

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". - ODDYSSEY.

NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol.VI. No.1.

February, 1956

THE DECEMBER MEETING

The One Hundredth Meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday, 7th December in the Hornby Library, Liverpool, which was placed at our disposal through the kindness of Doctor George Chandler, M.A., the City Librarian, with the consent of the Libraries and Reading Rooms Sub-Committee of the Liverpool City Council.

The meeting was attended by about 80 members and their friends and the guest speaker was Mr.Frank G.G.Carr, C.B.E., M.A., LL.B., Director of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

The main theme of Mr.Carr's talk, for he modestly disclaimed the title "address", concerned the achievements of the Society for Nautical Research, of which he is a council member, and the necessity for research on local Mersey craft, which he considers to have been neglected in this respect. Mr.Carr has an enthusiasm for his own work which is reflected in his public speaking and a capacity for passing this on to his audiences. He reminded us that the Society for Nautical Research was founded as long ago as 1910 and that the late Sir Geoffrey Callender was its first Secretary. Of the Society's works the best known are its primary responsibility for the restoration of H.M.S."Victory" and assistance in the establishment of the National Maritime Museum which was opened in 1937, largely as the result of the generosity of Sir James Caird who helped the venture in various ways to the extent of one and a quarter million pounds. Covering eleven and a half acres with over one mile of galleries, the Museum possesses the finest collection of terrestrial globes in the world and the second finest of astrolabes. In its portraits of admirals, it has the best selection of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Coming to recent years, the Society has undertaken research in connection with the restoration of the "Cutty Sark" which is drydocked alongside the Museum and eventually will be fully rigged.

Turning to our own Society, Mr.Carr emphasised that the results of research should be published and drew attention to the paucity of information on Mersey flats and kindred local craft. Research should be undertaken before it became too late. We had local encouragement for research in the storehouse of information amassed by Mr. Frank C. Bowen, the distinguished shipping historian, and now in the archives of the magazine "Sea Breezes", itself a well indexed storehouse.

Concluding, Mr.Carr said that research should have as its emblem Neptune's three-pointed trident representing the aims of those who follow it; Pleasure in the Past, Pride in the Present and Fortitude for the Future.

Mr.G.Lysaght Finigan proposed and Mr.J.S.Rees seconded a vote of thanks to Mr.Carr. The discussion was opened by Captain Ayre and amongst the speakers were Mr.Argyle, Mr.Kenneth Brown of "Sea Breezes" and Captain Rouffignac. A vote of thanks to Mr.R.B. Summerfield as Chairman was proposed by Captain Ayre and in seconding, Mr.Kennedy took the opportunity to express Members' appreciation of the Chairman's work in preparing the Society's latest publication, "In Retrospect, 1938-1955".

THE JANUARY MEETING

Pressure of business unfortunately prevented our Member, Mr. Rupert C. Jarvis, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., from travelling up from London and personally delivering his paper "The Alabama Case" on Thursday, 12th January, and it was read in his absence by the Chairman, Mr. R.B. Summerfield.

Based on historical manuscripts in the Customs Library, London, Mr. Jarvis set out to give the facts of the "Alabama's" departure from the Mersey, unlaced by what has since been written on a sensational level, and to survey the events and repercussions in the light of maritime and international law as it respectively stood at the time, and the changes in statute and outlook which the affair effected. No incident has been so misreported, and Mr.Jarvis cited inaccurate feature-articles which have appeared in London and provincial newspapers even within recent months.

Mr.Jarvis began by commenting on the malpractice of privateering which reached its peak during the closing years of the 18th and opening years of the 19th centuries whereby a national of a belligerent state could fit out a fighting-ship and wage private war against the commerce of his country's enemies. The Foreign Enlistment Act, besides prohibiting British citizens from taking part in the wars of other countries, forbade the fitting out of warships for belligerent powers in Great Britain but did not disallow the supply of merchant ships to either or both the contestants. The distinction was drawn because of the readiness for combat of a warship compared with a merchant ship and in the event of its not being drawn, Mr.Jarvis suggested the possibility of warships being fitted out by separate Liverpool firms each for the Chinese Communists and the Nationalists in Formosa, and on completion the vessels shooting it out in the Mersey.

"Yard Number 290" as the "Alabama" was at first known, was ordered from Lairds' yard by agents of the Confederate Southern States during the American Civil War. Representations were made by the Federal Government to London and also on a consular level to the Collector of Customs in Liverpool, but the transaction approaching completion across the Mersey was within the law as it then stood and no grounds could be seen for granting the Federal request for interference. An allegation that the Liverpool tug "Hercules" was lying at Woodside loaded with guns and ammunition for "Yard Number 290" was investigated and found to be false, and what was to become the "Alabama" left the River to pick up her armament from craft awaiting her at sea.

In due course victory came to the Northern States whose Government was bitter in its criticism of Great Britain over the "Alabama's" success against its shipping. The subsequent Treaty of Washington of 1871, which was to become Article One of the Hague Convention of 1907, bound its signatories "to use due diligence to prevent the departure of a vessel adapted in whole or in part for warlike use". The "Alabama", be it noted, although unarmed when she left the Mersey, was pierced for guns. The British Government made a remarkable concession to the United States in agreeing to regard the Treaty as retrospective to the date of the "Alabama's" departure from the Mersey and in default paid over to the United States compensation to the value of 15½ million gold dollars.

This masterly reduction of one of the most sensational stories of the century to cold jurisprudence evoked a lively discussion, the speakers including Captain Ayre, Mr. Howard-Watson, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Schofield, Mr. Smart and Mr. Ward.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman for his excellent reading of the paper was tendered before question time by Mr. John S. Rees, and Captain George Ayre, in expressing his appreciation of the paper, suggested that we ought to express our warm thanks to Mr. Jarvis, and the Chairman undertook to write to him to this effect.

CAPTAIN ERNEST WILLIAM CARR BEGGS

As most of our local Members will know, Captain Beggs died on Christmas Day at the age of 89. After the many tributes to the professional attainments and public service of one of our most respected Members, that of the Society must seem modest indeed. On the "Landfall", for the hospitality of which we acknowledge his good offices, our meetings will recall him as a senior amongst us, not only possessed of a fund of knowledge from which he could always contribute usefully to the topic of the evening, but having a fine delivery and conciseness of speech.

Captain Beggs began his maritime career some fifty years ago aboard the 625-ton barque "Pole Star" and finished it on retirement in 1929 as commodore-master of Manchester Liners. Although trained in sail, he had none of the strong and sometimes rather intolerant views on the subject associated with a number of shipmasters of his generation. His interest in the welfare of seafarers found expression from his connection with the Mariners' Home at Egremont, Cheshire, to his committee-work for the H.M.S. "Conway" training-school.

The writer of this note will miss the occasional company of a cheerful lunchtime companion with a sympathetic breadth of mind. At the funeral service at New Brighton, the Society was represented by the Chairman, Mr.R.B.Summerfield, and Honorary Secretary, Mr.A.N.Ryan. Our Council Member, Captain G.Ayre, represented, as Secretary, the New Brighton station of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Society acknowledges with thanks donations towards the cost of producing "In Retrospect, 1938-1955" from The Express Typewriting and Duplicating Service (contractors to the Society), Mr.G.Lysaght Finigan, Mr.W.P.Raine, Mr.R.Martin Smith and Mr. T.D. Tozer. The Society is grateful to Mr.Wm.Lowndes, Librarian of the Mayer Public Library, Bebington, for his kindness in having presented to it thirty-nine volumes, dating from 1802 to 1818, of the "Naval Chronicle". These are at present being prepared for loan to Members. Thanks are due also to our Member, Mr.Graham E.Farr, for a copy of his book "Chepstow Ships".

NEW MEMBERS

J. F. Smith, Esq., M.A., F.R.S.A., Liverpool.
 Arthur S. Dean, Esq., M.B.E., Liverpool.
 Donald J. L. Hague, Esq., Liverpool.
 Harold C. Jones, Esq., A.I.C.S., Liverpool.
 The Parker Gallery, London.
 J. L. Pelling, Esq., Birkenhead.
 Ian B. Roy, Esq., Broughty Ferry.
 William Tapson, Esq., Liverpool.
 Norman A. Williams Esq., C.C., Gordon Smith
 Institute for Seamen, Liverpool.
 Captain R. V. Ewart, Crosby.
 Peter Barton, Esq., Middlesbrough.
 J. H. E. Simpson Esq., B.Eng., A.M.I.C.E.,
 A.M.I.Struct.E., Liverpool.
 Professor Michael A. Lewis, C.B.E., M.A., F.S.A.,
 F.R.Hist.S., Greenwich.

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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol.VI. No.2.

March, 1956

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

Marine Photography, after something like a century of progress, is now a major factor in nautical research. As time goes on, early pictures will become of increasing historical value and be joined by the work of today, possibly to find a following as respectful as did the maritime lithograph which reached such a peak of accurate and artistic perfection in the years before the advent of photography usurped its original recording functions.

Probably with thoughts such as these the Society welcomed on Thursday, 9th February, Mr. R.J. Hughes, A.I.B.P., with a representative exhibition of the work of Messrs. Stewart Bale Limited. As architectural and marine photographers Mr. Hughes' firm has a reputation of distinction derived, we should say, from the use of all that is best in apparatus and material combined with the highest technical skill in manipulation. With this in mind we examined the display and settled down to listen to Mr. Hughes.

Not unnaturally, Mr. Hughes began by stating that a shipping photographer had to have the "feel" of ships, to know what was wanted and how to go about getting what the subject matter did not at first seem to offer. He instanced demands for photographs for advance publicity of passenger accommodation aboard ships not long launched, and a general scrounge around for hangings, crockery and cutlery to make the corner of a tea-room, still in the hands of carpenters, look "alive". A knowledge of photogenic furniture arrangement was essential; the finished plan, though suitable for passengers, did not always make the best photograph.

These demands sometimes had their humorous sides. A New York agency desired photographs of an eagerly-awaited ship being cleaned-up inside ready for her passengers, so the firm photographed char-ladies at work. Unfortunately such simplicity and truth did not suit the customers who cabled back for photographs of the ship being soogie-moogied by ladies, with all respect, of fairer aspect and feminine charm. They did not get them.

Relations with the Russians have provided Mr. Hughes with mixed memories. Sent by local agents to photograph a Soviet ship under repair at Birkenhead, Mr. Hughes and his assistant were greeted with suspicion and locked in a cabin from which they were only released to get on with the job after nearly breaking down the door. Not wishing to offend what appeared to be restitutorial hospitality on the part of the captain, they nodded assent to his guttural "You eat?" and were presented with a long loaf of black bread wrapped in a newspaper.

Many of our Members will recall the maiden commercial voyage of the "Queen Elizabeth" late in 1946 when she carried amongst other notabilities, Mr. Molotov. A sensational press story of the time was of the Soviet Foreign Minister accepting the wheel of the great ship, (and after a few minutes letting go of it without warning). Mr. Hughes revealed to us that the invitation to do this was, with the Captain's consent, at his suggestion in order that he might make an unique addition to the series of photographs he was taking for the owners, and he modestly reminded his audience that this must have been one of the few occasions when the Great Enigma was heard to say "yes".

Of photographing ships at speed on trials, Mr. Hughes remarked on the reactions of the masters of tugs who were asked to creep as close as they dared to facilitate the work of the cameras. These are indeed occasions worth their weight in gold, for, within the rules of the road, it is seldom that the opportunity reoccurs for the human eyes to see a ship at speed at such close range, and to survive. An unhappy experience was aboard a tug towing a wartime-built cruiser from Cammell Laird and Company's basin. The warship took charge and listed the tug to a dangerous angle from which she only recovered when the tow-rope was severed with an axe.

Mr. Hughes was plied with many questions at the end of his talk. The older photographs in the display came in for some discussion and technical points were raised on such matters as lenses and sepia-toning. In reply to one Member, he mentioned that the firm was founded about forty years ago as a commercial artists' business with photographic support. In due course the photography became uppermost and the brushwork was dropped. On the death of Mr. Stewart Bale the firm became a limited company and has since expanded considerably its interest both locally and in the South of England. Incidentally, many requests for prints of shipping subjects are received from private collectors all over the world. Of the forty-five photographs displayed, suffice to say that they were each perfection exemplified, and in subject matter were concerned mainly with the building and commissioning

of well-known vessels. Some detailed local aerial views drew considerable interest.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Hughes was proposed by Mr. A.W.Beal and seconded by Mr. John S. Rees.

THE MARCH MEETING

On Thursday, 8th March, our Member Mr. Maurice M. Schofield, M.A., read a paper "Lancaster, West Indian Competitor of Liverpool, 1680-1815". Like that of Mr. Rupert C. Jarvis in January, whose assistance he acknowledged, Mr. Schofield set out to disprove by cold analysis some widely-held misconceptions. On a visit to Lancaster an exaggerated opinion of the port's sometime importance was expressed to him by none less than the Bishop who gave the view that Lancaster was enjoying precedence at a time when Merseyside was only a collection of fishing villages.

On the evening we report, one end of the "Landfall's" dining-room was occupied by a map of Lancaster and its environs and a graphic representation of statistics relating to the port for the period under reference, extending practically the width of the ship. Mr. Schofield also acknowledged assistance in his researches from the work of two of the Society's Founder Members, the late Mr. W. Stewart Rees, from his articles in the Lancaster Library, and the late Mr. Arthur C. Wardle, both former Archivists.

Although Lancaster became an independent port by Act of Parliament in 1750, a tardiness in the commencement of proper record-keeping has resulted in a gap in history from that year until 1757. Much information on the port comes from the diary of William Stout, a Quaker who was in business as a grocer and ironmonger and whose comments on the vagaries of trade and the ways of his colleagues during the period 1680 to 1750 have come down to us.

In Lancaster's favour, the port served a large hinterland against Liverpool's limitations prior to the advent of canals and railways. Fleetwood did not become a port until the middle of the nineteenth century whilst Preston suffered from the disadvantage of the long Ribble estuary with its impeding sandbanks. The American War of Independence and privateering caused the trade of Lancaster to suffer, but the end of the conflict saw a recovery. A later setback came from the decline of the Hamburg sugar-refining industry during the Napoleonic Wars.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Schofield was proposed by Mr. John S. Rees and seconded by Mr. John Smart.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BANKES

We record with sorrow the death of our Member Captain W. Bankes of Waterloo, Crosby. A Regular Soldier, Captain Bankes joined the Society in 1946 and on the all too few occasions when he was able to attend our meetings enlivened us with a ready wit. He suffered considerably from poor health last year and passed away on 21st December.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Society acknowledges with grateful thanks the anonymous gift of two volumes of Lloyds Register of Shipping, 1870 and 1871, through the kindness of our member Mr. W. Tapson. Also a bound volume of the two papers by the Society's Vice-Presidents, Mr. John S. Rees and Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods, F.R.Hist.S., "John Phillips and the Smalls Lighthouses".

NEW MEMBERS

"Sailing Time", M.G. Duff Esq., Editor, Chichester.
 Arthur R. Sawers Esq., Illinois, U.S.A.
 Dennis Chapman, Esq., Liverpool.
 W. H. Eastwood, Esq., B.Eng., A.I.N.A., Hightown, Liverpool.
 Edwin A. Messer, Esq., Mount Gambier, South Australia.
 P. R. Calder, Esq., Massachusetts, U.S.A.
 Captain R. L. Jones, M.B.E., Anglesey.

QUERY

THE MARINERS' CHURCH, BIRKENHEAD.

In 1856 when the reformatory ship "Akbar" was first established in the Great Float the boys were landed to attend services at the Mariners' Church, Great Float.

Was this a church in Birkenhead or was it a floating chapel similar to the old frigate "Tees" which for so many years lay in George's Dock, Liverpool?

JOHN SMART.

Can any member supply on loan a plan or photograph of a Mersey flat. Dimensions and other relevant details required for the purpose of constructing a model.

T. W. ADAMS,
 Cape Town.

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NEWS, NOTES AND QUERIES

Vol. VI. No. 3.

July, 1956

THE APRIL MEETING

At the last meeting of the 1955/56 Syllabus, our Member, Mr. Basil W. Bathe, was to have read his paper "The Shipping Galleries of the Science Museum, London, with special reference to the models of Liverpool Ships." Unfortunately Mr. Bathe was unable to travel to Liverpool and his paper was read in his absence by the Chairman, Mr. R.B. Summerfield.

Mr. Bathe, formerly of Southport, is on the staff of the Science Museum and an authority on small craft.

The idea of a museum of science came from the Prince Consort following on the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the nucleus of a collection of ship models was got together, including Admiralty models from Somerset House. This was supplemented by models of merchant ships to such an extent that when the Admiralty models were removed to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich in 1873, there still remained a sizeable collection. This has been added to until at the present day it comprises some 400 models cared for by a staff of skilled craftsmen in the Museum's own workshop. Only three ship models have actually been constructed in the Museum, the last in 1937.

The idea of three-dimensional representation seems to have arisen amongst those responsible for the Navy during the 17th century; Phineas Pett built several models. The Museum contains models of ships built in Liverpool for the Navy by Richard Golightly, Gorell and Parke and John Okill. Between 1745 and 1747 these builders were responsible for the "Mercury", "Deal Castle", "Anglesea", "Thetis", "Expedition" and "Prince Henry".

In the mercantile field, there are models of the two Liverpool-built clippers named "Fiery Cross", each designed by William Rennie. The first was built by Johnson and Rankin in 1855 and wrecked in the China Seas in 1860. The second was built by P. Chaloner and Son and for five years was the fastest and most successful clipper-ship built, her best passage being 101 days

from China. Both these models make interesting comparisons with the Aberdeen-built vessels of the time.

Among the smaller craft, there is a model of the Liverpool pilot-cutter "Isaac" of 1805, a rather roughly-finished piece of work which appears to be contemporary. Of a later date, 1852, there is a model of the schooner-rigged Liverpool pilot-vessel "Victoria and Albert".

Mr. Bathe confined his paper to the sailing era and accompanied it with several enlarged photographs of the models together with a selection of smaller pictures and handbooks.

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. John Smart expressed his appreciation to the Chairman for reading the paper and it was agreed that the thanks of the meeting be accorded to Mr. Bathe for a most interesting paper.

VISITORS FROM THE MIDLANDS

On Saturday, 23rd June, a party of sixty members and friends of the Sutton Coldfield and North Birmingham Model Engineering Society visited Liverpool. After inspecting the motor-vessel "Ulster Monarch" in Prince's Dock, the party lunched aboard the "Landfall" under arrangement of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society and by kind permission of the Master and Committee of the Merseyside Master Mariners' Club, and were thereafter in the care of our Society. A visit was paid to the Gladstone Dock system and the Port Radar Station and en route to the Pier Head, the Canada Dock improvement works. The party's coaches proceeded to Speke Airport via Otterspool Promenade and took tea at the Airport Restaurant. Returning to the Pier Head, our visitors crossed by ferry to New Brighton where they joined their coaches which had meanwhile travelled through the Mersey Tunnel to meet them, and departed for home.

NEW MEMBERS

Crosby Public Library, Miss Jean Ballantyne, A.L.A.
A. K. Tunnock, M.A., A.C.A., Penmaenmawr.
E. W. Paget-Tomlinson, B.A., Ulverston.
F. C. Watts, M.I.Mes., Bristol.
Hugh Dovey, M.A., M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Liverpool.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

THE FLAG CIRCLE

The Society's publication "In Retrospect, 1938-1955" mentions the Flag Circle of which the late Captain E. A. Woods, a founder-member of our own Society, was a member. Mr. John S. Styring of Ware, sends us the following notes:

"As regards the Flag Circle. There is quite a history attached to this. My hobby has been House Flags for nearly forty years and my records cover something like 15,000, from the early whalers of Salem, New Bedford, etc., to the days of sail and then on through steam and motor to the present day. One of my articles, either in "Sea Breezes" or "The P.L.A. Monthly", caught the eye of the late Colonel E. A. Ewart, probably better known as "Boyd Cable", the writer and authority on many historical subjects. He was then becoming quite interested in the historical side of House Flags and we "got together". After some time I invited Captain Woods to come along with me and meet him (on one of Captain Woods' leaves). As Captain Woods and the late Daniel R. Bolt were very old friends, and I was friendly with them both, it was a natural sequence eventually that we all three went together to "pow-wow" with Boyd Cable. Thus the "Flag Circle" was born. Commander Hilary P. Mead, R.N. (great authority on Naval signals) joined, so did the late Cecil King, R.A., (artist and very "hot" on old Russian and European flags) and Henry J. Pitt (authority on national flags). We were later joined by H. G. Carr who made deep research into many aspects of flags. We corresponded regularly with all our views and queries, and met as convenient. The war interrupted our activities and the deaths of many Members meant an end to what had become a very interesting and, if I may say so, a very efficient team of experts."

J. S. Styring.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE NUMBER OF SHIPS AND VESSELS BELONGING TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE WHICH APPEAR FROM LLOYDS' LISTS TO HAVE BEEN LOST, STRANDED, AND GOT OFF, CAPTURED AND RECAPTURED FROM THE YEAR 1789 to 1800 INCLUSIVE

	LOST	ON SHORE	GOT OFF	CAPTURED	RETAKEN
1789	163	61	7		
1790	167	47	11		
1791	213	82	8		
1792	195	59	11		
1793	201	38	5	357	62
1794	246	64	4	701	86
1795	222	42	2	646	56
1796	181	44	1	534	67
1797	193	59	6	751	135
1798	165	61	6	447	91
1799	210	46	3	451	86
1800	<u>229</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>457</u>	<u>122</u>
	2,385	652	70	4,344	705

(Totals carried forward to next page)

LOST	ON SHORE	GOT OFF	CAPTURED	RETAKEN
2,385	652	70	4,344	705
<u>652</u> on shore			<u>705</u> recaptured	
3,037			3,639	total lost
<u>70</u> got off				by capture
2,967	total lost by perils of the sea.=====			
<u>3,639</u>	total lost by capture			
6,606	total lost by perils of the sea and capture in 12 years.			

There is no doubt but that many ships belonging to the British Empire have been lost and captured which are not mentioned in Lloyds' Lists.

The foregoing is printed in "A Collection of Interesting and Important Reports and Papers on the Navy and Trade of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Colonies in the West Indies and America. Printed by order of the Society of Shipowners of Great Britain. London, 1807, Stockdale." The table is in the Appendices paper No. XVIII, p. clxxxi.

The totals from this table are reprinted in "The Naval Chronicle", Volume 17, for January to June, 1807. (London, 1807). But though the captures and recaptures are correctly dated 1793-1800, the same dates are given for the losses by sea, instead of the correct dates shown by the table, 1789-1800. No source is given by "The Naval Chronicle", whose figures were therefore used unchecked and uncorrected by C. Wright and C. E. Fayle, "History of Lloyds'" (1928), page 451. Wright and Fayle, pages 182-187, and 451-455, print other calculations of losses by capture for 1793-1802, varying from the above but not by so great a margin as to invalidate their general impression.

M.M. Schofield

QUERY

IRON SHIPS

The iron ship "Jumna", built 1862 at Middlesborough, and owned for a time by J. Beazley and Son of Liverpool, was renamed "Adolphe Thiers". Early Lloyds' Registers show the name as "A. Thiers". Can any Member throw light on the subject? Did the name include "Adolphe" in full? The iron ship "Northbrook", built 1874 at Stockton-on-Tees, and owned for a time by Milton Stuart (Stuart and Douglas) of Liverpool. She was converted to barque-rig at some time during her career. A Lloyds' Register entry suggests 1895. An early number of "Sea Breezes" suggests 1885. Captain Beard states "1898 ... renamed 'Hassia', converted to barque." Can any Member provide information supporting one or other of these dates?

Peter Barton

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September, 1956

In support of our opening remarks we should make it quite clear that the book has come our way from outside the Society and not from Mr. Farr or his publishers and our note is an entirely unsolicited one in genuine praise of a fine job of work.

ANSWER

MERSEY FLATS

The following is an extract from the Collector of Customs at Liverpool to the Commissioners of Customs at London, dated 21st August, 1785:

"The navigable part of the River Mersey extends from the Rock about three miles below this town to the entrance into the River Weaver near Frodsham more than twenty miles which last river is navigable to the salt refineries in Cheshire and to Runcorn locks (where the Duke of Bridgewater Canal which is navigable to Manchester about thirty miles, communicates with the River Mersey) about 17 miles above this town and from thence to Warrington about 12 miles and from thence to the River Irwell about 12 more which River Irwell is navigable to Manchester. The breadth of the River Mersey so exempted varies very much as well as in the depth of water. The depth opposite the Town about ten fathoms. At Runcorn Locks it is 7 feet, at the Lock above Warrington that leads to Manchester 5 feet. At Frodsham Bridge which stands on the Weaver it rises about 10 feet. The size of the vessels that ply there are from 40 to 120 tons burthen. This chiefly employed in the coal trade from 40 to 60 tons and their construction very flatt and are decked and carry coals free of duty chiefly to the salt refineries in Cheshire, some to a copper work about one mile above this town but very few for the use of the town or shipping since the Leeds canal has been opened and some but very few to places lying on different parts within the River Mersey and they are brought from several collieries on the Sankey Canal which communicates with the River Mersey at a place called Fiddler's Ferry about three miles below Warrington.

The following are extracts from the Liverpool Statutory registers of British merchant ships:

The "Edward and William", a square-sterned flatt of 74 tons was built in Liverpool in 1772, was 62 feet in length, 15 feet extreme breadth above the main wales, and 7 feet 3 inches depth of hold.

The "Lark", built in Liverpool in 1771 of 57 tons, length 57 feet, breadth $14\frac{3}{4}$ feet, depth $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

The "Mary" was built in Northwich (Cheshire) in 1766, 68 tons, 75 feet, 15 feet, $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

"Molly and Nancy", Northwich, 75 tons, 63 feet 3 inches, 16 feet 5 inches, 6 feet.

"Two Brothers", Liverpool, 1770, 64 tons, 53 feet, 16 feet 8 inches, 5 feet 6 inches.

"Polly", Liverpool, 1773, 34 tons, 52 feet, 14 feet, 6 feet.

"King of Prussia", Northwich, 1760, 57 tons, 56½ feet, 14 feet 7 inches, 5½ feet.

The foregoing notes are in reply to Mr. T.W. Adams whose enquiry appeared in "News, Notes and Queries, Vol. VI, No.2, March, 1956.

Rupert C. Jarvis.

"JUMNA". Declared by her owners' letter of the 31st May to have been sold to foreigners. The certificate of British registry was surrendered and cancelled, and the registry was closed on 6th June 1871. H.M. Customs, therefore, have no official knowledge of any subsequent change of name to "A.Thiers" or "Adolphe Thiers" as the case may be.

Rupert C. Jarvis.

GIFT

The Society acknowledges with grateful thanks the gift of copies of "The Mariner's Mirror", Journal of the Society for Nautical Research, by Mr. Alan F. Dakin of Barnston, Wirral. The issues cover the period 1947-54 inclusive and include the relevant Annual Reports.

OF GENERAL INTEREST

The Flag Circle. Commander Hilary P. Mead, R.N., writes that he was very pleased to read the interesting note about the Flag Circle and its origin in the last number of News Notes & Queries. He gives the names of two more members: the late Mr. R.M. Harring of Trowbridge and Mr. T.S. Lascelles, both valuable associates. He also mentions that Mr. Pitt's name is Herbert, not Henry.

Paddle Steamer "Unicorn" 1836. Our member, Mr. Osgood Williams of Salem, Mass. U.S.A. has contributed an article on this vessel in the book "Early American Steamers" by Erik Heyl. If any member is interested in the later history of this old Cunarder, the Chairman has a copy of the

article which can be copied or borrowed. The ultimate fate of this vessel, believed to have ended her days in China, as the "E.H.Green" is still uncertain, and any clue as to her disposal would be welcome.

THE "OVERHEAD"

Being concerned by title and practice with matters maritime and mainly those which are no longer within memory, the affairs of a railway are not really this Society's concern.

There must however be few of our Town Members and not a few of our Country or even Overseas Members who have not pursued some local aspect of our studies without at some time having used Liverpool's Overhead Railway. As we now know only too well, this little line linking the dock systems and once one of the engineering wonders of the North West, is to close at the end of December unless some generous outside body is prepared to finance the maintenance of the structure, surely one of the most ambitious ever to carry a railway clear of streets which grow busier each year.

For such is the position of the line which, were it sited on ground level would have little to worry about. Unfortunately the upkeep of that very state of elevation which makes it so useful cannot be met out of revenue and to date no one else seems willing to help.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society with the printing of its "Transactions" causing headaches in Exchange Street East, can do little but sigh at the impending disappearance of a local landmark with the strongest of maritime connections and, conscious of our interest in the preservation of records of the past, offer sympathy to those of our fellows to whom engineering history is the breath of life. Even were it as enshrined as the Talyllyn and Ffestiniog Railways, the most determined voluntary effort could not save the "Overhead", and developments must therefore depend on the strength with which a case of Utility can be made to Authority.

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.VI. No.5.

December, 1956

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As already intimated in the notice of meeting for November, the Officers and Council for the present season remain unchanged from last year. The Annual Report and Accounts as submitted by the Council were adopted and these have already been circulated to all members.

NOVEMBER MEETING

The first meeting of the season was held on "Landfall" at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, 15th November, 1956, when our member Mr. J.A. Howard-Watson, F.R.G.S., F.R.Hist.S., read his paper "The Office and Jurisdiction of the Lord High Admiral and of the Admiralty".

After pointing out that the history of a rudimentary maritime organization in England can be traced as far as the Saxon Kings, Mr. Howard-Watson examined the emergence of the laws and customs of the sea and their codification in the Laws of Oberon.

The development of a permanent administration for the organization of the national maritime forces dates from the reign of King John, and the speaker showed how from that time there was in continuous existence an official department for the organization of the fighting forces, and a court for the administration of maritime law. The official responsible for the exercise of these functions and for leading the fleets in battle eventually received the title of Lord Admiral or Lord High Admiral.

The emergence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of a permanent navy led to a great increase in the business of the admiralty, and necessitated the putting of the administrative and directive functions of the Lord Admiral into the hands of a commission, the Board of Admiralty, and his judicial functions were entrusted to the Admiralty courts. They have been exercised since 1854 by the Admiralty division of the High Court.

Mr. Howard-Watson finished by showing that, although contemporary conduct of the executive, administrative, and judicial

functions of the Admiralty is very different from earlier practice, they derive ultimately from the Office and Jurisdiction of the Lord High Admiral.

The paper was followed by a lively discussion during the course of which the speaker was asked to comment upon several maritime cases of recent happening.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. A.M. Fletcher and seconded by Mr. E.W. Paget-Tomlinson. It was carried with enthusiasm.

DECEMBER MEETING

The second meeting of the Season gave an opportunity to our Vice-Presidents, Mr. John S. Rees and Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods, F.R.Hist.S., to present another joint paper, and the result, "Seacombe Ship Yards" added some further interesting information to our records.

The Merseyside ship-building industry originated on the Liverpool side of the river, and surviving records relative to the early activities of Merseyside ship builders show that several firms were operating in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The first ship yards on the Cheshire side were established in the mid-nineteenth century, and their establishment was the origin of the great modern industry at Birkenhead. The history of the Seacombe shipyards forms part of the history of this industry, and it covers the period 1864/1887. The site of the Seacombe yards was the now deserted and waste land south of Seacombe Ferry, which is familiar to all travellers on the Ferry. A number of firms, none of them very successful, had yards there, and during the period in question well over one hundred vessels were built.

The failure of the industry at Seacombe was the result of several factors. The yards were situated on the narrowest part of the river and launchings from them were inconvenienced by the proximity of the Seacombe Ferry track. There was also the severe competition from the Birkenhead yards which possessed a bigger river frontage and a greater extension to the rear.

In an age when the size of ships was increasing, the effort to compete with Birkenhead failed. The last ship was built at Seacombe in 1887. The existence of the Seacombe yards is now almost forgotten, but their story is an integral part of the history of the Merseyside shipbuilding industry.

Mr. John S. Rees read the paper and Mr. E. Cuthbert Woods dealt with the questions which followed.

The paper evoked considerable discussion, foremost amongst the speakers being the Wallasey members, Messrs. John Smart, E.A. Worthy, Captain G. Ayre and Mr. L. White, Librarian of Wallasey Corporation Libraries. Mr. Worthy proposed a vote of thanks with some interesting recollections of old Wallasey, and Captain Ayre in seconding remarked that he spent part of the war years on the Dock Estate amid falling bombs, adjacent to these almost forgotten yards. The proposition was carried with acclamation.

NEW MEMBERS:

DAVID HUGHES,	WALLASEY
MRS. R.F. COOKE,	BIRKENHEAD

RESIGNATION

Your Council has accepted with regret the resignation of "Sailing Time" which has ceased publication.

CONGRATULATIONS

In the September issue we congratulated our member, Captain George Ayre, on his Presidency of the Mercantile Marine Service Association. We learn that he has also been honoured by the Merseyside Master Mariners Club, and from January 1st, 1957 assumed the Chairmanship of "Landfall". Congratulations.

ARCHIVIST

Mr. Guy Sloman has recently obtained an appointment with Glasgow Corporation, and he has been obliged to resign his position as Archivist and Member of the Council. Although sorry to lose his presence with us in Liverpool we are glad to know that he is remaining a member of the Society, and we wish him and his wife every happiness in their new life.

The Council, at a recent meeting, recorded an expression of thanks for Mr. Sloman's many services to the Society during his period of office.

GIFTS

The Collection includes the Charles Sergison Collection of fifteen of the finest and most famous of the Admiralty scale ship models which, for 225 years had remained undisturbed in a specially built room at "Cuckfield Park", Surrey. They were purchased from the Sergison heirs by Colonel Rogers in 1920.

For the student of the English warship of the period, particularly, the catalogue is of immense interest.

QUERIES

Our member, Ian Roy, of Broughty Ferry, Dundee, is compiling a history of whale factory ships and he is anxious to have any information about both the early types of converted vessels and the first specially built vessels.

If any one has details about Lancaster built or Lancaster registered ships, prior to 1840, or details of Lancaster merchants who were later in business in Liverpool, our member, Mr. M.M. Schofield, of Widnes, would be most grateful to hear.

Information is required about a ship named "James Brown", which later became the "Rockhampton" of the Black Ball Line. Is there any known illustration of this ship under either name.

R.B. Summerfield.

K.P.L.

The Council of the Society has felt compelled to accept, with regret, the resignation of Mr. Keith P. Lewis as Editor of News, Notes and Queries, enforced as it was by personal and business reasons.

His services to the Society have been outstanding in many directions but 'News, Notes and Queries' was K.P.L.'s own: it was his idea, he was solely responsible for its inauguration at a time when the fortunes of the Society were at low water and he has been responsible for its continued success.

We trust that we shall be able to continue to enjoy Mr. Lewis's contributions, by pen and camera, to Sea Breezes and kindred publications.

A.M.F.

Arrangements have been made to continue this feature of the Society's activities and for the time being any queries, answers or other items of interest for publication should be sent to Mr. R.B. Summerfield, 28 Exchange Street East, Liverpool, 2.

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W.P.R.