

# SOUTH WEST SOUNDINGS 93

The Newsletter of the SOUTH WEST MARITIME HISTORY SOCIETY  
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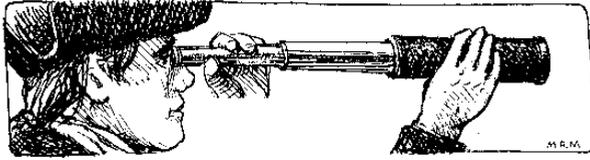
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cover )

**Next copy date: January 31<sup>st</sup> 2014**

## FUTURE MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS



We have a very interesting draft programme for next year, and hope you will be able to support at least some of these events.

5 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Poole or possibly Watchet tbc
10 <sup>th</sup> May	Odin House (Appledore)
7 <sup>th</sup> Jun	AGM (Topsham)
5 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Mount Edgecombe
27 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Brockweir
Oct date tbc	Brixham Trawlers

*(Italics indicate an event of interest but not organised directly by the Society)*

**“Ten Minute talks” at the AGM. The Committee is looking for volunteers to do a ten minute talk to supplement the traditional student talks. Dredge up those tales of your youth, or short bits of research, perhaps pace Helen Doe, you have been down a rabbit hole whilst doing research....**

**Confirmation of events will be published either in the next edition or in calling notices for bookings, which will be sent to members at the appropriate time.**

## EDITORIAL AND MEMBERSHIP

Many reviews have been pushed onto the web for the time being. They will be listed next time for those who only rarely consult our website- but you are missing a good deal, as Dave Hills is now also putting a wider range of news items on the website, and many items miss the *Soundings* press date.

Our Facebook site [www.facebook.com/SWMarHistSoc](http://www.facebook.com/SWMarHistSoc) is open for business, and Sarah Parsons has kindly volunteered to manage it, and already it is a lively place to visit. She welcomes input from you all. Facebook is very much about pictures, and we hope that you will find it worth looking at for pictures and the news snippets brought together from a range of sources. Do you have a favourite shot ? send it in ! You don't need to be signed up to access the main page, and you can access from our website, too.

We have been active in advocacy work, details are given below. We have also made a contribution to interpretation for *Shieldhall* and are considering an interpretation project, "Learning the Ropes", for ketches and pilot cutters etc, for which we would ask for modest HLF funding. If the winds look fair there will be more about this next year. The drafts are on the website and as always, comments are welcome.

We have had ongoing difficulties with our bank, which has taken a great deal of time and stress for Martin and me. Gill also reminds you **if you haven't updated your Standing Order for 2014 please send it to her**. There is also some confusion among members about the difference between standing orders and direct debits. SWMHS subscriptions collected through a Bank are by standing order NOT direct debit. Unlike direct debits, standing orders are controlled by the customer; we have no powers to change these, so if you are not continuing your membership in 2014 you must ask your Bank to cancel your standing order.

We wish you a good festive season and New Year.

**Jonathan and Gillian**



## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### **Joint Meeting of the South West Maritime History Society and the West Wales Maritime Heritage Society on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013**

Twenty six members attended, evenly split between the two societies. The National Waterfront Museum, Swansea, an imposing modern construction of glass and slate linked to an historic waterfront warehouse, hosted the occasion under the leadership of its curator, Dr David Jenkins.

Our first speaker **Toby Jones**, reported on the progress of research and conservation on the Newport Ship. Since its discovery while excavating the foundations for the Newport Riverfront Theatre in 2002, the ship has proved to be the most complete example of a 15th Century clinker built merchant vessel ever found in the United Kingdom. The vessel was probably undergoing a major refit when she fell on her side to be inundated by the following silt laden tides. There were attempts to recover her at the time and the upper sections and rigging were salvaged leaving the lower part of the hull to be preserved in the anoxic river deposits.

The ship was estimated to be 35m long, beam 9m and draft 4m., with a displacement of over 200 tonnes. Apart from a keel of beech, the hull was built entirely of oak. A combination of tree ring analysis and the discovery of small silver coin embedded in the keel show that she was probably launched in 1447 and ended her days in Newport in 1468. Her oak planking has been traced to the Basque region although subsequent repairs are from British timber. The remaining timber has been so well preserved that even the impression left by a clenching nail included the shape of a small star believed to be the nail manufacturer's trademark!

Using the latest technology in laser contact digitising and 3D printing, a 1/10 scale model has been constructed in plastic which will be used as a basis for rebuilding the hull from the original timbers to

form part of a major visitor attraction. Debris recovered from the bilges and surrounding area has yielded large quantities of insect and plant remains making it possible to determine cargoes carried and life on board.

Our second speaker, **Rev. David Reed**, grew up in the North Cornwall port of Padstow and gave an detailed account of his memories and research into the maritime history of the town. This followed the development of Padstow as a successful ship building centre, through the expansion of its harbour with increasing commercial shipping and seasonal fishing, to its eventual decline in the late thirties as ship owners moved to larger ports. The arrival of the railway in 1899 marked the beginning of this decline and David charted the pressures facing the town through the records of the Padstow Harbour Commissioners and the London and South West Railway. His talk, illustrated with photos of the harbour developments and shipping, reflected changes in many of the region's ports with the arrival of the railways.

**Dr David Jenkins'** talk on mid nineteenth century schooner builders on the River Dyfi at Derwenlas was yet a further example of the effect that railways had on maritime history. It started in 1845 when Rowland Evans moved his farming business, including a thriving bark and timber operation, to Derwenlas where he became a significant shareholder in the local shipbuilding. On his death in 1856 the business was taken over by his son John who subsequently established his own small shipyard. The pattern of coastal trade was changing with the advent of the railways and he went on to build larger ships with the arrival of the railway at nearby Machynylleth. His largest was the barque Mary Evans launched in 1867 whose longest voyage was to Valparaiso. Inevitably the extension of rail and the construction of viaducts placed increasing impediments to river navigation and the potential size of ships that could be launched. John Evans would probably have been enterprising enough to overcome such problems but was tragically killed in 1868 when thrown from his horse, startled by a steam train!

After lunch, **Tony Galvin**, gave a detailed account of Tenby luggers and the WWMHS project to restore the last known example. The Tenby lugger was the sailing workhorse of south east Pembrokeshire, reaching its peak in the 1890's. Early photographs of

Tenby show a harbour full of Brixham sailing trawlers and small lug rigged punts built in Appledore. The Tenby lugger was a larger vessel between 19 to 28 feet in length with a unique rig of a large dipping lug mainsail and a mizzen spritsail. The last to be built was the aptly named *Twentieth Century* launched in 1902. All were carvel built. Six or seven survived until 1939 by which time they were mainly used for tourism. In 1997, what is believed to be the last remaining Tenby lugger built in 1897, was located in Glamorganshire. There is strong evidence based in part on the chance finding of an old watercolour, that the vessel was named *Thistle*. This 26 ft carvel built lugger is now undergoing restoration by the WWMHS at their headquarters in Pembroke dock and the society is applying for lottery funding to complete the task.

Our final speaker, **Colin Green**, gave an account of the design and construction of the *Hereford Bull*, a replica Wye trow to represent the county of Hereford in the 2012 Royal Pageant. Colin, author of the definitive book on trows entitled *Severn Traders*(1999) was consultant to the project and, with a committee consisting mainly of retired naval officers, and the craftsmanship of Tommi Nielsen shipwrights of Gloucester, delivered the vessel in time to represent the sponsors in the parade. The design of the 36 ft long replica was based on a wreck at Lydney and construction was complicated by the transition from a carvel built lower section to the upper more flexible clenched planking. Motive power during the parade was provided by a crew eight rowers although the design includes a single square sail and outboard if needed! The *Hereford Bull* continues to represent the county although moving her between locations is proving to be a difficult and expensive operation.

Speakers and organisers were thanked for making the meeting a great success and it was agreed that the Waterfront Museum was an ideal central venue for similar occasions in the future. Members had the opportunity of viewing the museum before departure.

**Ray Fordham**

## **Cornwall Maritime History Conference NMM Cornwall 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013**

This conference is organised under the auspices of the Museum, with many Society members involved in organising, speaking and attending. It did indeed have a strongly Cornish flavour, and some 40 attended.

The first speaker was Jo Esra, on the impact of Barbary pirates, especially on fishing, in the period up to the Civil war. The pirates were a grim addition to the natural hazards, and were not contained till the Commonwealth Navy became more effective.

Loveday Jenkins gave us an account of James Trevenen, who had a naval education, as this began to develop, and told of his early experiences in Cook's third voyage. He then had further adventures in the Navy, becoming close to Capt. King and touring Europe with him. He eventually joined the Russian Navy of Catherine the Great, and served with distinction till killed at the battle of Viborg. His Scottish wife returned to Helston and the family were much involved in educational improvement.

Adrian Webb spoke of Capt. Greenville Collins who prepared the first complete hydrographic survey of UK waters in the 1680's, and the first extensive pilot. Adrian had researched his origins and thought he had traced him to Cornwall- but it was all a tease and his birthplace had finally been tracked down to Devon.

Off the usual track, Megan Westley told us about the plant hunters whose efforts led to the many exotic gardens of Cornwall. The maritime connections of Falmouth in particular, were vital, both for transport of seeds and live plants, and the wealth that sustained the passion for "Empire" gardens amongst the successful. The gardens have survived rather better than the trade that created them.

On a more classic research theme, Jonathan Griffin gave us details of the now computerised Fox registers, which are available for most years 1880 to 1996. Previous selective work on them gave a broad picture of trends, the decline of sail and rise of steam, and the reduction in "for orders" as radio became universal, but these are now clearer.

It is an ongoing project , and researchers are welcome to make use of this as a resource.

I handed over at lunchtime to Mike Bender, whose possibly windblown thoughts follow. I would also record thanks to the main organisers Helen Doe and Tony Pawlyn, and the Museum for hosting this excellent event which also offers good chances of meeting fellow enthusiasts. Note also that final write ups of many topics will appear in *Troze* the Museum's online journal, in due course.

### **Floating Around Falmouth and Cornwall Maritime History**

1/11/2014. To Falmouth for what I thought was the launch of the *Maritime History of Cornwall*. To the Chain Locker for a pre-prandial pint, overheard a bunch of men at the next table discussing a 85' carbonfibre catamaran that is being built locally. Thence to a fish and chip shop on the first floor, looking out towards St Mawes. The fish is apparently sustainably caught, and the waiter keeps telling me that I can be 'guilt free', which isn't something I've worried about when eating fish and chips before.

2/11. I'm actually attending the bi-annual Cornish Maritime Conference (actually the first for three years). Find the Editor and we agree I'll write up the afternoon session, so here goes.

Helen Doe reported a bit of what she called 'rabbit hole research'; diving into a quite unrelated hole whilst digging around. In this case it was how Lord Morris transported three MGs to race in the Mille Miglia of 1933 in a clay carrier from Fowey to Genoa. Two of the cars did well, despite a terrible rush to produce them and deliver them to Italy on time. Harry Bennett gave us the lowdown on the six Cornish airfields and their vital role in World War Two making it difficult for the U-boats to get back to their Biscay ports. I once stumbled across Davidstow airfield after ascending Rough Tor and Brown Willy, so it was interesting to have these airstrips placed in context.

Cathryn Pearce looked at whether there were Cornish wreckers, and concluded that this was a notion caused by various historical events – wrecks, salvage, ghost stories etc. – being put into a coherent narrative.

The final presentation was by the editors of *The Maritime History of Cornwall*. After the successful launch of *The Maritime History of Devon* in two volumes in 1992 and 1994, in 1999, Stephen Fisher started floating the idea of a Cornish equivalent. But by 2002, he was dead. The idea was resurrected in 2004 by the present editorial team of Helen Doe, Alston Kennerley and Philip Payton and they recruited some 25 authors. I was not quite clear as to why ten years passed, but, as Helen went over the various chapters, with their greater emphasis on mercantile rather than Royal naval matters, she mentioned that a number of the authors had died. There was now a further delay with the editor being ill, and photographs still to reach the desired quality. No publication date has yet been finalised.

As I drove back, I was glad I had gone. The Falmouth Maritime is the nearest leisure sailing comes to having a home; the displays really are much improved and are really beautifully laid out, so, rare for a British museum, are quite aesthetic; and for the excellent presentation about the prestigious development of horticulture around Falmouth, by Megan Westley, which made sense of the large number of exotic gardens in the area – think of all those varieties of rhododendrons at Trellisick – and likewise learnt about the Cornish airfields; but I felt very gloomy about the Maritime History project. Some half-forgotten lines from Willy boy came to mind and I looked them up when I got home: ‘There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads to fortune;/Omitted, all the voyage of their life/ Is bound in shallows and in miseries’. It’s from *Julius Caesar*. Some, if not most, of those chapters must be getting on for a dozen years old. Times move on. New information surfaces, for example from inquisitive postgraduate students. Ways of understanding the raw data of history changes; and the interest in maritime history has lessened noticeably in that time. I wish them well after all their work.

**Mike Bender**

## ARTICLES

### *City of Adelaide - An Historic Ship with Nine Lives!*

One of Britain's most significant historic ships slipped quietly out of sight down the River Thames on the evening of October 20<sup>th</sup> –destined to begin a new life in South Australia.

*The City of Adelaide*, the world's oldest surviving clipper ship and five years older than the famous *Cutty Sark*, had been brought on a barge from Scotland to Greenwich for a re-naming ceremony by the Duke of Edinburgh two days earlier. I was fortunate to attend this event, and hope that the following short account will be of interest.

To understand the *City of Adelaide*'s significance, a few points from her extraordinary history. She was built in Sunderland in 1864 for Devitt and Moore especially to serve their trade with South Australia. She carried emigrants from Cornwall, Devon, Ireland even Germany to that colony, and her best time for the voyage from Plymouth to Adelaide was 65 days. In return she carried wool, wheat, copper ore and copper ingots.

Today many thousands of people in South Australia can trace their forebears to having arrived on this ship. Her first class cabins were considered among the finest in the sailing ship era.

With growing competition from steam ships, her days on the South Australia run came to an end in 1886, and for two years she carried coal from the North east of England to Dover. For another five years she was in the timber trade between North America and Britain. Then in 1893 she was bought by the City of Southampton to act as a floating isolation hospital, and remained there all through the Great War.

In 1923 she began a new life as a training headquarters for the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in Glasgow after first being prepared for this role at a yard in Irvine. On May 16 1923 the Western Morning News reported she had been re-named HMS *Carrick*, and recalled that in her day she had been a favourite passenger carrier and made some fine passages.

She served the RNVR in the years before and during World War 2 but after the war the Admiralty decided to transfer her ownership to private hands – RNVR Club Scotland Ltd and she lost her HMS prefix. In 1989 the ship was flooded after the hull became wedged under a jetty at an exceptionally low tide. She was pumped out but her ownership passed to a new trust which hoped to restore her to her previous condition. Two years later the ship sank again, and her recovery was a big operation resulting in her transfer to the Scottish Maritime Museum at Irvine.

The Museum had no funds to do the necessary restoration, but somehow the authorities who argued for her disposal lacked the powers to achieve this, and those who argued for some kind of preservation won the arguments. The ship was even classified as a listed building at one stage to prevent her destruction. In September 2001 the Duke of Edinburgh attended a conference in Glasgow to discuss the future of the clipper, and it was agreed that she should revert to her old name of “*City of Adelaide*”, and drop “*Carrick*”.

After another 10 years of uncertainty during which time Sunderland tried to muster enough support to move her to her birth place, eventually a consortium from South Australia, including naval architects, engineers and canny businessmen, persuaded the Scottish government they could and would move her to Adelaide, and work began to achieve this move. There is not space to detail all their moves, which included fabricating a special steel cradle in Adelaide, fitting it under the ship in Irvine, lifting her on to a barge and arranging for the Dutch tug “*Pioneer*” to tow her south between the 2013 autumnal gales .

It was a heartening sight to see “*City of Adelaide*” “on this barge moored just off the water-gate at the Old Royal Naval College, just a few hundred yards from her sister clipper ship. Ceremonies involving the naming of ships are based on ancient tradition. According to legend every vessel is recorded by name in the Ledger of the Deep and is known personally to Neptune. To change the name of the ship required the Australian committee to destroy the old name – which Andrew Chapman, in Victorian ship’s master’s uniform, duly did by burning a piece of paper inscribed “*Carrick*” and casting the ashes into the Thames. He then invited the Duke of Edinburgh to re-name the ship which the Duke did in a loud, clear voice, adding: “I hope she has a long and successful career in her re-incarnation.”

Chapman then appeased the four winds by casting some bubbly to the North, East, South and West, managing to avoid the spectators. The Duke also unveiled a memorial plaque intended for the ship in South Australia, and “*Cutty Sark*” representatives presented a Red Ensign with a motif designed to indicate a Historic Vessel.

It was time to move now to St Mary’s undercroft to drink the ship’s health in Australian wine and beer, and the Duke made his way round the room talking to everyone he met.

Two days later the Dutch tug towed the loaded barge across to Ostend where “*City of Adelaide*” is being made ready for her last voyage as deck cargo on a heavy-lift ship to take her to Adelaide.

## **Michael Pentreath**

### ***Barnabas Goes to St Ives 6-8 September 2013***

“Boats in the Bay” came around again this year – a prelude to the St. Ives Festival and arranged by the Jumbo Association to get interest in their organisations and traditional boats in general. It always occurs in the early weeks of September. In spite of some worrying forecasts of heavy rain and strong winds, we decided to give it a go.

With a good strong crew we set off from Mousehole at 0800. The start of the trip was light northwesterlies so we motored all the coast with just a mizzen set. We slipped inside the Runnelstone reef and between the Longships and Lands End. Heading across Sennen Bay the breeze got up lightly from the North West and we hoisted the fore lug and motor sailed towards the Brisons. All was going fine until just off the Brisons the engine failed. Although there was a light wind and a lumpy sea we were able to make some offing while we resolved the engine problem. We knew that Peter Morgan was coming up behind us in the *Cecelia Elizabeth* and contacted him. His 20 foot lugger has a powerful engine and we were soon going along under tow. In the meanwhile we were pulling apart the fuel system. The problem seems to have been blocked pipes and filters as an aftermath of the Paimpol problem. Having swallowed sufficient quantities of diesel and lathered ourselves in the stuff we managed to resolve the problem and simultaneously a fresh

breeze came up and we romped along the coast to St. Ives – a very fine sail.

The Jumbo Association put on a barbecue and provided financial encouragement to go the Castle Inn! Later that evening with the tide having gone out we were able to walk across the sand to *Barnabas* and climb aboard. With the boat lying solidly on her legs, to which we had added large pads to prevent them sinking in the sand, we lay comfortably through the night. At around four in the morning we were awakened for a while as the keel bumped on the sand as she came afloat. In order not to be trapped by the falling tide we had to make the decision to leave the sheltered mooring by 0900 . We went to a mooring off Porthminster Beach which was not the most comfortable but sufficient to get some breakfast inside. At 1030 we were off sailing in the bay. The nasty joggle went down and with a fresh westerly we had some excellent sailing. In the afternoon at low water we were able to pick up some more crew by dinghy and in the late afternoon were joined by the two St. Ives Jumbos and some other craft. Unfortunately we were the only big lugger, but it must have all made a great spectacle for those watching from the shore. We came into the harbour again for a further round of festivities. Much was going on in the harbour, including a swimming race and a sculling race using Johnny Nance's built punts. Awards were made by the Mayor in which BARNABAS received a nice token from Seaware. Once again the crew walked to the boat and slept aboard.

Sunday morning we once again had to get out of the harbour before the tide left us and at 0900, after taking aboard a few provisions, including croissants, pain au chocolat and beer. The weather looked a bit bleak and rainy and although there was a fresh sailing breeze it was from the southwest and in the wrong direction for the first part of the trip. *Barnabas* leaped around a bit but with some help from the engine made it down to the Brisons and better sailing conditions by 1300. From there it was better sailing conditions. Although the tide was against us passing inside the Longships and the Runnelstone we plugged along well and were able to admire the magnificent cliff scenery. Once off Porthcurno we were able to kill the engine and slide along peacefully with a gentle westerly behind us. Arrived off Mousehole at .

**Adam Kerr   Cornish Maritime Trust**

### *Perhaps the Worst Diver in the RN . . . .*

In October 1959, as a very junior Lieutenant in a destroyer undergoing a tedious refit in Chatham, I very rashly accepted a suggestion from our TAS Officer to qualify as a Shallow Water Diver. “It will be a bit of an adventure – and will make you fit” he said rather ominously. A week later, together with about 10 young ratings, I reported to two hard-faced Petty Officers who were to be my instructors for the fortnight’s course.

The diving equipment was little changed from 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, consisting of a clammy ‘dry’ rubber suit, which had to be entered through the neck-hole (a spectacularly undignified manoeuvre) with a close-fitting rubber balaclava, clipped to the suit. The breathing system consisted of an artificial ‘lung’ on the chest which was fed oxygen via a ‘reducing flow valve’, thence to the mouthpiece via a canister filled with soda lime to absorb exhaled carbon dioxide. As the breathing gas was still pure oxygen (from its ‘frogman’ pedigree), the diving depth was limited to 32 feet, below which one could suffer oxygen poisoning (“You go raving mad and tear off your mouthpiece”). You adjusted the oxygen valve before each dive with a flow meter to support normal exertion – but in case of breathlessness you could ‘guff up’ by cracking open a small by-pass valve that dramatically fed pressurised oxygen directly into the lung. Perhaps the worst attribute of all this equipment was that it had to be taken apart, refilled and reset between each dive – and if the bits weren’t reassembled with great care the results could be dire.

The course was ghastly! We spent our first day suited but without breathing equipment, jumping into a disgusting dock and swimming to a caisson, running inelegantly along it in flippers, then jumping back into the water to repeat the operation. It was at this point that I realised that I was spectacularly less fit than the remainder of the pupils, who appeared to have been chosen for magnificent physique (and superb tattoos!). Then came the first real dive and I discovered what I really disliked about diving – ‘dockyard water’. The dock where we trained was built (so I was told) about 1850, and had not been ‘refreshed’ since that time, so the water was filled with a century of detritus, and visibility under-water was less than 6 inches. Finally on hitting the bottom one disappeared into six foot of historic mud. I found the whole experience terrifying, and kept my eyes shut throughout my time under water, but

discovered that I had an ability to avoid unwelcome exertion by lying on the mud (I over-filled my knapsack with compensating lead weights) and waving my safety line around to give an impression of great activity! The sailors, however, had no such problems, and revelled in the course, displaying absolutely no fear, but occasionally a certain lack of common sense (Pupil, coming to the surface – “Chief! Chief! My face-mask keeps letting in water!” Instructor, with great patience – “That, lad, is because you’ve forgotten to put the glass in it”).

Over the fortnight we were taught a number of underwater techniques, learning how to do a ‘finger-tip’ search (useful but disgusting), sawing a chain in half with a hacksaw (hard on the fingers!) and once firing a bolt into a sheet of metal using a magnificently noisy underwater (Costain?) gun. Then came the final exam – and slightly to my surprise I passed, galloping through the written exam with 98% but scraping through the practical with a modest 55%! I received my certificate and returned to the ship as a qualified Shallow Water Diver, to draw my welcome additional 4/- a day for this added responsibility.

I thus became one of about 8 divers within the ship’s crew. The main reason for every ship’s crew to include a complement of divers was so that they could carry out a ‘bottom search’ if there was suspicion that a limpet mine had been attached to the ship. This search technique was named ‘Operation Awkward’, and the normal procedure was to pass chains from either side of the ship under the keel – the divers would then attach heaving lines between the chains and carry out a finger-tip search along these lines. So for the period of the commission of this ship (HMS *Broadsword*), and another destroyer (HMS *Carysfort*) in the Far East I was a member of this rather exclusive group, exercising at least monthly to retain the skills.

Was it an enjoyable activity – frankly, not very! I had imagined in my innocence that naval diving would be like that of Hans & Lotte Hass, who were currently showing on prime time television, effortlessly gliding over coral reefs through fish-filled crystal water.

Unfortunately most naval diving exercises took place in harbour, usually between ship and jetty, under a stream of ‘waste products’ which were spewing from various outlets. To add to this discomfort I once experienced the diver’s dread – a ‘soda cocktail’. Having perhaps failed

to check my assembly – or encountering a leak – I found that water was entering the lung and the soda-lime canister. This caused a dramatic reaction where alkaline foam frothed up the breathing tube. I had the sense (and training) not to breath in, but shot to the surface to eject my mouthpiece, thus avoiding real physical damage – but for the next two weeks I had completely lost my taste and could impress the wardroom with a party trick of munching a lemon!

Finally the second commission came towards its end, and we took the ship back from the Far East to the Mediterranean, stopping for a last exercise with the small Persian Gulf squadron. Our diving officer became enormously excited, as for the first time we were able to exercise ‘Operation Awkward’ in clear water, using underwater lights and a ‘visual search’. That night I suited up in the stifling heat, and waited on deck as a ‘standby diver’. After a very short while one of the divers popped up to the surface, complaining unconvincingly of equipment malfunction, and I was detailed to take his place. Just as I was about to jump in he exclaimed “They are attracted by lights – but don’t worry, they won’t bother you!”

I gave an agonised yelp – but it was too late and I was in the water, 20 feet down, to see to my horror that the water was seething with sea-snakes, many of whom had decided to take an interest in this new interloper. I remembered the ominous advice that ‘They can’t normally bite through a suit – but of course if they do you’re dead!’ , so carried out an extremely swift and desultory ‘search’ and swam to the ship’s motor boat to be picked up. The crew took their time in helping me into the boat, and I asked them waspishly what had caused the delay. “You had a sea snake stuck in your knapsack, and we thought we should wait for it to swim away before we picked you up!”

I never dived again – and I don’t think that the Navy found this a particular loss!

**James Saumarez**

## REVIEWS

*‘Through Albert’s Eyes’- A Bentley-Buckle (Vol. 2 of the British Navy at War & Peace) Editor: Capt. Peter Hore .Whittles Publishing, 2013 – ISBN 978-1-84995-066-4 [152 pages, Hardback, illustrated]  
Price:£16.99p*

Having recorded oral social history, interviewing World War 2 veterans, I was most interested in ‘Through Albert’s Eyes’. Tony Bentley-Buckle’s reminiscences were recorded shortly before he died. Only one third of the text relates to the author’s World War 2 experiences, the rest chronicles his life and career founding shipping companies and sailing in East African coastal and Indian Ocean waters, during the twilight of the British Empire post war.

The narrative is clear and matter of fact. To modern folk his adventures seem to belong to a far bygone age. As a child he was brought up far from his parents, sent to boarding and then public school and World War 2 was his ‘university’. As a teenage midshipman he commanded a German prize. He then became a young beachhead officer, once ordering General Montgomery to stop talking and not to block the beach exit! After commanding small craft in clandestine operations on the shores of occupied Europe he was captured, escaped, and subsequently re-captured. He then went on to help make the famous dummy ‘Albert, RN’ which for a while fooled the guards to cover up POW escapes. At the end of the war he retrained and got his fleet air arm wings, but then he resigned from the navy.

With young friends Bentley-Buckle repaired and sailed the old Plymouth built ketch ‘Orestes’, which had been laid up during the war, to East Africa via the Mediterranean and Suez Canal. (These sort of adventures I have recorded time and time again from veterans of the war. A sort of positive, glad to be alive and free, and a get on with life attitude made for success in many forms post war. )

The final two thirds of the book consists of founding shipping and trading companies in East Africa, flying and sailing, both for business and pleasure, worldwide, and meeting with political leaders and the rich and famous. Finally after living in East Africa, the Seychelles, and then South Africa, Bentley-Buckle 'retired' to the Beaulieu River in England. He still sailed and flew well into his seventies. As the book's cover states his life was out of 'the first Elizabethan age' when anything was considered possible.

In conclusion, this is a story of 'daring do' well told with charm and modesty. In many ways it is a pity that this memoir is hidden under a series entitled, 'The British navy at war and peace' for it is much wider than that, and deserves an audience outside the maritime field.

The book is well produced and illustrated with family photographs and drawings, having good footnotes and a useful index. Highly recommended.

### **Martin Hazell**

*Support for the Fleet. Architecture and Engineering of the Royal Navy's Bases 1700-1914* Jonathan Coad English Heritage Swindon, ISBN 978-1-84802-055-9 £100

This book is an updated and greatly extended successor to the author's classic *The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850* (1989). When that book was published, Roger Morriss in reviewing it for *Mariner's Mirror* hailed it as 'a landmark in the historiography of the navy ...[which]... will probably remain for several generations a standard work for all who are concerned with naval administration and its buildings'. Originally priced at £45, it now appears in booksellers' catalogues at prices in excess of £150, so that would-be readers should not be deterred by the asking price of £100 for the new, lavishly illustrated and magnificently produced volume.

*Support for the Fleet* advances from *The Royal Dockyards* in many ways. There are now chapters on the architects and the engineers of the Admiralty Works Department who created the yards and their buildings and on the relationship of their works to the needs of the fleet. Extension of the subject to 1914 brings in the vast works necessary as a result of

the transition to a steam navy and one moreover that was intended to sustain the Victorian and Edwardian maritime empire on which the sun was reputed never to set. If the coverage of the industrial equipment necessary to support the steam fleet is not so full as that in David Evans's impressive *Building the Steam Navy. Dockyard Technology and the Creation of the Victorian Battlefleet 1830-1906* (Conway Maritime Press/English Heritage 1904), it is wider by its pioneering comprehensive examination of the imperial naval bases: to read these chapters is to understand how the nineteenth century *Pax Britannica* operated. The 1914 end date also enables the book to take in the barracks and training establishments, as well as the victualing and ordnance yards and the hospitals of the largest navy in the world.

The range of topics covered is dazzling and provides the fullest insight this reviewer has seen into just what having a great navy entailed. Members of SWMHS can be assured that full justice is done to the buildings of the navy in the South West, though the author never satisfactorily explains why so many of its finest and most grandiose architectural achievements were built at Plymouth – from the 1695 Officers' Terrace to the Royal William Victualling Yard and to the façade of the great Quadrangle factory at Keyham. Were they purposely intended as prestige works to impress British naval majesty on ships calling at the first and last home naval base of a world empire? Were yard officers and constructing engineers able to get away with a bit more bling at the home yard furthest removed from Admiralty eyes? Particularly useful is the discussion and photographic illustration of the building of the great Keyham extension between 1896 and 1907 which, as the author points out, finally made Devonport the largest naval base in western Europe.

Finally the vast number and excellent quality of the illustrations are a major contribution to the enjoyment of this book and help justify its price. There are many hitherto unreproduced contemporary photographs and plans – most of the latter in colour, as well as colour photographs of surviving buildings, that together make this book a fine work of art as well as the new standard work on the subject. It is hard to see it being replaced for many years to come.

**Michael Duffy**

***Built on Scilly -The History of Shipbuilding on the Isles of Scilly between 1774 & 1891.*** Richard Larn OBE and Roger Banfield. ISBN 9780952397175. £ 5.99+ £ 1.75 p&p. Harbour Gaze, Buzza Hill Road, St. Marys Isle of Scilly, Cornwall TR21 0NQ. 01720 423679

Richard Larn, the Society doyen of all shipwreck matters, with co-author Richard Banfield, has turned his hand to the history of shipbuilding in the Scillies. Surprisingly, there was a successful if very little known industry for well over a century, till its demise towards the end of the 19th century. It was a substantial employer on St. Marys, and built 167 wooden ships of up to 500 tons in that time. Whilst it made use of materials recycled from shipwrecks, everything else had to be imported, even figureheads, there being apparently no local carver.

Richard recounts the story with extensive extracts from a wide range of original sources, as we would expect, and gives a full list of vessels built from the customs registers, with fates where known. Around half were wrecked, so perhaps he didn't stray too far from his favourite theme!

The book also has information, mostly from the census, on tradesmen, and reprints some interesting information on costs from original bills, mainly repair work, from which average construction costs have been inferred. There are details on ropewalks and other ancillaries.

The book is well produced on good quality paper with many illustrations, some in colour, which have come out well, though not many photos of ships actually being built were taken.

Modestly priced, this book fills out a missing piece of West Country shipbuilding history. Recommended.

**Jonathan Seagrave**

***BROADSIDES - Caricature and the Navy 1756-1815*** By James Davey and Richard Johns Pen & Sword Publications in association with National Maritime Museum Greenwich £16.99. (£12.66p from The Book Depository) Softback 300mm x 210mm, 64 pages, with 80 Coloured Illustrations

We are all familiar today with the cartoons usually printed daily in our newspapers and often commenting upon political life and items of concern, generally with a humorous or disparaging connotation. These have been a genre of publishing over very many years, and in the earliest time were a means of publicising matters of general concern.

The National Maritime Museum at Greenwich has a very large and unique collection, and the opportunity has been taken to offer us the chance to view a selection over the period of the French and Napoleonic Wars culminating in the Anglo-American War of 1812.

These have been skilfully chosen and explained by James Davey – Curator of Naval History and Richard Johns – curator of prints and drawing at NMM Greenwich and reflects an exhibition held there in October 2012.

This large A4 sized book looks at the political and cultural history of the Royal Navy through the caricatures brought to life in these cartoons, which were a commentary on current events whilst satirising the navy and its conduct of affairs. Each of the 80 illustrations – which are beautifully reproduced, is accompanied by a detailed commentary of the cartoon itself and the event, or person that it portrays. This form of comment developed with the artists (one hesitates to call them cartoonists) becoming quite famous in their own ways, such as Samuel Fores, James Gilray, William Humphrey Thomas Rowlandson, and Thomas Tegg. Divided into 5 Chapters and an introduction the book covers The Admirals; Nelson; Jack Tar; Invasion; and Politics and the Navy. It is extremely well-written and a most entertaining book of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which I can highly recommend in the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

**David Clement**

## LETTERS NOTES AND NEWS

### ***Monmouth – World's Oldest Boatyard Discovered***

The site dates back to 1700 BC and is of 'international importance'. Excavations revealed channels shaped like the bottom of wooden canoes which archaeologists say were evidence that boats were built at the site which was found when developers came upon the edge of a long-vanished Ice Age lake.

### ***Plymouth City Museum gets go-ahead for £21m history centre.***

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery is set to triple in size after it got the green light to build a new £21m history centre. The council approved the museum's application for £3.5m initial funding for the new interactive facility. The museum hopes the boost will help it secure grants for the remaining funding, and is planning to bid for a £13m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The centre will also house a library and the Plymouth and West Devon record office and is scheduled to open in 2018.

### ***The BESTT Training Plan and HLF grant***

BESTT wants to ensure that the activity of heritage and locomotive boiler making, maintenance and repair is supplied with the skills and standards it requires for safe and sustainable steam operations into the future. It is therefore developing proposals for a training programme with the help of HLF funding. There are over 200 heritage centres in the UK where steam operations are an important feature and around 6,000 working or restorable boilers on railway locomotives, traction engines and road vehicles, ships and stationary engines and this programme is intended to help maintain steam operations into the future.

BESTT has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under its *Skills for the Future* programme for a proposed boiler-smiths training project totalling £495,000 over 2 years. This is subject to receiving approval for a Stage 2 bid to HLF including a detailed training plan and BESTT has been awarded £17,000 in grant towards the cost of preparing this. The Society will be writing in support of this. Without boiler-smiths there can be no survival of heritage

steamships, such as *Shieldhall*, *Kingswear Castle* and various tugs based in our region.

We also added our support to a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, seeking a funder to acquire the Gibson archive of Scillies photos from auction for an appropriate museum, and as many will know the NMM bid successfully for them.

### ***Underfall yard***

The ambitious plans for the Underfall yard have passed a key hurdle with work taking place on detailed plans with HLF support.

## **LETTERS**

**Rob Burroughs** writes :-

I write to share with you a Call for Papers which I hope will be of interest Rob Burroughs, at [r.m.burroughs@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:r.m.burroughs@leedsmet.ac.uk).

*British Waters and Beyond: The cultural significance of the sea since 1800* Royal West of England Academy, Queen's Road, Bristol  
Monday May 12th, 2014 Proposals: 250 word abstracts for 20 minute papers, by December 31st 2013 emailed to [janette2.kerr@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:janette2.kerr@uwe.ac.uk)

*[Whilst a few readers were at sea in 1945, some of you may also have information. Soundings is always open to printing recipes for alcoholic concoctions! Ed]*

**Lee Peare** writes :- I am a mixologist from Ireland currently residing in New York. I am contacting you hoping for your assistance in a project i am currently working on. I am putting together a book about liquor at sea which is also being developed into a bar based entirely around this particular theme. I would like your assistance if possible about a specific area which is 'what they drank'.

I am trying to find anything that has been noted in history roughly between the dates 1690-1945 that has a recipe. Whether it is the Royal Navy or any other navies or merchants, or in fact any note worthy seafarer. The different types of liquor are known, but it is what they drank which is my speciality and I hope to find everything that I can. I know this is a very small area and not easy to pinpoint, but any assistance that you could afford would be greatly appreciated.

Lee Peare [leepeare@gmail.com](mailto:leepeare@gmail.com)

## HERITAGE SHIPS

### *Watchet Powerboats*

Powerboat fans may want to look at the details of the new Community Interest Company being set up by the British Military Powerboat Trust at Watchet. The Trust owns *Gay Archer*, now largely restored, and a visitor to the Bristol Harbour festival last year, and several other vessels. The plans include a museum and repair facilities as a permanent home for the Trust collection. <http://www.bmpt.org.uk>

*Medway Queen* left Abel's Yard and has arrived safely at Gillingham. *Kaskelot* has been in Nielsen's yard in Gloucester prior to departure for Brazil. *Bessie Ellen* has had work done at Ring Anderson, and will overwinter at Charlestown, with a full programme next year.

### *Shieldhall News*

Early in the year we had the good news that the ship had been granted substantial funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant is to help pay for some significant renewals – renewals aimed at ensuring that it is possible to keep the ship operational for the next 25 years.

HLF grants do not normally come without a few strings attached and this is no exception. But they are reasonable strings. For instance, the HLF funds must be spent exactly upon the projects described in our application, a percentage of all project costs must come from our own fund raising and other resources and we must honour our obligation to achieve an income level that would meet all normal running costs.

*Shieldhall's* HLF project team expect to be busy with the various renewal projects for the next two to three years. The first major task, asbestos removal, will be completed by the time you read this. The next major task, strengthening the hull and replacing weakened shell plating, requires a period in dry dock. Invitations to Tender have been sent out to several dry docks and their initial reactions received. The decision about which contractor to select will be made in late November/early December. Our expectation is that the ship will spend most of next April in dry dock and will emerge fully certificated by the MCA and able to undertake a normal schedule of cruises from May onwards.

In anticipation of being returned to a fully certificated condition we have published our provisional sailing programme for 2014 on our website. Please do take a look at [www.ss-shieldhall.co.uk](http://www.ss-shieldhall.co.uk) and plan your next trip with us. You should find that we are introducing some variations to our former programme.

In May of this year Southampton held its first ever Maritime Festival over two days. It was generally considered to be a great success. *Shieldhall* played a major part in the Festival and there were plenty of other interesting vessels and exhibits to be seen in the vicinity of Ocean Terminal. At the time of going to press it is understood that 2014 will see another Maritime Festival – probably in September. **Doug Brodie**

***Philips tug Venture of 1902 , now San Esteban or better known as “Vaporin” –information sought***

We have been contacted on Facebook by the owners of a 1902 tug built by Philips & Sons of Dartmouth. She was yard no 220 , 39 tons, and was sold to San Esteban de Pravia in Northern Spain in 1907. She worked as a tug for a railway company until the 1970’s , and after languishing for years, she was rescued in 1998 and fully restored by a trust. She is now based at Aviles or Gijon. She is in good condition and returned to her old home port recently for the Carmen celebrations. The owners would appreciate any further information on her. *Contact the webmaster or the Editor. Picture p. 35.*

***One of the last surviving Brixham sailing trawlers is to make a dramatic return to her home town.***

Fears that 1923-built *Torbay Lass* might never head out to sea again have been allayed thanks to the efforts of a Torbay-based campaign group and crucial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The group, headed by the Trinity Sailing Foundation, is seeking a £900,000 grant to restore and preserve the vessel. The first stage of the application to HLF has now been approved, providing funds with which to carry out temporary repairs to the ailing vessel and draft the detailed application for the major grant. That means *Torbay Lass* will be able to return to Brixham harbour under her own power, and there await the final decision about her future.

Brixham shipwright John Cuthbertson and local trawler skipper Toni Knights, who have both skippered Trinity's other traditional sailing trawlers boats, will head the crew on the voyage back from the River Thames, where *Torbay Lass* is currently lying.

*Medusa* 70 years after she was launched from Newman's Yard in Poole Harbour in October 1943, HDML 1387 *Medusa* is making a return visit to the Port, *Medusa* will be berthed alongside Poole Quay, opposite the slipway where she was built 70 years ago

Source: National Historic Ships

### ***WW2 Sunderland found off Plymouth***

Discovery Divers recently discovered the wreck of a WW2 Sunderland flying boat just beyond Plymouth's breakwater. There is a very interesting story behind the wreck and we hope to have a talk sometime next year.

### ***Wreck of HMS Amethyst Found in Plymouth Sound***

The wreck of the Royal Navy frigate HMS *Amethyst* that sank in Plymouth Sound in 1811 has been found by the SHIPS Project team. The *Amethyst* was a 36 gun frigate launched in 1799 that fought in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars against the French. She had a very successful career, capturing more than 46 ships as prizes between 1800 and 1809 including two French frigates.[ *more on this next time. Ed* ]

### ***HMS Collingwood reunion***

A reunion is being held in April, ffi Peter lacey [lacey58@btinternet.com](mailto:lacey58@btinternet.com)

### ***Consultation on Navigation Lights***

A nationwide consultation is being held on the future requirements for lights. Representations to [Navigation.directorate@tlhs.org](mailto:Navigation.directorate@tlhs.org)

[*Is this something members feel we should comment on ? Ed*]

## ***Some Irish Notes- October 2013***

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, the Dutch 42, metre Tall Ship “*Astrid*” came to grief on the Sovereign Rocks, just to the east of the entrance of the Kinsale estuary in County Cork. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, the vessel was lifted off the rocks, placed on a barge and brought into Kinsale. Following, an inspection she was declared a total loss fit only for scrapping. It is sad to report the loss of a 95 year old vessel. She was originally built in 1918, and was in trade until 1975.

On a happier note there were 220 cruise calls to Irish ports in 2012. This is bringing considerable economic benefits, but Dublin and Dunlaoire are missing out because they cannot accept vessels of more than 300 metres in length. However, there are plans to extend port facilities in both places. In the west of Ireland, there are moves to redevelop Galway harbour starting in 2015. Your correspondent visited that port recently. The only vessel in port that day was the *Galway Fisher* out of Barrow, and unusual in these times flagged and registered in the U.K. Thanks to the magic of [www.maritimetraffic.com](http://www.maritimetraffic.com) tonight (15-10-2013) she is waiting at the oil refinery at Whitegate in Cork harbour. It is good to see a little movement in the coastal trades. Some Irish maritime affairs can be followed on [www.mariner.ie](http://www.mariner.ie) and [www.lugard.ie](http://www.lugard.ie) To all my friends in S.W.M.H.S. best wishes. **Joe Varley.**

## **Life on board the *Dreadnought***

The day to day life of a surgeon on a privateering ship which set sail from Bristol in 1757 is the subject of an intriguing new online project which starts today. The journal of the anonymous surgeon on the *Dreadnought* during the Seven Years War is being serialised on:

- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/bristolro](http://www.twitter.com/bristolro)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bristolrecordoffice](http://www.facebook.com/bristolrecordoffice)
- Storify: [www.storify.com/BristolRO/dreadnought](http://www.storify.com/BristolRO/dreadnought)

Documenting attacks on French vessels intended to disrupt trade and steal prizes, the surgeon also described disputes and drinking on board and the dangers of life at sea. The serialisation of the journal coincides with Bristol Record Office’s Explore Your Archive campaign, which

includes maritime-themed behind-the-scenes tours of Bristol Record Office in the Create Centre near the Cumberland Basin. Tours December 4 and 5, will include being able to see the diary, which was in private hands until being recently donated in a will and transcribed by volunteer Nigel Sommerville.

### ***Beachcombing for Liners***

If you are ambling along the beach and find a small liner washed up, it is probably the *Lyubov Orlova*, a decrepit 1400 ton Russian passenger vessel which broke an unmanned tow off Newfoundland earlier this year on her way to breakers in the Dominican Republic. She was assumed sunk, until two of her lifeboat beacons sent signals from mid Atlantic. Repeated searches found nothing, but the signals inspired trials of a new technique of using satellite radar technology to try and locate her. It didn't trace her, but it is thought she may still be afloat as she was very light in the water.

Such ghost ships aren't new of course, and ex SS *America* went ashore in Lanzarote, in similar circumstances. Your Editor saw the little that remained a couple of years ago. It took the Atlantic only 10 years to demolish that great ship. A Japanese fishing boat took 15 months to drift to Oregon after the tsunami.

So, if you find a ship on your walk, *Soundings* is always after an exclusive...!

New Scientist October 2013

## WEBERY

### **Social media**

We now have Twitter and Facebook accounts up and running. These can be seen by clicking on the buttons at the bottom of every page on our website. It is not necessary to have personal accounts to view these. At present this is very much an evaluation exercise but we hope to appoint someone to look after these in the near future.

Already we have discovered several news items of interest, notably *Venture* a 1902 tug built by Philip & Sons of Dartmouth, now superbly restored by her Spanish owners. This has been added to the Heritage News page on our website. Her owners are interested in hearing about her early history in the UK. If anyone has any information, please send it to [webmaster@swmaritime.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@swmaritime.org.uk) and I will pass it on.

### **Calling notices for meetings**

It would be helpful if meeting organisers could send copies of calling notices to Jonathan Seagrave and to myself, in either MS Word or pdf format so that they can be put in Echoes and on the website.

## **New Links**

The History Press <http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk>

Royal Naval Museum Portsmouth <http://www.royalnavalmuseum.org/>

Devonport Naval Heritage Centre <http://devonportnhc.wordpress.com/>

## **A Selection of Items from the Forum**

### **Romanian passenger ferry *Regele Carol I***

From SWMHS member **Stephen Dent**:

Can anyone supply any information on the Romanian passenger ferry *Regele Carol I* built by Fairfield in 1898?

### **Vessels Visiting the Port of Exeter** (SW Soundings No.88, Sep 2012)

From SWMHS member **Martin Benn**:

Rather delayed comments - but *CELTIC* arrived Exeter 6 times and Exmouth once, all from Newhaven with cement plus once from London, again with cement, all between 1954 and 1957.

*CHANNEL TRADER* made 4 visits to Exeter May - November 1958 and one to Exmouth January 1956. *JOHANNA TE VELDE* brought Baltic timber to Exmouth - once in 1954 and twice in 1955. BRS lorries may well have been used but the dock's railway sidings probably saw a greater tonnage movement. All the stations to Exeter and Sidmouth Junction branches had their coal sidings. Also many a truck load of timber departed the docks as well as covered wagons with bagged cement etc

### **Bell help required**

From SWMHS member **Paul Barnett**:

Dear SWMHS members I have recently received the following request for help.

I was wondering whether any society member could help on ships bells and Buoy bells. I have recently come across a 11 inch high bell of 12 7/8 inch lip diameter which has a date (or is it a stock No. I wonder) of 1692 raised on its waist. It appears that it may have come to my old school in Bridgwater, Somerset, in about 1952 as previous old boys (the other sort this time!) do not remember it. I am therefore curious to know where it might have been between 1692 and 1952!! There was a church bell foundry in Bridgwater from about 1780s to 1850s at least, but no evidence of a 17th century one, and anyway the bell only has a single support lug, not canons. Bridgwater was an important Bristol Channel Port though, I suspect, way back in that time, hence my interest. Is it like the one in Kingston Seymour village hall, an old ship's bell - I must go and compare sizes and inscription, if any there. Do you know anyone else who might be able to help in those specialist fields - ship's- and buoy's-bells? I could send you pictures of external and internal surfaces as at present painted externally with white paint 1955 vintage, but we hope to have it cleaned up soon and determine whether it is brass or bronze. Any help or suggestions much appreciated.

### **Identifying a boat built by Hinks at Appledore** (Letter from SW Soundings No.91, May 2013)

SWMHS member **Charlie Tolcher** replied:

Phil,

It could be an old Morgan Giles design re cycled. It could be based on a Seabird design ! It could be a design that MG's chief designer Collyer produced. It might be worth looking at some of the old Yachting Monthlys.

The design looks like a pre 1950's. Perhaps she was stored over the war years, which could mean that the boat is in better condition, for its age.

I will try and find some of my Morgan Giles research to see if there is a set of line plans that match this one.

Its always the small craft that are the hardest to find and research, which is why I am taking so long to write something on Morgan Giles.

How did you get on with Francis Morgan Giles and the rest of his team in Teignmouth ! All the best,Charlie Tolcher

### **Looking for pictures of the Ketch *Good Templar* from Bridgwater**

This enquiry has now been answered by SWMHS member **Paul Barnett** who replied that he has several pictures of her.

### **Long service and good conduct medal**

This enquiry about a medal with the name Denis Sisk HMS *Thorn* was answered by SWMHS member **Philip Gloyn** as follows:

The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal was awarded to Denis Sisk in January 1917 and was sent to the C in C Plymouth - his Ship/Division was given as *Thorn* He was awarded the WW1 Star, Victory Medal and British War Medal which were sent to *Colussus* His Royal Navy Service Record is listed at The National Archives under reference ADM 188/483/298115 and can be downloaded from their website for a small cost if you haven't got it yet. Denis was born in Cork 3/3/1879 and died there in 1936.

### **William Mansfield 1865-1866 pilot on *Mary Ann***

This enquiry was answered by by SWMHS member **Philip Gloyn** as follows: I think I have found a reference to your William Mansfield in the 1851 census. He is with his wife Elizabeth, daughters Mary and Sarah and is described as a Mariner. He was born in "St George, Somerset" and was living in Easton in Gordano or St George, Somerset. He was 55 in 1851. It seems very likely that he was a Bristol pilot.

### **Pollard, *Seaplane* & Easton**

SWMHS member **Gary Hicks** responded to this enquiry as follows:

The *Seaplane* was registered under Part I of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 at Plymouth on 23 March 1943, her owner Arthur Frederick Easton, who remained her owner for the rest of her life.

She returned to fishing and was re-registered as a first class fishing boat at Plymouth and allocated the number PH57 on 28 July 1948. Her Fishing Certificate was produced annually from 11 January 1950 until 24 November 1960 and was finally cancelled: "Certificate Cancelled & Registry Closed 16 January 61. Ship broken up. Advice Received from Owner". (Fishing Boat

Register P&WDRO 2805/1) Her registration under Part I of the MSA 1894 was closed on the same date. Contact me gary.hicks(at)blueyonder.co.uk for transcript of register.

### **Early Royal Naval surgeons in New Zealand**

From non-member Patrick Alley:

I am researching early surgery in Auckland New Zealand.

Royal Naval vessels were relatively frequent and early visitors and given the majority of them carried a ships surgeon it is possible that they would have conducted some operations on the locals.

Auckland at the time of the early nineteenth century was a very dangerous place and reading some of the coronial autopsies of the time there was a lot of traumatic death in the town. Interpersonal violence from alcohol misuse was another notable cause of death. So there would have certainly been need for a surgeon.

Presumably any surgery would have been duly and officially recorded. So can anyone suggest where I might locate the logs of Royal Naval ships that were in Auckland in the early nineteenth century? Any other tips and information on the subject would be most gratefully received

I do get to England on about an annual basis but it would be good to be prepared beforehand for any necessary archival searches

Regards Patrick Alley, Semi retired general surgeon Auckland New Zealand

### **The Shaldon Regatta Boats** (Article from SW Soundings No.51, May 2001)

Sub-topic SEABIRD - Class designed in 1921 by Morgan Giles.

Non-member Brig. A.P. Singh writes from India:

One of the original Seabirds is in the possession of the Corps of Engineers Sailing Club, Pune of the Indian Army. There were two boats, *Albatross* and *Rajhans*. The 1921-vintage boat was used for many historic sailing expeditions which culminated in the Bombay-Karachi-Bandar Abbas, Iran, venture in 1977. I was a member of this expedition, which was made by the Corps of Engineers (and Not the RBYC as mentioned in the above article). The boat is presently displayed on the Corps Equipment Museum at the College of Military Engineering, Pune, India.

### **The Garlandstone** (SW Soundings No.49, Oct 2000)

Non-member Paul Goss writes from Tasmania *with a heart-felt plea for the Garlandstone to be cared for:*

I am the one of John Goss (James younger brother who also worked on the Garlandstone) Great Great Great Grandchildren. I live in far away Tasmania Australia (another hive of maritime history). My Father had returned to England before his death to visit this vessel and our boat building heritage within the family is still held in high regard to this day. I know some of the original timbers of this vessel were saved when it was restored and passed down to family members. I look forward to visiting it one day myself. Please take care of her, we all know about her. Thank-you for sharing the information.

### **Rochefort and the frigate *Hermione*** (SW Soundings No.6, Oct 2004)

From non-member Pat Riley Blackwell:

I attended the American high school in Rochefort 1953-55 and had no idea at the time the significance of Rochefort, LaFayette and l'hermione even though I could see the old dock from the building nearby that housed our school. In 1998 a group of 50 who had attended the American school returned to Rochefort for a reunion and were able to tour the beginnings of the construction of the frigate. We had taken up a collection and presented our guide with a donation. In return, we were given a beautiful banner which will eventually be on display at the American Overseas Historical Association museum. While in Rochefort we met the then Mayor Frot who, I understand, was instrumental in the planning of the reconstruction of the frigate. The City of Rochefort was most welcoming to us and even flew the American flag atop the the entrance to the compound that used to be the military base in Rochefort. Some of our alumni group are planning to greet *l'hermione* when she docks somewhere along the US Eastern seaboard in May 2015.

### **Appledore sailing ship known as *American Annie***

From non-member Ian McGregor:

In the 1980s we lived in Cornwall and during that time I bought an oil painting from Tony Warren's gallery in Falmouth. It was of an old sailing ship which still takes pride of place in the lounge. All I can remember is that her nickname was "American Annie" and she was either built at or sailed from Appledore. I would be grateful for any further information.

### ***Swift of Bideford***

From non-member Peter Reveley:

I am trying to find information on a smack Swift owned by my great grandfather captain Charles Lamey. from the Chappel painting I have of her she looks very much like an ex pilot cutter. I was told by my grandmother she took a cargo of granite from Cornwall to Spain and brought back a cargo of nuts He owned her before buying the Ketch *Hobah*. If any one has any information please contact me . peter.reveley@fsmail.net

### **The "First" Mayflower, the William and Thomas 1618**

In answer to this enquiry first posted on the forum by the Chairman of the Plymouth's Mayflower Project, we have now received a very detailed account of the settlers' fate in Virginia. This was a long extract from the book "Isle of Wight County, Virginia: a history of the county". This is too long to put here but can be seen on the forum, together with a link to the full text on the Google Books website.

**Dave Hills**

webmaster@swmaritime.org.uk



The Philips built *San Esteban* usually known as *Vaporin* (little steamer) Source: Nueva Espana. See p.26

**SOUTH WEST MARITIME HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**Registered Charity No. 289141**  
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