The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Diamond Jubilee Year : 1938 - 1998)

THE BULLETIN

Editor : John Shepherd

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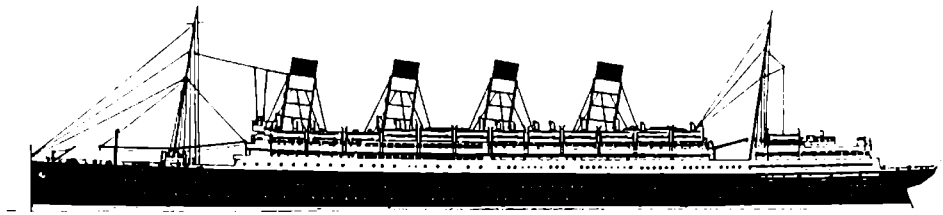


Membership and all Correspondence to : -

Hon. Secretary, L.N.R.S.,
Maritime Archives and Library,
Merseyside Maritime Museum,
Albert Dock,
Liverpool L3 4AA

Forthcoming Meetings

Thursday 17th September
VESSELS OF THE DOCK BOARD FLEET (Gordon Wright)

Thursday 15th October
COASTAL PASSENGER SHIPPING (Malcolm McRonald)

Front Cover : The "Aquitania" of 1914

INTERLUDE IN STEAM

by Commodore Gerald N. Jones

My first voyage to sea in a sailing ship had been a long one, and at the end of it after a few weeks at home I reported to the office of the owners of the **Glenesslin**. I was informed by Mr John Star de Wolf that not one of the company's ships was in home waters. So he said that he would cancel my indentures, and to this I agreed; they were marked "*cancelled by mutual consent*" and signed by Mr de Wolf and myself. I also received the balance of the premium due to me for the few remaining months of my time as an apprentice.

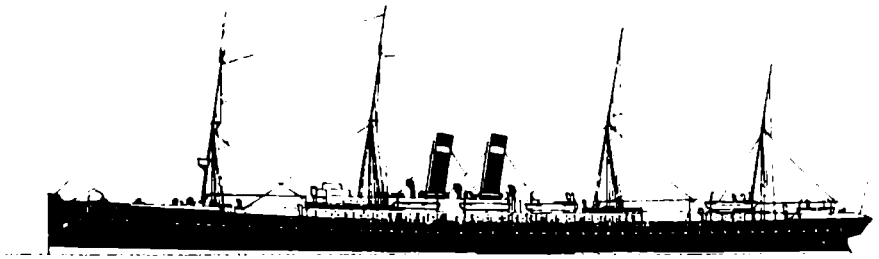
I was now faced with the problem of putting in the remainder of my time for the second mate's certificate. I did not wish to go in a sailing ship for fear of shipping for a longer voyage than anticipated. At this time my brother, after qualifying as a doctor in Edinburgh, had gone to the United States and settled in Philadelphia. Consequently I decided to go and see him and to do this I signed on as an able seaman in the American Line passenger steamer **Westernland**.

This steamer, built in 1883, had a clipper stem and was originally square-rigged on the fore and main-masts, and fore and aft rig on the mizzen and jigger. The yards were struck in the late 1890s, but the jibboom remained. The master of the **Westernland** was Captain Turner and the chief officer was Mr Musgrave; to me they appeared men of high rank and of vast importance. In later years I sailed as an officer with Mr Musgrave in the **Haverford** of the American Line when the White Star Line took over that company, and later still I was with him when he commanded the **Ceramic** in the Australian White Star service.

The **Westernland** was a ship of 5,736 gross tons and carried two classes of passengers, cabin and steerage. She also had good cargo capacity and was quite a popular ship with passengers from Pennsylvania and the Southern States, who travelled at far lower rates than they would have paid in the ships out of New York. But the principal role of the **Westernland** was carrying emigrants and the steerage was packed with hundreds of people who came from Northern and Central Europe.

I joined the **Westernland** the night before sailing at her berth in the West Huskisson Dock, Liverpool. High water being around two in the morning, we went on stations before midnight and, with the aid of tugs, hauled through into the Sandon Basin. The ship was worked out into the Mersey an hour before high tide and went and anchored just to the south of the landing stage. To me it was all strange and tiring; I found the work of handling the heavy hauling lines harder than any work in a sailing ship and, after the ship had come to an anchor, I was told by the bosun that I had an hour's anchor watch

to keep on the fo'c'slehead. By the time that my hour was up it was time for coffee and I sat down in a dreary and crowded fo'c'sle feeling quite out of my element. The seamen were all British, among them some old shellbacks who gave me a very warm and friendly welcome when they knew that I had served in sailing ships. The younger men had spent their few years at sea in the North Atlantic steamers, but they too were friendly. The seamen's fo'c'sle was below the maindeck. Above was an open space under the fo'c'slehead, along both sides of which were the quarters of the deck officers and also their mess-room. The bosun and carpenter, lamp trimmer and quartermasters had their cabins off the main fo'c'sle and the firemen's fo'c'sle was just abaft the seamen's on the same deck level but with a bulkhead separating the two.



The "Westernland" of 1883

There were about ten deck boys who were also packed into the seamen's fo'c'sle; the place was full of humanity and there was no privacy at all. Food was brought down from a galley on the foredeck and, using our own plates, knives, forks and spoons, we took our meat and vegetables out of the mess tins which were fetched from the galley by a couple of the deck boys and placed on the table. The ship went alongside the landing stage at 9.00am and almost as soon as the gangways were on board streams of emigrants began to struggle over them. These men, women and children had been brought down to the landing stage in large brakes drawn by two horses. Poorly clad for the most part and dressed in the garb of peasants from Poland, Russia, Eastern Prussia and other European countries, they were leaving behind them hardship and poverty and had high hopes of a new life.

Liverpool landing stage in 1906 was a scene of intense interest, of novelty and excitement as brake after brake disgorged its load of emigrants. They were hustled aboard and taken by stewards down below, forward and aft, on to dark steerage decks. In these quarters they were crowded in an amazing manner; women and children on some decks and men and older boys on others. These people slept in wire berths, three in a tier one above the other and the numbers in each steerage section would be about 100. I was astonished that so many people could be accommodated in such confined spaces. All

emigrants were on board by noon, and then the cabin passengers arrived in trains from London and various parts of the United Kingdom.

The **Westernland** carried 1,000 steerage passengers and 250 cabin passengers. The cabin-class ships were very popular with people of moderate means and were always well booked up. By three o'clock in the afternoon all the passengers were on board and their baggage had been stowed away. With the aid of tugs, the **Westernland** was hauled away from the landing stage and headed down river. The previous occasion that I had left the Mersey was over three and a half years before in the full rigged **Glenesslin**. Behind me were the years of sailing ship experience and now I was facing new conditions at sea. I disliked the life in a steamer from the beginning, but still I was interested in the routine and duties in force aboard. The **Westernland** had a speed of 11 knots and reached Queenstown the following afternoon. Here the steam tenders brought more passengers out to the ship, mostly young Irishmen and women going out to the States to 'make their fortunes'. During the two hours that the ship lay at anchor in the bay, bumboats crowded alongside and vendors, mostly women, came on board to sell Irish lace and woollen shawls. By early evening the **Westernland** had cleared the harbour and passed Roche's Point before dark. Rounding the Daunt Rock lightship, I saw its red light flashing out across the waters, and was glad when we had passed the Old Head of Kinsale and all the seamen were settled to their regular watches. Since the **Westernland** had left her berth in Huskisson Dock in the early morning of the previous day, I seemed to have been on stations or on watch most of the time, and I was tired and glad to find that it was the port watch below from eight o'clock until midnight.

We were called at one bell and relieved the starboard watch at eight bells. Immediately we were on watch we were sent to scrub the saloon deck. At four bells we had a spell and hot tea, seated at one of the fo'c'sle tables. How the men of the other watch managed to sleep, despite our presence in that general space, I learned for myself; we were always so tired that nothing ever disturbed us. By the end of the watch we had almost washed the ship down fore and aft. By seven in the morning the ship was shining and the decks were white as snow.

Work in a steamer at sea seemed all spit and polish and we were never idle. Then on the third day out the bosun came into the fo'c'sle and said that two men from each watch would be required to work coal from the fore end of No.3 'tween decks along to the cross bunker. An able seaman named Nelson who came from Blackpool asked me if I was prepared to take on the job with him and I agreed. So from then on for four more days my 'watch on deck' was spent below in the 'tween decks shovelling coal into a barrow and wheeling it along to tip into the bunker below. It was hot and dusty and the only light was from a dark smoky lamp, which flickered and cast weird shadows around us. This was a new and hard side of life at sea and yet I was happy

enough for I had a great companion in Nelson. He was a man in his early fifties and had been at sea since he was a boy of eleven. He had sailed in the tea clippers in the late 1860s, and later in the crack colonial passenger and wool carriers. Although he was now in a steamer and had been for about a year, he was dissatisfied and told me that he was going back to sailing ships, though he admitted that the sailing ships of the 1900s were undermanned and very different from those of his early days. To me his advice was to go back into sailing ships as soon as possible and remain in them until I passed for master.

When the task of working coal ended, Nelson and I returned to our regular watch and to keeping look-out on the fo'c'slehead at night, and to washing decks and white paintwork. It was monotonous and uninteresting and the only relief was one day when we sighted a large 4-masted barque under a full spread of sail. We never learned her name but she looked magnificent and I wished that I could have been on board her. Another day the handsome White Star liner **Majestic** overtook and passed the **Westernland**. She looked like a great steam yacht with her long fo'c'slehead and her three tall raking masts.

A few days later the **Westernland** came off the Delaware breakwater and, leaving the light on Cape May well on the starboard side, entered the Delaware River with a pilot on board. The run up to Philadelphia was one of great interest for in 1906 the banks of the Delaware were largely woodland and pasture. As the **Westernland** turned the bend below Chester we saw a large and handsome full-rigged ship which turned out to be the **Tillie E. Starbuck**. Although this fine ship was over twenty years old, she was still kept in prime condition. Nelson was fascinated as he gazed with eager eyes at the big American ship and he turned and said to me: "*I'd like to sail in that ship. She's loaded and must be ready for sailing, probably waiting for a crew. I wonder if they have signed on yet!*" We docked in Philadelphia that afternoon and the same night, when I returned on board after visiting my brother, Nelson came to me and said: "*The Tillie E. Starbuck's crew sign on tomorrow and I'm going in her.*" Nelson was stuffing his belongings into his canvas seabag as he spoke and within a few minutes he was ready for the shore. In 1907 the **Tillie E. Starbuck** was lost off Cape Horn whilst on passage from New York to San Francisco. All hands with the exception of the mate were taken off the sinking ship by the British ship **Cambuskenneth** and landed at Coquimbo, Chile.

The **Westernland's** stay in Philadelphia lasted six days and I enjoyed my evenings ashore in my brother's home, but I was not sorry when sailing day came and we left for Liverpool. It was my first experience of steamers and I was not impressed. I paid off at Liverpool and went home for a few days. But I still had the matter of four months to put in before I could sit the examination for second mate. Consequently, after meeting one of my old **Glenesslin**

shipmates, I decided to follow his example and look for a job as quartermaster in one of Harrison's Calcutta steamers.

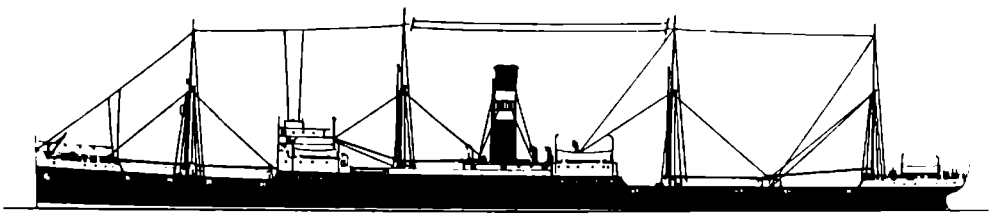
Within a few days I had signed on as quartermaster in the **Huntsman**. This ship was of 7,460 gross tons and had been built by C. Connell and Company of Glasgow in 1904, and was only 18 months off the ways when I joined her in Herculaneum Dock. Her master at that time was Captain H. McKee. I found that the quartermasters lived under the fo'c'slehead, two in a room. The quarters were good and I liked my shipmates. The seamen and firemen, all Lascars, lived aft and were hard working and disciplined. From the beginning I was happy in this very fine cargo steamer. The work was not hard; we kept watch and watch on the bridge - two hours at the wheel and two hours at various tasks around the bridge during the day. This work was done before eight bells in the morning watch, and during the remainder of the day the stand-by quartermaster sewed canvas awnings, mended flags and read the log every two hours. At night-time, when not at the wheel, the quartermaster made the coffee in the galley for the officer of the watch and for his own mate and himself. The food we got was of the best and I am sure that I could not have found any more comfortable steamer afloat than the **Huntsman**. Life in this ship was all new to me and I enjoyed the passage through the Mediterranean and when the ship made fast to the buoys in Port Said everything was fascinating in its novelty. Here bunker coal was taken on board; the coal being brought up out of the barges by Arabs who carried quite small baskets of it on their heads. They ran up the sloping planks that led out of the barges into the side bunker doors and tipped the coal out of the baskets into the bunker, and quickly turning, ran down the plank again for another basketful of coal. It seemed difficult to believe that several hundred tons of coal could be bunkered in the space of a few hours by such primitive means, but the Arab labourers numbered at least 100 and worked at high speed, chanting as they did so. By late afternoon the **Huntsman** was ready to leave the buoys and make the passage through the Canal. A searchlight in a large box was fitted on the stemhead, and two boats were hoisted up at the end of derricks for the passage. Two men came with each boat and others with the light projector. The pilot who came to take the ship through the Canal was British. At the time of which I write - early 1906 - the pilots were mostly either French or British, the Frenchmen being in the majority.

In 1906 the Suez Canal was not nearly as wide as it is now and great care had to be taken with the speed and steering of the ship. During the night we made fast to bollards on the banks for long periods while other ships passed in the opposite direction. The mail steamers had preference and I think we struck a night when several were coming North towards Port Said. It was noon next day when we reached Suez. We landed the pilot, boats and searchlight with their men, and sailed out into the Red Sea.

The **Huntsman** continued the passage to Calcutta without a stop and

in due course we took a Hughli pilot on board out of the new steam pilot cutter which had recently taken over from the brigs - those famous sailing craft which for generations had cruised off Sandheads watching for inward bound ships, putting pilots and their apprentices on board them, and taking them off the outward bounders.

The Hughli pilots were looked upon as the aristocracy of the sea, for they were very highly paid men. Most of them had been cadets in the **Worcester** or **Conway** and after serving their time in sailing ships entered the pilot service as pilot apprentices to become experts with the hand lead, taking soundings in unusually deep water with the ship going at good speed. On arrival at Calcutta the **Huntsman** went into the Kiddapore Dock and discharged her cargo of salt and general. She then began loading gunny bags (jute sacks) and jute in bales. I had quite a good deal of time for going ashore in Calcutta, for we quartermasters kept watch on the gangway by night and day. So in my watch below during daylight I wandered around Calcutta. I visited the bazaars, walked along Chowringhee Road and went into the Marble Bar, the famous and favourite resort of the British soldiers from the barracks.



The "Huntsman" of 1904

The **Huntsman** sailed from Calcutta after a stay of two weeks and went direct to London, at least to the London River, for Harrisons had a discharging berth in the Tilbury docks. From London the ship went round the coast to Liverpool and into the Herculaneum Dock The navigating and engineer officers paid off and signed on again the same day, as did the quartermasters. During the time that the ship lay in the dock I had lodgings ashore and went down to the ship each morning by seven o'clock when all work began; for those were the days when we worked ten hours when in port. I did get one week-end free and went home but the time passed quickly and at the end of three weeks the **Huntsman** was out at sea again bound for Calcutta. The passage out and home varied little, or not at all, from the previous voyage and it was this fact that impressed upon me the monotony of steamer life and all my ideas and dreams were of getting back once again into sail, with the ever changing routine; making or taking in sail; facing up to sudden changes of

wind and weather; trimming the yards and working aloft in fine conditions. Never again can life at sea have the same variety of incidents and experiences since sail has passed from the face of the ocean. ■

from Lloyd's Register, 1905/1906 :

WESTERNLAND Official Number 115352 Call Sign T S N Q
Gross Tonnage : 5,665 Nett Tonnage : 3,584
Built by Laird Brothers at Birkenhead in 1883
Owned by the International Navigation Company Limited
Length : 440′ 0″, Breadth 47′ 2″, registered at Liverpool

HUNTSMAN Official Number 118103 Call Sign V T F S
Steel Screw Four-masted Steamer
Gross Tonnage : 7,460 Nett Tonnage : 4,828
Built by C. Connell & Co. Ltd. at Glasgow in 1904
Owned by The Charente Steamship Company Limited
Length : 470′, Breadth : 57′ 2″, registered at Liverpool
Engines by Dunsmuir & Jackson Ltd., Glasgow

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - COMMODORE GERALD N. JONES

Commodore Gerald N. Jones C.B.E., D.S.O., R.D., R.N.R., was born at Llanarmon, near Ruthin, North Wales on 30th May 1885. It was intended that he would enter the medical profession, but instead, at the age of 16, he became an apprentice, sailing on his first voyage in the full-rigged ship **Glenesslin**. He remained with the **Glenesslin** for over two years and then joined the 4-masted barque **Silberhorn**. He was later an able seaman in the full-rigged ship **Ladye Doris**, and in 1906, after having obtained his second mate's certificate, he joined the barque **Conway Castle**, owned by Robert Thomas and Son of Liverpool.

Later Commodore Jones made a voyage to Port Germein, South Australia, to load grain in the Glasgow owned barque **Marjory Glen**. The cargo took six weeks to load, and the passage home was by way of the Cape of Good Hope to Dublin, where he left to sit for his master's certificate. On obtaining this, Commodore Jones left sail and joined the Blue Funnel liner **Telamon**. In January 1911 he transferred to the White Star Line and served as a junior officer in the **Suevic**. As a member of the Royal Naval Reserve he was mobilised on the outbreak of the First World War and as commanding officer of H.M.S. **Sprightly** he was awarded the D.S.O. in 1917.

Commodore Jones returned to the merchant service in 1919 and while serving as second officer of the **Regina**, he took away a boat to rescue some of the crew of the sinking steamer **Messina**. After the merger of the Cunard and White Star companies in 1934, he sailed in several of the passenger liners and on the outbreak of the Second World War he was again called up to undertake naval duties. For the greater part of the war he served as commodore of convoys and in 1941 was awarded the C.B.E. For a time Commodore Jones was commanding officer of H.M.S. **Attack**, the coastal forces training depôt. He was demobilised in the summer of 1946 and returned to the Cunard White Star Line as chief officer and later staff captain of the **Georgic**. He was afterwards staff captain in the **Aquitania**, **Queen Elizabeth** and **Queen Mary**, and was appointed to command the liner **Ascania** on her first post-war voyage in December 1947.

Commodore Jones retired in January 1949 and died in June 1958.

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

NOTICE BOARD

Members' access to the Maritime Archives and Library on Fridays will resume in September as follows:

SEPTEMBER : FRIDAY 11th, 18th and 25th

OCTOBER : FRIDAY 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th

NOVEMBER : FRIDAY 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, 17th September
"VESSELS OF THE DOCK BOARD FLEET" - Gordon Wright

Thursday, 15th October
"COASTAL PASSENGER SHIPPING" - Malcolm McRonald

The full Programme of the 1998-1999 Meetings will be included with the September "*Bulletin*".

Meetings are held at 12.30pm in the Education Suite of the Maritime Museum

THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Once again it is my pleasure and privilege to report on the Society's activities since our last A.G.M. on 15th May 1997. Thankfully, the past year has been free of the disputes and controversies with so enlivened the course of the previous year's Agenda!

1. The Monday (now Friday) Facility

The compromise reached with the Museum authorities whereby the Archives and Library would be available to us on 22 Mondays in the year has been a success, and at a Council Meeting in November last year it was decided to renew the agreement for a further twelve months. But we are of course ever mindful of the need for further expansion should the opportunity arise. And, I might add, without abandoning the principle that the Archives and Library should be open to the public on at least five days per week.

However, our arrangement received something of a setback when our ever-amenable helpmate, John Moore, secured a part time post at John Moores University. Well, we are very happy for John, but this commitment took him away from the Archives and Library on Mondays! Consequently, we had to switch to the other 'closed day' - Friday - to exploit our concession. A new schedule was drawn up, and although inconvenient for a number of our Members, it has nevertheless been well-attended, and is greatly appreciated by those who avail themselves of this privilege.

2. Lecture Programme

As always, we are indebted to Ron Dennis for introducing a full range of interesting speakers at our monthly meetings. Only one failed to materialise, and that was due to his having been called upon by the local judiciary to attend Jury duty. Meanwhile, his place was promptly taken by John Shepherd, who, at short notice, gave us fresh insight into the history of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. Other Society Members who contributed were Harry Hignett (The American Bureau of Shipping), and David Eccles (The ***Buenaventura*** *Incident). Once again our friend and colleague, Mike Stammers, subjected us to the rigours of his Christmas Quiz, which was won by Member Norman West.*

Another highlight was the visit in January to Cammell Laird's shipyard, a visit which inspired more than one published account in the Spring 'Bulletin'. Later on the Treasurer's Report will reveal how the Society's funds were enhanced by some £50, thanks to a ticket voucher generously donated by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, which was raffled at the Christmas meetings to be won by Member Peter Day.

3. Joint Meeting with the World Ship Society

This took place on 4th April 1998 and occupied a full day from 10.00am. It was chaired by Roy Fenton of the World Ship Society, and consisted mainly of a series of talks on the W.S.S. Central Record and other facilities. A description of a British Shipbuilding Database of some 300,000 entries by Dr Ian Buxton of the Department of Marine Technology at the University of Newcastle, was of special interest. The seminar was attended by myself and a substantial number of our Members, several of whom addressed the meeting in their turn. They included our Vice-President, Harry Hignett, on the American Bureau of Shipping; Don Hayman on Modelling Resources and the steam coaster Ophir, his fine model of which was prominently on display; and David Eccles on Researching Larrinagas. Altogether it was a very successful meeting, and should be repeated next year.

4. Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

It was my privilege on 23rd April to represent the Society at the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of this venerable Historical Society. After a sherry reception, we filed into the lecture theatre to receive a paper ably presented by Dr Martyn Lynn, of Queen's University, Belfast, on the development of trade between Liverpool and Africa in the Nineteenth Century. It was greatly appreciated by his audience, as evinced by L.N.R.S. Member, Dr Peter Davies, in his vote-of-thanks address.

5. The Office of President of the Society

Soon after A.G.M. last year, the Council decided to invite our distinguished Member, Sam Davidson, to become President of the Society. As you know, the offer was accepted, and so at last the long-vacant office of President was very appropriately filled. Sam is well-known to you all, and both he and his books and papers on Marine Art are attributes of which the Society can be justly proud.

6. Donations

You will see in the Hon. Treasurer's Accounts an item headed "Donations' and recording the considerable sum of £238. These donations are invariably anonymous, but I cannot conclude this Report without expressing, on your behalf, my appreciation of the generosity of those unknown donors. I believe they are all Members of the Society and obviously have its well-being at heart. Among this fraternity are those who, from time to time, make donations in kind to Archive and Library resources, from which we all benefit sooner or later, and for which we are all grateful.

7. "Transactions"

As you know, we are hoping to produce a "Transactions", or similar book, on the theme of 'Liverpool Shipping in the past Sixty Years', to mark our 60th Anniversary as a Society. We would like everyone to have a chance to contribute, but inevitably there must be a selection process which will be initiated in July. Please address your copy to me, or to John Shepherd, by the end of June.

8. Appreciation

Finally, I am resolved to place on record my appreciation of that worthy group of Members who, in various ways, keep the Society moving forward on an even keel from year to year. To John Tebay, our hard-working Hon. Secretary, for whom no task is too formidable; to Sandy Williamson, who keeps the books of account in such good order; to John Shepherd, who, taking great pains, produces 'The Bulletin' at regular intervals; to Mike Jones, my Deputy, who, with great elan, ably fills the gap when I am absent; to Ron Dennis, who arranges for speakers to grace and enlighten our monthly meetings; to Gordon Wright, who organised the Christmas Luncheon at the Blundellsands Hotel, and generally oversees our catering needs; and to all Members who, whether by delivering lectures or by assisting our Museum colleagues in collating or cataloguing material, enhance the good name of the Society. To all I express my heartfelt thanks.

Captain Graeme Cubbin
Chairman of The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

THE "LANCASTRIA'S" ANCHOR

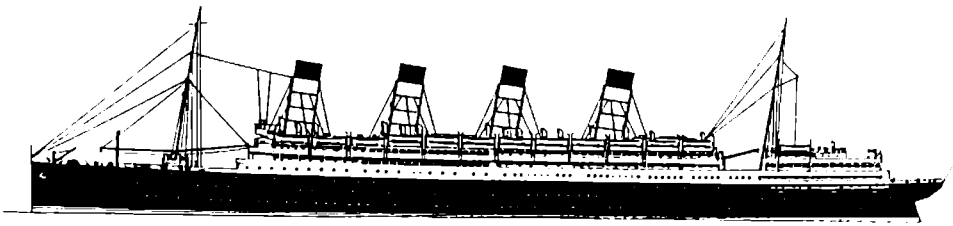
A ten-ton anchor, which was dredged up from the Mersey by the bow anchor of the Cunard liner **Saxonia** shortly before she sailed from Liverpool for Montreal in September 1956, was identified by the Receiver of Wrecks at Liverpool. It belonged to another of the Company's ships, the old **Lancastria**, and was believed to have been lost in 1924. The anchor was traced by means of registration numbers after it had been cleaned at Herculaneum Dock.

No: 2 - THREE MILLION OCEAN MILES - THE "AQUITANIA"

by T.E.Hughes

from : Lloyd's Register, 1922-23 :

Official Number : 135583 Call Sign : J F Q G
Steel Quadruple Screw Steamer
Gross Tonnage : 45,647 Nett Tonnage : 21,466
Built in 1914 by John Brown, Clydebank, Yard No: 409
Owners : The Cunard Steamship Company Limited
Length : 868' 7", Breadth : 97' 0"
4 x Parsons-Brown Steam Turbines, service speed 23 knots, 24 knots max.



On 1st December 1949, the Cunard Liner **Aquitania**, *doyenne* of the North Atlantic and the last four-funnelled liner in the world, arrived at Southampton from Halifax, N.S. Fourteen days later her owners, Cunard - White Star Limited, announced that after full consideration of all the relevant circumstances it had been decided to withdraw the liner from service. Thus for the **Aquitania** a sea career of 35 years, during which she had steamed nearly three million miles and carried nearly 1,200,000 passengers, came to a close.

If in those years she could not lay claim to being the world's fastest or the world's largest liner, the **Aquitania** was to earn her niche in the shipping hall of fame by reason of her remarkable consistency of performance and her proud record of service, not only to her owners, but also to her country in two world wars.

Conceived at the beginning of the 'big-ship' era and when the Atlantic 'Blue Riband' was secure with the **Lusitania** and **Mauretania,** the contract for the construction of the **Aquitania** was placed with the builders, John Brown & Co. Ltd., on 8th December 1910. The events leading up to this decision were explained to the shareholders by Mr Alfred Booth, chairman of the company, at the annual meeting held in Liverpool on 6th April 1911, when he said that

the three guiding principles of the company's policy were "*to weed out from the fleet, even at some immediate sacrifice of traffic, any steamers which could no longer pay their way; to add to the fleet the most suitable steamers that their experience could devise; and to cultivate by every means in their power such relations with competing lines as would enable rates to be maintained at a reasonably profitable level*". The **Aquitania** was designed to run a weekly service with the **Lusitania** and **Mauretania**. There was no Government subsidy and in consequence she needed to have 50% more carrying capacity than the earlier vessels in order to become an economic proposition.

Mr Booth then went on to speak of the docking problem at Liverpool, which was complicated by the fact that although the entrance to the Canada Graving Dock was 94ft in width, and the Canada Dock gates from the river were 100ft wide, there was in fact insufficient depth of water on the sill and confined area in the Canada Basin. Again, the Huskisson Dock entrance was only 90ft in width. The Company had taken its dilemma to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board and was told that the new Gladstone Dock would be completed shortly before the **Aquitania** was ready for sea. It would be used both as a wet and a dry dock which would appear to be satisfactory until the construction of the whole Gladstone system could be carried out, when the new dock would become the graving dock attached to that system. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board amended its plans for the new drydock by lengthening it to 1,050ft and widening the entrance to 120ft.

In point of fact the keel of the **Aquitania** was not actually laid until 5th June 1911 as the builders had their own peculiar problems in connection with the facilities at the yard. In constructing the **Aquitania**, John Brown was dealing with a ship of unprecedented weight, height and other abnormal features which demanded special arrangements being made. The same berth was used as that upon which the **Lusitania** had been built five years previously, but owing to the greater size of the **Aquitania**, the ground had to be strengthened and extended. In addition the Clyde had to be widened and deepened and the fitting-out berth adjacent to the slipways dredged.

On Monday 21st April 1913, some 22 months after the keel had been laid, the **Aquitania** was launched, the naming ceremony being performed by the Countess of Derby. Another thirteen months were to pass before the great ship was ready to leave the builder's yard and make the passage down the narrow waters of the Clyde. On the morning of 10th May 1914 - in drizzling rain and a slight mist - the **Aquitania** made her triumphal progress from the fitting-out basin to the Tail of the Bank, preceded by the commodore steamer of the Clyde Navigation Trust and watched from the banks by thousands of spectators. The river passage completed, she made a short run at eight or nine knots before finally coming to anchor.

The next day she took on board 2,000 tons of coal and water ballast to bring her down to a mean draft similar to that on an Atlantic voyage. On 12th

May 1914 she weighed anchor and proceeded on trials. These were completely successful, a speed of 24 knots being reached without effort, after which the **Aquitania** made the coastwise run to Liverpool, where she entered the Gladstone Graving Dock for painting of the underwater hull and final preparations for her maiden voyage to New York. On 30th May 1914, under the command of Captain W.T. Turner, the **Aquitania** left Liverpool direct for New York. The event, which in the natural course of things would have been an occasion for rejoicing, was, however, obscured by tragedy. On the previous day, 29th May, the liner **Empress of Ireland**, proceeding down the St. Lawrence River in thick fog, was in collision with the Norwegian ship Storstad and sank in a few minutes with 1,023 men, women and children being lost. Liverpool was a port in mourning.

Commissioned in early summer, the busy season of the Atlantic passenger year, there was good reason to hope that the **Aquitania** would make an auspicious beginning. However, on 28th June 1914 came the news that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife had been murdered at Sarajevo. A month later, on 28th July, Austria declared war on Serbia and on 2nd August Germany invaded France, and Russian troops crossed the German border. On 4th August, Great Britain declared war on Germany.

In the agreement with the Government at the time of the building of the **Lusitania** and **Mauretania** in 1903, the whole of the Cunard fleet was in time of war to be placed at the nation's disposal. This arrangement was immediately put into effect. At the beginning of August 1914 the **Aquitania** and **Caronia** (1) were in Liverpool. They were immediately taken over by the Admiralty and fitted out as armed merchant cruisers. Thus, within three months of her entry into Atlantic service, the **Aquitania** was ruthlessly stripped of all her luxurious fittings, hurriedly strengthened, fitted with 6-inch guns and painted an overall grey. Four days after the declaration of war, H.M.S. **Aquitania** left the Mersey on her first patrol.

Her career as an armed merchant cruiser was, however, shortlived. Damaged in a collision with her escort off Anglesey, she returned to Liverpool at the end of September. She was judged to be too large and vulnerable for AMC duties. From then until May 1915 she lay idle until requisitioned for transport purposes, and by August of that year she had carried about 30,000 troops to the Dardanelles. She was then fitted out as a hospital ship, in which capacity she carried no fewer than 25,000 wounded and sick personnel from the Turkish war zone. The **Aquitania** was then laid up at Liverpool throughout 1917.

After the entry of America into the war the **Aquitania** was again taken over for transport service, making nine Atlantic voyages with over 60,000 American troops. Immediately after the war she was employed in repatriation work before being handed back to the Cunard company and refitted for resumption of normal service. Her strenuous service and the diverse roles she

had been called upon to play meant that a considerable reconversion job would be necessary to refit her for the Atlantic service she would be required to maintain. The **Aquitania's** first post war sailing was from Liverpool to New York on 19th February 1919, but after that she transferred to Southampton. In December 1919 the **Aquitania** went to Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson at Newcastle for conversion to oil burning. Her bunker capacity was 8,638 tons. At the same time she was fitted with a gyro compass. On 17th July 1920 the **Aquitania** was back on the Southampton - Cherbourg - New York service in company with the **Mauretania** and the 52,000 ton **Berengaria**, the former German liner **Imperator**.

For the **Aquitania** there then began the halcyon years of her career. If her speed did not come within measuring distance of the **Mauretania**, nor her magnificence and size equal the rather garish portentousness of the **Berengaria**, she had a grace and elegance of her own which attracted passengers. It is perhaps a reflection of her intrinsic quality and serenity of service that never did so great a ship make so many ocean passages and provide so little news. A search through newspaper files and press cuttings is in fact remarkable for the absence of references to the ship, so that the odd occasions stand out in sharper relief.

There was, for instance, the stewards' strike of May 1921 when the **Aquitania**, carrying 2,750 passengers - the largest number since before 1914 - and manned by volunteers, for the most part office personnel, left Southampton on time and arrived in New York after making the fastest voyage of her peace-time career. There were also the two occasions when she grounded off Southampton, being later refloated, but not before the press and newsreels had spotlighted her.

During the inter-war years the **Aquitania** was to make 582 Atlantic crossings, steaming 1,746,000 miles and carrying a total of 530,749 passengers. In addition, she was employed during the winter months on luxury cruises from New York to the Mediterranean and South America. These cruising schedules were in themselves an indication that from a business point of view, the North Atlantic was not all plain sailing. One of the biggest problems was the passing by Congress in 1921 of a new immigration law; this made the Dillingham Act of 1917 really effective and seriously reduced immigration. Three years later, in 1924, the law was again revised, and the quota for most countries was again reduced.

Catering for the emigrant traffic to the United States had been an essential feature of the planning of the **Aquitania**. She had been designed to carry no fewer than 1,900 third-class passengers, compared with 698 second-class and 600 first-class, and although certain adjustments had been made, her third-class carrying capacity was still considerable. It was essential that other sources of traffic should be sought, and when in the summer of 1924 the idea of third-class tourist travel was introduced and became immediately

popular, particularly with American students, this new class was installed in the **Aquitania**. By 1931 tourist travel had become so popular that in the seven years since 1924, Cunard ships alone had carried 200,000, of which 42,000 had travelled in 1930. It was decided to abolish the term '*second-class*' and to replace it with '*tourist-class*'.

There followed the years of world-wide economic depression when Atlantic passenger traffic fell to record low levels; the total traffic for all lines in 1932 was little over the 600,000 mark, compared to 2,500,000 in 1913. At the beginning of 1934 came the merger of the Cunard and the White Star lines. The old **Mauretania**, the **Aquitania's** first sea going companion, made her last voyage from New York on 26th September 1934 - the day the **Queen Mary** was launched.

The **Queen Mary** was commissioned on 27th May 1936 and maintained the weekly express service between Southampton, Cherbourg and New York with the **Aquitania** and the **Berengaria**. In 1938 the **Berengaria** was withdrawn and sold for scrap, and the **Aquitania**, the last pre-1914 survivor of the North Atlantic, was left as sole companion to the flagship of the fleet. She was still in good shape, however, and a press report of her annual overhaul in the spring of 1938 concluded : "*Upon re-entering service, the **Aquitania** will make eight crossings of the Atlantic almost without an interval, as her schedule is such that she will never have more than a matter of hours to spare both in Southampton and New York*". She had to achieve 24.87 knots to maintain this schedule.

At the end of 1938 the **Aquitania** completed a further overhaul. Sailing from Southampton on 17th December she made a short Christmas cruise from New York, and from the beginning of 1939 until 10th March she was scheduled for a number of quick turn-round Atlantic voyages which would give her only one day in port at Southampton between voyages. In September 1938, the **Queen Elizabeth** was launched, and it was generally assumed that when she entered service in 1940 the order would be given to the **Aquitania** to "*finish with engines*" for the last time. The outbreak of the Second World War on 3rd September 1939 put an end to any such theorising.

At the time, the **Aquitania** was at New York, whence she sailed for Southampton. In November, she was requisitioned by the Government for transport service and on 29th November she sailed for Halifax, N.S. to embark troops - part, in fact, of the first Canadian contingent. These she safely disembarked at Greenock. She then made another round voyage to Halifax and in March 1940 made the long voyage to Sydney, where she was based for the transportation of troops from Australia to the Middle East. On 23rd November 1941, the **Aquitania** picked up a raft with 26 survivors from the German raider **Kormoran** which had sunk HMAS **Sydney**. Radio silence was maintained and the **Aquitania** was unaware of the loss of the **Sydney**. There were 318 survivors from the **Kormoran**, but 645 had been lost in the **Sydney**.

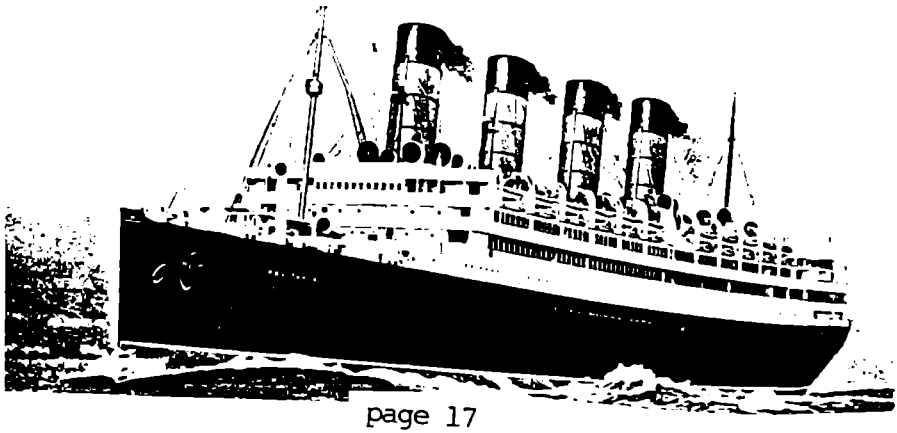
The **Aquitania** subsequently returned to the Clyde and carried American service personnel. From September 1939 to December 1945 she steamed 526,264 miles and carried 384,586 personnel. The **Aquitania** continued in Government service until March 1948, operating between Southampton and Halifax, transporting thousands of Canadian servicemen and their English wives and children back to the Dominion. About this time there were many reports that the Australian Government was interested in the **Aquitania** as a possible emigrant ship. Any doubts about her future were cleared in March 1948 when it was announced that an agreement had been concluded between the Cunard - White Star and the Canadian Government, with the approval of the Ministry of Transport, under which the **Aquitania** would carry settlers and a limited number of commercial passengers to the Dominion.

For her new purpose the liner underwent an austerity refit at Southampton, and on 25th May 1948 began her first voyage in this service to Halifax, N.S. Early in 1949 the agreement was extended for a further period, until on 24th November the **Aquitania**, under the command of Captain R.G.B. Woollatt, began her last voyage from Halifax, berthing at Southampton on 1st December, 1949.

In February 1950 the **Aquitania** was sold to the British Iron and Steel Corporation, and on 19th February she was delivered to the Gareloch by a crew of 250, to be broken up at Faslane.

Way back in 1910, the then chairman of the Cunard Company told shareholders, in describing the meticulous detail that had gone into the design of the **Aquitania**, that it was essential to do so because "*a wrongly planned steamer was wrongly planned for her whole life*". No greater justification of that planning and no greater tribute to the imagination, skill and foresight of those men who, in an almost forgotten age, designed and constructed the **Aquitania** can be found than in her proud and incomparable record of service. ■

The Aquitania on her trials, 12th May, 1914



STRIKE OVER

by L.N.R.S. Member Alan McClelland

Alan McClelland wrote this article 32 years ago on the morning that the 42-day 1966 seamen's strike ended. It originally started life as a radio script for the B.B.C. World Service. It makes very interesting reading in 1998 at a time when the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company is ***finally*** *going ahead with the long awaited and urgently required river berths for the Irish ro-ro traffic.*

Memnon, Apapa, Author, Redstart, resplendent they made their way down the Mersey on the bright Saturday morning of 1st July 1966, just after high tide. They were not the first vessels to clear the Port of Liverpool after the 42-day seamen's strike; I could see others making their way along the Crosby Channel to the Bar. The signing-on of crews had started at midnight, and now the scene in Liverpool Bay was reminiscent of the war years, when vast convoys made their way across the Atlantic to and from the docks lining the Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal. However, these ships on 1st July 1966 were gleaming in the liveries of their respective owners, not smothered in anonymous grey like their war-time predecessors. They stood out boldly against the haze shrouded Welsh hills as they passed by.

As I swung my binoculars round to the crowded docks upstream, I wondered what sort of future lay ahead for the vast fleet of ships rapidly disengaging itself from Liverpool and all the other ports of the United Kingdom. The British merchant fleet, though still the largest in the world, is being closely challenged both in size and efficiency by several competitors. It has many shortcomings and problems, which may well have been aggravated by the seamen's strike - though they were certainly not created by it. Shipowners and port authorities alike, with certain honourable exceptions, have been slow to accommodate themselves to modern trends in world commerce. In particular far too many of them have been slow to appreciate the significance of economies which result from hauling bulky commodities such as grain and ores in the largest possible ships, and the need to speed up general cargo handling techniques in an age of rapidly increasing costs.

In the evening of the day that the 1966 seamen's strike was called off I had occasion to visit one fairly small dock south of the Pier Head in Liverpool. It contained just four vessels, but they amply illustrated the present state of British dry cargo shipping and provision for seaborne commerce.

Lying alongside the quay nearest to me was a small deep sea bulk-carrier built about twelve years ago - the ss **Cydonia** of 1955, owned the Joseph Robinson & Sons, The Stag Line, and built by J. Readhead & Sons Ltd.

For a variety of reasons she had been fitted with a steam reciprocating engine, which, no matter how low its purchase price, must prove exceedingly costly to run nowadays. She appeared tiny when compared with the gigantic bulk carrier fitting out at Cammell Laird's shipyard across the Mersey for operation by a Norwegian firm. She belongs to a small go-ahead tramp ship concern, noted for the care with which it makes plans for new tonnage. Three or four years ago Robinsons made a thorough investigation of the shipping requirements of the grain trade before ordering a bulk carrier of the largest size capable of serving all the major ports of the U.K. This vessel was the **Ixia**, built by Pickersgills in 1964. Within a very short time of coming into service the new ship arrived at one U.K. port with more than 20,000 tons of Canadian grain There was not a sufficient depth of water alongside the silos to accommodate her!

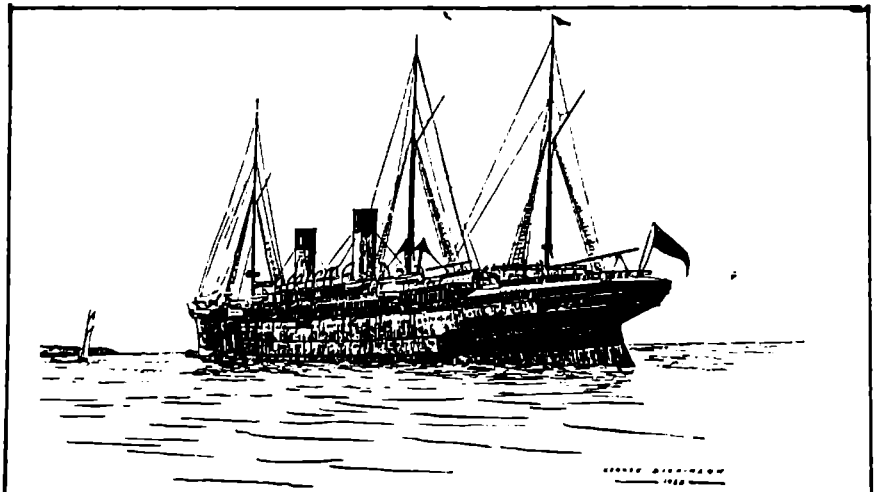
South Canada Branch Dock and the Canada Graving Dock towards the end of the seamen's strike in June, 1966.

The port was Liverpool and the Ixia had to be lightened first at another berth some distance away - a relatively costly and time consuming operation. It is to be hoped that she will soon be able to do the job for which she was designed without unnecessary hindrance and delay.

Ahead of the small bulk carrier on the evening of my visit to the docks there lay a handsome diesel-engined Mediterranean cargo liner built in the 1950s and owned by Moss Hutchison. She looked very spick and span, with clean lines and a rounded bridge front, but her cargo handling gear is a barely refined version of the equipment in use sixty years ago in the era of the horse and cart, and her engine room is situated amidships so that an awkward propeller shaft tunnel obtrudes in two of her four lower holds. As a consequence of the increasing use of containers and pallets in the regular general cargo trades, she is already obsolescent.

Of the other two ships in dock, one was a small Baltic trader belonging to the United Baltic Corporation which incorporates the latest improvements in cargo handling methods in its new tonnage (including drive-on, drive-off facilities for car deliveries), and the other was a fine, really up-to-date Booker liner employed in a South American trade. She represents all that is best in British cargo shipping. Her engines are situated right aft, her holds are served by rapid action slewing derricks and cranes, and her hatchways are so arranged that goods packed in a variety of ways can be manoeuvred through them with minimal difficulty, to be deposited exactly where they are to be stowed.

My brief dockland excursion certainly seemed to underline the fact that some rapid and sweeping changes are required if British shipping is to hold its own against foreign competition. Shipowners, port authorities, traders and trades unions must keep their attitudes and techniques under constant review. ■



The "Teutonic" at Spithead, 1897

CAPTAIN CHARLES CARRIES MOLASSES

by John Fletcher

Many Members will be familiar with the articles written by John Fletcher which appeared in the '*Nautical Magazine*' and '*Sea Breezes*' over the years. John Fletcher's real name was John Pilling, and he died just over eighteen months ago on 14th November, 1996.

John Pilling joined the Royal Navy at an early age, but in 1948 at the age of 20 he left to join the Blue Funnel Line, where he remained until 1971, sailing as chief officer for over twelve years. After being made redundant along with many others, John sailed as master with Kuwait Shipping, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation and Everards until 1983 when ill-health forced his retirement.

Articles in '*The Bulletin*' usually have a strong Liverpool connection, but in this case the link is somewhat tenuous! However, I hope that Members will agree that this article is worthy of a place in the first 48-page '*Bulletin*' - it has always been a particular favourite of mine.

j.s.

Captain Charles's ship, though old-fashioned by modern standards, was what is known as a 'comfortable ship'. Owned by a long established Liverpool company and bearing the name of one of its earliest vessels, she had served as a minelayer through the war years.

After the war she was refitted and sent on foreign service on the American run, and then on the company's three-ship service between the Malay Archipelago and the east coast of Australia.

On this particular voyage the ship had loaded in Singapore and Java, topped up with bunkers in Balikpapan (Borneo), and then steamed through the placid waters of the Flores and Arafura Seas to pick up the Barrier Reef pilot at Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. Usually she was fully loaded with Sydney her first port of call, but in Singapore Captain Charles had heard that a parcel of 1,000 tons of bulk molasses was on offer from Cairns to Melbourne; a short haul with good freight. With this in mind the big deep tank in No.3 hold had been left empty, and a few days after sailing his agents had cabled to say that the cargo was booked.

Sending for the mate, Captain Charles told him the news and said that it was a good job that the tank had been pressure tested in Singapore. The mate checked that the tank only needed a rough clean, and Captain Charles confirmed that there was no Lloyd's survey required for molasses. Steam coils would be required as it would be a heated cargo.

The mate got the bo'sun and his men organised on the cleaning. As the captain had said, only a rough clean was necessary, unlike the very high

standard required for palm oil, latex and most of the other bulk liquids which were carried, but even so, all loose scale, rust, dirt or residue of former cargoes had to be removed from the tank.

During the many years that Captain Charles's company's ships had been trading to the Far East and Australia, they had gained a wealth of experience in the carriage of bulk liquids, and as with other types of cargo, all this knowledge had been compiled to form a standard instruction book. Captain Charles knew the basic elements well enough from his own experience. Briefly stated, they covered two classes of liquid cargo: that which required heating and that which did not. In the latter case the tank was simply prepared and filled, the main point to watch being that it was full, with no possibility of a free surface which could endanger the stability of the ship.

With heated liquids there was more to it, some of them having the loading, carrying and discharging temperatures differing by as much as 45°F. The consequent change in volume in a big tank presented certain problems. A nice balancewas called for, by which the liquid at its lowest temperature on the voyage did not fall dangerously close below the level of the tank top, nor when it was heated to discharge temperature did it expand so as to strain or overflow the tank.

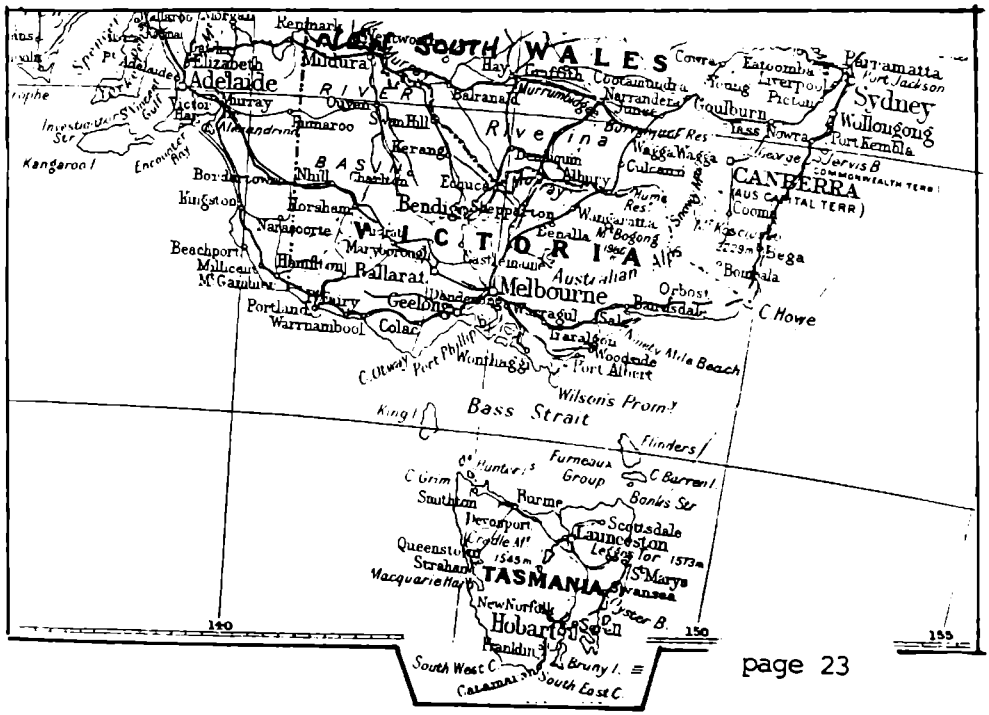
Of course, the company wanted all the freight it could obtain and had taken practical means to ensure that it got it. The coaming of the tank was raised about six inches above the tank top and at each corner of the tank were expansion trunks leading up to ventilators on deck. Thus the liquid could if necessary expand considerably without causing serious stress on the tank lid and manhole joints. In the case of molasses, the temperature was not to exceed 90°F, not to fall below 75°F, and at a point somewhere between 80°F and 85°F fermentation might occur and asphyxiating gases could be given off.

To the seaward of Cairns lay the Grafton Passage, the only way through the Barrier Reef except for the channels at the north and south extremities. The entrance to the harbour itself was almost hidden in a fold of steep green-clad hills. By the time the ship was secured alongside it was early evening and when the mate got back to his room there were three shore-side men waiting for him. They were the agent, the shipper and the engineer in charge of pumping. The only real problem the mate had was in slaking the seemingly perpetual thirst of the pumping engineer and his boys, and ensuring that one of them would be available to stop the pump when he gave the order. All through the night the molasses poured, with the same sense of inevitability as a volcanic lava flow. There was almost a hypnotic fascination in watching the heavy, sweet smelling liquid pour from the pipe and spread itself so slowly that it looked as if the tank would never be full, but by early morning the level was nearly up to the mark which the mate had made. By seven o'clock he was able to report to Captain Charles that the cargo was loaded to his satisfaction and shortly afterwards they were on their way, leaving the sub-tropical warmth of

Northern Queensland for winter in the southern ports. Three-and-a-half days later the ship passed under the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge and docked at Central Wharf where she would spend a further three days discharging. Captain Charles's idea on leaving was to go first to the oil berth at Melbourne, half way up the Yarra River, to discharge the molasses, and then to carry on to the Victoria Dock to the general cargo berth.

A day before arrival at Sydney, however, with a noticeable drop in both air and sea temperatures, the mate had sent one of the cadets to check the temperature of the molasses. Thermometers secured to light chain had been left hanging in the tank so it was a simple matter of hauling them out to take a reading. Half an hour passed before the cadet returned and reported that he couldn't pull up the chain. The combined efforts of the mate and two middies eventually brought the thermometer to view. It read 76°F, and the mate reckoned that the molasses must be as thick as a Lake Maracaibo oil well, and advised Captain Charles that the steam should be cracked open.

After leaving Sydney they had a quiet forty hour run round the coast and first light saw them through Port Phillip Heads and by eight o'clock the ship was moored in Victoria Dock, Melbourne, ready for the waiting day gangs. The agent was on board and confirmed that twilight and night gangs had been ordered so that all being well the discharging of the general cargo would be completed by the next morning. A tanker was on the oil berth at present, but she was due to sail soon after midnight.



Checking the temperature of the molasses, the mate saw that it was 89°F, one degree less than the required pumping temperature, and just into the expansion trunk. During the morning inspection he mentioned this to Captain Charles, who appeared to be very pleased with the way things were working out.

The gangs worked well, and on his final look round the hatches with the third mate, the mate saw that she would easily be finished for the morning. It was a clear, cold night with a touch of frost in the air. He thought how thick the molasses would have been at this temperature without the heating coils and then, one thought leading to another, he walked over to one of the deep tank ventilators and shone his torch down. The beam didn't have far to travel before being reflected from the darkly glinting surface of the molasses, which he saw with some consternation was only about six feet below deck level.

At five o'clock the mate was called, and the second mate told him that the cargo would be all finished for six, and that the molasses had risen further up the ventilator, and that the surface was now only an inch or so below the lip of the ventilator cowl. At half past six the agent came aboard and told Captain Charles that there was some sort of trouble down on the oil berth. The tanker occupying the berth wouldn't be ready to sail for another 24 hours. Captain Charles immediately ordered tugs and a pilot and decided to proceed to Adelaide, despite the mate's misgivings about the molasses. It would, said Captain Charles, be pretty cold in Adelaide and in Burnie, and if the steam was shut off, then the molasses would settle. Furthermore, with the extra thousand tons down below, there would be no stability worries on the run across to Tasmania.

They left the berth shortly afterwards and were well down the river before the mate was relieved on the fo'c'sle head by the second mate. He went to have a look at the deep tank and what he saw sent him up to the bridge in a hurry. The molasses was over the lip of the vents and running into the scuppers in a steady stream of thick dark liquid. Captain Charles decided that if the flow hadn't stopped by the time the pilot was ready to go, then he would anchor off Gellibrand Pile and get the agent out.

An hour later the flow continued and at an increased rate, so Captain Charles brought the ship to anchor and sent off a note with the pilot asking the agent to bring with him a chemist or someone who knew about molasses. He duly arrived, accompanied by two men who he introduced as an industrial chemist and the manager of a Brisbane molasses plant. They all went to No.3 hatch where they were joined by the mate and the chief engineer. In silence they all stared at the unique spectacle presented by the four ventilators spewing molasses in a steady remorseless flow which ran down the scuppers and finally dissolved in the grey waters of Port Phillip Bay.

The chemist told Captain Charles the molasses was '*growing*'. At a certain temperature under certain conditions it could happen. The captain

asked if they had any idea when this '*growing*' might stop. All the steam heat was off the tank now. He was told that a chemical reaction had started - it could stop that evening or maybe the next day.

Captain Charles gave the agent his amended E.T.A. at Adelaide and sailed through the Backstairs Passage, hoping to make the pilot before dark. He was over optimistic, however, and it was after nightfall when they arrived and anchored until morning. The mate reported that the molasses was coming out faster now than when they had left Melbourne. The sailors had been washing it over the side, but once they were alongside, that couldn't go on.

The mate reckoned that there was three days' cargo work at Adelaide. As soon as they were tied up he contacted the chandler and ordered fifty 40-gallon drums. The bo'sun, meanwhile, with typical Chinese ingenuity, had made four lots of chutes to funnel the molasses into the drums and the wharfies derived no end of amusement from the whole fiasco. It was a messy business at best; inevitably some of the molasses spilt and each drum had to be washed before being slung down below and stowed. During the afternoon, as well as '*growing*', the molasses began to erupt. A loud popping noise was heard, followed by a nauseous gas wave which permeated the whole ship.

Captain Charles started to worry about the possibility of the molasses ceasing to '*grow*' and starting to contract. The mate had managed to save about 100 tons in the drums, but a lot had gone over the side as well. There was now less than 900 tons in a 1,000 ton tank. If the molasses contracted, then they would be left with a mighty slack tank. If it had been water it would have been bad enough, but a free surface of molasses in a big 'thwartship tank .... a winter passage across the Bass Strait and Tasman Sea in that condition didn't bear thinking about.

When the ship sailed from Adelaide two days later, a total of 250 drums had been filled with molasses and 20 more empty drums stood on deck for use in their next port, Burnie. When the pilot had gone, the mate took over the watch and checked the course which would take them clear of the Troubridge Shoals and on down the Gulf of St. Vincent. He decided to let the molasses go over the side now that they were back at sea.

Next morning the molasses was still flowing and erupting, but just before noon the mate thought that it had slowed down a little although he had become so mesmerised by it over the last few days that it was difficult to really tell.

At three o'clock that afternoon, the molasses stopped. The mate followed Captain Charles down on to the deck and together they stood by one of the ventilators, looking at it with a certain degree of incredulity. The situation was watched carefully for the remaining fifteen hours of the passage and during the two days the ship lay alongside at Burnie. The level dropped about three feet in the ventilators and remained there, with no eruptions either. At sailing time, and with a fair weather report, Captain Charles decided

that they were going to be lucky. He told the mate that they would not start heating the molasses again until they were inside Port Phillip Heads. If it started to grow again then, it was just too bad! Their luck held and forty hours after leaving Burnie they were tied up alongside the Melbourne oil wharf.

The molasses consignee and the pumping manager boarded right away along with the agent; the consignee going straight up to see Captain Charles while the other two made for the mate's room. The consignee explained that the tanks ashore were completely dry, and also that he was being hard pressed by some of his customers who only bought in 50 or 60 drum lots. The molasses apparently had to settle in the tanks ashore before it could be drummed, and that would take another couple of days.

Captain Charles suggested that he could make 250 drums available, explaining that there had been a slight excess of molasses which the deep tank couldn't hold. If the consignee wanted it, then he was welcome to it, provided he covered the cost of the drums. The captain said that he would arrange for the discharge of the molasses on to the consignee's lorries.

Some three hours later Captain Charles was disturbed by the mate knocking on his door. He explained that the pump had been rigged, but that it would not draw. The pumping manager said that the molasses was too thick, even though there was full steam on the heating coils. The mate's solution was to get the pump running and then lift it clear of the tank lid with one of the derricks; they would then take off the manhole door and lower the pump with the end of the pipe through the manhole. Captain Charles pointed out that with the head on the tank, the 'tween deck would soon be full of molasses. The mate pointed out that there was no cargo in the 'tween deck, and the deck crew had swept it clean. The carpenter had built a sort of cofferdam around the tank coaming so that any spillage could be contained. Captain Charles agreed with the plan and accompanied the mate to the tank top. When they got there the pump hung poised above the manhole door and the third mate, second engineer and the carpenter were down in the 'tween deck. The bo'sun was standing by the winch and two sailors waited in readiness to handle the pipe. Carefully they slackened off the nuts on the manhole door.

There was a hissing noise as the door rose from its seating and thick molasses began to ooze out all round its edges. The carpenter quickly took off the nuts until only four remained. They worked on these until the second engineer shouted a warning. They jumped back just in time as the steel door flew into the air, completely stripping the remaining threads of the holding nuts, and landed in a corner of the 'tween deck. Molasses poured out from the opening and spread over the tank lid. The pump was then lowered and the pipe guided into the manhole. By now the mate and his men were ankle deep in molasses, but the idea had worked and the cargo which had caused so much trouble was finally on its way ashore. Leaving the third mate in charge and setting the sailors to work shovelling the spilt molasses back into the tank, the

mate and second engineer climbed up on deck and got rid of their stained and sodden gear.

Ten days afterwards the old ship was heading north through the reefs. A good cargo had been loaded in Sydney and there remained a brief call at Port Alma in Northern Queensland before she left the Australian coast and steamed westwards to Java and Singapore. Captain Charles and the mate were having a drink together and discussing the events of the preceeding weeks. There was a knock on the door and the radio officer arrived with a message from the Sydney agents :

"*Molasses out-turn excellent. Stop. On this basis endeavouring book you 1,000 tons Cairns to Melbourne next southbound voyage*" .... ■

FOG AT THE BAR

The log of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's King Orry for Tuesday 13th January and Wednesday 14th January 1959 when the steamer was delayed for twenty-four hours by '*fog at the Bar*'.

Log of Steamship KING ORRY Master.
From Douglas To Liverpool. Tuesday 13th January 1959

Lights, Headlands, &c., Passed on Passage.	Time.	Courses. Stan'd Compass. Steer'g Compass.	Wind.	Remarks as to Weather, Anchoring, Docking, Detention, &c.
From Douglas	0902			Departed from Douglas with 90 passengers 3 Cars. 143 Mails, and deck traffic
Head	0907	SSSE. ASEC	Easterly	
				11.55. Anchored 1 Mile Outside Bar [illegible] owing to dense fog.
Bar L. Ves.	0826 Wed. 14/1/59.		ASL	
				Weather. Light to Mod Easterly winds sea smooth vis Good but becoming poor approaching Bar L. Ves
Formby	1150 14/1/59			Wed. 14/1/59. 8.18 AM. Hove up and proceeded. 8.58 AM Anch. owing to dense fog.
Crosby	1212 "			1140 AM Hove up and proceeded vis improving.
Rock.	1235 "			
				Arrived Liverpool disembarked passengers cars mail etc
Liverpool	1302 South Berth Princes Stage			

Time on Passage	hrs. 28 · min. 00	Distance Run	75 miles
Received Mails	0730	Ship's Draught of Water. Ford.	ft. 11 · in. 0
Landed Mails	1330 ·	Aft	ft. 12 · in. 10
Time of High Water	1354	Height	ft. 28 · in. 7
Passed on Passage Co.'s S.S.	Manxman	at	1200
" "		"	
"		"	

Names of Seaman	From	To
On Look-out: J. Killey.		
During Passage: H. Bowring.		

Night Watchman: E. Kenley.

Regulation Lights exhibited: As per Regulations

Signature: J. W. Kinley Mate

THE ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER (WIRELESS) RESERVE

by L.N.R.S. Vice-President Ray Pugh

In 1932, the Admiralty decided that the offer of many enthusiastic radio amateurs ("*hams*") to form an Auxiliary Reserve would provide an excellent opportunity to augment the R.N.V.R. Telegraphist Branch. The offer was accepted and civilian volunteers joined the Royal Naval Wireless Auxiliary Reserve (R.N.W.A.R.). These reservists provided their own equipment and were taught Naval operating procedures, but were not provided with any form of uniform. Since the R.N.W.A.R. had no legal base, members were told that in time of war they must hold themselves in readiness for service ashore or afloat, but they were not subject to general mobilization - their instructions continued somewhat enigmatically with the statement that '*the Admiralty would only "call-up" such members as might be required!*' There was no retainer as with Army Territorials - we served on an entirely voluntary basis, in civilian apparel.

That was the general statement at the start, but now let us look at the personal side. I saw the advertisement in the 'Wireless World' and was enrolled as a Watcher First Class, having proficiency in the morse code, but not being in possession of a wireless amateur transmitter. After a meeting of the eight Merseyside members in 1933 with Commander Mann and Warrant Officer Glastonbury at the Liverpool Adelphi Hotel, I was made Rating-in-Charge for Liverpool. I gave morse practice to those who could attend at my home in Wallasey. At 10.00pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings the Whitehall Naval Transmitter put out morse exercises for our benefit, and the Reserve soon grew to nationwide dimensions.

It became evident that a training centre would be needed for weekly evening practice, and H.M. Office of Works provided a rather dismal room in the Inland Revenue Building in Victoria Street, which in daytime was used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Eventually we had to vacate these premises, and were granted space above Aird and Anderson's Tool Shop on Whitechapel.

This was to cause difficulty, as the R.N.V.R. also had a wireless reserve training at H.M.S. **Eaglet** in Salthouse Dock. Captain Elgood of **Eaglet** would not allow R.N.W.A.R. members to train in his ship, as they were not in uniform.

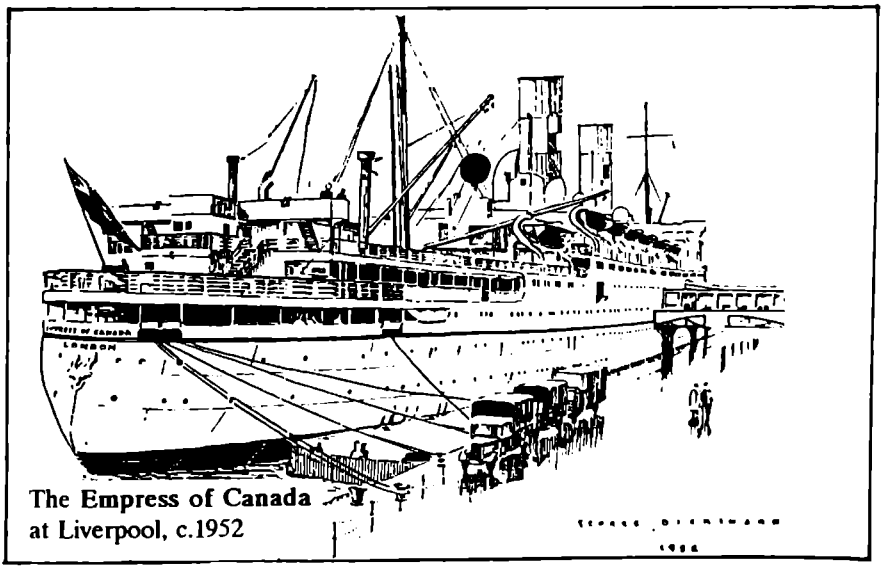
In 1938, war seemed imminent and Liverpool now had two units of eight members each, with Arthur Fielding of Heswall being Rating-in-Charge of the second unit. Also in 1938, the R.N.W.A.R. amalgamated with the R.N.V.R. Wireless section to form the Royal Naval Volunteer (Wireless) Reserve, and a retainer fee was now granted. The minimum joining age was 18. The total membership of some 400 telegraphists nationwide would be useful in

time of war on many types of vessel. In the 1930s there were benefits in being able to take one's holidays afloat in H.M. ships. I was in the light cruiser H.M.S. **Caledon** for the Jubilee Review of King George V in 1935; I attended a wireless course in Portsmouth Barracks Signal School in 1936; I enjoyed a fortnight's cruise in H.M.S. **Newcastle** when we escorted the Royal Family from Stranraer to Belfast in 1937, and in 1938 I spent a week in H.M.S. **Rodney** for Home Fleet exercises in the Channel. In addition, one of the volunteers, Mr W.D. Wills offered holiday cruises from Torquay in his steam yacht **Osprey**. This vessel was renamed **Hiniesta** when commissioned for Naval service in the war at the age of 37 years, and I spent the last three and a half years of the war as her sole P.O. Telegraphist on direction finding research work.

Some Volunteers were called up for the Munich crisis, and received £15 for obeying the call, and I spent two days at Devonport Barracks on board H.M.S. **Drake**. Little did I know then that I would be called up on 16th October 1939 to the same Barracks, getting used to the Navy way of life, and waiting for a 'draft' in January 1940. The war at sea was well under way, and I was living with survivors from the aircraft carrier H.M.S. **Courageous**.

I had four days leave due over New Year, 1940 and returning to Devonport found that I had missed the motor yacht H.M.S. **Rodora** (which was lost in September 1940), and instead I was appointed to the motor yacht H.M.S. **Evadne** at Birkenhead, in which I served for over two years. In peacetime she had belonged to Sir Richard Fairey (Aviation), and she was most useful as a coastal convoy escort.

The R.N.W.A.R. had been a brainwave on someone's part as there were so many trained telegraphists available just when they were needed most.■



The Empress of Canada at Liverpool, c.1952

EDITORIAL

"*The Bulletin*" has been increased to 48 pages for this issue. The additional space will enable two or three longer articles to be included which would encroach too much on the available space in a 32 page edition. It is hoped that 48 page "*Bulletins*" will appear regularly twice a year in the Summer and at Christmas.

Many Members will be aware that this is the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Society. It is hoped to produce a special publication in the Autumn to mark the event. Members should by now have received a circular letter inviting them to contribute to the anniversary publication, but please remember that all articles should be submitted by the end of June so that the 'working-group' can start selecting those to be included.

Articles for publication in "*The Bulletin*" are welcome at any time and should be sent to the Editor at the address in the inside front-cover. An ideal length of article is 3 close-typed A.4 sides, or 5 close-typed A.5 sides.

A reminder has been enclosed with this "*Bulletin*" to the effect that Membership Subscriptions are once again due. The Society's 'year' runs from 1st May to the following 30th April, and it is earnestly requested that all subscriptions be paid by 1st September. An addressed envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

It is intended to establish a Database of Members' special interests and fields of research. Please refer to the notes on the Subscription renewal slip. It is hoped that most Members will respond, but please note that we shall keep the information on a computer, as is done with Members' names and addresses. The information will be for the use of the Society's officials only, and will not be made available to any other organisation. The Data Protection Act requires the Society to advise you of these facts.

I should like to thank the proof-readers who meticulously go through each issue of "*The Bulletin*" before it is photo-copied for distribution to Members. Thanks are due to the Society's Chairman, Alan McClelland and Malcolm McRonald for undertaking this task and correcting my clumsy constructions and ensuring that I've got the facts right. As many Members will be aware, it is almost impossible to 'proof' one's own work - after reading it through four or five times I see what I want to read, not what is actually printed on the paper!

Thanks are also due to the many Members who send me material for inclusion in *"The Bulletin"*. Please keep the material coming in, whether it is a full-length article, a *'filler'* or a piece of local news.

To conclude at a personal level, may I say how much I have enjoyed editing *"The Bulletin"* over the past year. I have made a great many new friends, many of whom correspond with me regularly. Members' comments are always welcome, and if you have an item which you feel might be suitable for our regular 'Notes and Queries' feature, or wish to have a letter printed, then please write to me. There's always space for Members' contributions.

June, 1998.

BOOK REVIEW

"IRON FIGHTERS, OUTFITTERS AND BOWLER HATTERS"

by George C. O'Hara

ISBN 0 935082105 Price £25.00

The author has a background in shipbuilding. This book makes compulsive reading for the researcher and those merely interested in *'whatever happened to the British shipbuilding industry*?'.

This is a comprehensive account of the decline and fall of the one-time shipbuilder to the world to virtually a cottage industry.

The formation of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (1968) provides a case study in mismanagement. The directors were politically appointed with only a limited knowledge of shipbuilding and shipping contracts. (One director came from a ladies' garments factory!) An intransigent workforce, political dogma, outside influence and fierce international competition all contributed to the débâcle.

Mr O'Hara has produced a volume of quality and balance with very good photographs of shipyard plant, and of the many ships built in various yards. He also leaves the reader in no doubt about *'whatever happened to the British shipbuilding industry!'*

The book can be obtained from Ellesmere Port library, or from your local library for a small reservation fee.

s. t. h.

WEATHER AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERMITTING

compiled by John Shepherd

To quote the advertising leaflets, it was indeed a "wonderful day out" when the sea was calm and blue. However, the weather in the Irish Sea can be notoriously bad at any time of the year, and on Wednesday 6th September, 1950, an exceptionally severe gale was blowing. The graphic newspaper accounts on pages 34 and 35 decribe the problems the storm caused to the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Company and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company.

Visitors to Llandudno and other North Wales Resorts will find that the sailings and excursions by the Company's Fleet of luxurious pleasure steamers provide one of the premier attractions. The vessels are especially adapted and designed to provide passengers with the utmost comfort.

A steamer provides amenities which no other form of travel can offer, spacious decks, well-equipped dining saloons, delightful bars and comfortable lounges.

Catering on "St. Tudno" and "St. Seiriol" is of a particularly high standard, and excellent meals are obtainable.

Light Teas and Refreshments, etc., are available at popular prices. All vessels are fully licensed.

Children over 3 and under 14 years—Half-Fare.

T.S. "St. Tudno"	2,493 passengers	... 19 knots
T.S. "St. Seiriol"	1,556 passengers	... 18½ knots
M.V. "St. Trillo"	568 passengers	... 12 knots

Souvenir Guide obtainable at Company's office, Pier Gates or on board vessels price 1/-.

SEASON 1957

The Liverpool & North Wales S.S. Co. Ltd.
40 Chapel Street, Liverpool 3.

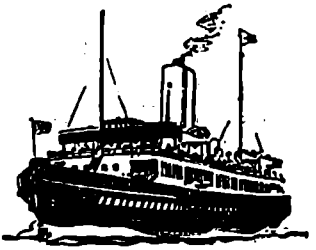
POPULAR HOLIDAY CRUISES

from

LLANDUDNO PIER

by

T.S. "ST. TUDNO" T.S. "ST. SEIRIOL"
M.V "ST. TRILLO"



For Tickets and Further Information apply:
Booking Office, Pier Gates, Llandudno
(Tel: No. 6837)

All tickets are issued and passengers carried subject to the Company's Conditions of Carriage as exhibited at the Company's Offices and on the vessels.

SAILINGS FROM LLANDUDNO PIER (1957)

(weather and other circumstances permitting, subject to alteration without notice)

Leaving	Daily (Suns. Included)	Due Back	Return Fare (including Pier Tolls)
p.m. 1.15	T.S. "St. Tudno" or "St. Seiriol" MENAI BRIDGE (1 hour ashore)	p.m. 5. 0	6/6
	SUNDAYS		
a.m. 10.45	M.V. "St. Trillo" Morning Cruise ...	p.m. 12.15	3/6
p.m. 2.45	Afternoon Cruise ...	p.m. 4.45	4/6
p.m. 7.30	Evening Cruise ...	p.m. 9. 0	3/6
	MONDAYS		
a.m. 10.45	M.V. "St. Trillo" MENAI BRIDGE (3¼ hours ashore) Return 3.45 p.m. by "St. Tudno"	p.m. 5. 0	6/6
p.m. 2.45	Afternoon Cruise ...	p.m. 4.45	4/6
p.m. 6.30	MENAI BRIDGE Circular Tour Out Boat, Return Crosville Bus.	p.m. 10.20 or 10.40	6/6 Children 3/4
	TUESDAYS		
a.m. 10.15	T.S. "St. Seiriol" DOUGLAS (I.O.M.) (about 2¼ hours ashore)	p.m. 8. 0	20/-
a.m. 10.45	M.V. "St. Trillo" MENAI BRIDGE (3¼ hours ashore) Return 3.45 p.m. by "St. Tudno"	p.m. 5. 0	6/6
p.m. 2.45	Afternoon Cruise	p.m. 4.45	4/6
p.m. 6.30	MENAI BRIDGE Circular Tour Out Boat, Return Crosville Bus.	p.m. 10.20 or 10.40	6/6 Children 3/4

Leaving	WEDNESDAYS	Due Back	Return Fare (including Pier Tolls)
a.m. 10.15	T.S. "St. Seiriol" DOUGLAS (I.O.M.) (About 2¼ hours ashore)	p.m. 8. 0	20/-
a.m. 10.45	M.V. "St. Trillo" Morning Cruise ...	p.m. 12.15	3/6
p.m. 2.30	MENAI BRIDGE (About ¼ hour ashore)	p.m. 6. 0	6/6
p.m. 7.30	Evening Cruise ...	p.m. 9. 0	3/6
	THURSDAYS		
a.m. 9.30	T.S. "St. Seiriol" LIVERPOOL (2 hours ashore)	p.m. 4.30	9/-
a.m. 10.45	M.V. "St. Trillo" MENAI BRIDGE (3¼ hours ashore) Return 3.45 p.m. by "St. Tudno"	p.m. 5. 0	6/6
p.m. 2.45	Afternoon Cruise ...	p.m. 4.45	4/6
p.m. 6.30	MENAI BRIDGE Circular Tour Out Boat, Return Crosville Bus.	p.m. 10.20 or 10.40	6/6 Children 3/4
	FRIDAYS		
a.m. 10.45	M.V. "St. Trillo" Morning Cruise ...	p.m. 12.15	3/6
p.m. 2.30	MENAI BRIDGE (About ¼ hour ashore)	p.m. 6. 0	6/6
p.m. 6.30	MENAI BRIDGE Circular Tour Out Boat, Return Crosville Bus.	p.m. 10.20 or 10.40	6/6 Children 3/4

"FOR THE LOVE OF MIKE, DON'T FEED THE SEAGULLS !!!"

Talking with Malcolm McRonald a few weeks ago, the conversation turned, perhaps inevitably, to the **St. Tudno** and **St. Seiriol**. Malcolm reminded me of the St. **Tudno's** last Purser, a voluble Welshman named E.B. Hindley. The Purser was responsible for making the shipboard announcements over the 'tannoy' system, such as warning children not to climb on the ship's rails, or giving notice of the **St. Tudno's** arrival at Llandudno Pier.

Mr Hindley was also concerned about passengers feeding the seagulls, and on one particular busy and harassing day, concluded a seagull warning with the unforgettable words "***for the love of Mike, don't feed the seagulls !!!***"

j.s.

Press Cuttings from the 'Liverpool Daily Post' and 'Liverpool Echo' for Thursday 7th September, 1950.

Surprise 70 m.p.h. gales lash west coast;

Storms maroon passengers, flood roads

SHIPS IN DISTRESS, MANX LIFEBOATS OUT

SUDDEN high winds and heavy rainstorms lashed the North Wales and Isle of Man coasts last night, and lifeboats answered many calls. In the Mersey it was still blowing hard with violent gusts at 4 a.m. to-day.

When the Isle of Man steamer Lady of Man, with 420 aboard, reached Fleetwood early this morning after a six-hour crossing—twice the normal time—three women passengers were taken to hospital. The boat was met at the quayside by an ambulance. The women were treated for cuts from flying glass when windows were smashed by the heavy seas.

Earlier the steamer Viking arrived at Fleetwood more than three hours late on the crossing. Mr W. Ashworth, of Blackpool, who has travelled to and from Douglas from Fleetwood for twenty years, described the trip—his seventy-first this season—as "terrible, one of the worst I have ever experienced."

The Ben My Chree reached Prince's Stage, Liverpool, two hours late. Leaving Douglas at 4 p.m. she soon ran into a gale. Crockery was thrown about, and a man sitting in a chair in the saloon was thrown from his seat. No one was injured.

30-foot waves

Port Erin and Port St. Mary lifeboats were launched yesterday afternoon in answer to a ship's distress signals picked up by Seaforth radio.

The ship—the motor-vessel William Herdman (47 tons) — called for immediate assistance when caught in high seas and a 70 m.p.h. south-westerly gale between Langness and Port St. Mary.

Just before 6 p.m., with 30-foot waves sweeping over the breakwater, the William Herdman was escorted into Port St. Mary harbour by the Port St. Mary lifeboat.

The William Herdman was bound from Holyhead for Port St. Mary with two scientists and a crew of eight aboard. The ship, owned by Liverpool University, is permanently attached to the Marine Biological Station at Port Erin and is engaged on all-the-year round sea research, subsidised by the Manx Government.

HOLIDAY SHIP "MAROONED"

PASSENGERS INJURED

The gale, which flooded many country roads in the Isle of Man, was still sweeping the Manx coast later last night. It prevented the steamer St. Seiriol, which had brought 408 day trippers from Llandudno, from leaving Douglas harbour.

Officials of the steamship company remained on duty at Llandudno pier gates until late last night to deal with inquiries from anxious relatives. Several people stood in the pouring rain waiting for information.

Beds on board

Captain H. Doran (harbourmaster at Douglas) said late last night: "The passengers are remaining on board the St. Seiriol for the night. Beds are being improvised, and the crew are making sure the passengers are all comfortable. Special attention is being paid to the welfare of the children. There is plenty of food."

The St. Seiriol was expected to leave for Llandudno this morning provided the weather had improved sufficiently.

Storm strands400 on holiday island

FOUR HUNDRED passengers were stranded at Douglas, Isle of Man, last night by a 70 m.p.h. gale which prevented the Irish Channel ship St. Seiriol from returning to Llandudno, North Wales.

The passengers were offered accommodation and food for the night in the ship.

Another 500 passengers returning from the Isle of Man stepped wearily ashore from the steamer Viking at Fleetwood after a violent buffeting during the crossing. They were three hours late.

The Lady of Mann took six hours to cross from Douglas to Fleetwood Three women were cut by glass when seas broke windows.

WAVES 30ft. high were sweeping the breakwater at Port Erin (I O M) when two Liverpool University scientists and a crew of five in the 47-tons research ship William Herdman were brought in by the Port St Mary lifeboat.

They had battled two hours to cover four miles.

Anxious relatives and boarding-house owners in Llandudno and other North Wales resorts besieged the North Wales Steamship Co.'s offices at Llandudno last night when the St. Seiriol, 1,500-ton pleasure steamer, with 400 passengers, became storm-bound in Douglas, I.O.M., harbour.

With a 60 m.p.h. gale blowing outside the harbour whipping the waves to house-top height many of the passengers decided to spend the night aboard ship. Some found accommodation on shore.

Passengers were bowled over like ninepins aboard the Manx steamer Viking in one of the worst crossings from Douglas to Fleetwood.

The voyage took over six hours instead of the usual three, and there were many minor casualties. Two firemen were injured while struggling to keep steam up.

Special trains, trams and buses were kept waiting over three hours to take passengers home.

Gale steamer radios: 3 hurt

Trippers stranded

Express Staff Reporter

TWENTY miles off Fleetwood, in the heaviest gales for years, the Isle of Man steamer Lady of Man radioed at midnight: "Stand by to take three injured passengers to hospital."

Earlier, 900 passengers returning from Douglas in the steamer Viking landed three hours late. Many had small injuries from being flung about the decks and cabins.

The Ben My Chree was 2½ hours late at Liverpool.

THE LAUNCH OF THE "KING ORRY" TUESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 1913

by David Handscombe

Monday 10th March 1913 was cold and blustery, and the head office of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, located on the quay at Douglas in the former Imperial Hotel, was bustling with people. Since early morning Company officials and their guests had been congregating there in preparation for the passage to Liverpool in order that they could attend the launch of the King Orry on the following day. Berthed alongside the Victoria Pier, waiting to take the morning sailing to Liverpool, was the steamer **Snaefell**. It was appropriate that she should be taking the officials to Liverpool, as she herself had been built by Cammell Laird only three years earlier, and it was as a result of her success as an '*all year round*' steamer that Cammell Laird had once again been commissioned to build a ship for the Manx company.

The **Snaefell** backed out of Douglas harbour shortly after 9.00am. For those who wished to partake, breakfast was served in the first-class dining saloon, although many chose to catch up on a few hours sleep, having left their homes at the crack of dawn in order to catch the sailing. The passage to Liverpool was uneventful and surprisingly comfortable despite the blustery weather and sea swell. The **Snaefell** made good time and was alongside Prince's Landing Stage at 1.15pm. The head of the official party, Mr D. Maitland (Chairman), thanked the master for getting them to Liverpool in such good time and then made a point of personally thanking Mr Ritchie, the Steam Packet's catering manager, for looking after them during the voyage.

The following morning, Tuesday 11th March, started off cloudy and damp, although the blustery wind of the previous day had dropped. By the time that the Steam Packet officials and their guests had arrived at Cammell Laird's shipyard, the Managing Director, Mr G.J. Carter and the Chairman, Mr W.L. Hichen, had already inspected the arrangements for the launch and were satisfied that all was in order. The main aspect that they had checked was the release mechanism that would send the **King Orry** down the slipway. As she had been built up on the stocks, wooden cradles had been positioned between her hull and the slipway, and these were designed to stop her toppling over. As the slipway sloped down towards the Mersey, heavy wooden wedges were inserted into the cradles to stop the **King Orry** taking to the water prematurely. These wedges were now being removed and grease was being applied to the slipway to assist the movement of the ship. All that kept the **King Orry** on the slipway was a heavy hawser, fastened to the cradle under her bow and connected to the release mechanism at the top of the slipway. The release mechanism was fitted with a quick release shackle, known as a '*Slip*', and it was to this that the hawser was attached. The '*Slip*' was fitted with a

small lever which had to be kept under tension as when the lever was released the '*Slip*' would open and free the hawser, allowing the **King Orry** to slide towards the Mersey. At the appropriate moment during the launching ceremony, a workman with a large hammer would knock off the '*Slip*' and if gravity alone failed to move the **King Orry**, then a set of hydraulic rams would give the ship a push in the right direction.

Cammell Laird's shipyard was a hive of activity in 1913 and it was plain to see that these were very prosperous times for the shipbuilding industry. Two large vessels were under construction for the Norske-America Line and once completed they would ply between Norway and America, mostly on the emigrant trade. The first of these two vessels, the **Kristianiafjord** (yard no:784) was nearing completion, while the second, the **Bergensfjord** (yard no:787) like the **King Orry** was ready to be launched. In the southern end of the yard, two large steamers for the P. & O. Company were beginning to take shape. With yard numbers 793 and 794, the **Khiva** and **Kyber** were to be 8,947 ton passenger and cargo liners, destined for the Far East trade routes. Alongside the **King Orry** and also nearing the time when she would be launched was the torpedo boat destoyer HMS **Garland** (yard no:786), which was being built for the Royal Navy. Her low, sleek hull gave her a menacing profile. Not far from the slipway on which the **King Orry** lay was the graving dock in which the Canadian National Railway Company's **Royal George** was undergoing extensive repairs after running aground in the St. Lawrence a few months earlier. In the fitting-out basin, adjacent to the first of the Norske-America liners, lay the new Super Dreadnought HMS **Audacious**. As she neared completion the last of her huge gun turrets, each containing two 13·5 inch guns, was being installed. These huge guns had been manufactured by Vickers, Sons and Maxim at Barrow-in-Furness and it had proved to be a major feat of transportation when the time came to move them down to Birkenhead. Sadly this fine battleship was to become the Royal Navy's first major casualty in the Great War when on 27th October 1914, having only been in service for twelve months, she ran into a German minefield and detonated a mine which blew a massive hole in her stern. Despite repeated attempts to stop the rapid ingress of water, and to put out the fires which had been started by the explosion, all efforts to save her failed. At 9.00pm, less than twelve hours after hitting the mine, there was a large internal explosion and HMS **Audacious** rolled over and sank. Fortunately nearly all of her crew were saved, being picked up by an attendant destroyer. One of the other interesting vessels that could be seen in yard on that March morning in 1913 was the steamer **Doon** (yard no:790) which was being constructed for the carriage of frozen meat from the upper reaches of the River Plate to Buenos Aires for the Royal Mail Line, where her cargo would be transferred to ocean going refrigerated vessels for the passage to the U.K. and Europe.

The **King Orry** had been built on No.6 slipway, and the scene around

this area had changed considerably over the previous few days. Piles of surplus steel plates and rivets had been removed and the towering scaffolding around the hull had been dismantled. The paintwork was now complete and colourful bunting had been draped over both sides of the **King Orry's** bows and around the stern, carefully covering the brass letters which spelt out her name. A large wooden platform had been constructed at the bow, and it would be from here that the officials of both the Steam Packet Company and Cammell Laird would watch the ceremony.

On arrival at the shipyard, the guests had been ushered into the reception hall in the main administration building and had been offered refreshments while the final arrangements for the launch were made. Just before noon, they were invited to proceed down to No.6 slipway, where they were shown to their seats on the grandstand and given a copy of the official programme to commemorate the event. Already in position down both sides of the slipway were dozens of the shipyard workers and their families.

The **King Orry's** '*sponsor*' was Mrs Waid, the wife of Mr W.A.Waid, the deputy chairman of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. They were both shown to the raised platform in the centre of the grandstand, placed some five feet in front of the **King Orry's** bow. Mr G. Carter (Managing Director of Cammell Laird) accompanied them and explained the operation of the release mechanism to Mrs Waid, showing her the coloured cord she would cut after she had named the ship. Mrs J.W. Laird, the wife of one of the founders of the shipbuilders, then stepped forward and presented Mrs Waid with a bouquet of flowers. As if specially ordered for the ceremony, the sun suddenly broke through the clouds and bathed the slipway in sunshine. This unexpected change in the weather put the final stamp of approval on the ceremony. At 12.25pm, as the high tide reached its peak, rockets were fired to warn any shipping on the Mersey that the launching was about to take place, and that a wide berth should be given to the slipway. Once the echo of the rockets had died away Mr Carter invited Mrs Waid to officially name the new ship and handed her a pair of ornate scissors, indicating that she should now cut the brightly coloured cord, on which a bottle of champagne was suspended. With a slightly nervous voice, Mrs Waid announced "*I name this ship King Orry, and may God bless all who sail in her*", and at the same time she cut the cord allowing the bottle of champagne to swing against the stem of the ship. As the wine from the smashed bottle ran down the **King Orry's** paintwork, Mr Carter pressed a small bell push which rang a bell below the platform indicating to the workmen waiting there that they should knock off the retaining slip on the release mechanism. With a loud crack that made Mrs Waid jump with surprise, the release mechanism operated and the retaining hawser was freed. Almost immediately the **King Orry** began to slide down the slipway towards the Mersey. At the same time, workers on board quickly pulled up the bunting from around the bows and stern to reveal her brass name letters. Three cheers

were called for and the crowd roared in reply as clouds of rust blew out from beneath the hull as the drag chains began to be pulled along. The **King Orry** gathered speed and slid gracefully down the slipway, entering the River Mersey in a plume of spray before being pulled to a halt some fifty yards out after leaving the slipway, the drag chains having done their job. From the time that the **King Orry** had begun to move to her being stopped in the water, less than a minute had elapsed. As the flood tide slowly drifted her up river, two tugs quickly closed in and brought her under control. After the remains of the wooden cradles that had held her upright on the slipway had been cleared away, she was slowly nudged into the fitting-out basin.

The officials and guests of both companies now adjourned to the spacious Model Room which Cammell Laird had transformed into a banquet hall for the occasion. The room had been decorated with bunting and flags, which set against the starched white linen tablecloths created an attractive setting for the meal that would shortly be served. Taking pride of place in the centre of the room was a large scale model of the **King Orry** which in itself was a work of art. The luncheon was attended by over 150 guests. As the last course was finishing and coffee was being served, the chairman of Cammell Laird, Mr W.L. Hichen, stood up and asked for everybody's attention. He proposed a toast to the "*Success of the King Orry*", which received a round of applause. Continuing, Mr Hichen explained that Cammell Laird had a long association with the Steam Packet Company, and as far back as 1878 they had built the **Mona**, and only a couple of years ago they had completed the **Snaefell**.

Mr Hichen hoped that once the **King Orry** had been delivered, she would meet all of the predictions of his company and every expectation of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. He then went on to thank Mrs Waid for performing the naming ceremony so successfully. As a reminder of the occasion, he gave her the ribbon that had encased the bottle of champagne which had been smashed on the **King Orry's** bow, and then asked her to accept a small gold and pearl necklace as a token of appreciation from his company. As Mrs Waid accepted the gift, there was a round of applause. Replying on behalf of the Steam Packet Company, Mr D. Maitland thanked Cammell Laird for launching the ship on time, saying also that he was confident that she would be ready for the Whitsuntide service. If the new **King Orry** was as successful as the **Snaefell**, then Cammell Laird and Company could rest assured that they would receive further orders from the Isle of Man. Mr Maitland then asked Mrs Waid to accept a diamond pendant as a gift from a grateful Steam Packet Board of Directors. As yet another round of applause died down, Mr Maitland informed the guests that this was the third ship owned by the Company that had carried the name **King Orry**. The first had been built in 1842 and had cost £10,000, and the second vessel to bear the name had been completed in 1871 and had given many years' service to the Island's

community. She had only recently been sold out of service and was being broken up in the Dee Estuary in North Wales. Mr Maitland concluded his speech with the toast "*Prosperity to the eminent firm of Cammell Laird and Company*".

As Mr Maitland sat down, Mr Waid took the opportunity to thank both Cammell Laird and the Steam Packet Company for the generous gifts given to his wife and he felt sure that they would remain treasured items and provide a constant reminder of this memorable occasion.

Mr Carter, responding for Cammell Laird, thanked Mr Maitland for his kind remarks. Cammell Laird was very proud of its connections with the Steam Packet Company and was pleased that its workmanship was considered to be of such a high standard that the Manx company sought their expertise again. He said that credit must also be given to everyone who worked within the shipyard, and that the close liaison between the management and the men who actually built the ships obviously paid dividends, as was evident by the amount of work that was underway within the yard. They had several important contracts, not only with other shipping companies, but also with the British Government, and they were doing their utmost to fulfil every requirement of each individual order. Finally, in proposing a toast to the "*Owners' Representatives*", Mr Carter thanked the Steam Packet Company for providing such a good liaison in the form of Captain Keig (*Marine Superintendent*) and Mr Blackburn (*Superintendent Engineer*). Although these two men had the interests of their own company at heart, they had provided tremendous assistance to Cammell Laird, and he wished them good health and prosperity.

Captain Keig acknowledged the tribute, saying that he had served on the first **King Orry** during the 1850s, and he hoped that the new **King Orry** would be as successful as her predecessors and he wished Cammell Laird many years of profitable business.

Mr Blackburn said that he was glad to be able to endorse what Captain Keig had said, and thought that the Steam Packet should have no doubts about adopting the Geared Steam Turbine. The **Viking** had been running for seven years with conventional (*direct-drive*) turbines and had only suffered from minor defects. If the engines which were going to be fitted into the new **King Orry** only suffered from similar minor teething problems, then his company would have no regret about pioneering this type of propulsion system. The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and Cammell Laird should be proud that the new **King Orry** would be the first vessel to operate out of the Mersey fitted with geared turbines. As the applause from this speech drained away, Mr Hichen offered to conduct a short tour of the Engine and Boiler Shops in order that the machinery which was to be fitted into the **King Orry** might be inspected.

As this gesture signalled the end of the luncheon, those guests who did not wish to inspect the new engines started to leave the banquet hall. The time was now nearly 4 o'clock in the afternoon and a very successful and memorable event drew to a close. The next occasion when they would all meet again would be for the official sea trials which were scheduled for mid-June. ■

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LOCAL NEWS

WIND FARM FOR SEAFORTH

A cluster of electricity generating windmills on the sea wall at the Royal Seaforth Dock is expected to be in operation in 1999.

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company successfully submitted a bid to the Non-Fossil Purchasing Agency for a 15-year contract to supply 'green' power to the National Grid from six 600 Kilowatt turbines harnessing the winds blowing off the Irish Sea.

Nine months of wind strength tests and a study of ten years of Meteorological Office data for Liverpool preceded the Company's decision to back the £2.7 million scheme.

The development won planning permission on appeal after Sefton Council raised objections. ■

DEE DOCKS RIVAL FOR £35 MILLION MERSEY TERMINALS

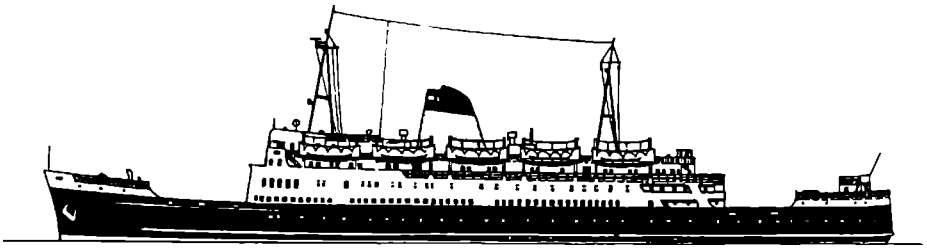
The privately owned Port of Mostyn has begun construction work on a new deep-water berth in the first phase of an ambitious redevelopment which will also include a roll-on, roll-off freight ferry terminal. The proposed terminal will be little more than 15 miles as the crow flies from two similar facilities in the River Mersey which are being developed by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company at a combined cost of £35 million.

The new quay, extending 120 metres into the River Dee, will provide five berths and enable Mostyn to handle ships of up to 30,000 tonnes around the clock. The existing dock, with a severely limited access which is governed by the tide, can only cope with vessels of up to 4,000 tonnes.

Construction of the new quay is being undertaken by Christiani and Nielson. Over 150 steel piles, each of which is almost 100 feet long and weighs 14 tonnes, are being driven into the river bed. At the same time, reclamation work is under way on five acres of land for stevedoring operations. The first phase is due for completion in September 1998. ■

THE "DUKE OF LANCASTER"

A passing reference to the former Heysham - Belfast turbine steamer **Duke of Lancaster** was made in the Spring '*Bulletin*'. Many Members will have seen her at her berth at Llanerch-y-Mor, near Mostyn, in the Dee Estuary. These notes provide a brief history of the ship and describe the ambitious plans for her which were dreamt up almost twenty years ago.



The **Duke of Lancaster** was built at Belfast by Harland and Wolff and was launched on 14th December 1955. Her tonnage was 4,797 gross, 2,274 nett, with a length of 376' 2" and a beam of 57' 4". Two double reduction geared 'PAMETRADA' steam turbines gave her a speed of 21 knots, but on her designed Heysham to Belfast route, only 16 knots were required. She sailed on this route for ten years, but spent the summer of 1966 on three or four-day cruises. In 1967 the **Duke of Lancaster** returned to Heysham after the **Duke of Rothesay** was transferred to Fishguard. In the winter of 1969 the *Duke* was converted into a stern loading car-ferry by Harland & Wolff and remained at Heysham until the route was closed in April 1975.

The **Duke of Lancaster** became relief vessel at Holyhead and made her final passenger sailing from Dun Laoghaire to Holyhead on 9th November 1978. She was then despatched to Barrow to lay up. Suggestions that the *Duke* was under consideration to provide extra summer capacity on the Manx Line Heysham - Douglas service in 1979 (Manx Millenium Year) proved to be unfounded.

In mid-July 1979 it was announced that the **Duke of Lancaster** had been sold to Empirewise Limited of Liverpool and would be used as a leisure centre at Llanerch-y-Mor, Deeside. On 10th August 1979 the *Duke* arrived in the Dee estuary from Barrow in tow of the tugs **Dunheron** and **Afon Las**, and was secured in the small tidal creek where a berth had been dredged out for her. The name was changed to **Duke of Llanerch-y-Mor**.

Ambitious plans were made public. The old ship was to become a £2 million floating leisure centre complex. There would be a 300-bed hotel with

casino, cabaret, exhibition and conference rooms. A hovercraft would link the centre to West Kirby on the Wirral. The **Duke of Llanerch-y-Mor** would, it was claimed, become the main feature of a major development which would include a marina and maritime museum, creating at least 200 jobs.

The reality of the situation was that the local council refused to grant the scheme the necessary permission to go ahead, claiming that fire precautions, access for emergency vehicles and various other points had not met with their expectations. In the early 1980s the *Duke* opened for business as a market, with 140 stalls on the car deck.

In recent years the *Duke* has reverted to her old name of **Duke of Lancaster**. She is closed to the public and vistors are not welcome. Despite the track to the quay at Llanerch-y-Mor being clearly marked 'Public Footpath', there is a guard dog attached to the gangway by a fifty-foot leash. The state of the keel plating must be poor after almost twenty years of lying on the mud. The *Duke* floats on the very highest 32 ft. spring tides, and a barrage of rubble has been constructed around her stern.

The **Duke of Lancaster** is well worth a visit, but watch out for that guard dog! Good photographs can be obtained from the track along the north side of Llanerch-y-Mor creek.

MORE ABOUT THE "ROYAL IRIS"

It was noted in the Spring "*Bulletin*" that the **Royal Iris** is now at a tidal berth at Woolwich, a few yards downstream from the Barrier Gardens Pier at Sergeant's Wharf. She is apparently owned by a Doug Endersby, and has been placed on the market again after failing to secure her future as a showpiece restaurant in the heart of London's rejuvenated docklands.

Mr Endersby, a representative of Northampton-based Portmoor Investments, indicated that his company was no longer prepared to challenge the refusal of planning permission. He told the Merseyside 'Friends of the Ferries' that local people had been delighted at the scheme to convert the **Royal Iris**, but Woolwich planning authority had mounted stiff opposition.

The immediate future of the **Royal Iris** is secure. A Port of London Authority spokesman said dues were being paid and that the vessel was not causing a navigational hazard.

The realistic solution to the problem must be the breaker's yard, as is the case with the **Duke of Lancaster**.

THE "COOGEE"

The **Coogee** incident, when the steamer **Coogee** sailed under the bowsprit of the barque **Fortunato Figari** in dense fog in the Bass Strait at Christmas 1902, was described in detail in the Winter 1997 *Bulletin*, page 86.

L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans has supplied additional information about the ultimate fate of the **Coogee**. Between 1918 and 1919 the vessel was

taken over by the Royal Australian Navy as minesweper H.M.A.S. Coogee. She was then laid up for eight years and was dismantled at Melbourne in 1927. On 21st February 1928, the hulk was scuttled in the Bass Strait.

LIVERPOOL CRUISE LINER FIASCO

Liverpool's much awaited re-birth as a cruise liner port faced a double fiasco in early May. Hundreds of Merseysiders had their plans for a luxury cruise thrown into chaos just three days before they were due to set sail. The **Apollo** (ex **Empress of Canada**) had not completed her £10 million refit in Greece to the satisfaction of her new operators Direct Holidays, and the cruise due to depart on 2nd May was cancelled.

This follows the incident in mid April when thirty passengers refused to board Direct Holidays' other cruise liner at Liverpool, the **Edinburgh Castle**, after a burst water pipe had flooded a number of cabins. On 25th May the **Edinburgh Castle** was again in trouble and stunned passengers were told that their two-week luxury cruise was cancelled - five hours after boarding the ship. Problems with the vessel's main switchboard were blamed which would necessitate five days of repairs. Passengers had their passage money refunded and were offered a substitute free eight-day cruise leaving Liverpool on 29th May.

Members may recall the fiasco of the Wallasey based Cruise Club of nearly twenty years ago, which did nothing to improve Liverpool's image as a passenger port.

The **Apollo** was launched as the **Empress of Canada** on 10th May 1960 and commenced her maiden voyage from Liverpool for Canadian Pacific on 24th April 1961. After her arrival at Liverpool on 23rd November 1971 the *Empress* was withdrawn, and Canadian Pacific's North Atlantic service ceased after 68 years. The **Empress of Canada** was sold to Carnival Cruise Lines Inc. in January 1972 and renamed **Mardi Gras**.

Direct Holidays' other cruise vessel, the **Edinburgh Castle**, was launched on 21st November 1964 as the **Eugenio C.** for Costa Armatori of Genoa. She was delivered on 22nd August 1966 and placed on the Genoa to Buenos Aires service.

AND FINALLY : 'PAMETRADA' - THE ACRONYM

Reference is made earlier in this feature to the **Duke of Lancaster's** Pametrada steam turbines.

PAMETRADA is the acronym from **P**arsons **A**nd **M**arine **E**ngineering **T**urbine **R**esearch **A**nd **D**evelopment **A**gency. ■

READERS' LETTERS

From : Malcolm McRonald of Heswall, Wirral :

I would refer to Dan McCormick's letter on page 117 of the Spring '*Bulletin*'. It is not strictly true to say that the **Leinster** was the last ferry to be built by the Verolme Shipyard at Cork. After completing the **Leinster** in 1981, Verolme went on to build the Little Island ferry for the River Suir at Waterford, followed by the Strangford ferry for use across Strangford Lough.

The 1993 change of name from **Leinster** to **Isle of Inishmore** was not as a result of the change of route to the Rosslare to Pembroke service. The fact that the two events happened close together was coincidental. The renaming was to bring the **Leinster** into line with the new style introduced by the chartered **Isle of Innisfree** (the result of a competition in travel agents' offices!).

The 1996 third change of name to **Isle of Inishturk** was to free the name **Isle of Inishmore** for the new vessel then building in Holland.

From : L.N.R.S. Member Charles Dawson of Sundbyberg, Sweden :

I read the article by Terry Kavanagh on the **Columbus** quicksilver steamship in the Spring *Bulletin* with great interest. However, I am a bit baffled by the notes on the **Comet**, since the references seem to have mixed up two vessels.

My notes on the Navy's **Comet** [1] show that she was ordered by the Admiralty in 1821, laid down in November of that year, and completed at Deptford Dockyard on 13th July 1822. However, she first appeared in the Navy list in 1828 as "HM Steam Vessel" **Comet**. She was rigged as a two-masted schooner, 115' x 21' 3" x 11' 11", and of 238 tons BM. She had an 80 NHP engine driving 14' diameter paddles. She was recorded as a survey vessel in 1837 and broken up in 1868.

There was a commercial ps **Comet** [2], built by W.Evans of Rotherhithe in 1834 with dimensions 138' x 18' 6" x 9' 8", of 158 tons and with a 70 HP engine. She was first owned by the Gravesend Steam Packet Company, so was obviously a Thames steamer. She changed hands to another London owner, R. Ravenhill, in 1848. This vessel was sold to Leith owners in 1852, when she was shown as being of 101 tons, with 67 tons engine room and slightly altered dimensions. In 1856 the **Comet** moved to Liverpool owners and was shown then as of 148 tons gross, 93 tons nett, and again with slightly altered dimensions. She was wrecked in the Bristol Channel in 1859.

[1] David K. Brown : *Paddle Warships* (London, 1993), 11.
[2] BT 107/64 and /67, London; BT 107/459, Leith and BT 108/46 Liverpool.

From : L.N.R.S. Member Terry Kavanagh of Chester

I have mixed up two vessels named **Comet**. I was led astray by the *Liverpool Standard*, quoted by the *Manchester Guardian*, which referred to "*the first steam vessel of this construction, the Comet, in March 1834.*" I knew something of the **Comet** of 1822 - it is mentioned in an article by F.E. Dean entitled '*Early Steam Warships*', but the correspondence in the *Mechanics Magazine* between Thomas Howard and Wm Symington seemed to confirm that it was a new vessel. Clearly it was having a refit at Rotherhithe, and, in any case, I ought to have written it was '*possible*' that the Royal Navy sold the fictitious new **Comet**.

The *Mechanics Magazine*, which I looked at in Manchester Public Library, is a bit like the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and contains only the odd line or two about the early steamships, mostly gleaned from other sources. The former periodical only becomes useful in the late 1830s and early 1840s when it discusses patents for propellers etc. The indices are not very good.

The sources of information on individual steamships should always be treated with caution! For instance, *Gore's Liverpool Directory* for 1816 refers to a Runcorn steamboat called the **William Peacock**. William Peacock was in fact the master's name, and the steamboat was named the **Elizabeth**, as witness the *Chester Chronicle* of 2nd August 1816.

"On Sale, the Steam Packet Boat ***Elizabeth****. Now employed on the River Mersey between Liverpool and Runcorn, with the best accommodations for passengers, in complete repair; was built at Glasgow and launched in November 1812 ..... Captain Peacock, on board, at the Parade Slip, will shew the vessel ....."*

Letter to "Sea Breezes", April, 1956 :

It seems to be the cry of many old-timers who served in sail that they worked harder than any apprentices of the present day. I wonder if any worked harder than us in the Liverpool pilot service.

We are four on, four off and six to eight regardless of who should be below. The watch below never gets more than 3½ hours' sleep because they are called at one bell. The watch below, too, is often turned to.

Before I began my apprenticeship there was no watch below in the forenoon, so that in 48 hours the boys had only 16 hours off against 32 on deck, and even then were called out during their watch below. I doubt very much if any old timer can beat this.

c/o Pilot Office,
Liverpool,3.

"Mersey Sailor"