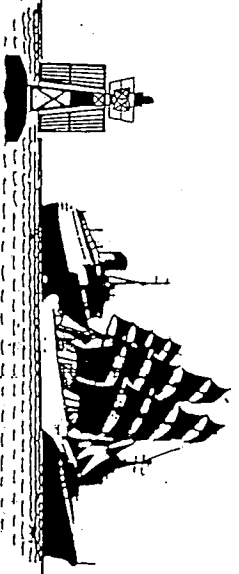
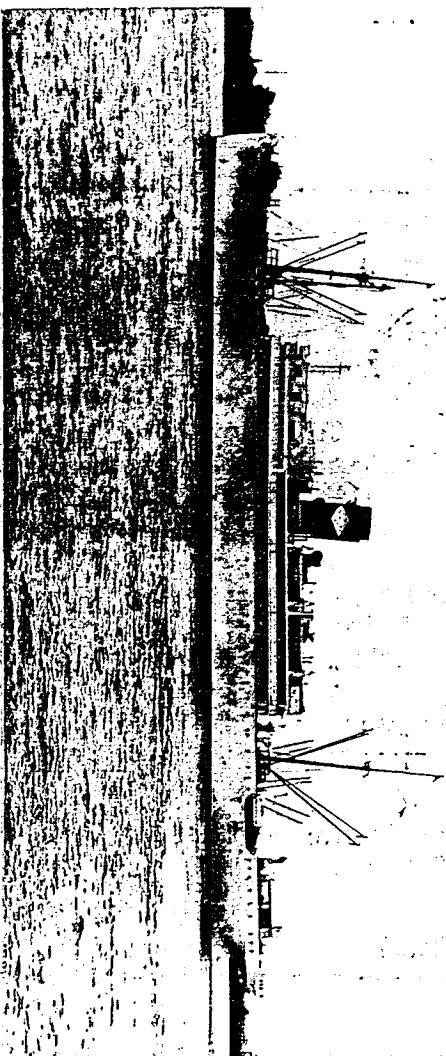
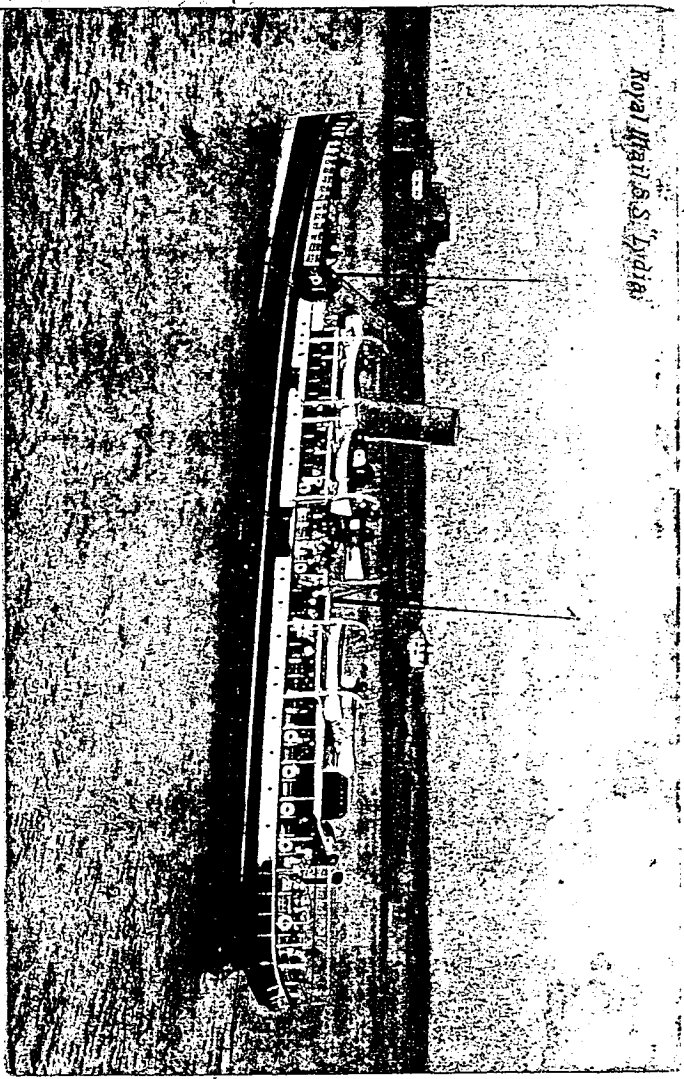


# BLACK JACK

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH  
WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

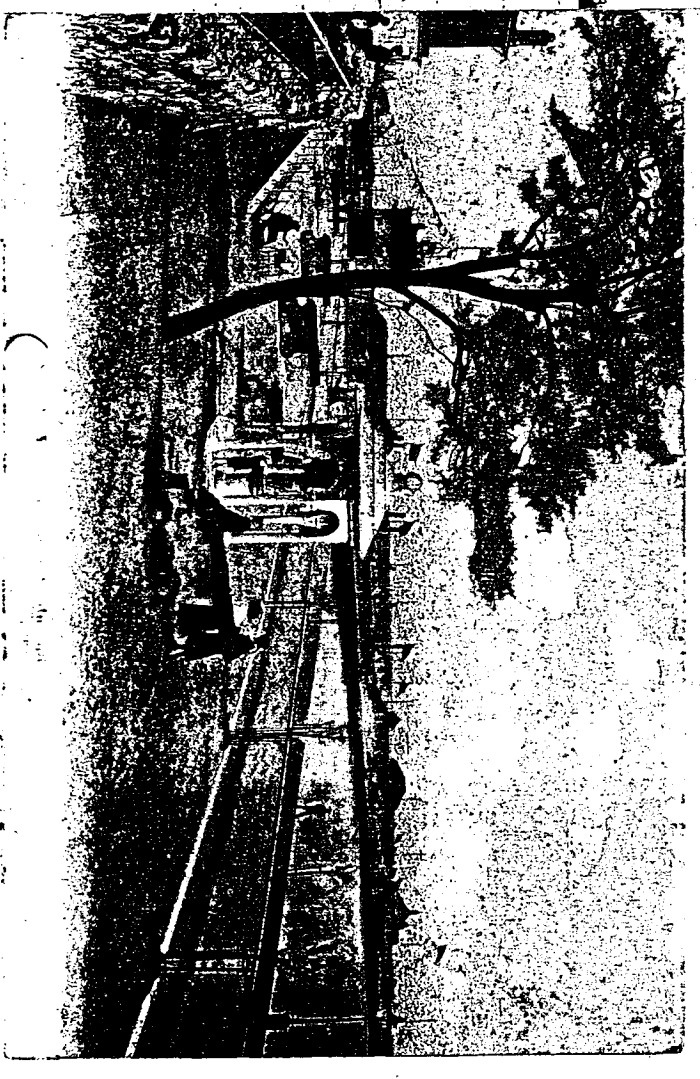


Royal Mail S.S. Lydia



above : THE SIX MAIL SHIPS OF THE GREAT WHITE FLEET  
Jamaica - one of the six

right : SOUTHAMPTON MEMORIES  
Lydia - sister of the Stella  
The Mary Rogers Memorial



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Chairman	John Havers
Vice Chairman	John Lillywhite
Branch Secretary	Rod F Baker, 29 Milbury Crescent, Bitterne, Southampton. tel; So'ton 449972
Branch Treasurer	Dave F Hutchings, 1 Westborn Road, Fareham, PO16 7DH
Magazine Editors	Nigel V Robinson, 2 Glencarron Way, Bassett, Southampton, SO1 7EF.
Publicity Officer	David Hornsby
Visits Secretary	Miss Pat Laing
Projectionist	David Hornsby, 'Greystones', Southampton Road, Cadnam, SO4 2NG tel; Cadnam 3704
	Colin Drayson

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### PROGRAMME - October to December

Meetings are held on second Tuesday of every month in Lecture Room B, Nuffield Theatre Building, University of Southampton commencing at 7.30pm

Tues 13 October	-	Southampton Branch AGM plus supporting programme
Tues 10 November	-	"Men, Memories and Memorials" - Mr A Leonard
Tues 8 December	-	Quiz - Bill Mitchell with some more of his nautical teasers

### FORTY UP !!

With this issue of BLACK JACK we reach our 40th issue and complete our second series. Therefore this issue includes an index for BLACK JACK Nos 21 - 40.

We still have some copies of the index to the first series (BJ Nos 1 - 20), which was issued with BJ No 20, available. Anyone who would like a copy please contact the Editors.

Here's to the third series! And don't forget we need plenty of articles!

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## SOUTHAMPTON MEMORIES

an occasional series

by Rod Baker

With the declining number of ships to be seen from Southampton's waterfront these days, people have to look at other things in the area for interest. If you walk from the Maritime Museum across Bugle Street and follow the pedestrian walk you come to two monuments; the famous and well photographed Mayflower tower (which I hope to look at in a later article), and then a canopied shelter. Being neither eye-catching or serving any useful purpose anymore, few people (including many of us I suspect) stop and give it any attention and yet to do so would bring to your attention a sad and dramatic story .....

Mary Ann Rogers - Stewardess of the Stella  
-----

"On the night of the 30th March 1899 amid the confusion and terror of the shipwreck aided all the women under her charge to quit the vessel in safety. Giving her own lifebelt to one who was unprotected. Urged by the sailors to make good her escape she refused lest she endanger the heavily laden boat. Cheering the departing crew with a friendly cry of "Goodbye, Goodbye" she was seen a few moments later as the 'Stella' went down. Lifting her arms upwards with the prayer "Lord have me", then sinking under the waters with the sinking ship"

Thus reads a brass plaque attached to the central column of this touching memorial. However you would be wrong to assume that this was our only memory of this nearly forgotten disaster. Cross the Itchen and find your way up to Peartree Parish Church (also known as St Mary's Extra) and go into a rather attractive churchyard and you will come across a large and typically elaborate Victorian family memorial cross, on one of the panels of which you will read the following .....

"Richard Robert Loane Rosoman who was drowned in the 'Stella' disaster of the Casquets Rocks, March 30th 1899. Aged 72 years"

What then is the background to these little remembered Southampton memorials? The Stella was one of three sisters delivered by the Clydebank yard of J & G Thompson to the London & South Western Railway Company in 1890. Along with her sisters Lydia and Frederica, she was placed on the Southampton - Channel Islands run in which they all proved to be very popular. A single-funnelled vessel of 1059 gross tons and 253 ft long, the Stella, along with her sisters, was the first twin-screw vessels in the fleet.

The Stella left Southampton on the morning of 30 March 1899 on her normal, but on an extra sailing, under the command of Capt Reeks with 140 passengers and 40 crew. She was sighted during the crossing by the Vera, another LSWR steamer and never seen again.

The Casquets (8 miles west of Alderney and 23 miles north-east of Guernsey) are notorious and well feared rocks by mariners and on the day concerned fog descended over the area. However these were the days when rival concerns raced each other openly and the results keenly watched and encouraged by the public. In this case the LSWR and the GWR were the parties concerned with the race from London to the Channel Islands and the IbeX the rival ship. Capt Reeks was under considerable pressure to arrive in Guernsey at the same time as his rival, 5.30pm, so after slowing on a couple of occasions he continued at full speed. Sounding her fog horn at regular intervals everything seemed

alright until just after 4.00pm when a mechanical horn on the rocks seemed very loud and then 250 yards ahead rocks were sighted. The Stella hit Black Rock just as she had turned hard to port and then astern, consequently she struck with her stern and immediately began to sink. Five lifeboats were launched but one capsized and in 6-7 minutes the tragedy had run its course, the Stella sliding under the water.

Survivors rowed and drifted around rather helplessly for many hours in the fog until early in the morning of the following day. 68 were rescued by the Vera, the Great Western's Lynx and the French tug Marsouin.

As is so often the case with such tragedies some good result came as a result of the sinking of the Stella. The Board of Trade enquiry recommended that the two companies should have different times of arrival, a policy accepted by both parties.

But 112 people had gone missing in the disaster among whom were Richard Rosoman and Mary Ann Rogers.

As a result of a letter to "The Times" a public subscription was raised to erect a memorial to Mrs Rogers and to support the dependents of the other victims. On 27 July 1901 Lady Emma Crichton unveiled a plaque and declared open a drinking fountain dedicated to the memory of a Victorian stewardess of great bravery.

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You may like to know that Mr Alan Leonard, our speaker in November will be dealing with other maritime associations of a miscellany of Southampton streets. Now Academic Registrar of La Sainte Union College, he is a well known writer on local history topics and you may well recall having read his recent series in the 'Echo' on our City's street names.

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FROM "VICTORY" TRAMPS.....

.....TO CONTAINER SHIPS

A brief history of SAFMARINE - Part Two  
by David Hornsby

Of all the major developments and achievements since the formation in 1946, perhaps the greatest impact on the South African public was made on 29 October 1965, when the media announced that Safmarine was to participate in the passenger mail ship service between South Africa and the U.K.. Two ships were purchased from Union-Castle for Rand 18m and in addition it was agreed that the Corp. would supply the next mail ship replacement, thus giving it 3/7 of the mail contract. The vessels were renamed after the country's two most important rivers, giving recognition to the great importance of these natural features in the development of the South African economy, the Transvaal Castle became S.A.VAAL, whilst the Pretoria Castle was renamed S.A.ORANJE.

Because of the particular significance of the occasion, the wives of the then State President and Prime Minister consented to act as sponsors to rename the liners. On both days, January 12 and February 2 1966, the Cape weather was perfect and the functions truly marked the reaching of yet another milestone in the history of the Company.

For practical reasons the S.A.VAAL and S.A.ORANJE had to remain on the British register for the following three years. The change of flag to the South African register eventually took place on 12 February 1969 by the State President onboard S.A.VAAL, whilst the Prime Minister performed a similar high-level function on S.A.ORANJE on 17 March.

Unfortunately, during 1966, the Company suffered its first loss, when on 1 July the 8,100 grt cargo liner S.A.SEAFARER went aground at the entrance to Table Bay when inward bound to Cape Town from Glasgow. Although the vessel subsequently broke in two, there were fortunately no casualties to her passengers or crew.

After acting as operators and managers of seven I.D.C. owned tankers, the Corp. became a partner in the venture in 1967, taking over the ownership of four vessels, the KULAND (ex Otina), the BURLAND (ex Oscilla), the MARLAND (ex Bideford) and the THORLAND (ex Mobil Vanguard). The last of this group was sold in 1970 following explosion damage, whilst the others remained in the fleet until the latter part of 1975 when they were scrapped. With this experience it was decided to order a 217,400 dwt VLCC in April 1969, the KULU (Zulu for large) being delivered two months early in October 1971. In October 1969 it was announced that a second VLCC had been ordered and in March 1970 an option for a third was also taken up, named GONDWANA and SINDE the vessels were delivered in January 1972 and March 1973 respectively. The first two VLCC's remained in the fleet until charters to major oil companies expired in 1979, whilst SINDE was sold after only 5 months at a profit of Rand 26m!

Following the introduction of services to Venezuela/Colombia/Mexico (1964) and to the Far East and Mediterranean (1967), 1969 saw the introduction of 'Safocan' service to Australia, jointly with Royal InterOcean Lines. The same year also saw the scrapping of the original three "Victory" freighters, whilst 1972 saw a similar fate for the three 'Klaveness' vessels - one with collision damage and one with fire damage.

Further substantial expansion and diversification took place in 1973. Firstly the Corp. acquired the South African Line, a subsidiary of the West German Globus Reederi. The seven cargo vessels taken over received 'S.A.' prefixes and all remained with the fleet until 1977, with the exception of S.A.ORANJELAND (wrecked in August 1974) and the S.A.WALVIS BAY (sold in 1975). Later in the year, orders were placed for the world's two most powerful deepsea salvage tugs, and for 5 pollution control vessels.

The success of the first bulk carrier led to further orders for similar sized vessels. The S.A.SUKUMBI was delivered in November 1973, followed by the S.A.SKUKUZA in December 1974 and S.A.SABIE in June 1976. Two additional bulkers were ordered in 1977, named....

VENTURE and VICTORY when delivered in April and October 1978, the two vessels cost Rand 20m.

The bulk export of coal, iron ore and manganese ore also required larger bulk carriers resulting in the introduction of the 50% owned 158,000 dwt bulk/oil carrier VANGUARD and the 60% owned 170,000 dwt bulker SISHEN. During the latter part of 1977 the SISHEN was placed on a 10 year contract to carry iron ore from Saldanha Bay to Japan, and a similar contract in respect of VANGUARD was entered into in April 1978.

The first of the two salvage tugs S.A. WOLRAAD WOLTEMADE was delivered by the lead yard of Robb Caledon on 23 April 1976 and was immediately chartered to the Dept. of Transport. Claimed to be the world's most powerful, fastest and biggest deepsea salvage tugs, the second sistership - named S.A. JOHN ROSS - was delivered two months late in December 1976 by James Brown and Hamer of Durban.

The feasibility of containerisation was first considered in 1968/9, but it was not until March 1974 that a decision was made to containerise the first of the Cape routes. Within 4 months of the announcement by the Europe/South & South East Africa Conference that the Mediterranean and Northern Europe routes were to be converted, Safmarine ordered a cellular vessel from Italcantieri SpA, followed only two months later by orders for 4 larger vessels to be built by a French consortium. An interim container service to Northern Europe commenced using the jumboised cargo liners, the full service commencing in July 1977 following the delivery of the smaller Italian-built S.A. LANGEBERG. The four French-built vessels were delivered between December 1977 and February 1979, being named S.A. HELDERBERG, S.A. SEDERBERG, S.A. WATERBERG and finally S.A. WINTERBERG. Further containerisation was instigated in 1980 with plans for the Far East route involving Safmarine in one of four orders for 1600 teu cellular vessels, together with agreement for ownership of a fifth vessel (40%) when required.

In 1979, the Corporation formed 'Universal Reefers' in conjunction with other operators including British & Commonwealth. The reefers had already lost their 'S.A.' prefixes and had been transferred to Bermudian registry under the British flag, but following this new reorganisation they were again renamed. Two further reefers were ordered by 50% owned associated companies in 1978 from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries being named BORA UNIVERSAL and SCIROCCO UNIVERSAL when delivered in June and September 1979.

Up until November 1979 the Corporation had been controlled by the Industrial Development Corp. of South Africa as the major shareholder of Drommedaris Holdings (Pte.) Ltd, but at this time the authorised share capital was increased three-fold and Drommedaris Holdings ceased being the holding Company.

From small beginnings the Corporation has grown to the point, when in 1980 it was able to announce that at last it had achieved 40% of liner trades from South Africa in line with the UNCTAD code, and that progress was rapidly being made towards a similar figure in the bulk trades.

#### BRIEF FLEET LIST

MORGENSTER/SOUTH AFRICAN VENTURE/S.A. VENTURE (47-69) ex Westerly Victory-47  
 VERGELEGEN/SOUTH AFRICAN VICTORY/S.A. VICTORY (47-69) ex Westbrook Victory-47  
 CONSTANTIA/SOUTH AFRICAN VANGUARD/S.A. VANGUARD (47-69) ex New Bern Victory-47  
 1944/5 Bethlehem Fairfield 7607g/10750d 455' x 62' ST 16 knots  
 SOUTH AFRICAN MERCHANT/S.A. MERCHANT (55-76)  
 SOUTH AFRICAN PIONEER/S.A. PIONEER (57-72) ex Sira-57  
 SOUTH AFRICAN TRADER/S.A. TRADER (58-72) ex Sjoa-58  
 SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSPORTER/S.A. TRANSPORTER (58-72) ex Simoa-58  
 1953-5 Fairfield SB & E. 9518g/12250d 491' x 63' ST 16 knots  
 SOUTH AFRICAN FARMER (61-62) ex Grysbok-61, ex Umgazi-60, ex Lanarkshire-59  
 1940 Greenock Dyd 8181g/9830d 506' x 65' 2ST.

SAFMARINE - fleet list continued.....

SOUTH AFRICAN FINANCIER (61-62) ex Gemsbok-61, ex Umgeni-60, ex Clan Macrae-59, ex Empire Might-46; 1942 Greenock Dyd 9221g/10145d 488' x 63' ST

SOUTH AFRICAN SEAFARER/S.A. SEAFARER (61-66) ex Steenbok-61, ex Clan Shaw-60  
SOUTH AFRICAN STATESMAN/S.A. STATESMAN (61-72) ex Bosbok-61, ex Clan Sinclair-60  
1950 Greenock Dyd 8400g/11000d 512' x 66' ST 17 knots

SOUTH AFRICAN SCULPTOR (61-62) ex Clan Stewart-61  
SOUTH AFRICAN SCIENTIST (61-62) ex Clan Ross-61  
1954/6 Greenock Dyd 8189g/11070d 502' x 66' ST 16 knots

SOUTH AFRICAN SHIPPER/S.A. SHIPPER (61-75) ex Rooibok-61, ex Umzinto-60, ex Clan Robertson-59; 1954 Greenock Dyd 9511g/10818d 503' x 67' ST 17 knots

LANGKLOOF/S.A. LANGKLOOF/LANGKLOOF/MONSONE UNIVERSAL (63- )  
S.A. HEXRIVIER/HEXRIVIER/MISTRAL UNIVERSAL (67- )  
S.A. ZEDEDIELA/ZEDEDEIELA/MELTEM UNIVERSAL (68- )  
1963/7/8 Verolme Schps 6907g/10520d 159m x 21m M 17knots reefer

LETABA/S.A. LETABA/LETABA/PASSAT UNIVERSAL (63- )  
DRAKENSTEIN/S.A. DRAKENSTEIN/DRAKENSTEIN/PAMPERO UNIVERSAL (63-80)  
TZANEEN/S.A. TZANEEN/TZANEEN/S.A. TZANEEN/TZANEEN/PAPAGAYO UNIVERSAL (64- )  
1963/4 Greenock Dyd 6837g/10384d 159m x 21m M 17 knots reefer

SAFDAN HELENE (64-68) ex Olivia Maersk-64  
SAFDAN YVONNE (64-67) ex Brigit Maersk-64 ) -len/deepened, conv from tankers.  
1954 Odense Staalskibs 15860g/24400d 574' x 82' M ore carrier

SUGELA/S.A. SUGELA (65- )  
1965 Fujinagata SB 16405g/24365d 178m x 23m M 15knots bulker

S.A. ALPHEN (66- )  
S.A. HUGUENOT (66- )  
S.A. CONSTANTIA (68- ) all lengthened 1974/5 to 192m  
S.A. MORGENSTER (69- ) tonnages now 12250g/15400d  
S.A. VERGELEGEN (69- )  
1966-9 Fujinagata SB/Mitsui 10580g/13400d 168m x 23m M 20 knots

S.A. VAN DER STEL (66- )  
S.A. WELTEVREDEN/SAFOCEAN WELTEVREDEN (66- ) all lengthened 1974/5 as above  
S.A. NEDERBURG/SAFOCEAN NEDERBURG\* (67- )  
1966/7 Verolme Schps (Cork\*) 9530g/12700d 168m x 23m M 20knots

KULAND (1967-75) ex Otina-67  
BURLAND (69-75) ex Oscilla-69  
1962/3 Cammell Laird 32129g/52300d 748' x 103' ST 16 knots tanker

THORLAND (67-70) ex Mobil Vanguard-67  
1963 Bremer Vulkan 31275g/50230d 735' x 104' ST 16 knots tanker

MARLAND (67-75) ex Bideford-67  
1958 Kockums M/V 23065g/41240d 700' x 97' ST 15 knots tanker

KULU (1971-79)  
GONDWANA (72-79)  
1971/2 I.H.I., Kure 103291g/218290d 1060' x 158' ST 16 knots tanker

SINDE (1973)  
1973 I.H.I., Kure 125421g/271686d 1106' x 179' ST 15 knots tanker

S.A. KOMATILAND (1973-77) ex Komatiland-73, ex Geestemunde-71  
S.A. KUNENELAND (1973-77) ex Kuneneland-73 ex Cuxhaven-71  
1956/7 Nordseewerke, Emden 6507g/9845d 535' x 63' M

S.A. KAAPLAND (1973-78) ex Kaapland 73 ) len 1970 to 527', 9771grt  
S.A. KRUGERLAND (73-78) ex Krugerland 73  
1960/2 Flensburger Schiffs. 6203g/ - d 487' x 64' M 18 knots





IN 1930 the United Fruit Company of New York undertook a building programme to replace their ageing fleet of passenger ships, utilising the mail subsidy of the Jones-White Act of 1928 - an Act to encourage the building of American ships by American owners, in American yards.

THE SIX MAIL SHIPS  
of the  
GREAT WHITE FLEET

Plans were made to build six refrigerated combination cargo-passenger ships at an estimated cost of just over \$ 21m, about 75% of which would be loaned by the U.S. Government, committing the ships to carry the mail over routes specified by the Government - hence the company's designation of the class as "The Mail Ships". Newport News Shipbuilding Company of Virginia won the contract to build three of them and Bethlehem Steel Company at their Quincy, Mass., yard, the other three. All six were launched in 1931, with delivery promised for 1932. The three Newport News ships - Segoria, Talamanca and Chiriqui were the first to be launched. The Segoria was delayed owing to a severe fire while building and, on delivery, her name was changed to Peten. The Bethlehem ships were Antigua, Quirigua and Veragua.

The Talamanca, named after a range of mountains in Costa Rica, was sponsored by Mrs Herbert Hoover, wife of the 31st President of the U.S.A. The other five were named after Central American banana producing or historic (Mayan) sites. Due to prohibition, champagne at the launching was 'out', and the ships were christened with water brought from the location of their name site - Talamanca from a river in Costa Rica. The passenger accommodation for 100 first class was luxurious, and each vessel had a permanent swimming pool - not so common in the 1930s as today.

They were fitted with the latest in banana-carrying and general cargo equipment and their subsidy entailed their construction to United States Naval requirements for emergencies - which occurred only too soon.

They were twin screw steam turbo-electric propelled, with a cruising speed of 17½ knots. Each 415 ft in length and 60 feet wide, gross tonnage 7,000 was approximated with refrigerated space for 50,000 bunches of bananas.

The Newport News ships were originally scheduled for the San Francisco-Central America-West Indies run, but Segovia's delay entailed a revision of this. Consequently Talamanca, Antigua (the first Bethlehem delivery) and Chiriqui (the latter completion expedited due to the other ship's fire) went West, whilst Quirigua and Veragua started the New York-Havana-Cristóbal-Costa Rica run, being jointed by Peten in 1933. All of them were immediate successes - excellent banana carriers and very popular passenger ships, as well as being generally efficient cargo carriers.

In 1937, the three ships on the West coast run were withdrawn from that service, the Government loan having been repaid, and the mail contracts were not renewed by the company in order to have a free hand in their employment. This called for the six to handle both the New York-Colombia and New York-Havana, Costa Rica runs, the ships alternating each voyage - not popular with their crews.

In January 1935 the Peten carried out a spectacular rescue when the Ward Line's Havana ran aground on Matanilla Reef of Little Bahama Bank in Florida Straits. In spite of heavy seas, Peten's lifeboats rescued all passengers and crew from the wreck.

They had hardly settled in to their routine when a dreaded Banana disease struck a death blow to the Limon Division of Costa Rica, and production came to a halt. Jamaican plantations had already succumbed to this so-called Panama disease. This disrupted the schedule as ships had to be diverted to other ports. It then became expedient to divert the Santo Manta (Colombia) crop to Europe, and Puerto Barrios (Guatemala) and Puerto Cortes (Colombia) became the major loading ports for the six, now operating out of New Orleans as well as New York. In the late 1930s, the Peten

THE SIX MAIL SHIPS continued:

was chartered to the Colombian Line and renamed Jamaica. In 1938, Veragua rescued all hands in a 'lusty northeaster' with 'raging seas' from the wrecked and sinking Norwegian Newsome (A/S Frugfart, 1924/1605g) on charter to United Fruit, from a reef off Nicaragua.

With the onset of war in Europe, the six mail ships were called in by the US Navy as Fleet Supply ships - five as naval-manned, while Antigua remained civilian under the direction of the War Shipping Administration as a Military Supply Ship. The Chiriqui and Quirigua were commissioned in the U.S. Navy on 14 June 1941, six months before the USA entered the war. The Chiriqui became USS Tarazeo (AF 13) and Quiragua the USS Mizar (AF 12). The other three were commissioned after war was declared - Talamanca (AF 15) whose name was not changed, Veragua (AF 21) which became Merak on 8 May 1942 at Galveston and Jamaica on 28 May 1942 as USS Ariel (AF 22). All passenger accommodation was removed - swimming pools became cargo hatches, bunks for extra personnel were fitted in accommodation and all wooden doors replaced by steel. Each ship could then take 400 troops, as well as 90 other passengers, and a ship's company of 240 officers and men. Guns, etc, were mounted on all.

The Tarazeo served the whole time in Atlantic-Mediterranean waters in all the invasions and routine trips (Iceland etc) and the Normandy invasion. The Mizar was at first in the Atlantic and then in all Pacific war theatres. The Talamanca spent the whole war in the Pacific, docking at Auckland in March 1945 as her port propeller was cracked. She returned to the USA after an absence of 35 months. She had become very well known in Auckland. In late October 1945, after further Pacific service, she sailed for Puerto Armuelles, Panama to load bananas for New Orleans, where she decommissioned, after 250,000 miles on naval war service, earning the commendation "Well done". The Merak served in the West Indies, Atlantic and Mediterranean. The Ariel had similar service and was honoured whilst in Portland (Dorset) by a visit from King George VI. Antigua, as a civilian supply ship served in the Pacific. She had one extensive collision near Pearl Harbor - both ships (the other the Liberty E.A. Christenson) blacked out. She returned to her owners in March 1947.

When peace came, the six resumed their passenger service - the only passenger-carrying United Fruit ships - after reconditioning. However, in 1952, air competition and ever soaring operating costs, caused the demise of the passenger trade, except for the New Orleans-West Indies-Central America trade employing the Chiriqui and Jamaica but in 1957 these also stopped passenger carrying and were laid up. Thus ended the United Fruit Co's fifty years of passenger carrying. The first four were stripped of their passenger accommodation, superstructures were cut down etc and with a maximum of 12 passengers in each, they sailed in general/banana trade out of New York. The two withdrawn in 1957, Chiriqui and Jamaica, were sold to Union Handels, a German firm who also cut them down and made extensive alterations. The Chiriqui became Blexen, Jamaica the Blumental. Another three were sold in 1958 to Elders & Fyffes, their names becoming Samala (Quirigua), Sinaloa (Veragua) and Sulaco (Talamanca). The Antigua went to Salen, Sweden as the Tortuga.

For the next six years the three Elders & Fyffes ships sailed in the banana trade from Fernando Po, the Cameroons and Jamaica to the United Kingdom.

Finally, in 1964, the Samala was sold to Japan for breaking up, the Sinaloa and Sulaco being scrapped in Belgium. The Tortuga, like the Sinaloa and Sulaco was scrapped at Bruges in the same year and the two Germans in December 1969 at Kaohsiung.

So ended the lives of a very notable and handsome sextet of ships.

Erratum: On the front cover of Black Jack No 38 (Spring, 1981) there appeared a drawing by Eric Law of the Elders & Fyffes ship Sulaco (ex Talamanca) built at Newport News in 1931. However, the notes on page 5 of the same issue refer to the previous Elders & Fyffe's Sulaco, built by Cammell Laird, 1926 and lost in 1940 and not to the ship on the front cover as stated.

## INTERESTING OLDIES

by Frank Phillips

AMAZON - Sometime ago I happened to see Arthur Lowe on 'Nationwide' and he expressed anxiety over his yacht which had sailed from Cowes during bad weather and only arrived at Poole after a hazardous voyage.

I remembered that 'Captain Mannering' had used his yacht as living quarters whilst playing at Poole the previous year, so I thought I had better go and see what kind of a ship he owned - expecting it to be an enormous, luxurious 'gin-palace' type of affair.

I was greatly surprised and excited, therefore, to see this lovely old-lady lying alongside the quay as soon as I arrived, in all her slightly faded glory - a counter stern, two robust and quite tall wooden masts, a 'woodbine' funnel and forward, a decorated out-water bow and long tapering bowsprit - a lovely reminder of the era of elegance that seems to have been lost to us these days.

I got the camera out and heard some workman say to me 'Do you know who owns her?' to which I replied indignantly - 'Stupid boy - of course I do!' Later on she moved off the quay to take a turn around Brownsea Island, so I was able to photograph her on the move - away from tiresome background.

Her details are as follows:-

S.Y. AMAZON port of registry - London  
 built 1885 by Day, Summers, Southampton  
 53.9 tons 91.2 x 15.1 x 9.1 feet draught  
 ex-Armoricain - converted to motor in 1958  
 Previous owner - Randle F W Holme of London  
 The yacht register for 1959 says she was built by  
 T Chamberlayne.

(Chamberlayne was another shipbuilder in Northam - he may well have built the hull the machinery being from Day Summers -Ed)

SOUTHERN CROSS - It was in September 1977 that this foreign bird was first seen in the skies over the Solent and on landing on the water it was seen to be a flying boat which had come all the way from the Virgin Islands to give local people trips around the Needles and Isle of Wight and 'back in time for tea' - so to speak.

Her owner and Captain was a Mr Blair and she was one of the very few surviving flying boats of the Sunderland or Sandringham class in the World.

Unfortunately Captain Blair was killed in a flying accident in the following year, but preservation enthusiasts took over and this 'ship' appeared at Calshot again in April of this year and this time she was pulled out of the water for inspection and maintenance and could be seen over at weekends for the price of £1 - 50p for children.

Her history is as follows - she was built at Rochester, Kent by Shorts in 1943 as a wartime Sunderland flying boat and served at Wiggs Bay in Scotland on reconnaissance and anti-submarine patrols.

At the end of the war she was converted to a 42 passenger Sandringham Mark IV - the civilian counterpart of the Sunderland - and was then flown to New Zealand in 1954 and for the next 20 years was used commercially on a service between Sydney and the Lord Howe Islands and later around the Virgin Islands in the Pacific.

She is presently owned by a consortium headed by a Mr Peter Bolton and they are hoping to get her flying again but she is finally destined for a museum.

Not as old as the Amazon but still 38 years old!

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 EXCALIBUR VIII - If you had been at Calshot on 21 May last you would have seen a second Sandringham flying boat come out of the murky skies, circle over Southampton before returning to Calshot and touching down at precisely 14.30 hours.

This is the second of the flying boats owned by the late Captain Blair, which after his death became neglected for a while, and was then bought by Sir Edward Hulton who is alleged to have spent £70,000 on her - she is in better shape than Southern Cross.

She was built by Shorts of Belfast in 1944 and served with the RAF Coastal Command for 21 years including anti-submarine spotting during the last war. She then went to Australia, the Antilles and finally the Virgin Islands, before making her homeward trip via the Bahamas, Newfoundland, the Azores and Ireland and she has now proceeded to Marseilles where she is to be used on pleasure trips around the Meditteranean.

So after a period of many years we had two flying boats at Calshot at the same time!

Incidentally, it is no coincidence of course, but the nearest pub is - yes you guessed it - the 'Flying Boat'.

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 SARINA - - I first saw this magnificent two-funnelled, two-masted yacht when I was travelling the south coast of France with my daughter in late May 1977.

It was at Cap d'Antibes that we spotted her quite a long way off and amongst a welter of other yacht masts, but by weaving and turning along the various marina quays we at last got alongside her - and what a sight for sore eyes she made. I was thrilled to pieces at such a bonus which I thought I would never stumble across again, but to my utter surprise and delight she turned up in the Empress Dock, Southampton in May/June of this year. ,

She was in immaculate condition, clean white hull, polished handrails and her own gangway with a forbidding rope across the end marked 'Private'

Various members of the crew could be seen making their way back from the Southampton markets with bags full of 'goodies' - all wearing smart navy blue caps, jackets and trousers and T-shirts with the word 'Sarina' in bold letters right across their chests.

Lloyds Register of Yachts tells us that she was built - as a motor ship - in 1929 by Friederick Krupp of Germaniawerft at Kiel for Mr Max C Fleischmann of New York, USA. She later became the property of the Guinness Family, was conscripted by the US Navy in 1941 and converted to a patrol ship by P Y Argus of California for service in WW2, and is now owned by a Mr Stigwood of Australia who is an impressario and an agent for Elton John's theatrical career.

Further details are set out below:-

Built 1929 as Haida - a steel, twin-screw ship of 298 gross tons.

Consecutive No 2762 Official No 228794 Signal letters WKDS

218ft Oins x 30ft Oins x 17ft 3 ins draught.

2 x 6-cyl oil engines supplied by Germaniawerft in 1928

Designed by Messrs Cox and Stevens

Registered at Gibraltar and has R H A D C on her counter stern which I am told stands for Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club.

Passenger liners are again in the news. In May we were visited by the Russian Estonia (5035g 1960) and Fred Olsen's Venus (9499g 1966) which also cruises under the name of Black Prince. The most interesting vessel was the former American Export cargo-passenger liner Texas Clipper (9644g 1944) ex-Excambion '65 ex-Queens (US Navy) '48 which used the Ocean Terminal for a week in July. Today she is owned by Texas Agriculture & Marine University and carries fee-paying officer cadets who sign on the vessel for a duration of four years. The vessel spends nine months of the year in Galveston and the remaining three months on the high seas.

Fawley Power Station has also seen some shipping. Saint Angus (499g 1980) of J & A Gardner discharged a heavy lift while Condock II (999g 1979) anchored of the station in July. The vessel owned by Bauer & Hauschildt then submerged the cargo section to allow a barge to be discharged with a 473 ton tower onboard. The barge was towed into the power station and the 192 ft long tower discharged. The barge was then taken back aboard Condock II.

The Seal Ro-ro service to Mauritius has introduced three new vessels - Norefjord (14187g 1977) ex-Rheinfels '81 owned by C F Ahrenkeil, Vindafjord (18289g 1979) ex-Bullaren '81 ex-Hoegh Bullaren '79 owned by Transatlantic Red., and Kongfjord (14740g 1977) ex-Essen '81 ex-Rauenfels '80 owned by Hapag-Lloyd.

Thoresens have introduced their Europic Ferry (4770g 1967) on to the Le Havre run.

Neptune Orient Line's Neptune Sardonyx (8920g 1978) ex-Chikas '78 used the Docks for repairs after 'bending' her heavy lift derrick while loading a Ministry of Defence cargo in Cowes Roads. Rafaela (9128g 1960) ex-Martiniquais '79 also used the anchorage for a similar operation in July. She is presently owned by Comp. Nav. Giraf of Panama and was a former Messageries Maritime freighter. Pep Star (499g 1977) owned by Pep Nautica of Denmark used the floating crane to load a tank landing craft (no RPL 11) for Belize.

Bowker and King's latest tanker Brentwood (499g 1981) called in July. Built by A/S Nordsovaer-Ftet in Ringkobing, Denmark the vessel was launched in May 1980.

Two 'out of the ordinary' visitors to the Docks were an oil-drilling ship and a converted T2-tanker:- The American Global Challenger (6281g 1968) owned by Global Marine Inc which is a part of a six nation consortium, called in July at 104 berth. The vessel sailed to the isolated uninhabited island of Rockall (300 miles NW of British Isles) which forms part of the Rockall Plateau and was joined to Greenland until it split away many millions of years ago.

Using the Ocean Terminal in June was USNS Vanguard (1944) ex-Mussel Shoals '65 ex-Mission San Fernando '64. Built as a T2-tanker she was converted in 1965 for the National Aeronautic Space Administration and work included fitting a new midship section, enlarging the aft superstructure and raising the bridge plus the fitting of some 400 tons of electronic equipment. Today the vessel is run by the US Military Sealift Command.

First time callers in the ro-ro field included Mitsui-OSK's Violet (6126g 1976) under the Panamanian flag and Lief Hoegh's Hual Tracer (12783g 1981) under the Liberian flag both with Datsuns. Making her first voyage under a new name in August was Gem Transporter (975g 1969) ex-Bifrost '81 ex-Arktos '74 ex-Niolon '71. The vessel loaded units to be used for a new feeder service in the Arabian Gulf which the ship will perform under the ownership of General Marine Shipping of Sharjah.

The East German flag has kept the drydocks busy during June and July with the Georg Weerth (5561g 1967) ex-Padau '74 and Ferdinand Freiligrath (5587g 1967) ex-Parma II '74 ex-Parma '73 both reefer vessels. Other vessels flying the same flag included Ralswick (299g 1966) and Lietzow (299g 1966) with timber and in August Tessin (494g 1972) with containers.

Using the Philippine service in July was Nasipit Bay (9611g 1971) ex-Corregidor '81 ex-Ville Desete '78 and Puerto Princesa (10542g 1970) ex-Ville de Rotterdam '79 in August, while on the second-hand vehicle trade to Colombo was Aegis Spirit (9078g 1970) owned by Aegis Shipping of Greece.

Following a fire British Rail's latest Channel Island ferry Earl Granville (4478g 1973) ex-Viking 4 '80 used Husband's Shipyard for repairs as did Regents Park (1600g 1972). Owned by Turnbull Scott, an explosion occurred in her cargo of coal causing the hatch covers to be ripped off. Another small coaster which used Cowes Roads for repairs was the Panamanian Unity (480g 1952) ex-Lek Unity '80 ex-Argus Progress '78 ex-Benlow Trader '77 ex-Seaforth Trader '75 ex-Capricorn '72 ex-Oliver Van Noort '70 owned by Marine Management Corp.

Using the river berths, coastal traffic included Gallic Wave (1599g 1976), Leslie Gault (1599g 1977) and Mingary (1599g 1973) all managed by Denholms, Amina (2357g 1977) owned by Comp. Vapore Carmen, Almut (421g 1956) ex-Eider Strand '80 ex-Pommern '75 of Brink & Wolfel, Heinz Suhr (499g 1965) ex-Gabriele W '79 ex-Gabriele Wehr '78 owned by H Suhr, Gesinep (425g 1958) ex-Kathe Ahrens owned by E Pohlmann and Greta C (394g 1963) ex-Andacia '76 ex-Volente '75 owned by Carisbrooke Shipping of Cowes.

On the Trio Line service the new Hapag-Lloyd containership Frankfurt Express (58384g 1981) made her first call to the port in July. Other containership news included the introduction of ACL's two newly chartered vessels Atlantic Prospect (5997g 1971) ex-Visurgis '81 owned by Thule Reederei and registered in Austria and Atlantic Prowess (6411g 1972) ex-Lindo '81 owned by D Oltmann and flying the Panamanian flag. Feeder vessels included Vernia (1186g 1970) ex-Rane '80 owned by Red A/B Virginia of Sweden, Caroline Graebe (998g 1969), Gerda Graebe (499g 1972) and Brigitte Graebe (898g 1977) owned by G Graebe of West Germany.

Finally, after transferring their vessels to Felixstowe, Dart Containerline may return to Southampton. Their old vessels Dart America (31096g 1970), Dart Atlantic (31036g 1971) and Dart Canada (26051g 1978) are to be renamed Manchester Challenge, C P Ambassador and Canadian Explorer respectively whilst Dart Europe (30826g 1970) remains unchanged at present. The new vessels some of which have already called at the port are Dart Americana (13813g 1978) ex-Seapac Independence '81, Dart Atlantica (15584g 1979) ex-Seapac Chesapeake '81, Dart Britain (13812g 1979) ex-Seapac Oriskany '81 and Dart Continent (15584g 1979) ex-Seapac Yorktown '81.

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NB 'Black Jack' No 36 was accompanied by a booklet - a history of the White Star Line at Southampton.

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