. W.B. Raine.

DONATION

The Society acknowledges with grateful thanks a donation of £10 by our President, Sir Ernest B. Royden, Bart., towards the cost of printing "Transactions".

OF GENERAL INTEREST

CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOVERNMENT MAIL STEAM PACKETS AT
HOLYHEAD, 1821-1850

- 1821 Service commenced by Post Office, May, 1821.
"Ivanhoe" already on station, chartered from David Napier.
"Meteor" and "Lightning" built by Evans, Rotherhithe.
- 1823 "Vixen", built at Chatham Dockyard, replaced "Ivanhoe",
sent to Weymouth.
- 1824 "Aladdin", built by Symons at Falmouth, "Cinderella" and
"Harlequin", built by Wigrams & Green at Blackwall, replaced
"Meteor", "Royal Sovereign" and "Vixen" sent to Milford.
- 1825 "Ivanhoe", which was purchased in September 1823, returns.
- 1826 "Escape", "Watersprite" and "Wizard" built by Graham at Harwich.
- 1827 "Ivanhoe" and "Watersprite" sent to Weymouth.
- 1828 "Dragon" built by Graham at Harwich.
- 1834 "Gulnare" built at Chatham Dockyard, replaces "Aladdin",
sent to Milford.
- 1837 Service transferred to Navy, April, 1837. Vessels renamed:
"Cinderella"- "Cuckoo", "Dragon"- "Zephyr", "Escape"- "Dotterel",
"Gulnare"- "Gleaner", "Harlequin"- "Sprightly", "Wizard"- "Otter"
- 1839 "Gleaner" withdrawn.
- 1840 "Cuckoo" sent to Weymouth.
- 1846 "Flamer", naval tender, as spare vessel.
- 1847 "St. Columba" built by Laird. "Caradoc" built by Ditchburn &
Mare. "Banshee" built by J. & G. Thomson.
- 1848 "Llewellyn" built by Miller & Ravenhill. "Zephyr",
"Sprightly" and "Dotterel" withdrawn.
- 1849 "Fire Queen" bought as spare vessel. "Vivid" sent from Dover
- 1850 Service handed over to contractors. "Vivid" returns to Dover
"Banshee", "Caradoc", "Otter", "Fire Queen" and "Flamer"
withdrawn. "Llewellyn" and "St. Columba" to City of Dublin
Steam Packet Company. "Llewellyn" renamed "St. Patrick".

C.E.C. Townsend.

(The Society is most grateful to Mr. Townsend for the above informative contribution and the chronology of Liverpool packets which appeared in the last issue of "News, Notes and Queries").

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

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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. V. No.2.

March, 1955

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting which was held on Thursday, the 10th, took the form of an open evening to which Members had been invited to bring models, books, charts, paintings and photographs of nautical interest; a short paper to be read during the evening.

By 7.30 p.m. the after saloon of the "Landfall" was the scene of a rich display. Two collections of pen-and-ink sketches of a high order predominated, numerous historic plans, oil-paintings and some pottery.

The sketches were the works of Mr. George Dickinson, Editor of the monthly journal "Sea Breezes", and Mr. P.S.P. Morter, F.R.I.B.A., both of whose published works will be familiar to most of our Members. Each specialises in contemporary single-ship black and white drawings but their styles, equally attractive in their respective ways, are contrasting. Mr. Dickinson achieves a realism with a minimum of well-chosen strokes and reliance on suggestion whilst Mr. Morter, using his pen to the full, can give a black and white interpretation of a modern liner reminiscent even in monochrome of what Frank Brangwyn did for the Elizabethan Navy in oil colours. Whilst sorry that Mr. Morter was unable to be present, the Society is grateful to him for sending along such a varied and interesting selection of his work.

Our Member Mr. J.W. Williams brought two oil-paintings, the ship "Clytemnestra" and the "Tingira", formerly Devitt & Moore's famous "Sobraon". Mr. J. Smart contributed drawings of H.M.S. "Victory" and Mr. J.S. Rees an unusual ware jug of the period around 1812.

Probably the most striking picture was that loaned by our President, Sir Ernest B. Royden, Bart. An original oil-painting by Herdman forming a full-circle panorama from the north side of the entrance to the George's Basin, Pier Head, the southerly aspect coming in the middle of the picture. This shewed the George's Landing Stage as a short pontoon berthing a few small ferry-craft. Northwards, there was no Prince's Landing Stage, and

the present covered Prince's Parade was in fact an open promenade between the transit sheds on the west side of Prince's Dock, and the river. Although the scene has altered so much, a number of surviving structures stood out with a familiarity born of the skill of Herdman's brush. The distant clock tower on the Albert Dock warehouses, the tower of St. Nicholas' Church and the gateway to the southwest corner of the Prince's Dock surround which today forms the passenger entrance to the Belfast Steamship Company's berth. The Tower Buildings depicted has long since been replaced, and the clean outline of its tower was topped by what was then the new telegraph semaphore which, through intermediate stations, linked the port with Holyhead.

The paper was read by Mr. Dickinson, giving an introduction to pen and ink sketching. He emphasised the need, when drawing for eventual reproduction, for keeping constantly in mind the limitations of printing, an aspect of the subject which he is particularly able to appreciate. He mentioned that he drew on Bristol Board in preference to cartridge paper which caused the ink to run, and admitted a preference for stern three-quarter views and a predilection for the fruit-carrying ships of a well-known firm of importers. A particular point was his contention that the funnel is the "face" of the ship; the slightest inaccuracy in size or representation of colour division could ruin the likeness as effectively as a slight distortion could render valueless a human portrait. Much of his work is based on odd sketches forming rough notes, reflections under certain lighting conditions and so on, which are incorporated into the finished picture.

Whilst talking enthusiastically on his subject and under the concentrated gaze of some forty pairs of critical eyes, Mr. Dickinson drew for his audience on a large sheet of paper an excellent three-quarter stern perspective of one of his favourite steamers. To those of us who know him personally as of a rather retiring disposition, the accomplished manner of Mr. Dickinson's exposition of his art came as a pleasing revelation.

After refreshments some of the lantern slides depicting scenes from the salvage undertakings of the late Commodore Sir Frederick Young, were projected. These are now the property of the Society on the gift of his son, Brigadier Young.

THE MARCH MEETING

Introducing Mr. John R. Biglands, F.C.I.I., A.C.I.S., J.P. on Thursday, the 10th, the Chairman noted that of all the aspects of shipping which had been the subjects of papers or discussions before the Society, Marine Insurance had to date been a notable omission.

Mr. Biglands began by expressing the view that Marine Insurance was one of the most fascinating businesses in the modern world of commerce. In the course of an informative paper he did much to prove his contention with a history of the practice from its inception as a body of merchants pooling their losses to the complicated structure, the hand-maid of commerce, which it is today. A surprising revelation was that these merchants had to conduct their primitive insurances in secret because the church of the day had condemned the practice as running contrary to its teaching and to be usurious.

The origin of the term General Average, denoting expenditure or partial loss the result of voluntary sacrifice for the common safety and involving a right on the part of the owner of the property sacrificed to receive contribution from other interest directly benefited, is unknown, but it is believed to have derived in practice from the Phoenician traders.

Before the 17th century marine insurance had probably been effected by Hanseatic Leaguers settled in London and later by the Lombards. The famed coffee house of Edward Lloyd was opened in Tower Street towards the end of the century catering for seafarers and merchants, items of maritime and commercial news being read to them as they ate and drank. A few years later the business was moved to Abchurch Lane and had a newspaper, "Lloyd's News", which was suppressed by the Government of the day which it had offended. "Lloyd's List" was first published in 1726 and merged with its rival, the "Shipping Gazette", shortly before the outbreak of the First World War.

Later in the same century the underwriters and brokers who had frequented the coffee house of Edward Lloyd formed themselves into the association which to this day bears his name and met in Pope's Head Alley, and in 1779 framed the form of marine policy which has altered only in detail since that time. Whilst reading quaintly to modern eyes with its references to "Master, under God" and "Touching the Adventures and Perils", it is a document which has withstood the tests of actions at Law and from which gradual amendment has removed all shred of ambiguity.

A move to the Royal Exchange where Lloyd's remained until 1928 when the present building was opened was under the aegis of a Russo-British businessman, one John Julius Angerstein. This long tenancy was interrupted by a fire in 1838 which with the Exchange destroyed most of the records of Lloyd's. In 1871 the Association was incorporated by Act of Parliament.

Mr. Biglands gave brief histories of the leading marine insurance companies and mentioned two which had arisen during the growth of and survived the subsequent bursting of the South Sea bubble speculation of 1720.

In outline, hull and cargo insurance is effected between owner and insurer by a broker who prepares a "slip" giving details of the risk. He then approaches underwriters for an initial for the amount for which each is prepared to be responsible and arranges the premiums to be paid. The slip completed a "cover note" is issued pending the preparation and issue of the formal policy. The standard insurance policy is supplemented and overridden by additional clauses drawn up by the Institute of London Underwriters and known as Institute Clauses. These are set out sectionally to cover hulls, freight, port risk, collision, and other stated eventualities.

Marine Insurance is most prosperous in time of war, and Mr. Biglands mentioned the difficulty experienced in deciding whether certain casualties were the results of marine or war perils.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. McManus who looked forward to the publication of the paper in "Transactions", and seconded by Captain Beggs. After the refreshment interval, Mr. Biglands dealt most helpfully with many questions put to him by his audience.

CAPTAIN C.W. VAUGHAN

We have only recently learned of the serious illness of our Member Captain C.W. Vaughan of West Kirby. Captain Vaughan was taken ill late last autumn but we are pleased to learn that he is now making a recovery, though slowly. We take this opportunity of sending him our good wishes for an early restoration to full health

NEW MEMBERS

Captain John Beard, D.S.C., Southport.
Captain H.J. Chubb, West Kirby.
Mr. R.C. Jarvis, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.Soc., London.
Mr. W.H. Lamey, Liverpool.
Mr. W.R. Serjeant, Liverpool.
Mr. R.B. Smith, Birkenhead.
Mr. H.A. Taylor, Liverpool.
Mr. J.V. Woollam, M.P., Liverpool.

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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. V. No.3June, 1955

THE APRIL MEETING

On Tuesday, 14th April, the last paper of the season, "The Development of the Liverpool Dock System", was presented by Mr. R.A. Stevenson, A.M.I.C.E., of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. He gave a most interesting and balanced account of the Liverpool and Birkenhead Dock systems from the formation of the first wet dock to the present day.

All early development took place in the vicinity of Steers' dock which soon became known as the "Old Dock". As the prosperity of the Port increased, however, the dock system began to spread along the banks of the river until by the middle of the last century it had reached Bootle in the north and Toxteth in the south. Unfortunately little thought was given to the once prosperous shipbuilding industry with the result that it was soon extinguished on the Liverpool side of the river and survived in a single yard in Birkenhead. By the First World War the dock system had, with the exception of the Gladstone and Bidston Docks, assumed its present extent and the period since then has been largely one of reorganisation and reconstruction.

As was to be expected from an engineer, Mr. Stevenson paid particular attention to constructional problems and refrained from dwelling more than was necessary upon tedious parliamentary procedure.

His accounts of the tide mills at Harrington and of the attempts to keep the Great Float dredged by sluicing were particularly interesting.

The Society is greatly indebted to Mr. Stevenson for what is probably the most complete history of the dock estate since that of Picton in 1875.

THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE

The Society's joint meeting with the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire took place on 21st April at the Royal Institution when a paper was read by Professor Hyde of Liverpool

University. Dealing with "Liverpool Shipping and the Far-Eastern Conference System, 1879-1914", Professor Hyde traced the stages by which a Liverpool shipping firm, Alfred Holt and Company, attained in those years a pre-eminent position in the Chinese, East Indian and Australian carrying trades, presenting a remarkable story of local shipping enterprise.

NEW MEMBER

J.H. Hodson, Esq., B.A., Liverpool. (Rejoined).

OF GENERAL INTEREST

THE VOYAGE OF THE BRIG "ADVENTURE"

The Society is indebted to its President, Sir Ernest Bland Royden, Bart., for sight of the original log of the brig "Adventure".

This vessel belonged to Thomas Bland, born at Skerton, Lancashire, in 1773. who died at Aughton, Lancashire, in 1865. He was a valued connection of the Royden family. For twenty years (1810-1830) Thomas Bland was a shipbuilder at Liverpool (Bland and Chaloner). The "Adventure's" name was located by our Member, Mr. Graham E. Farr of Bristol, in the Shipowners' Register, Red Book, 1813, which stated that she was of 82 tons, single deck and British built. Apparently in 1812 she was almost rebuilt at Liverpool and it is quite possible that the reconditioning was carried out by Bland and Chaloner. When or where she was built is not known.

She sailed from the Queen's Dock, Liverpool on 9th September, 1812, under the command of a Captain Mossop, bound for Newfoundland, taking 56 days to complete the voyage of about 2,600 miles. As Britain was then at war with the United States the convoy system had been put into operation and for this voyage Loch Ryan Bay had been arranged as the rendezvous of the merchant fleet, of which the "Adventure" was a unit. On 30th a strong gale with a tremendous heavy cross sea developed, the brig labouring and taking a great quantity of water on deck. The gale continued and increased and on the 4th she had to heave to. Owing to the violence of the gale the convoy was dispersed and the "Adventure" continued her voyage with only the occasional company of an odd straggler.

The brig arrived at Conception Bay on 4th November and on Sunday, the 7th, whilst lying at the wharf at about 10 p.m., her complement heard several guns fired as signals of distress. The signals proved to have been from H.M. Sloop "Adventure",
'AVENGER'

bilged and filled with water on the Chain Rocks, Newfoundland. After taking on board 87 quintels of merchantable fish the "Adventure" sailed for Gibraltar on 3rd December arriving on the 26th after an uneventful voyage. On 13th February, 1813, she left Gibraltar in ballast for Tobago, West Indies, arriving there on 10th March, again without incident, and from 16th March to 9th April was discharging her ballast of limestone and sand. On Thursday, 24th June, 1813, at 3 p.m., she sailed from Tobago "under convoy of H.M. Schooner 'Elizabeth' and merchantmen" for Grenada, St. George's Bay, and left Grenada on 26th "under convoy of H.M. Sloop and two brigs-of-war and a great number of merchantmen". On 30th "at 7.30 p.m. several guns was fired as Signals of Distress, also two lights at the masthead. In the morning saw a ship on our lee quarter with fore and main topmasts and mizzenmast gone".

At 10 a.m. on 1st July anchored at St. Thomas Island. On 3rd sailed from St. Thomas "under convoy of H.M. Ships and about 200 merchant ships" for the Thames. At 5 a.m. on 20th "saw a strange sail ahead of us. At 6 a.m. Commodore made all sail possible after him. At 11.30 a.m. came up with the Commodore and his prize, an American ship privateer of -- guns, which he had succeeded in capturing".

The "Adventure" arrived in the Thames on 24th August, 1813. Her destination when she ultimately left the Thames is not known, the log being incomplete, but, in all probability it was Newfoundland again. From the part of the log available the following interesting extract has been taken:

"Monday, 6th December, 1813. At about 4 p.m. saw a fire on the lee bow from the masthead. At about 5 p.m. saw the fire from the deck, supposed to be a vessel on fire. Shaked two reefs out of the main topsail, and let fall the foresail and steered for the distressed object, also got yard tackles reeved ready for getting the boats out should the assistance be wanted.

"At about 6.45 p.m. was spoken by the frigate "Gauland" (?) who is convoying us concerning the light we saw, as we had previous to this fired a gun and kept a good lookout for boats. At 9 p.m. passed within one mile of the vessel on fire, the flames raging with great fury fore and aft; it appeared the hull of a very large ship. At 11 p.m. let out one reef of the fore topsail.

"At midnight the frigate leading the convoy, bearing southwest distance two miles, could still perceive the flames from the burning vessel".

John S. Rees

SHIP MODELS AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

The Ship Model Collections at the Science Museum, South Kensington, are well-known to most students of naval architecture and those interested in maritime archaeology, but this brief outline may be of some value to our Members.

The collections, which fall into three main sections comprising Sailing Ships, Steam Ships and Small Craft, must not be regarded as a mere accumulation of ship-models. The purpose of the first two sections is to show the development of the design and construction of ships together with their ancillary features. The models are chronologically grouped, as well as the present restriction of space will allow, to show the outstanding changes in the various classes of naval and merchant vessels. Carefully selected modern scale reproductions are used to illustrate these changes from the Ancient Egyptian ship, through the Roman, Viking and Mediaeval periods to the four-masted Elizabethan galleon. A number of magnificent contemporary models show the development, changes in style of decoration, and in some cases the rig, of warships during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The later advances in the design of the sailing warship and merchant ship are indicated by contemporary and modern models, particularly fine examples of the latter being the late Dr. Longridge's "Victory" and the "Cutty Sark".

Coming to the age of steam, the exhibited collection includes models of the "Charlotte Dundas", Fulton's first steam-boat and the "Comet" (both with operable mechanisms). The progress of ocean-going passenger vessels from the "Sirius" of 1837 to the "Normandie" can also be clearly followed. A fine model of H.M.S. "Vanguard" is the culmination of a series showing the later evolution of the warship.

The Small Craft collection serves rather a different purpose, local craft from all over the world are represented in what is perhaps the most comprehensive assembly in existence. Models of the diverse types of fishing and coasting vessels, dissimilar because of different local conditions and usage, are arranged geographically. Specialised types such as Yachts, Lifeboats and Lightships are also exhibited in this section.

Many of the individual models are of particular interest from the Liverpool point of view and it is hoped to cover this association in a paper to be read to the Society in the near future.

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. V. No. 4.

November, 1955

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Fourteenth Annual General Meeting was held on board the "Landfall" on Thursday, 13th October, when the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the past season were presented and adopted.

The following Office Bearers and Council Members were elected, or re-elected, for the season 1955/56:

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.
	J.A. Howard-Watson, F.R.G.S., F.R.S.
	Lit., F.R.Hist.Soc.
	W.P. Raine
	T.D. Tozer

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

Opening the 1955/56 Syllabus, the Honorary Secretary, Mr. A.N. Ryan, M.A., of the Department of Modern History, Liverpool University, read a paper "The Royal Navy and the Defeat of Napoleon".

Mr. Ryan developed his theme on the problems which beset the Royal Navy following on the victory of Trafalgar and suggested that the remainder of the sea aspect of the struggle against Napoleon was twofold; a desire for military ascendancy by France together with an attack on the seaborne commerce of Great Britain. The efforts made by Napoleon to build up his fleet were seriously hampered by a shortage of masting timber, and a desire by the commander of the French fleet in Toulon to fight his way out through the numerically inferior English blockading force was refused on the grounds that whatever the outcome, precious masts and spars would be lost in any engagement.

Napoleon's navy was to be supplemented by the fleets of other powers, including those of Denmark and Portugal, but his attempts were thwarted. The Battle of Aix Roads in which a British force attacked French ships in harbour led to the court martial of a senior British officer for alleged incompetence, on which he was acquitted, but in discussion to this day it has been agreed that the apparent indecisiveness of the action did not detract from its usefulness on the score of damage caused by the fireships sent in amongst the French.

The French war on English commerce was resisted successfully. Europe under Napoleon was supplied with merchandise by stealth and a French diplomatic representative in Eastern Europe on his way to visit his opposite number in the north expressed surprise at meeting waggons loaded with Manchester textiles.

Mr. Ryan made the point that the British Army had a striking power out of all proportion to its limited numbers because of the mobility given to it by the Royal Navy's command of the sea. Not only in the transport of personnel from one theatre to another, but in lines of communication was the advantage felt. The enemy's could be stretched by a move which to the British only meant that seaborne supplies came in through a different port.

It was this command of the sea, lacking to Napoleon and his vast armies supplemented by the manpower of his conquests, which gave final victory to the allies.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Ryan was proposed by Mr. Smart and seconded by Mr. McManus.

MR. MALCOLM E. FISK

We record with sorrow the death of Mr. Malcolm E. Fisk, a Member of the Society, apart from a short break, for over ten years. Mr. Fisk, who was Chief Cashier of the Cunard Steamship Company at the Liverpool head office, started his business career with the White Star Line, joining Cunard-White Star on the merger of 1934. He was a keen collector of records of his first company and a skilled miniature modeller, his work having been exhibited several times on Merseyside. His paper, "Outstanding Ships of the White Star Line", was read before the Society on 21st November, 1946.

NEW MEMBERS

H.C. Ellison, Esq., Great Crosby.
Captain J. Rouffignac, Liverpool.
Manx Museum Library, Douglas, I.O.M.,
B.R.S.Megan, Esq., Director and Librarian.

RESIGNATIONS

Your Council has accepted with regret the resignations of Mr. M.H. Smye and Mr. T.W.F. Walker. Mr. Smye served the Society as Honorary Secretary during the years 1948-1949. At its last meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting, two memberships were declared lapsed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Society acknowledges with grateful thanks three items from Members.

From Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods, a very fine lantern to show standard slides; a most acceptable gift.

Compiled by Captain J. Beard, D.S.C., a list of some 1,500 sailing ships giving builders, owners, ports of registry, dimensions, disposals and other pertinent information, together with an analysis of Liverpool-owned ships and changes of name. These are in duplicate and Members interested may borrow one copy for a period not to exceed one calendar month, on application to the Hon. Secretary, c/o Messrs. Summerfield & Lang, Ltd., 28 Exchange Street East, Liverpool, 2.

Extracted by Miss E.B. Saxton and presented to the Society by her, an index of ships mentioned in a Liverpool Dock Dues book, 1801-1809.

THE OCEAN CLUB

Following on the fire which seriously damaged the Ocean Club, Lord Street, Liverpool, early in the morning of 28th March last, the Council of the Liverpool Seamen's Welfare Centre announced that the Club would close down. Heavy annual losses had been incurred owing to a diminishing demand for its facilities.

Amongst the worst affected apartments of the Club premises as a result of the fire was the reading room on the first

floor where the Society held its meetings during the seasons 1951/52 and 1952/53.

Prior to the introduction of radar, the Woodside-Liverpool and Seacombe-Liverpool steamers navigated in fog as best they could, waiting for each other at the respective landing-stages to avoid the risk of head-on collision in mid-river.

On 17th November last the writer of this note was one of something like a thousand passengers waiting at Woodside for over twenty minutes whilst the time-honoured procedure was in operation, ignoring the loud-speaking telephone which barked its radar picture vacantly into the fog. Tactful enquiry elicited the information that two vessels were anchored in line across the ferry-track, the space between being too narrow to permit safe navigation of two ferry-steamers, even under radar control.

Ships anchored across the Woodside and Seacombe ferry-tracks have been embarrassments in both mist and clear weather ever since the introduction of steam. The tragedy of the "Gem's" encounter with the "Bowfell" is too well-known to merit repetition, but it will surprise many Members to learn that public opinion of the danger during the middle years of the last century forced the Dock Board authorities of the day, in exercise of their powers, to summon several pilots who had anchored the vessels in their charge on the ferry-tracks. The presence of good holding ground hereabouts and convenience for the entrance to Birkenhead Docks is the modern reason for the practice, but it was suggested in those days that the advertisement value of such a public anchorage was not lost on the owners of certain crack liners.

On 1st November, 1892, the Wallasey Ferries steamer "Crocus" fouled the inward-bound barque "Eurydice", losing her two funnels and sustaining other damage and injury to her passengers. At dusk on the evening of 7th September, 1910, the Wallasey steamer "John Herron" bound for Egremont and New Brighton was rounding the Cunard liner "Carmania" when she came into violent collision with the luggage-boat "Seacombe". Amidst a good deal of excitement the passengers on the "John Herron" were transferred to the ferry-boat "Iris" which made for Egremont where everyone was sorted out. The incident aroused the indignation of the Coroner for Wigan who, although his professional services were happily not required, condemned in a letter to the press the practice of anchoring liners to foul the ferry traffic, and the "hugging" of the sides of such obstructing vessels, causing blind corners. Coming to modern times, on 11th August, 1949, the Birkenhead steamer "Claughton" was damaged when she collided head-on with the North Wales excursion steamer "St. Tudno" in the vicinity of the anchored Cunarder "Franconia".