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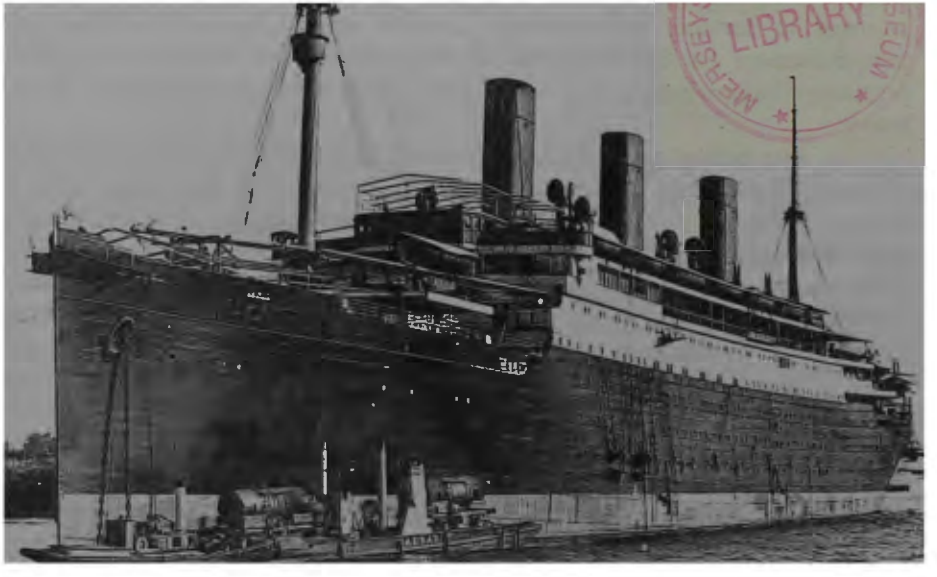
The Empress of Australia as a troopship

*The **Empress of Australia** alongside Princes Landing Stage after her final voyage*

THE '*EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA*' OF 1920

EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA (ex TIRPITZ)
Built by Vulcan Werke A.G. at Stettin, Yard No. 333.
Launched 20.Dec.1913, completed Nov, 1920.
Gross Tonnage: 21,498. Nett: 11,749. Length: 615ft, Breadth: 75·1ft.
Two steam turbines, twin screws. Service speed: 16·5 knots.

Albert Ballin, the architect of the Hamburg Atlantic Line's great resurgence during the early years of the 20th century had a grand plan to establish the company as the world's leading shipping line. Whilst the three giants of the **Imperator** class were designed to conquer the North Atlantic, a smaller trio was planned to overtake the competitors on the South American run and one of these ships – the **Tirpitz** – was designed to become the sole survivor of Ballin's fleet.



*The **Tirpitz** prior to her completion at the Vulkan shipyard in 1920*

The first ship designed for Hapag's (Hamburg-Amerikanische-Packetfahrt-Actien-Gesellschaft) South American service was launched at the end of 1913 as the **Admiral von Tirpitz** but three months later this was shortened to **Tirpitz**. The new ship was specially designed to operate to the west coast of South America via the Panama Canal which was due to be opened in August 1914.

Work on the **Tirpitz** was suspended on the outbreak of the First World War and recommenced after hostilities ceased. Completed in November 1920 the **Tirpitz** was allocated to Britain as a war reparation the following month. After a brief period

as a troopship under P&O management, the Shipping Controller sold the new ship to Canadian Pacific Steamships in 1921 and she was renamed **Empress of China**. Her new owners intended to use her as a running-mate for the Fairfield-built trio **Empress of Russia**, **Empress of Asia** and **Empress of Canada** on the fortnightly service between Vancouver and the Orient. In August the *ex*-**Tirpitz** returned to Stettin for conversion from a coal to an oil-burner, and on completion of this work the ship sailed to Clydebank where John Brown & Company refitted her passenger accommodation to provide for 400 first-class, 165 second-class, 360 third-class, along with space for 670 Asiatic steerage passengers. The ship was once again renamed, this time as the **Empress of Australia**, and on 16th June 1922 she left the Clyde with a skeleton crew bound for Vancouver (via the Panama Canal) where she arrived on 19th July, the day after the **Empress of Japan** had completed her Canadian Pacific service. Many of the **Empress of Japan's** crew were transferred to the new Empress.

The **Empress of Australia** sailed for Hong Kong and Yokohama on 28th July 1922, and it was immediately found that her boilers were inefficient with the result that her service speed was well below expectation and she was soon behind her planned schedule. At the start of her second voyage in September, one of her turbines was disabled and she had to return to port. Following repairs, which included new oil-burners as an attempt to reduce her high fuel consumption, the **Empress of Australia** returned to service in November. Despite these changes the ship remained a disappointment for Canadian Pacific who also had to contend with 1,500 tons of permanent ballast installed by her builders because she was considered to be too top-heavy.

Just before noon on 1st September 1923 the **Empress of Australia** was preparing to sail from Yokohama and had embarked 2,000 passengers, when the Great Tokyo Earthquake struck. This eventually claimed 300,000 lives and made over 2·5 million people homeless. Buildings ashore collapsed and the *Empress* swayed violently from side to side as a result of tsunami waves. Burning oil drifted into the harbour and ships nearby were torn from their moorings, and the cable from one of these fouled the **Empress of Australia's** port propeller and prevented her extricating herself from an increasingly dangerous position. The Dutch tanker **Iris** was able to tow the *Empress's* bow around and she managed to reach the relative safety of the bay where a Japanese Navy diver removed the tangled cable. The *Empress* then sailed back into the harbour to pick up survivors and remained in the area for a week until the arrival of other ships with emergency supplies. Her master, Captain Robinson, was awarded the C.B.E.

In May 1926 the **Empress of Australia** was withdrawn from Canadian Pacific's trans-Pacific service and sent to Govan for the replacement of her engines and boilers by the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd. at a cost of almost £500,000. Canadian Pacific did not wish to spoil the *Empress's* public rooms and so the German boilers were cut up *in situ*, and the new boilers were lowered into the forward hold and the bulkheads opened so that they could be hauled into position on skids. Parsons turbines with single reduction gearing replaced the original German-built experimental machinery. Diesel engines were also installed to drive the generators and auxiliaries and the end result was an exceptional improvement in

performance. Shaft horsepower increased from just under 15,000 to 20,000, whilst the service speed increased by three knots to over nineteen knots.

With greater speed, superb passenger accommodation and fuel consumption now reduced by almost a third, Canadian Pacific decided that the **Empress of Australia** would make an ideal trans-Atlantic liner and cruise ship. The passenger accommodation was reduced to 400 in first class, 144 in second class and 632 in tourist class, and the ship was placed on the Southampton – Quebec service. On her first voyage to Canada in June 1927, the **Empress of Australia** carried the Prince of Wales (Edward VIII), Prince George (George VI) and the British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Canadian Federation. Between 1927 and 1931 the *Empress* operated the Quebec service from Southampton from April to October, whilst in December she left New York on a four-month world cruise via the Suez and Panama Canals.

*The **Empress of Australia** on Canadian Pacific passenger service*

With the entry into service of the new **Empress of Britain** in 1931, the **Empress of Australia's** schedule was changed to include summer cruises slotted in between her Canadian sailings; to Norway from Immingham and to the Mediterranean from Southampton. Following a three-month winter lay up the *Empress* operated a season of Caribbean or Mediterranean cruises out of New York, with a return to the Canadian run in the spring.

When she first entered Canadian Pacific service, the **Empress of Australia** had a black hull with a white band. In 1929 she was painted white with a blue hull band. Ten years later, in May 1939, the *Empress* was chartered to act as a royal yacht

to carry King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada. Some of her cabins were transformed into royal apartments whilst the smoking room was converted into a private dining room, with the dining table and chairs transferred from the Royal Yacht **Victoria and Albert**. With the King and Queen on board, accompanied by a party of sixty-nine, the **Empress of Australia** left Portsmouth on 6th May 1939 escorted by three cruisers. The scheduled arrival in Canada was delayed by two days due to problems with ice. Such was the extravagance of those times that the 42,000-ton **Empress of Britain** was chartered to carry the royal party home.

After her brief stint on royal duty, the **Empress of Australia** spent the next three months on the Southampton – Quebec service. On 3rd September 1939 the *Empress* left Quebec for Southampton where she was painted grey and fitted out as a troopship with a capacity for 5,000. Armed with a three-inch gun, she sailed on her first wartime voyage to Bombay and Ceylon on 28th September. On her return in November 1939 she crossed the Atlantic to Halifax where she joined a large convoy carrying Canadian troops to Europe. In 1940 she was involved with the Norwegian campaign and while transferring food to two ships in a fjord she was heavily bombed but got away safely. Empty carton and crate wreckage found floating in the water afterwards convinced the Germans that she had been sunk and Goebbels officially announced her loss. Unlike some of her Canadian Pacific running mates, the **Empress of Australia** was a lucky ship and despite coming under heavy attack she suffered relatively little damage apart from being holed by the Orient Line's **Ormonde** at Oran during the North Africa campaign in January 1943. Following the collision a fire broke out in the *Empress's* ammunition room, and then she drifted from her berth towards a flotilla of destroyers and the sunken French battleship **Bretagne** when a sudden squall swept her berth, snapped her mooring lines, and set her adrift in the congested harbour.

In September 1945 the **Empress of Australia** left Hong Kong with ex-prisoners of war and internees on her final wartime voyage. In active service she had carried 140,000 personnel and steamed more than 250,000 miles. On her return to Liverpool, Canadian Pacific announced that it no longer required the ship as a passenger liner, and the old *Empress* continued to be chartered as a troop carrier.

In May 1946, whilst manoeuvring in the Mersey, the **Empress of Australia** fouled her anchor with the anchor cable of Lamport & Holt's **Debrett**. In the confusion a number of tugs came to the rescue and later claimed salvage money. The matter was settled in court and the seven tugs involved were each awarded a fee for services rendered. At the end of 1946 the *Empress* was sent to Harland & Wolff at Belfast for a refit for her new role as a full time troopship and as such she operated mainly between Liverpool and Bombay, and from Liverpool to Port Said. She also carried military staff to Pusan in November 1950 during the Korean War. She was due to be retired in January 1951 but continuing problems in the Middle East provided further employment. By a strange quirk of fate, in her final year of service, the **Empress of Australia** visited two of the ports which had played a key role in her earlier days: Quebec on 8th October 1951 and Hong Kong on 17th March 1952.

On 29th April 1952 the **Empress of Australia** arrived at Liverpool for the last time at the end of voyage No. 234. She was immediately sold to the British Iron & Steel Corporation for scrap, and on 8th May the last of Albert Ballin's liners sailed for

Rosyth and the shipbreakers' yard at Inverkeithing. And so another 'Grand Dowager' of ocean passenger liners, the ship of which it is said Kaiser Wilhelm had prepared in the early days of the First World War to carry him and his staff to receive the surrender of the British Grand Fleet following an early collapse of the country, sailed north to Scotland to become razor blades, tank parts and a score of other steel products.

Of the skeleton crew who took the liner round to her last berth were two who had been with her for more than twenty years. One of them, Cyrus Stanistreet, deck storekeeper, 58 years at sea, had been with Canadian Pacific Steamships for 46 years, 22 of them in the **Empress of Australia**. Reginald Blake, the officers' steward, had been aboard for 24 years and never missed a trip. Both made the *Empress* their home and had special permission to remain aboard when the liner was in her home port.

Storekeeper Cyrus Stanistreet shows off one of his ships in bottles to the expert eyes of the ***Empress of Australia's*** *master, Captain L.C. Hautville-Bell*

The only woman to make the coastal voyage from Liverpool to Inverkeithing was Margaret Knox, 'Peggy' to thousands of Atlantic and cruising passengers, who had been at sea for more than twenty years, and was one of Canadian Pacific's first sea-going stenographers.

Canadian Pacific found a sea-going position for Cyrus Stanistreet to enable him to complete his Diamond Jubilee at sea. Cyrus first went to sea in a sailing ship

when he was twelve, and by 1952 he had received the M.B.E., the Queen's South Africa Medal, the Polar Medal and three World War 1 and five World War 2 medals. He lost a son in the **Rawalpindi**, sunk by enemy action. Cyrus's deck storeroom was always 'spick and span', and partitioned off from it was his own cabin where he had a work bench for making ship models. When King George VI travelled in the liner to Canada in 1939 he sent for Cyrus to show him his work.

It was fitting that one of the **Empress of Australia's** former masters should pass his old ship off the Mersey Bar on the occasion of her final arrival at Liverpool. From the bridge of the **Empress of France** Captain Dobson signalled *"My ship's company join me in saluting you all on the final voyage of a very gallant and famous ship."*

Replied Captain L.C. Hautville-Bell, who had been in command of the **Empress of Australia** for only a few months: *"Many thanks for your kind message. The day has come at last."* ▌

TROOPING ON THE '*EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA*'

by Captain John C. Moffat

Captain John C. Moffat describes a voyage to Port Said made in 1950 on the ***Empress of Australia****, then Britain's largest and oldest troop ship*

I joined the **Empress of Australia** as Fifth Officer in the Gladstone Dock at Liverpool on Monday 1st May 1950. When I joined the ship she was under the command of Captain C.E. Duggan, DSC, RD, RNR, one of Canadian Pacific's most distinguished captains and a very fine commander to serve under. The Troop Deck Officer was Commander Billot, DSO, RD, RNR, a Canadian Pacific first officer, and he was the Liaison Officer between the Captain and the Military. The relationship between the permanent military staff and the ship's officers was excellent.

The **Empress of Australia** had been on trooping duties since 1939, carrying up to 5,000 troops on a number of voyages during the war. Late in 1944 her carrying capacity was reduced to 3,000. During the spring of 1946 the ship was reconditioned, after which she continued as a transport with her troop decks re-converted to provide comfortable lounges for 700 officers and service families, and 1,000 other ranks.

Forty-eight hours before sailing advance parties (Army, Navy and Air Force) joined. They were required to familarise themselves with the layout of the ship, the feeding arrangements, the ship's regulations and the cabin accommodation allocated for families. The day before sailing, fire and lifeboat drills were carried out under the eagle eye of the Board of Trade Surveyor. A full inspection of the ship was undertaken by both the port military staff and Canadian Pacific's marine superintendent and his entourage.

At 7.am on the 5th May the **Empress of Australia** moved out of the Gladstone Dock and secured alongside Princes Landing Stage to embark passengers and troops. This commenced at 11.am and was complete by 4.pm. There were now 2,200 persons on board, including the ship's company.

At 4.30pm we left the landing stage bound for Gibraltar, Malta and Port Said. Emergency drill was carried out on the passage from the Bar Lightship to Point Lynas. After this had been completed the first order was *'Boots off – plimsolls on, make as little noise as possible.'*

The Liverpool pilot disembarked at Point Lynas and the **Empress of Australia** started to work up to full speed. In the St George's Channel the weather was fine but hazy, although a south-westerly gale was forecast for the English Channel and Fastnet. The ship was well battened down for sea, and with a gale warning in force, everyone on board was advised to secure all moveable items.

When I went on watch at midnight with the second officer, we were steaming at a steady 16 knots, the visibility was good and the watch passed quickly. The Master at Arms and the Orderly Officer visited the bridge every two hours and reported that all was well below decks – no problems on the first night out. Reveille was at 5.30am for the troops. The washing facilities were sparse and fresh water was rationed. Breakfast was served from 6.30am until 8.30am. The troops had cafeteria-style messing and the passengers ate in an allocated dining room. All accommodation had to be cleaned and ready for the Captain's inspection at 11.am.

The first morning at sea was a bit chaotic with people being seasick and unable to find their cabins. There was a large sick parade at the ship's military hospital. By noon the **Empress of Australia** was crossing the English Channel and, although rolling slightly, the sun was shining. The forecast gale had not materialised.

The tannoy from the ship's orderly office never stopped from 8.am until 1.pm, but the following two-and-a-half hours was declared a 'silent period'. At 3.30pm boat and fire drills were carried out. Lifeboats were swung out and lowered to the embarkation deck, and then rehoused and secured. The emergency boat was left in the outboard position and under the supervision of the fourth officer the boat's crew was mustered and exercised every day at noon. At the end of the first day at sea everything was under control; working parties had been allocated for various duties and a number of troops detailed off for messroom and galley duties.

During daylight hours junior naval officers and midshipmen were allowed to stand bridge watches with the deck officers. The midshipmen received instruction in seamanship, signalling and other duties. They appeared to enjoy this – good basic training for embryo officers. From 9.30am until noon all the children over six years of age attended school. There was a number of schoolteachers going to Malta and Port Said and they were requested to organise lessons and to keep the children occupied.

The ship's canteen kept the troops stocked up with sweets, chocolate and cigarettes. At 4.pm every afternoon there was an issue of two cans of beer to each soldier, or as an alternative, soft drinks could be obtained. Troops were not allowed spirits at any time and the naval draft was not too happy about missing their daily tot of rum.

The boat deck was out-of-bounds to all ranks except the ship's officers and senior military personnel, but there appeared to be ample deck space and troops were able to carry out physical training and military drills on the fore and after decks. After 1.pm sunbathing and recreation was permitted.

A 'sweepstake' on the day's run was organised, the result being announced each day at 3.30pm. The winner usually received his winnings from the Orderly

Room. Deck tennis and other games were arranged for all on board. In the evening there were concerts (a number of National Service men had a theatrical background and enjoyed practising their talents on a captive audience). Bingo, horse racing (using dice and wooden horses) and cinema shows helped to pass the time, and there was something different each evening.

A number of the officers and their ladies played bridge in the small lounge after dinner.

On Sunday, 7th May, the day prior to arrival at Gibraltar, Divine Service was held at 11.am and all who were not on duty attended.

At 8.am on 8th May we steamed into Gibraltar Bay and anchored. Our stay was a brief one and at 11.am we were rounding Europa Point on our way to Malta.

Life as a deck officer on the '*Empress*' was very pleasant and during off-duty hours it was the usual thing to do a bit of socialising with the passengers. The food was very good and well presented. As Fifth Officer, in addition to being junior officer of the 12 - 4 watch, I was also responsible for ensuring that the ship's signalling equipment was always kept up to the required standard. Another task of mine was checking lifeboat stores and equipment (we did not carry cadets), and completing a list of defects which would be submitted to the Chief Officer. Any defects relating to Safety at Sea equipment were rectified immediately.

Twenty-four hours after leaving Gibraltar the temperature was up to 22 degrees centigrade and the order was given for tropical rig to be worn. The ship did not have air-conditioning and it became hot on 'C', 'D' and 'F' decks. A number of troops were allowed to sleep on deck. A small canvas swimming pool was rigged on deck for the children, and salt water showers provided for the troops.

Though warnings had been issued about sunbathing, a few decided not to heed the advice given and required treatment from the medical staff. Troops with sunburn received no sympathy from the RSM.

On 11th May we arrived at Malta, entered Grand Harbour and secured to buoys in Bighi Bay. The usual port formalities were soon completed and disembarkation commenced. Sadly, we had to say 'goodbye' to our Naval 'watchkeepers'. They had been a good team and had adapted to life on board a troopship very quickly. Three hundred troops and a small number of families left the ship at Malta. Shore leave was granted to certain personnel; however the Fourth Officer and myself were on gangway duty and did not get ashore.

Again, our stay was brief and at 2.pm we had passed the fairway buoy, secured for sea and set course towards Egypt, to pass 20 miles north of Damietta Lighthouse.

For the remainder of the troops and passengers on board we were on the last leg of the outward voyage. Below decks it was very hot and more personnel started to sleep on deck.

Dress during the day was shorts and shirts, stockings and shoes, white for the ship's officers and khaki for military personnel. Officers dressed for dinner in the evening and this entailed wearing No.10s for ship's officers, with badges of rank worn on the shoulder.

The ship's laundry had been quite busy since leaving Liverpool; however now that clean uniforms were required each day, the staff were working a fourteen-

hour day. Despite this, everyone had clean starched whites and prices were very reasonable.

The passage to Port Said was very pleasant with normal routine and a bit more recreation. A special concert for the entire complement on board was arranged. Prior to arrival in Port Said, a children's sports day and party was organised. One or two of the young ladies decided to come on deck with bikinis, but this was quickly discouraged by the ship's adjutant. The girls thought him to be rather prudish! For officers and their ladies a gala dinner and dance was held on Friday 12th.

On this particular evening, certain regulations were relaxed. The privilege was not abused, although a few couples were 'chased' off the boat deck by the Orderly Officer (with a smile on his face). We secured in Port Said Harbour at 8.am on 14th May. The Egyptian authorities were quickly on board and an hour later the ship had been cleared. The second group to board included the agent with mail for the ship's company, followed by the Army postal staff with the troops' mail. The officer in charge reported to the ship's Second Officer to arrange immediate discharge of the large number of bags containing mail for the Canal Zone Forces.

Disembarkation commenced at 10.am with pontoons at the two gangways. Barges and launches were used to ferry troops, passengers and baggage ashore. Guards were doubled at the gangway and all entrances to the accommodation. The ship's chandler; the official ship's bumboat man, George Robey, an Egyptian well-known to most seamen; representatives from the Port Said Engineering Company who would arrange for any engine-room and deck repairs, and last, but not least, the waterman, all came on board. All our fresh water tanks were topped to capacity for the voyage home. Water barges were alongside throughout our stay in harbour. Tanks, once filled, were continually topped up, until thirty minutes before departure.

Senior deck officers were on day duty and available for call out at night if necessary, and the junior deck officers were on six-hour watches (six-on, twelve-off). Disembarkation was completed at 9.30pm. The *Empress* was to be in Port Said for two days and shore leave was granted. A trip to Cairo was arranged through the agent and the port military commandant. The weather in Port Said was hot in the daytime and reasonably cool at night.

The harbour was full of ships, sixty per cent of them flying the Red Ensign. At 9.am on Monday 15th May we carried out a full-scale fire drill and abandon ship exercise, tested motor lifeboat engines and towed a few lifeboats around the ship. Embarkation was to begin at 7.am on the morning of 16th May and we were scheduled to sail at 6.pm.

Egyptian labour continued working on the ship's hull, caulking rivets and scaling and painting where necessary. Throughout our stay in Port Said strict security was maintained, and loading of baggage and military stores was in operation from dawn till dusk. In addition to our military guards, two Egyptian policemen with rifles were stationed at the gangway on twelve-hour watches. This was a port regulation which was strictly enforced by the harbour authorities.

The military accommodation was thoroughly cleaned by a fatigue party. Civilian passenger accommodation was the responsibility of the catering department.

Those of us who did not go to Cairo had to remain on board as it was not considered advisable to go ashore in Port Said at this time. Our recreation was a film show after dinner on the two evenings we spent in port.

Embarkation commenced at 8.am on 16th May. Wives and children were the first to arrive. The main body of troops commenced embarking at 11.am and, again, the galley staff were very busy as about 2,000 people required feeding from 12 noon onwards. Embarkation, bunkering, loading of baggage and fresh water was completed by 3.pm. At 4.pm navigation and bridge equipment was tested, embarkation was complete and the ship had been thoroughly searched for stowaways. All the crew were on board and Mr Ewing, the Chief Officer, reported to the Captain that we were in all respects ready for sea.

The pilot boarded at 5.30pm and tugs (belching black smoke on to our clean paintwork) were securing alongside. By 6.pm we were steaming out towards the fairway buoy. The harbour was full of ships secured to buoys, all fitted with their searchlights, ready for the midnight southbound convoy to Suez.

Troops were lining the rails on both port and starboard sides, and a small army band was playing soft music on the promenade deck. There was a euphoric atmosphere as many of the troops were going home to be demobbed, having completed their two years' National Service. Regular soldiers and families were returning home after two years service in the Canal Zone.

By 10.pm everyone had settled in, had been fed, and 'lights out' was piped at 10.30pm. I went on watch at midnight and we were passing Damietta light. The *Empress* was making 16½ knots. A quiet watch followed, and I was glad to turn in again at 4.am. Later that morning we had a full-scale fire and boat drill.

The passage through the Mediterranean was uneventful and after rounding Cape St Vincent, the temperature started to drop. At 9.pm on 22nd May the order was given that, as from 8.am the next morning, UK uniforms would be 'rig of the day'.

At 2.am on the morning of 25th May we embarked our pilot at Point Lynas. The Canadian Pacific choice pilot had kindly collected the ship's mail from the Liverpool office, but the bulk of the mail would be delivered at the landing stage. Disembarkation at Princes Landing Stage commenced at 7.30am and was completed by 12.30pm. The **Empress of Australia** moved into the Gladstone Dock at 1.pm on 25th May to complete the discharge of cargo and commence voyage maintenance.

I was promoted to Fourth Officer during the turnround in Liverpool and made one more voyage in the old *Empress*, almost identical to the previous one. On completion of that voyage I was instructed to transfer to the **Empress of France**, sailing for Quebec and Montreal in a couple of days time. I was delighted to be returning to the Company's North Atlantic service, but at the same time I was very sorry to be leaving the **Empress of Australia.**

Although she was up for sale, the **Empress of Australia** made her 70th and final voyage as a troopship on 17th February 1952, when she sailed from Liverpool with servicemen and their families to the Far East. She finally arrived home in Liverpool on 30th April of that year. Sold to the British Iron and Steel Corporation for scrap, she left the Mersey for Inverkeithing on 8th May 1952. The ship was now almost forty years old. There were many sad faces on Merseyside when she sailed on her final voyage to the breaker's yard. ▌

CAPTAIN CHARLES CARRIES MOLASSES

by John Fletcher

John Fletcher's real name was John Pilling, and he died over twelve years ago on 14th November, 1996. His articles about life in the Merchant Navy were published regularly in 'The Nautical Magazine' and 'Sea Breezes' over the years. John was a member of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society for several years. John Pilling joined the Royal Navy at an early age, but in 1948 at the age of twenty 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, the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation and Everards until 1983 when ill-health forced his retirement.

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 at 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 as 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 added 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 collated 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 balance was called for, by which the liquid at its lowest temperature on the voyage did not fall 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 or the 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 lies 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 is 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 flowed, 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 seemed 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 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 proceed 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 in 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 the 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 the ship would easily be finished for the morning. It was a clear, cold night with a touch of frost on 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 all be 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 on board 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 twenty-four 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 that 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; inevitably some of the molasses spilt and each drum had to be washed before being slung 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 it had slowed down a little although he had become so mesmerized 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 said that there was no cargo in the 'tween deck, and the deck crew had swept it clean. The carpenter had built a makeshift 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 around 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 later 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 preceding 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" ! ▌

ss "MARKLYN"–A BRIEF HISTORY AND HER WARTIME SALVAGE

by LNRS Member Gordon Bodey

Introduction

The combined British, Allied and Neutral World War 1 merchant shipping losses of all types for the year 1915 due to U-boats, mines and other enemy actions amounted to 772 vessels of some 1,323,114grt; an average monthly loss of 110,259 tons. Of the total tonnage lost that year, 68·4% was British. For the period January – November 1916, the figures had climbed to 1,203 vessels lost with a combined tonnage of 2,009,951grt; an average monthly loss of 182,723 tons. Of this lost tonnage, 55% was British. In total, 80% of the losses were due to U-boat activity.*

It was now apparent to Government that these rapidly escalating losses were not sustainable with the existing shipbuilding programmes and the Board of Trade, with the backing of the Admiralty, came to the conclusion that a rapid increase in the rate at which replacement tonnage was built was required.

As a result, in December 1916, legislation enacted in 1914 was quickly invoked and amended to include the 'New Ministries and Secretaries Act' that allowed for control and emergency action to be taken in specified sectors, one of which was merchant shipping. The Act provided for the appointment of a Shipping Controller who would oversee the implementation of a shipbuilding programme designed to replace lost tonnage at a faster rate than hitherto and, hopefully, at a faster rate than the enemy's attrition by *'Such steps as he best thinks ...'*. A Merchant Shipbuilding Advisory Committee was formed at once and held its first meeting on 19th December 1916 at which it was decided that:

- An additional and extensive building programme be started immediately
- Standard ship types as regards hull and engine design be built
- The types to be as few and as simple as possible

Ultimately the number of types built probably exceeded the number originally envisaged: there were eleven deep-sea, dry cargo types – some of which were modified versions of the main types – all of which were single-screw vessels (except for fourteen of the type 'G', which were twin-screw vessels) that varied from each other only in size and tonnage. The main types, and numbers built in British yards, were as follows:

- A & B types-almost identical to each other-of which a total of 206 were built.
- C type – 23 built by the war's end; but 86 in total. They were primarily intended as coal and ore carriers.
- D type – 27 vessels built expressly as colliers
- G type – 22 built.

Toward the end of the war thirty-seven straight-sided vessels, whose frames were without curves, were built from prefabricated sections (National or N-type).

*This information has been compiled from Lloyd's *World War 1 War Losses*

In addition to the dry-cargo types, some A & B-type vessels were adapted to carry oil by building cylindrical tanks in their holds and designated AO and BO types; thirty-eight and one respectively were built. Also, near the war's end, thirty-four standard-type tankers (Z type) were built to carry heavy fuel oil, and served mainly as Fleet oilers.

Besides the deep-sea vessels, a fleet of seventy-eight coasters ranging in size from 300 to 3,000grt was built under the programme, as were twelve powerful, single-screw sea-going tugs and fifty-two 1,000dwt dumb barges. The tugs and the dumb barges were built of concrete because, in addition to conserving steel, it was thought that the use of concrete would be cheaper and only require unskilled labour – both the latter assumptions were found to be incorrect.

All the standard vessels' names carried the prefix 'War'; whilst the concrete-built vessels' names carried the prefix 'Crete'.

For all the deep-sea hull types there were only two main engine types built, which ranged in horsepower from 1400 to 3650, except for the fourteen twin-screw 'G' vessels, which were steam turbine driven and rated at 5500hp.

Sixty-two shipyards and thirty-six engine builders in the UK were involved in the programme, as well as yards as far afield as Japan and Canada. In all, some 650 vessels were completed in British yards (but many were not completed until after the war had ended). In addition, American yards were contracted to build some 700,000 tons, but as America was not then involved in the war, the ships were ordered mainly through the Cunard Steamship Company. However, on America entering the war in 1917 most of the vessels being built in US yards, or ready for delivery, were requisitioned by the U.S. Government.

The subject of this article is one ship of the 'C' class, and the one major drama in her otherwise trouble-free and long working life.

'C'-class ships' specification

Overall length: 342ft, breadth: 46ft 5in, depth: 25ft 6in, and load draft 21ft 8in.
Gross registered tonnage: 3,019, Deadweight tonnage: 5,050
They were coal-fired, single-screw vessels driven by a three-cylinder steam engine
Generating 2200hp, giving them a notional sea speed of 11½ knots.

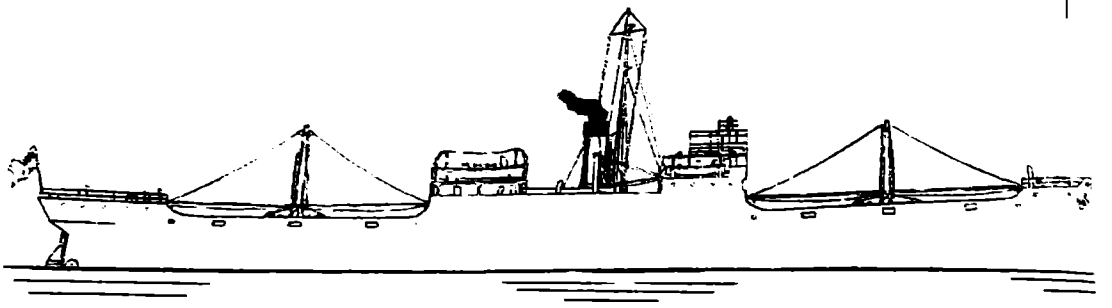
October 1918 – January 1942

At the time of her fall from grace in 1942, this particular 'C' class vessel was named **Marklyn**, but when completed in October 1918 at the yard of the Tyne Iron Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Willington Quay-on-Tyne, she was named **War Combe**. She was officially transferred to post-war private registration on 18th August 1919, becoming the **Watsness** in the ownership of Letricheux, David Ltd., Swansea, and entered their service under the command of Captain H.B. Henricksen.

By the start of the Second World War, she had been the **Marklyn** for some twelve years under the ownership of the Mervyn Steam Shipping Co., (Martyn,

Martyn & Co.Ltd.) of Newport, Mon., one of whose partners was the master. The company operated three ships in 1939, but by 1941 had only the **Marklyn**.

The **Marklyn's** eventful voyage started when she sailed for Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 21st October 1941, carrying a cargo of coal.



S.S. Marklyn - a WW1 Standard 'C' Class Ship

Freetown was the main assembly point for the formation of convoys of merchant ships travelling through the area from the UK to Cape Town and vice versa. It was not a port in the accepted sense of having the cargo-handling facilities that would normally be expected of a port; nor was it able to provide of itself the supplies needed by vessels calling there. In fact, at that time, Freetown was totally dependent on the outside world for supplies of every description – even fresh water. Despite the area's high rainfall there were neither reservoirs nor suitable areas for the building of such. In addition, medical facilities had to be provided on board an old passenger vessel anchored some miles offshore because of the enervating effect of the climate, and also the prevalence of endemic insect-borne, and potentially fatal, diseases on shore.

The fuel oil and coal needed to provide bunkers for passing ships and convoy escort vessels was sent there from the West Indies and Britain respectively. However, for the first three years of the war, off-loaded cargoes had to be stored in a few old vessels anchored there for that purpose, and ships were often subject to very lengthy delays as a result.

Freetown's strategic value lay in its geographical location as the nearest West African port to the UK under the political control of the UK, and that it provided a safe, defended anchorage. It was, therefore, a suitable (albeit dire place for Europeans to linger in) intermediate location for the organisation of convoys and their naval escorts. Its one great economic resource, particularly in wartime, was the iron ore extracted from the Marampa mine some 40 miles to the N.N.E. The iron ore output (about 3 million tons per annum) was brought by a rail link to the nearby port of Pepel on Pepel Island. It was this commodity – some 4,500 tons – that the **Marklyn** loaded for her return to the UK.

The **Marklyn** arrived at Freetown on 18th November 1941, and having eventually unloaded there, moved across to Pepel to load her iron ore cargo for the

UK. On 26th December she sailed from Freetown as part of Convoy SL 96, comprised of thirty-five ships of various types, but all having in common their low speed.

Prior to 1941, end-to-end convoy escort was not possible, and UK-bound SL convoys would proceed under escort to a location well to the west of Gibraltar, and about 2,000 miles from Freetown. From there the convoy would disperse with the ships going their separate ways, whilst the escorts returned to Freetown with a south-bound convoy that had formed from vessels proceeding to the location independently.

From mid-1941 ships bound for Freetown from the UK went in an escorted convoy to the mid-Atlantic location where its escorts picked up a UK-bound convoy, whilst the Freetown-based escorts returned there with the southbound convoy.

For some unknown reason (possibly due to a southbound escorted convoy not being available to make a rendezvous, or maybe a lack of escorts) convoy SL 96 followed the earlier procedure and dispersed when far enough out into the Atlantic. Oddly, no losses appeared to have occurred as a result.

After detaching from the convoy, the **Marklyn** made her way towards her destination port, Barrow, by the north-about route via the west coast of Ireland. Having rounded the Northern Ireland coast she headed approximately south-east between Rathlin Island and the Mull of Kintyre in order to pass, some seventy miles further on, a few miles to the west of the Mull of Galloway. Once past this land she would have changed course to east-south-east to pass well clear of Point of Ayre (the northern tip of the Isle of Man) and its offshore banks, and then resumed an approximately south-easterly course directly to Barrow.

Grounding and Salvage

At 9.pm GMT on Sunday 20th January 1942 a wireless message sent from the ship was received at Lloyd's in London. It said: *'Ashore at Mull of Galloway; require assistance'*. At 1.22am on 21st January another message was received simply stating *'Crammag Head'*; and at 3.18am a third message saying *'Water gaining, require pump'*, and finally at 7.28am, *'Impossible to state rate but leakage gaining slowly on maximum pumping capacity at low water.'* The **Marklyn** had taken the ground at about 8.50pm on the Sunday night. There is no record in the Portpatrick Coastguard log book of a distress call being sent from the **Marklyn**.

Although the second message said *'Crammag Head'*, the shoreline at that location [a headland that juts into the sea for some 400 yards] is completely guarded by rock outcrops, and the ship's total destruction would have occurred had she struck there, and in a tense situation, whoever had the message radioed, having run the ship ashore, was not then able to know her exact location, but should by then have realised that she was not ashore on Crammag Head.

As shown in the message below, the **Marklyn** was ashore on sand and the location of the grounding was, in fact, Port Logan (otherwise called Nessock) Bay, 4½ miles north of Crammag Head. This location has a half-mile long beach, whose middle section has, at the low-water mark, underlying rocks near the surface. She was actually aground in relatively shallow water, at the low water mark, with a tidal range of some 10 – 12 feet. Over a distance of approximately three-quarters of a mile from seaward

to the low water mark the depth of water reduces from five fathoms over shelving sand. The time of the grounding was about half-an-hour after dead low water.

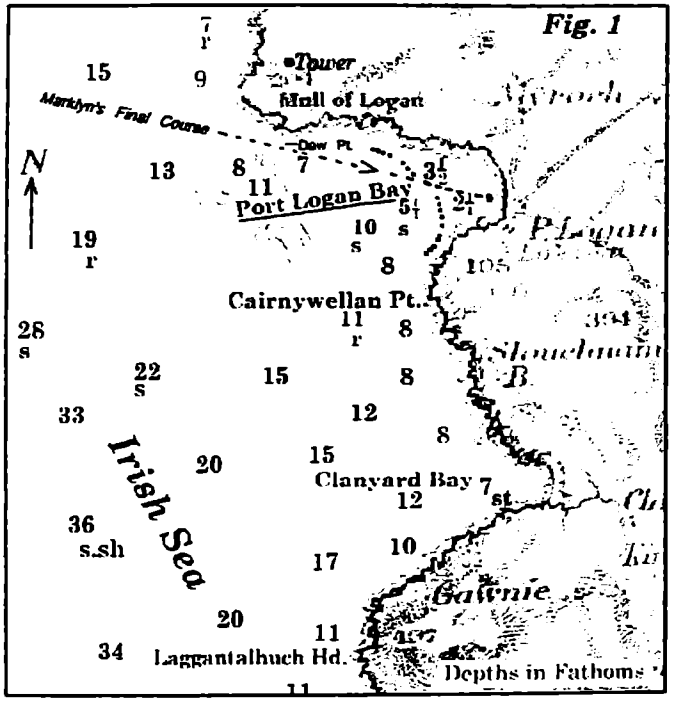


Fig. 1- ***Marklyn***'s Course Prior to Grounding

That the vessel had been set on an ESE course prematurely can be seen from the chart details (Figs. 1 & 1A). To strike the beach at Port Logan the ship would have passed very close to the outcrops off Daw Point [1¼ miles WNW from Port Logan beach] at the southern tip of the Mull of Logan – possibly within a hundred yards of them – prior to grounding. Had she been on her earlier south-easterly course, she would have struck on the extremely rocky coastline about half-a-mile south of Port Logan. Although steaming on a correct heading had she already cleared the Mull of Galloway the **Marklyn**, when passing Daw Point, was still some ten miles NNW of the area she should have been, in order to clear the southern end of the Galloway peninsula. It seems most probable that the Mull of Logan had been sighted earlier in the failing light and had been mistaken for the Mull of Galloway, thus precipitating the premature change of course, and hence the assumption in the first radio message that she was ashore on the Mull of Galloway. Whether she had approached the land to try to obtain a bearing or whether an earlier navigational error had been made is not known.

At 2.15pm on Tuesday 22nd January a telegram was received by the **Marklyn's** owners from their agent in Barrow stating, *'**Marklyn** is lying in a sheltered position on sandy bottom, wind offshore but heavy swell and vessel is pounding heavily. Making water in No.1 hold, water in No.2 hold has doubled since yesterday, engine-room and Nos.3 and 4 holds dry at present. It is a job for a powerful salvage tug, and naval authorities dispatched one from Gourock with four pumps, but owing to un-seaworthiness or bad weather she had to return. In the opinion of the naval officer, owing to the age of the **Marklyn** and her kind of cargo, unless a powerful tug with pumps arrives in the next 12 hours the vessel is likely to be a total loss. The naval authorities are now doing their utmost to obtain a salvage tug. If the **Marklyn** is refloated she will have to be taken to an immediate drydock at Belfast. The crew are in no danger at present as they are still on board, and should it be required, a lifeboat can be launched immediately'*

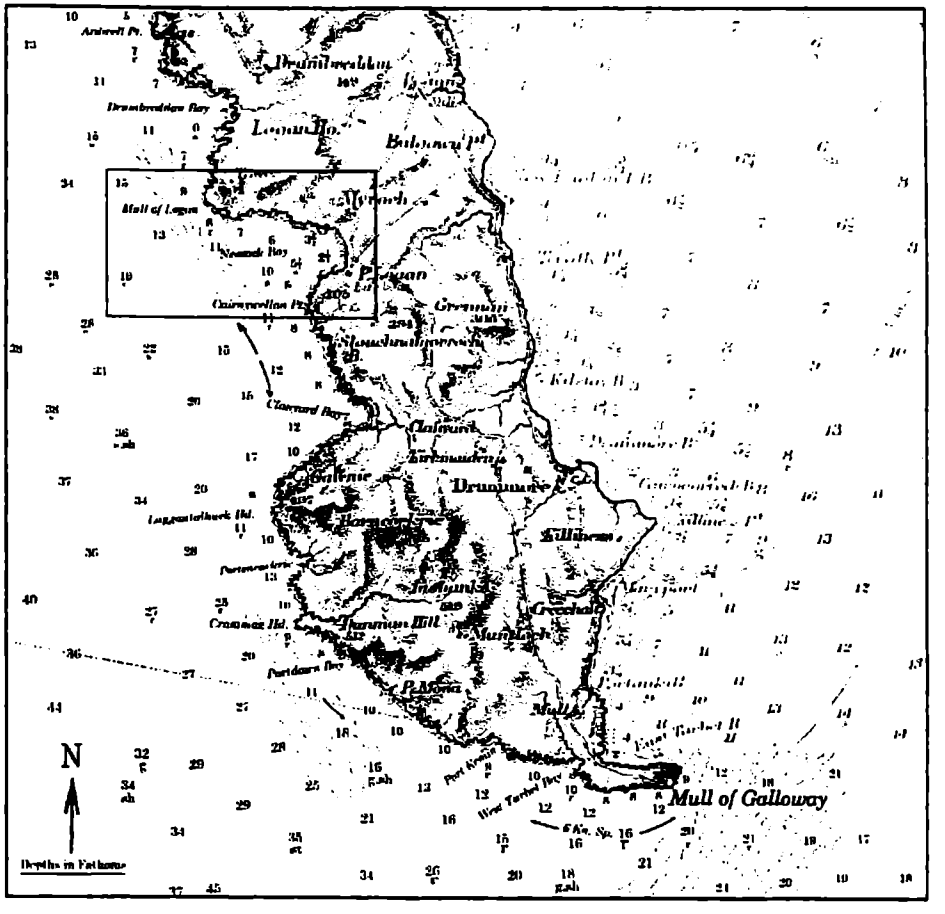


Fig. 1A - Southern Galloway Peninsula

The same day, the Lloyd's agent at Stranraer said that the position was hopeful and that the acting senior naval officer had ordered four pumping sets to control the water entering Nos.2 and 4 holds. The engine-room was still dry but water was entering the tunnel. On the following day, 23rd January, the Lloyd's agent visited the **Marklyn** and found no evidence of Admiralty action, or of pumps on hand to test the extent of the leakage in Nos.2 and 4 holds, and in No.2 tank. He also found that the position had worsened during the night, and that only a working crew was on board (she had carried a crew of thirty-nine but no lives were lost or injuries reported). He thought that a salvage vessel and a diver should be considered, but that the weather conditions would be vital.

On the morning of 25th January, the surveyor found the **Marklyn** badly ashore at the mean low water mark (some 150 yards below the mean high water mark) in a broadside position, and now on a heading of S.S.E., and exposed to south-west and north-west winds. Nos. 1 and 2 holds were now flooding with the tide, and the leakage was more than the ship's pumps could deal with, but he was able to say that two 5-inch and two 7-inch Admiralty motor pumps had previously been got on board ready for coupling up. A strong north-westerly gale was blowing that day with seas breaking over the ship and he was unable to get on board. All hands had now been evacuated to Drummore, three miles away.

He noted that an extra two-feet depth of water at high tide would be required to enable the vessel to float when the holds were pumped out, and he thought that about 1,000 tons of cargo needed to be discharged, and that a diver would be needed to plug the leakages.

The owners received a telegram dated 24th January from the Naval Authorities at Stranraer stating '*Salvage craft arriving, position favourable*', and one from Lloyd's agent, Stranraer, timed 1.15pm, 25th January stating '*Position worse due to westerly gale. No work possible. Four 7-inch pumps on board not yet connected. Salvage Association and Liverpool and Glasgow Salvage Association Officers attending.*' On the following day the weather was still too rough for anyone to set foot on board.

The next day the salvage officer reported the ship's position unchanged, but due to her broadside-on position to the sea, and her lying on sand, there was a risk of scouring under both ends. This would have made salvage even more difficult, and he said that he would be making immediate arrangements to heave the vessel end-on to the sea, and that a salvage vessel was being dispatched from the Clyde with all necessary equipment.

By that afternoon the weather had moderated considerably, and the salvors were able to board the ship during the afternoon. They found Nos.1 and 2 holds, the engine-room starboard side tanks, and No.4 double bottom tanks full of water, also 4 inches of water in the engine-room port side tank. The thrust shaft forward bearing was badly fractured on the starboard side, and the shaft bent. The tank top plating on the starboard side of the engine-room was badly set up, and stanchions and dynamo seating badly buckled. The tank top plating in way of the cross bunker, and the stokehold bulkhead were badly buckled. The main drainage pipe [from condenser to overboard carrying waste water from the main engine] was fractured, which would make it impossible to start the main engine

Captain Hall of the Liverpool & Glasgow Salvage Association also arrived that day and said that he had arranged for four extra pumps and divers etc., and a craft for laying out anchors to pull the bows to seaward, and that they were expected to arrive the following day. However, the tug arrived the same night and succeeded in laying out the starboard anchor. But the following day, 27th January, brought a strong south-westerly gale obliging the tug to seek shelter at Stranraer.

There was relief from the gale twenty-four hours later, and news that night that the tug **Zeebond** had arrived at Stranraer from Rothesay with the necessary pumps, divers and shipwrights, and as the weather had moderated would proceed to the **Marklyn** and commence work. This duly transpired, with the **Zeebond** at the scene the whole of the next day with two 3-inch and two 6-inch onboard pumps operating. Another set of similar pumps was delivered the following day and transferred on board, enabling No.1 hold to be brought under control. With this success an endeavour was to be made in the following few days to refloat and transfer the ship to a more sheltered position.

A report of 2nd February said that in addition to the forward hold being under control, the water in the engine-room was now below the plates, and they were again hoping to turn her end-on to the sea. Enough water had now been pumped out to give the vessel, at high water, some buoyancy and she was rolling easily in a slight swell. The salvors suggested pumping her out completely and heaving her off for examination by the divers and, if found seaworthy, towing her to a sheltered anchorage at the Mull lighthouse [on the north side (lee side) of the Mull of Galloway] to effect further tightening (sealing) to enable the vessel to be towed to Barrow, her port of discharge, and dry-docking her there. But the subsequent high tide proved insufficient to float her and the plan was abandoned.

Again the following day there was not sufficient water to float her, even though the holds and engine-room had been pumped dry, and it was decided to engage a coaster to offload some of the cargo. This proved less than successful as the coaster could only lie alongside for short periods as the tide permitted, and it was decided to jettison some of the iron ore if necessary. The salvors were duly instructed to discharge or jettison some 500 tons of it as the weather permitted.

On 5th February the small steamer **Ardachy** (194grt, J&A Gardner & Co., Glasgow) arrived alongside and began offloading some of the **Marklyn's** cargo, but four days later only some 120 tons had been removed, and by the 14th only about 300 tons; but in addition, some 270 tons had been jettisoned. At this point in the operation it was hoped to swing the vessel's head to sea by Monday, 16th February, but two days later the two tugs ordered had still not arrived. In the meantime the salvage officer was to try to shore up the tank tops from the inside ready for the tugs to take her to Loch Ryan for further tightening to make her safe for an open sea passage.

The tugs eventually arrived and **Marklyn's** head was successfully pulled to face the sea, but in so doing she was noticed to pivot amidships. Nos. 1 and 4 holds had been discharged, and No.2 hold partly discharged. But on the 22nd it was found that the engine-room and stokehold had flooded due to the shaft tunnel door bursting, and the bulkhead of the gland tunnel recess [the working-space compartment at the after end of the shaft tunnel and forward of the after bulkhead] giving out; there was also extensive leakage in way of the boilers and stokehold bulkhead.

The Liverpool & Glasgow Salvage Association steamer **Ranger** (already then 62 years old) was now to be dispatched to the scene with additional pumps, and it was still hoped to refloat the **Marklyn** and take her to Loch Ryan by 25th February. However, she was thoroughly surveyed at high water on the evening of Monday 24th, and again at low water the following morning by the Salvage Association Surveyor in conjunction with the Lloyd's Agent from Stranraer. Their findings were shattering to the salvage prospects.

New damage was found in engine-room and stokehold, which was both extensive and serious. The engine-room leakage was tidal and not controllable even with four 6-inch pumps and three 3-inch pumps on the rising tide. The main areas of damage were:

- Boilers set up aft hard against the engine-room screen bulkhead [the bulkhead between the boilers and the main engine compartment]
- The main engine badly set up and also canted over to port
- Aft engine room gratings all badly buckled
- Steps of ladders broken
- Engine room aft bulkheads badly buckled
- Shell plating of stokehold badly buckled outward on port and starboard sides from first strake [line of horizontal plates of the hull] below main sheer strake [the topmost strake] to turn of bilge [where the hull plating curves under towards the keel]
- Rivets in strong beam [the main structural support beam of the engine-room] sheared
- Main deck grating at aft deck saddleback [trunking that carried coal from the upper deck down to the engine-room side bunkers] badly buckled upwards for four strakes.
- Saddleback side plating badly fractured and rivets sheared on port and starboard side
- Funnel set up and set forward
- Bridge deck plating port and starboard side badly strained
- Waste steam pipe broken
- Fan engine [forced draught fan for boilers] casings and storeroom stanchions [pillars giving support to deck] badly buckled
- All stokeholds and engine-room floor plates badly set up
- Main steam pipe badly set up against athwartships strong beam in engine-room
- Forepeak and all double bottom tanks [usually used for water ballast purpose] full

The holds and cross bunker were apparently flooded deliberately for unstated reasons. The surveyor was unable to account for the extraordinary additional damage that occurred virtually overnight. He surmised that the vessel was sitting on boulders or a reef amidships (but some inkling of this was noted by him when she was turned head-to-sea the previous week, and local knowledge would have been expected to have acquainted him with the possibility), and that when the holds were flooded by the

salvors on the previous Thursday night she started to break at low water that night, causing the additional damage.

The **Ranger** arrived on the evening of 24th February with extra pumps but was unable to achieve much owing to a deterioration in the weather, which developed into a full south-westerly gale over the following two days. It was the 28th before the gale had moderated sufficiently for the salvors to again board the vessel. Additional damage to that above was found in the engine-room, and to decks amidships due to straining. It was decided that only the master, the chief engineer, second officer, bo'sun, and one seaman should remain with the vessel to safeguard her. The rest of the crew was discharged.

It was now decided that the rest of her cargo needed to be offloaded, but as there was no steam power to drive her winches to operate the grabs the operation was suspended awaiting the arrival of a portable steam boiler.

Although the vessel was in a fairly sheltered position she was to suffer further damage in recurring south-westerly gales, as on 2nd March when the damage to the shell plating and the saddleback casing was further extended. By 4th March more damage had occurred to the main and bridge deck plating, and to the saddleback casing, as well as the damage to the shell plating now extending above the main sheer strake. Also, the shell plating on the starboard side in way of the engine-room was badly buckled from the main sheer downward. On a slightly more positive note the main engines appeared less listed to port. On this day an easterly gale was blowing but she had the benefit of the slightly rising ground to eastward to shield her to some degree.

It was at high water on 9th March before she could again be boarded, when her condition was found largely unchanged. Three days later, the weather having continued favourable, no extra damage or straining had occurred. But by the time the salvage operation was ready to proceed on 8th April the weather was again too severe to start, and it was 20th April before the now-arrived portable boilers were coupled up, and the winches and other cargo-handling gear overhauled ready to remove the cargo. The salvors now awaited two coasters, expected the following day.

The coasters **Beaconia** (266grt) and **Cumbria** (271grt), both belonging to J. Wilson & Co. of Whitehaven, arrived as expected the following afternoon in favourable weather conditions and set to work immediately; and working through until 7p.m. discharged 60 tons from No.2 hold and 25 tons from No.3 hold. The **Cumbria** was dispatched to Workington the following night with 200 tons of the ore; the **Beaconia** had gone before her and was back for loading again on the 24th. The discharge of cargo continued uninterrupted and by the 28th the balance was approximately 2000 tons.

On 1st May a thorough examination of the shell plating at dead low water revealed that the original buckling was extended considerably, and there was new and extensive buckling in the third and fourth strakes below the main sheer on port and starboard sides.

A westerly swell on 7th May brought a temporary halt to unloading when the **Beaconia** was forced to cast off in mid-afternoon with only 20 tons aboard and proceed to Stranraer for shelter. However, the weather soon moderated and she was back within hours to continue loading, setting off for Workington just after noon the

next day with 130 tons on board. The shortfall in her load was due to the breakdown of No.3 winch, and to the breaking of a grab chain causing damage to the grab. The balance of cargo remaining was now approximately 105 tons in No.3 hold, and 810 tons in No.2 hold.

On 19th May it was reported that the discharge of cargo would be complete when the **Beaconia** had taken its next load, and a 12-inch and four 6-inch pumps would then be put on board to gain control of the leakage and tighten the holds. **Marklyn** could then be taken the thirty-five miles round the coast into Loch Ryan to be further secured. The last of the cargo was discharged by the afternoon of Thursday, 21st May, but the salvage operation had to be suspended on Saturday night due to bad weather, which did not abate until 29th May.

On that day the cross bunker was pumped out, as were holds 1, 2, 3 and 4; and such good progress was now being made that it was hoped now to move her to directly to Rothesay on Friday 5th June. Some slight additional cementing [as in building cement] was still required to seal some apertures in the plating, and the salvors were awaiting timber to shore the stokehold bulkhead, and another 8-inch pump for the engine-room. These items arrived on 4th June and shoring was quickly carried out, but more cementing was needed in No.2 hold where more leakage had developed, and the engine-room still needed pumping out before floating her into deeper water for examination by the divers.

By the following morning, the pumping was proceeding so successfully that it was thought likely that she could be refloated that evening and made ready for towing to Port Bannantyne above Rothesay on Bute. At 8p.m. **Marklyn** was successfully refloated and towed to deeper water where the divers set to work under the hull. Two tugs were standing by ready to tow her away, and on being given a certificate of seaworthiness by the British Corporation of Shipping surveyor she moved out to sea from Port Logan, and arrived in Kames Bay off Port Bannantyne the following morning.

Over the following three weeks further necessary temporary repairs were made, and she set off under tow on 2nd July and was taken to an anchorage at Tail of Bank the same day. Ten days later she was taken up the Clyde to Glasgow (yard unknown) where she arrived on 13th July to undergo an extensive re-build, which was completed by 28th October.

In the interim it had been decided that **Marklyn** be taken into the charge of the Ministry of War Transport when repairs were completed and renamed **Empire Usk**. This was formally done on 29th October 1942. She was now 3239grt.

Back to sea

On 31st October **Empire Usk** commenced loading cargo at Glasgow, reportedly for north Africa but actually for Portugal and Spain. She sailed, still under the command of Captain Martyn, on 17th December 1942 but had to put back two days later, for reasons unknown, and went to an anchorage in the Clyde waiting to be allocated to a Gibraltar-bound convoy. It was 7th January 1943 when, as **Empire Usk**, she sailed outward as part of Convoy KMS7G comprised of 49 ships. The designation of the convoy indicates that it was bound from the UK to the Mediterranean, and that it

was attached to another southbound convoy, detaching from the latter in the vicinity of Gibraltar.

Her first reported port of call was Lisbon, arriving there on 20th January 1943. From there she sailed to Almeria in southern Spain, arriving 2nd February, and sailing from there 14th February for Gibraltar, where she arrived the following day. She remained at Gibraltar until 22nd February, then sailed as an attachment to convoy MKS8 (Mediterranean to UK, Slow) which had left Bône, Algeria on 17th February. After an uneventful week's voyage she arrived at Barrow on 1st March to unload a cargo of iron ore.

Subsequently she sailed for Huelva in south-west Spain to load copper ore, which she took to Middlesboro via Loch Ewe after joining convoy MKS11 at Gibraltar. This was followed by two trips to Montreal between 18th May and mid-August; a period on Government contract that saw her routed to Malta followed.

Empire Usk sailed from Malta 15th September 1943 for Augusta in Sicily where she arrived the following day, and where she remained until 2nd November. Here she was possibly acting as a supply vessel in the wake of the Allied invasion of Sicily, 'Operation Husky', which began on 10th July. Augusta had been captured on 13th July and quickly got into working order by the naval forces.

Sailing from Augusta on 2nd November for Gibraltar, she arrived on November 7th, and from there was routed to Huelva. Arriving there on November 11th she loaded another cargo of copper ore, this time for Garston on the Mersey, but via Gibraltar to join a convoy that sailed 23rd November. However it was 11th December before she made the Mersey having been hit by an extremely severe and prolonged storm during which one of her lifeboats was completely destroyed.

Between 1st February and 12th July 1944, she was reported shuttling between Sicilian and nearby north African ports, probably transferring matériel from the latter ports for use in the fighting zone. Thereafter, her movements went unreported until mid-June 1945 (again possibly indicating a period under Government service) when she resumed normal post-war commercial voyages.

By the time of **Marklyn's** resurrection as **Empire Usk** the company was managing two relatively new ships on behalf of the Ministry of War Transport: **Empire Caxton** and **Empire Newcomen**.

Postcript

Had the grounding occurred in peacetime, or even at the latter end of the war, it is almost certain that **Marklyn** would have been declared a constructive total loss, so extensively and badly was she damaged; and so protracted and exacting was the salvage operation. However, at that stage of the war, and with shipping losses so numerous, her salvage was considered worthwhile, and she went on to justify the effort expended on it. It was also fortunate that she took the ground at low water; had it been high water her run up the beach would have taken her to the sea wall and beyond recall.

On release by the Ministry of War Transport in 1946 she went into the ownership of Constant (South Wales) Shipping Co., retaining the name **Empire Usk**, until 1947. **Empire Usk** then became the **Heminge**, still in Constant's ownership, until

1949. Then acquired by the Crete Shipping Co. of London and renamed **Bluestone**, she traded as such until 1953, still mainly carrying ore cargoes. In that year she was sold to the Moller Line (UK), and registered in Hong Kong as the **Grosvenor Mariner**. Laid up at Hong Kong in June 1955, she went to the breakers there in September 1955, aged thirty-seven.

The particular drama at Port Logan in 1942 has apparently gone largely unrecorded and unremembered; only one person, Mr James Ritchie of Port Logan, has been found who knows of it and recalls the events that took place there. As a ten year old he watched the salvage operation either from the beach or from a bedroom window of the house that he has lived in for seventy-seven years.

Selwyn Rawlings Martyn, born September 23rd 1892, was the eldest son of Samuel Thomas Martyn (of Dyer and Martyn) of Bilbao, Spain. Having excelled at school, he also became a very good marksman as a result of joining the OTC. He fought in France during WWI in the British Army, and afterwards worked in the family shipping business (probably commencing before the war started) based in Cardiff. He was a particularly fluent speaker of French, Spanish and Portuguese.
Captain Martyn died as a result of a car accident on 8th July 1956, aged 63.
The family business ceased trading in the late 1950s or early 1960s. ▌

Acknowledgements and sources consulted:

David Eccles, LNRS member
Mr A. McIlwrick of Moffat
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Allied Convoy System 1939-1945, The, Arnold Hague
British Standard Ships of WWI, Mitchell & Sawyer
Lloyd's Lists, Secret World War II
Navy at War, 1939-1945, The, Captain S. Roskill R.N.
Statutory Acts of Parliament
WWI War Losses, Lloyd's

THE MONDAY FACILITY

The dates for the next period are :-

	June	1st,	8th	15th	22nd	29th
	July	6th	13th	20th	27th	
	August	3rd	10th	17th	24th	
and	September	7th	14th	21st	28th	

Power and Authority in the Eighteenth-Century Wooden World Represented through Space and Material Culture.

Synopsis of the award winning dissertation submitted by Mark Grimshaw for the LNRS Award

"The only traditions of the Navy are those of rum, sodomy and the lash"
Winston Churchill

Seamen have always dwelt on the fringes of society. The Greeks hesitated whether to count them among the living or the dead, eighteenth-century Englishmen were no better informed and it appears that Churchill himself still did not understand the men that lived at sea. They have always remained different with their curious clothes and eccentric behaviour yet people have only known them on land, out of their element. It seems this lack of clarity on the whims, behaviour and power relations of these pioneers of the modern age has not escaped the historiography either. Historians who have previously taken an interest in the social relations onboard the eighteenth-century ship have reduced it to a basic dichotomy in which power relations are viewed as black and white. Ergo, those who have authority control it absolutely and those who are without it are completely powerless. It is the attempt of this essay to uncover a reality that shows how the company of every ship was divided in many overlapping, ambiguous and untidy ways. The 'wooden world' was a complex society in which each person's place was defined by many invisible and subtle distinctions and where power and authority structures were continually negotiated. In order to illustrate this point, this paper is placed within the framework of the influential anthropologist James C Scott in his work '*Domination and the Arts of Resistance*'. Scott uses the term 'public transcript' to describe the open, public interactions between dominators and oppressed and the term 'hidden transcript' for the critique of power that goes on offstage, which power holders do not see or hear. In order to study the systems of domination, careful attention is paid to what lies beneath the surface of evident, public behaviour. In public, those that are oppressed accept their domination, but they always question their domination offstage. The 'hidden transcript' that has been constructed and articulated off-stage, is then used as a bargaining tool with the dominating class to compose an acceptable 'public transcript'. It is this flux and negotiation that Scott's model allows between the 'public transcript' and the 'hidden transcript' that holds the key to understanding power relations onboard. The rigid structures imposed in the historiography on this subject cannot accurately reflect the complicated processes that occurred in such a unique society.

In order to impose such a model, the mechanisms that were used to construct the 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts need to be located. Journal and diary extracts can be very helpful for this. They cannot just only serve as a window and voice to the past; a voyeur's look into the murky world of shipboard life and relations but can also give specific examples of interactions between members of the authority hierarchy. While these journal extracts will be vital in understanding what constituted the 'hidden' and 'public' transcripts they only offer limited and specific glimpses from one persons perspective. This evidence will therefore be supplemented by an analysis of space and material culture. This justification of using such sources is influenced heavily from Doreen Massey's idea that "spatial form is an important

element in the constitution of power itself." Massey along with fellow social scientist Erving Goffman, argue that it is not only the physical boundaries of space that are important but also how the space is actually used and "what is performed in that space." The performance in what Goffman terms the 'front-stage' and 'back-stage' regions fits well with my application of Scott's model of the 'public' and 'hidden' transcript. How space is constructed and used therefore is vital for understanding how power and authority was negotiated onboard ship.

Quarterdeck Performance

In order to discover the 'public transcript' onboard the eighteenth-century ship, it is instructive to look at how space was used and how it was constructed. In general, space was becoming increasingly important during the eighteenth-century. In a domestic sense, the period can be characterised by a distinct separation of home and work, a reassessment of the value of privatisation and an emphasis on individualism rather than collectivism. In the main, therefore, society was becomingly increasingly concerned with how space represented the person or persons who owned it and also with how people represented themselves within that space. This phenomenon was only magnified within the context of the ship, as space was a limited and precious commodity. Indeed, it is clear that a naval vessel assumed an inexorable logic in her spaces of power simply by being rated.

The area in which space was at a premium was at the lower deck. The lower deck was a poorly ventilated, damp, foul smelling and disease-ridden place that held not only the guns but also it was the area in which the majority of the ship's company would spend their leisure time. The number of men living there was dependent on the size and type of ship but it could range from a body of ten to about six or seven hundred. The journal of Samuel Leech describes how he is assigned a berth when he arrives onboard and then how space was prescribed, "They (the crew) slung their hammocks from the beams of the deckhead, which is to say that they lay fore and aft, each hammock with fourteen inches width, according to regulation." The men would also eat their meals on the gun deck with "each mess of six with a table either hinged from the side or slung from the deckhead between the guns." It is clear from Leech's description that space was a rare luxury for the men from the lower deck. It was a permanently crowded area that afforded no instance of privacy.

Leech goes on to comment :-

> *"The vessel is a little community of human beings, isolated from the rest of mankind. This community is governed by law peculiar (sic) to itself; it is arranged and divided in a manner in which each task has its man and each man his place."*

What is interesting from this comment is that it appears to Leech that space was allocated accordingly to what task and therefore what rank a man held. Therefore, even before discussing the officers and captain, it is clear that even within the lower deck itself there was an explicit rather than tacit knowledge that space was allocated to hierarchy. This is reinforced by the common practice of the petty officers, such as the boatswain and the gunner, who would live and mess in the lower deck and yet would be afforded the luxury of *"partioning (sic) their space with strips of curtain"*. The allocation of space therefore appears already to be an important mechanism for the promotion of the `public transcript'. Space was certainly considered a luxury as it followed that you would be afforded some extent of privacy. The higher up the hierarchy you were the more space and privacy was attributed to you. It cannot be underestimated therefore just howimportant a public signifier of power space could be.

Of course, the allocation of space according to rank became more extreme the further up the official hierarchy you went. The Captain's cabin for example would often be made up of four or five rooms with its own galley and lavatory and would also be adorned with a menagerie of expensive

up of four or five rooms with its own galley and lavatory and would also be adorned with a menagerie of expensive furniture. The allocation of such a precious commodity as space would be a very active reminder of who was in control and would also play a major part in the formation of the 'public transcript'.

The question must be asked however to whether this increase in space and privacy had any real impact on notions of power and authority. It is clear that a predetermined hierarchy and levels of authority were allocated to space and privacy yet it is difficult to say for certain whether the real and actual situation ran parallel to the one which had been so carefully planned out. It will be more instructive to analyze how space was used onboard rather than making assumptions from the actual physical boundaries. The one area in which the 'public transcript' was performed within a space was that of the quarterdeck. The quarterdeck was a place that was located on the upper deck just behind the main mast. To the casual observer or visitor to the ship, it was just another deck in which it appeared that the captain spent most of his time. To the sailor, officer and captain however, it was sacred to the presence of sovereign power in displays of etiquette and privilege. It was the Captain's territory, his to walk on alone from his adjacent quarters, his to speak from but not to be spoken to unless he wished it. The quarterdeck was more than just a physical space; it was a social group that was constructed through rank. It was also the space in which the very public act of discipline was carried out which served to reinforce authority even further.

It would seem natural that there would have been a fair amount of resentment towards the lack of space they had, the restriction to certain areas and the public displays of discipline. It was surprising to find therefore evidence of criticism from the lower deck when these mechanisms of the 'public transcript' were not enforced. It is difficult to ascertain why this is so but I believe that it is linked to the fact that the men had no physical boundaries in their lives onboard ship. Therefore, in an environment in which it was rare for men to be physically separated they sought out privacy through the plays and gestures that marked status and privilege. The 'public transcript' therefore, while being a tool of the dominating forces onboard ship in order to cement their authority it was also something that was very important for the subordinated to make sense of the very strange world and situation around them.

Only Space in Their Stomachs

If we accept the assertion that the 'public transcript' was not only beneficial for the consolidation of power and authority for the ruling class but it was also a useful tool for the lower orders to construct meaning to their surroundings this does not mean that there was a lack of rebellion or negotiation onboard ship. Rather there were numerous instances and methods of resistance that were vital for building up a detailed and accurate picture of power and authority relations on the eighteenth-century ship. It is these methods of resistance to negotiation that can be grouped together under the term 'hidden transcript'. One of the most important areas were this was formed was in the lower deck. As previously noted, this was a space that was densely crowded and afforded very little privacy. It was in the lower deck however, that the practice of eating and drinking together was carried out and this formed extremely close bonds. Additionally, it was over a meal or a drink in the evening that stories would be told, music would be played and dances would be performed. Everyone who took part in these processes would be made to feel part of a wider community and as everyone collectively had the same amount of food and drink they could complain and grumble together about its poor quality, or in the case of drink, its insufficient quantity. Therefore in some of the worst working conditions there has ever been, block of humanity managed to forge a common society that was as powerful as any strike of the cat o' nine tails.

What is interesting about the wooden world in contrast to any other society that might be studied is that it was difficult to maintain distinct on-stage and off-stage spaces. The fact that a lot of men lived in a small and finite space meant that often the 'hidden transcript' was constructed in areas that were public. This is most prevalent in the spaces in which work was carried out. The work onboard was characterised by its milieu of action which made it both universal and *sui generis* and provided a setting in which large numbers of workers co-operated on complex and synchronised tasks. Work onboard ship was highly dangerous and hazardous. Not only were there dangers on the ship itself, with the opportunity of accidents very prevalent but also the ship was in constant battle with the elements. Shipwreck was always something that was in the back of a sailor's mind. Often it would not lead to death but it would mean that their sea chests and consequently all of their belongings could be lost. This could take up to twelve months to compensate, and was therefore an occurrence that could be disastrous. As a result, the need to stop this from happening was paramount. The communal and collective world that was forged in the lower decks was also vital to maintaining and running the ship. Every task had a man assigned to it and they would be expected to carry out their duty for the good and the well being of the ship. In such a dangerous environment, authority was accrued to those who had extensive practical knowledge. This could be anything from an understanding of the workplace, knowledge of trade routes, language of the sea, number of shipwrecks survived and physical strength, among others. Onboard ship therefore, skill and expertise was inextricably tied up with the formation of the 'hidden transcript'. It was an informal mode of authority and was consequently part of the 'hidden transcript' and yet interestingly it was constructed and presented during the very public performance of work.

It is this aspect that makes the 'hidden transcript' so powerful compared to the `public transcript' onboard the eighteenth-century ship and one that makes it unique out of any society. The 'public transcript' is rooted in performance, ritual and ceremony. The captain's and the officer's authority is directed through performance in space and the actual allocation of physical space. This is illustrated through the restriction of access to certain parts of the ship such as the quarterdeck, the rituals performed there and the objects, which are displayed both on the quarterdeck and in similar areas such as the captain's cabin. On the other hand, the 'hidden transcript' while having important ceremonial and ritual aspects is rooted in actuality. Of course, it is very difficult to determine what was most important to a certain group of people and to try and ascertain what meanings people placed on events and objects. However, the conditions of service and the danger of working onboard meant that real and definite displays of skill and expertise held much more importance in terms of authority and power than any performance Therefore, a fine balance needed to be struck. There was a tension between the officers, captain and the rest of the ship's body as there was a tacit knowledge that the ship could be sailed without the ruling elite and this is what made instances of mutiny possible. However, what is most telling is that mutiny was in fact very rare and I would argue that this was not due to any fear of the consequences if caught or indeed any loyalty to the crown. Rather, in a limited space such as the eighteenth-century ship, in order to make sense of their environment, the ritual importance of spatial definition that the ruling elite provided was absolutely vital to the smooth operation of the vessel. It was the recognition of this balance between the 'hidden' and 'public transcript' that made the British Navy so successful and one that allowed the first footsteps to be made in forging the largest Empire the world has ever seen.

Extended version and recommended further reading available on request by email

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PAST PRESIDENT IS HONOURED

By LNRS Secretary John Stokoe

Chairman Bill Ogle welcomed Members to the March meeting and added that the day's proceedings would be enhanced through a very special event relating to one of our Members. Readers will probably recall from last September's issue of *The Bulletin* the enthralling article penned by John Shepherd paying a richly deserved tribute to Canon Bob Evans who at that time had just received word of his M.B.E. Award in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Prior to his retirement Canon Bob had spent over 27 years as Chaplain Superintendent to the Mersey Mission to Seafarers and much of the article had been compiled courtesy of Bob's autobiographical account of those days in his book entitled *"A Dog Collar In The Docks"*.

Canon Bob is seen receiving his framed certificate from Chairman Bill Ogle

Fortunately for us Bob's writing continued and reflecting his own journey from suburban Cardiff to settling in Liverpool is well described in *"The Way To Liverpool"*. His attention then turned to examining the compelling saga of seafarers' welfare organisations in and around Merseyside in *"Mersey Mariners"*. Bob's gift for putting it into words is clearly apparent when he documents *"HMS Eaglet"*, then *"The Indefatigable"* and also *"The Training Ships of Liverpool"*. The organisation closest to Bob's heart, The Mersey Mission to Seamen recently celebrated its 150th. Anniversary. It was an opportunity too good for Bob to miss in delving into a story of support, laughter and tears relating to Merseyside's care for the seafarer. More recently, Bob has handed over the pen as it were to seafarers themselves to tell their own tales, the result of which has been the publication of three volumes of *"A Lantern In The Stern"*. And now we hear that a further publication entitled *"Conway Heroes"* is currently in the pipeline.

All of these publications show an unselfish, or perhaps we should say a very generous style of leadership which, when linked to personal qualities incorporating a sincerity and genuine desire to help and support others, make Bob a unique and trusted confident and friend to so many as well as being one of life's rich characters. We are truly fortunate that Bob has such strong links with our own Society which started from his early Chaplaincy and also becoming a very active President through most of the 1980's.

The Society's highest honour offered for only the second time in our 70 year history is Honorary Life Membership to Canon Bob Evans. We are extremely proud of his membership and association with the Society and we salute him for his prolific contribution to Merseyside's maritime literary heritage.

THE BRITISH & AMERICAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

by Frank C. Bowen

(This article first appeared in *Shipbuilding and Shipping Record*, 11th June, 1953)

The British & American Steam Navigation Company, sometimes confused with the British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, which was the original name of the Cunard Line, did not deserve the oblivion into which it faded and the neglect that it has received at the hands of many historians of the present day.

But for misfortune it would have been the first company to establish a regular steam service across the Atlantic and it was certainly the first to plan one, for a single-ship service can scarcely be described as '*regular*'.

The original idea behind the enterprise was that of an American named Junius Smith, working in conjunction in Britain with MacGregor Laird of the Birkenhead family, and Henry Bainbridge. These three far-sighted men planned to establish a regular fortnightly service between London and New York with four ships, two under the British flag belonging to the British & American Steam Navigation Company, and the other two by a company to be formed in the United States. Their bad luck began when the Americans, proud of the performance of their wooden sailing ships, would not give the necessary financial backing to the American company.

The British & American Company was accordingly registered in London in 1835 with a capital of £1 million in £100 shares. The first office was in Fen Court, Fenchurch Street, where MacGregor Laird acted as secretary. The first call on the shares was £25 each on allotment, followed by a second call of £5 in 1837, and a third of the same amount in the following year. In that year the directors proposed a Liverpool – New York service and tried to raise capital in Lancashire to acquire the necessary tonnage. They placed a contract with Laird of Birkenhead to build an iron steamer of 1,200 tons to be named the **Atalanta**, but without the necessary capital she was never laid down.

Tenders were next invited for the hull of the first steamer 'according to the draft specification furnished by the Company', and a little later another invitation was issued for the machinery. Curling & Young, of Limehouse, secured the contract for the hull and made a thoroughly good job of it. The contract for the engines went to Girdwood & Company of London, who embodied various novel ideas into the design. These included two slide valves to each cylinder, one on either side, but only one was to be used in starting or reversing. The engine was to be lifted higher than usual to allow the condensers to be placed immediately under the cylinders.

Unfortunately, Girdwood & Company went through the bankruptcy court before the engines were completed, which caused a most inopportune delay, but Robert Napier & Company, of Port Glasgow, were awarded the second contract and, increasing the nominal horse power from 460 to 500, they adopted a number of the original ideas, including Hall's surface condensers with tanks for 200 tons of fresh boiler feed, and a 'patent still' to make up for wastage. Napier also increased the

bunker capacity from 600 to 800 tons, reckoned to be sufficient for 20 days steaming, although even that was cutting things rather fine.

Meanwhile, Curling & Young were getting on with the construction of the ship in drydock at Limehouse, although there was further delay when the British & American Company learned the details of Brunel's plans to build the **Great Western**, and the new ship was made slightly larger than had been planned for the added prestige.

These delays not only upset the programme but also added to the cost. The ship was to have been called the **Royal Victoria**, but before she was ready for launching and naming Queen Victoria had come to the throne and the ship was named the **British Queen**, with a very fine figurehead carved in a likeness of the new Queen. As soon as the new ship was floated out of the building dock, she was taken in tow by the excursion paddle steamer **Fame**, as no London tug of the day was considered powerful enough to hold her, and taken to the East India Dock to be rigged.

As a full-rigged ship the **British Queen** left London under tow, but cast off near Plymouth and made the rest of the passage to the Clyde under sail. She was towed into Port Glasgow to receive her engines which comprised a two-cylinder set of side-levers, designed to drive paddles 31 feet 6 inches in diameter, with floats 9 feet 6 inches long, at 16 r.p.m. Four primitive boilers supplied the steam and it was reckoned that the **British Queen** could make about 8 knots at sea, although her best 24 hours recorded on service averaged 10·2 knots.

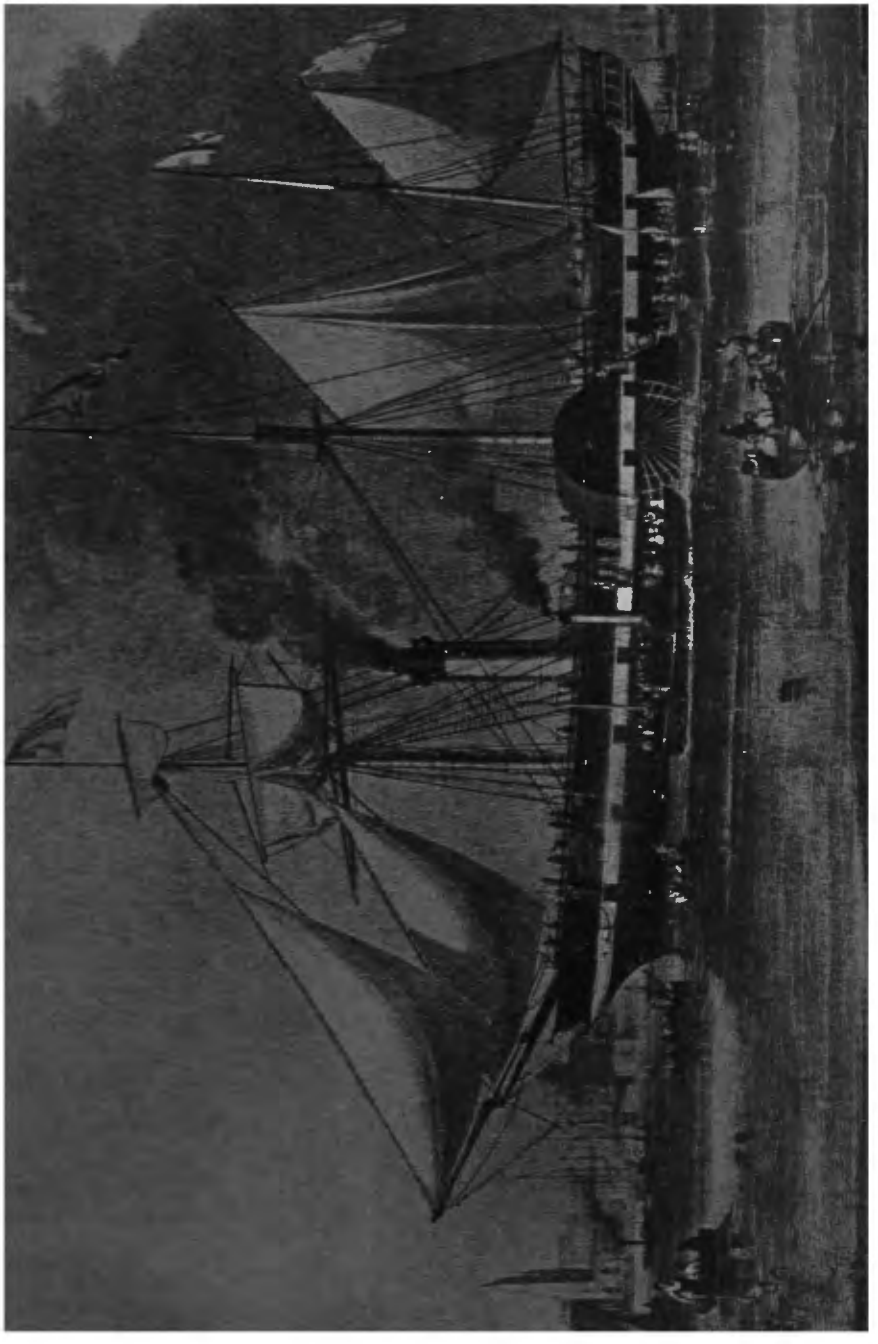
The **British Queen** was a wooden ship, 245 feet by 40 feet, with a tonnage by the rule then in force of 1,850. The accommodation was particularly fine, and the permanent first-class quarters had berths for 103 passengers forward of the machinery, and 104 aft. There were facilities for accommodating an additional 73 passengers in the 'tween decks if required. The crew numbered 85. The new ship was fitted with hot and cold shower baths which were regarded as quite a luxury. It would be another ten years before a properly fitted bathroom was installed in a steamer.

The main saloon measured 50 feet by 20 feet, and the dining saloon 60 feet by 30 feet, while, in deference to American taste, a small smokeroom known as the 'cigar room' was given a deckhouse to itself.

As the delays with the hull and machinery made it quite impossible to get the **British Queen** away before the **Great Western**, her owners chartered the Irish Sea paddle packet **Sirius**, a wooden vessel of 700 tons built by Menzies of Leith, for two round voyages. She was far too small to cross the Atlantic under steam with a reasonable reserve in her bunkers, but she was the only vessel available, and the directors of the St George Steam Packet Company, to which the **Sirius** belonged, were very sympathetically interested in the transatlantic venture.

Although the **Sirius** sailed from London, just as the **British Queen** was intended to do, passengers who wanted to delay until the last minute could leave three days later by the Bristol mail coach, and then join the steamer **Victory** for the crossing from Bristol to Cork, where the could join the **Sirius**. Similar arrangements were made for intending passengers from the Clyde, Mersey and Dublin. It was a very convenient arrangement as the **Sirius** needed to top up her bunkers at Cork.

The **Sirius** left Cork on 4th April 1838 with 11 after-cabin passengers each paying a fare of 35 guineas, eight fore-cabin passengers at 20 guineas, and 21 steerage



*The **President**, built by Curling & Young of Limehouse, and engined by Fawcett & Co. of Liverpool.*

passengers at 8 guineas. The ship was grossly overloaded with 435 tons of coal, and 45 barrels of resin in increase the intensity of the fires, but even so had to burn her spare spars and all other available wood in the ship, before reaching New York with only 22 tons of coal left in the bunkers. The **Sirius** used fresh feed water in her boilers and the evaporator probably contributed considerably to her high fuel consumption.

Although advertised to make a 15-day run to New York, the **Sirius** actually took 18 days and 10 hours at an average speed of 6·7 knots. The **Great Western** arrived on the same tide after a passage of 15 days 5 hours at 8·8 knots. The **Sirius** returned to Falmouth via Cork in 18 days, and her second and last voyage across the Atlantic was 19 days westbound, and 15 days eastbound to Plymouth. The **Sirius** attracted a lot of attention in Cork, and the company raised a good deal of capital in and around the district, where an independent committee of shareholders was appointed.

The sailing schedule of the **British Queen** was the first day of each alternate month from London and New York, calling at Portsmouth to land and embark passengers. Her maiden voyage carried a full complement of passengers and she reached New York in 15½ days. A report on her performance states that she was very fast when light and in calm water, but that she lost speed rapidly when she encountered any kind of heavy weather. In three round voyages in 1839 the **British Queen** earned sufficient profit to pay a dividend of 5½%, but her owners needed all the ready cash they could secure to pay for the second ship, the **President**.

Like the **British Queen**, the **President** was built by Curling & Young, and was launched on 9th December 1839. She was slightly shorter and with a little more beam than the **British Queen** but was given an extra deck which spoiled both her appearance and stability. The ship rolled all three masts out of herself whilst on passage from the Thames to the Mersey for her machinery, and was towed into Plymouth by the steamer **Royal William** for docking and repairs. Fawcett & Company of Liverpool had secured the contract for the machinery, apparently at a cut price in order to secure the publicity. The engines were of practically the same power as those of the **British Queen**, and as the new ship was 2,350 tons against the 1,850 tons of the older vessel, this made her considerably under-powered if bad weather was met. The **President** cost just over £80,000.

In 1840 the **British Queen** made five round voyages, of which only one was eventful. The owners had decided to fit both her and the **President** with Hall's patent reefing paddles in which the floats could be adjusted to suit the draught of the ship as coal was consumed. Unfortunately the company did not consult the patentee or pay him any royalties, and when he found out what had been done, he insisted that the paddles should be altered back. The **President** was not yet ready for sea, but the work was done so hurriedly in the **British Queen** that all the floats were lost from one of her paddles on a westbound passage, and after transferring some of the floats from the other paddle, the ship had to crawl into Halifax, N.S., 19 days out from Plymouth.

When the Cunard Line commenced operations, the British & American Company had to reduce its fares by 20% to meet the competition, but even then the average number of passengers carried in the **British Queen** fell from 240 to 165 per voyage.

The **President** made Liverpool her U.K. terminal port and sailed on her maiden voyage on 1st August 1840 almost empty as both the **Great Western** and Cunard's **Acadia** had recently sailed. Both outward and homeward passages took 16½ days and she proved herself most uncomfortable in bad weather. There was no improvement on the second round voyage, and on the eastbound passage the vessel had to turn back to New York after covering only 300 miles in six days, and then start afresh after re-bunkering. That incident threw out the timetable, and the **President** was unable to take her December sailing.

The **President's** third eastbound voyage started from New York on 11th March 1841. She had a poor passenger list, but to make up for it she had a very large cargo, and there is no doubt that the ship was grossly overloaded. In those pre load-line days that was, of course, nothing unusual, and the practice was certainly not confined to ships on the American run. The **President** had 136 passengers and crew on board, and within 24 hours of sailing the ship was sighted in bad weather shipping much water and labouring heavily. Nothing else was seen of the **President**. Some considered that she had struck an iceberg, but she was scarcely far enough out for that. The inquiry before the British Consul at New York found that the ship was not overloaded, but it must be remembered that there was no definition for that phrase at the time. It was quite possible that the overstrained engines broke down and left the **President** at the mercy of the seas. The underwriters paid £70,000, but it was reported in shipping circles that the cost to the British & American Steam Navigation Company was nearly £100,000.

The nine transatlantic voyages of the **British Queen** had made a very reasonable profit, although not much had been allowed for depreciation, and overhead expenses had to be considered, while the **President's** three voyages only earned a profit of just over £4,000.

At the end of April 1841, the **British Queen** finished her ninth voyage at Liverpool and it was advertised that she would sail from that port in future, but the accounts revealed that the company had lost in the region of £100,000. As it possessed only one ship against the four Cunard ships which could maintain a regular service, the **British Queen** was sold to the Belgian Government for £60,000 and she left Liverpool for Antwerp early in 1841.

The **British Queen** made three voyages under the Belgian flag with very few passengers, and initially retained her British navigating officers and engineers. On all passages from Antwerp to New York she made a call at Southampton. After the first voyage the British captain was replaced by a Belgian naval officer.

The 'last straw' was at the end of the third voyage when the ship was delayed by bad weather and had to put in to the Azores and pay 100 francs per ton for coal – an unheard-of price. The Belgian Government decided that it had lost quite enough money, and after offering the vessel for sale twice without getting a reasonable offer, it broke up the **British Queen** and used the material for building gunboats.

The unlucky British & American Company decided to wind up and the accounts were not encouraging. MacGregor Laird had seen the red light and had retired from the company, devoting himself to his work in the West African trade. However, the company should always be remembered for its pioneering efforts and for building what was undoubtedly the finest Atlantic liner of her day. ▌

Photo reproduced by kind permission of Peter Elson, Senior Features Writer at the *Liverpool Daily Post*
Very many thanks to Peter for all his help and enthusiasm for '*The Bulletin*' over my years as Editor. *J.S.*

Summer 1962 at Liverpool's Princes Landing Stage. The **St. Tudno** is preparing to sail for Llandudno and Menai Bridge, and in the background the **Carinthia** has arrived from Canada

THE NAME GAME

By LNRS Member J.B. Hill

(From the House Journal of the Furness Withy Group, *'The Log'*, Summer 1981)

Amongst British shipowners and those of Northern European countries, a certain amount of formality and dignity has usually been the custom when choosing names for ships.

Such is not always the case with ships of other nations, particularly those of Greek and Far Eastern origin and a rather astonishing case in point occurred when a 120,000-ton bulk carrier was transferred from Norwegian to Liberian registry and renamed **You are my sunshine**.

In times when many shipowners are finding it difficult to survive, perhaps it is a relief to see a note of frivolity introduced into the naming of ships, but it must surely be tempting providence to operate ships with names such as **Ever Lucky**, **Great Splendour** or **Unique Mariner**.

Sentiment also seems to play its part to the extent that one currently finds bulk carriers with such unlikely names as **Angelic Wings**, **Golden Bliss**, **Summer Dream**, **Universal Beauty** and **Splendid Hope**.

Wishful thinking could have given rise to the naming of other ships like the **Good Friend**, **My Charm**, **Midas Touch** or **Family Unity**, and one cannot speculate upon whether those vessels really live up to the titles which have been bestowed upon them!

It is rare to find peculiar names amongst the fleets of other maritime nations, but a few examples might be of interest. United States owners, for instance, frequently name their ships after people, but two exceptions come to mind, the **Stage Door Canteen** and **Minute Man**, both war-built vessels which carried these names for some time after the end of hostilities.

Even the Norwegians have upon rare occasions introduced rather amusing names, such as the small refrigerated ship **Cool Girl**, the LPG carrier **Sunny Baby** and the bulk carrier **Happy Dragon**.

Amongst British tonnage it is hard to find any equivalents, and one has to look back quite a number of years to unearth the appropriately named collier **Mr Therm**, or the coasters from Mistley, **Jolly Girls** and **Jolly Nights**.

Having given Greek shipowners credit for originality in choosing ships' names, one cannot refrain from mentioning the unfortunate tendency of certain purchasers to employ the utmost economy in changing names by the dab of a paintbrush. For example, several Ellerman vessels have emerged under new ownership with the 'City of' part of their name painted out, and another often used method of renaming is to paint out the first or last letter of the previous name; thus the *ex* British Rail ferry **Caesarea** became the **Aesarea**. But full marks for originality go to the Maltese buyers of the CEGB collier **Sir Archibald Page** who renamed her **Sir Archibald Rage**!

Last, but not least, are the owners who made a practice of not changing the names of ships at all when they purchased them, - could it be that they regard it as unlucky?

Gustaf Erikson, the last of the windjammer owners, always retained the names of the ships he purchased, or on occasion he restored original names to his ships.

Another Finnish owner, Lundqvist Redevierna, ran some ships for many years retaining their original names. Two vessels of particular interest were the *ex* Alexander Shipping Company vessels **Thornbury** and **Newbury**. The former was sold by Capper Alexander in 1928 and remained as the **Thornbury** under the Finnish flag for 30 years, whilst the **Newbury**, sold in 1963, retained the same name until broken up in 1973.

In conclusion, perhaps one should acknowledge the uninhibited approach of the owner who has been operating at 16,000-ton cargo ship under the Panamanian flag for a number of years, simply called **The Daisy**. ▌

From: Sea Breezes, June 1975:

ODD NAMES FOR BLUE FUNNEL LINERS

Odd things seem to be happening in the Blue Funnel Line these days. The two oldest ships in the fleet, the motorships **Rhexenor** (9,845grt) and **Stentor** (9,833grt), built by the Caledon Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Dundee in 1945 and 1946 respectively, are coming to the end of their days.

For many years they have been operating between the Far East and Australia, but now they are being replaced by more modern vessels. The two replacement ships are being renamed **Rhexenor** (*ex* **Maron**) and **Stentor** (*ex* **Memnon**). So that this can be done, the two older ships are also being renamed. Normally when Blue Funnel vessels are renamed, other names from Homer's Odyssey or Iliad are chosen, but this time a more simple expedient is being used.

The first and last letters of the old ships' names are being removed, so that the **Rhexenor** becomes the **Hexeno**, and the **Stentor** becomes the **Tento**. Presumably they will carry these names for a short period before being withdrawn and sold for scrap.

It seems a pity that contrived names such as these, which mean nothing, should mar the long list of 'Classic' Greek mythological names in the Blue Funnel fleet. There is little merit in adopting such a practice, even if it only a temporary measure before disposing of vessels.

TOM - THE KROO BOY

Submitted by LNRS Vice-President Harry Hignett, from Lloyd's List, 1903

These interesting particulars have been furnished by Mr B.A. Forrow, **RNR,** the well-known superintendent at the Board of Trade offices at Southampton:

"Among the seventy-odd shipwrecked and distressed seamen sent home by the Consuls at various ports on the South American coast, and landed here [Southampton] by the s.s. **Magdalena,** about two weeks ago, was a native of Sierra Leone, and though I was able to send all but one to their homes, how to dispose of Tom — a Kroo boy — taxed my resources.

"To send him to the Union (?) meant a permanent resident there on the rates, unless the guardians paid his passage home, and as I believe a relieving officer and two guardians must by law accompany the pauper and hand him over to the authorities of his own country, I though what a pretty penny it would cost this town; so, being myself a ratepayer, I spoiled three persons taking a long and expensive holiday. partly at my expense, and sent Toni to live at the Sailors' Home for the present, as he could not speak English. There he seemed very happy. He rapidly learned to speak and understand English, and so a day or so back I spoke to him and he told me he was a native of Freetown, Sierra Leone, and had sailed on a ship bound for South America, and then left at Pernambuco in hospital with rheumatism. He assured me he was a `British Englishman' now and wanted to get back home.

"I had ascertained that the Albertville, one of Elder Dempster's ships would call here [Southampton] on Friday for passengers for Freetown, and so I instructed the master of the Sailors' Home to have Toni in readiness, in case I wanted him.

"About noon that day I was invited by Sir Alfred Jones to have lunch with him at the South Western Hotel, just prior to the **Albertville's** departure. I asked Sir Alfred if he would give Tom a passage out. When I explained the case, he said

'Certainly I will take him, I'm always glad to oblige the Board of Trade and the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. Get him sent to the tender at once, and he can go on board with us. '

"I did as instructed, and Tom sailed away, looking over the side smiling, and as happy as a king."

The Kroo are a tribe from the Kroo area of Sierra Leone who were regularly employed on board British merchant ships.