

World Ship Society – Torbay & East Devon Branch

Contact: mail@david-walker.org, 07765 203263

Meetings held the second Tuesday of each month at the Alice Cross Centre, Teignmouth



Branch Newsletter: June 2015

Branch Calendar

09/06/2015 Container Ship Travels (*Andrew Hogg*)
14/07/2015 Baywatch (*John Eaton*)
11/08/2015 A Change of Korea (*Andrew McAlpine*)

Branch Notes: May 2015

At our May meeting, David Eeles continued a presentation from last year; we saw a range of photographs of ships at locations in the UK, the Netherlands and Germany, supplemented with videos to take us closer to the action. The highlight was a series of photos taken in Maassluis showing tugs from the last century under way. Many thanks to both speakers for enjoyable evenings.

Shipping Movements: May 2015

Teignmouth

Pur Navolok (97/3747dwt, CYP) sailed 01/05/2015 for Sfax via Fowey.
Swift (89/1400dwt, GBR) arrived 01/05/2015 from Ghent and sailed 04/05/2015 for Southampton.
RMS Ruhrort (93/2500dwt, ATG) arrived 03/05/2015 from Figueira da Foz and sailed 06/05/2015 for Vyborg.
Peleus (09/3665dwt, LBR) arrived 04/05/2015 from Figueira da Foz and sailed 05/05/2015 for Damietta.
Shetland Trader (92/2386dwt, BRB) arrived 12/05/2015 from Lillebonne and sailed 13/05/2015 for Plymouth.
Pommern (94/3006dwt, ATG) arrived 14/05/2015 from Newport and sailed 16/05/2015 for Bendorf.
Jade (10/3261dwt, NLD) arrived 17/05/2015 from Schiedam and sailed 19/05/2015 for Portland.
Falcon (91/2225dwt, GBR) arrived 20/05/2015 from Plymouth and sailed 21/05/2015 for Rotterdam.
Sea Kestrel (93/2225dwt, CYM) arrived 25/05/2015 from Port Talbot and sailed 27/05/2015 for Porthoustock.
Daniel K. (02/4274dwt, NLD) arrived 27/05/2015 from Amsterdam and sailed 29/05/2015 for Poole.
Olza (90/2690dwt, POL) arrived 30/05/2015 from Boulogne.
Icelandica Hav (82/2325dwt, BHS) arrived 30/05/2015 from Les Sables d'Olonne.



*Two vessels to call at Teignmouth in May were Jade (left) and Daniel K. (right)
(Photographs: David Walker).*



*Eternal Ace boarded a deep sea pilot on 9th May (left), and the brand-new CSCL Arctic Ocean landed on 19th (right)
(Photographs: Rodge Musselwhite).*

50 Years Ago – June 1965

Tom Walker

In June 1965, arrivals at Teignmouth totalled 49, with inward cargoes comprising of coal (five cargoes) and one each of timber, hardboard, and a part cargo of clay from Poole aboard Carter's Dutch built CRANBORNE (439/58). The CRANBORNE loaded additional clay and then sailed for Newry. The coal cargoes consisted of two Power Station cargoes from Amble/Warkworth and the balance were household cargoes from Goole. Significantly, the first of the 'slack' Power Station cargoes arrived on the MOIRA M. (678/37), marking the end of regular visits by the Metcalf fleet with coal to Teignmouth as the contract with Renwick, Wilton, and Dobson had been placed with the Hull firm of Rix. The Rix ships were all Continental built and June's callers were the FYLRIX (598/62); KENRIX (592/60); JONRIX (584.57); and LESRIX (676/57). The LESRIX had been built as the WHITEHAVEN and had called previously at Teignmouth under that name.

Export cargoes were all clay, with exports totalling 25,182 tons, 10% up on the previous month. The largest ship to take clay was the BREEWIJD (494/65), a newly built Dutch vessel of the P. A. van Es fleet with a deadweight tonnage of 1,100 tons. Again there were a number of regular callers in the 900-950 ton range, but also an increase in smaller Danish vessels around the 500 tons dwt mark.

The clay cargoes left in ships flying the following flags: Dutch (22); Danish (8); West German (2); and one each in British, Spanish, and Swedish ships. The range of clay cargo destinations were similar to previous months: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Spain, and Sweden - significantly no cargoes were shipped to West Germany. Some vessels also 'topped up' at either Poole or Fowey.

'Local' coastwise arrivals were from: Poole; Weymouth; Plymouth; Par; Truro; and Bideford, with the majority of vessels arriving from the near Continent. In other respects June at Teignmouth was relatively un-eventful with the exception of a couple of small riverside fires, one of which involved a bone-fire threatening a store of tarred fishing nets in Ivy Lane and the other was in timber stacks on the quay near the back of Bobbett's Garage which required two fire appliances.

My records show that both the YEWHILL (1,089/57) and YEWARCH (967/57) called at Tor Bay to load stone at Berry Head. Around this time I believe the YEWARCH had a Teignmouth skipper, Ken Gribble, who later became a local pilot, during which time he piloted the same vessel into Teignmouth several times, firstly as the SKYLAB in 1974, and later as the STAR LION in 1975 - under both names she flew the Greek flag.

The only vessel that I saw piloting that month was the Port Line's PORT CHALMERS (8,717/33). This does not truly reflect the number of Tor Bay callers, just my bad luck in not seeing many! The PORT CHALMERS significance was that she was one of only a very few ships, if not the only one, to have survived two horrendous convoys to Malta during the war and also survive the war itself. As a matter of interest, when she eventually sailed for a Taiwan scrap yard, a Shaldon lad was aboard for her final voyage. She arrived a Kaohsiung on 15 November 1965 to be broken up by Nam Feng Steel.

On 04 June 1965 the Union Castle liner PENDENNIS CASTLE (28,582/58) grounded in Southampton Water. She remained fast for nearly five hours before being refloated without any issues.

100 Years Ago - June 1915

A report in the Teignmouth Post stated that in 1914, 514 vessels entered Teignmouth coastwise, totalling 63,879 tons (this gives an average vessel size of around 125 tons) with corresponding figures for 'foreign' ships being 48 vessels of 9,484 tons (an average size of nearly 200 tons). I'm not sure what exactly these 'tons' are based on though, but possibly dwt, or net.

During June 1915, 124 ships were lost due to enemy U-Boat action, although, no significant losses were in local waters.

Sources used: my own records; Teignmouth Post and Gazette (copies made available courtesy of Teignmouth Museum); <http://uboa.net>.

Childhood Memories – Part 4: Rural Issues

Ken Cload

There may have been many benefits to being brought up in the countryside, but farming based education and public transport for future employment were not among them. Of the latter we were slightly more fortunate than many, in having a shopping bus twice a week to Taunton, and, the tortuous slow branch railway line to Tiverton Junction with onward connection to Tiverton (before Beeching). The Hemyock branch was largely kept open at the time for rail tankers taking milk to London. The passenger side was limited to a tank locomotive with gas lit carriages of South Wales origin, having photos of Tenby, etc. above the seats. I cannot remember the exact times, but the earliest to arrive in Tiverton was around 09.00 and the return left around 16.00, suitable for schools and colleges but not good for workers. Having said that it did become an invaluable lifeline during the winter of 1963 for six weeks, when the road to the village became impassable for cars and buses due to heavy snowfall and severe frost. Even the train was defeated on 2 or 3 days with deep drifts on the line.

Regarding my Secondary education, the least said the better, leaving at 15 with an Agricultural Leaving Certificate and endorsements in Devon hedging, Orchard pruning and Ropemaking! Probably just too late to take up training with Gustav Erikson, I suppose I could have gone as deckhand on a livestock carrier and ended up in Mecca. The only option was to spend another year studying basic engineering at Tiverton Technical College.

Having obtained good exam results, in August '61 I started an apprenticeship (or was it cheap labour), at a company making saw milling machinery. The benefit being that it was part of the Heathcoat Group who laid on a fleet of workers buses from outlying villages, though long days from 07.00 to 18.45. Mon to Fri. The working week was 42hr + 3hr overtime (to match with the bus), starting salary 1/9d per hour (less than 9p these days), and during term time spending one day and one evening each week at college for the duration of the apprenticeship.

One employment highlight was alternate Novembers when the company exhibited machines at Olympia and arranged for factory buses to take employees overnight on the Friday to London (a long journey on the old roads) to have the Saturday to view the exhibition. Or that was the intention, in many cases (mine included) a quick look around in the morning, followed by a football match in the afternoon and a show of varying tastes in the evening. Basic overnight accommodation was arranged, then some free time, before the Sunday afternoon journey home.

The free time allowed a visit to the fast dwindling number of ships berthed in the Pool of London, where on 25th Nov '61 only four vessels were recorded, three as seen June '59 (see Part 1), plus United Baltic Corporations BALTIC SPRAY 1305g/48, and a couple of tugs.

It was even less busy on 16th Nov '63 with only Armement L.Hermans CHARLES 1180g/49, and North Thames Gas Board's FIREGLOW 1549g/44 seen, along with five lighterage tugs.

I will take the opportunity now to recall some trips up to July 1961, when childhood however it's defined certainly ended:

With my knowledge of local shipping activity increasing, a suitable Sunday spring tide on 31st March '61, gave an opportunity to explore the River Parrett, Nr Pawlett, and witness the BP REFINER 797g/44 built as Empire Drury by Grangemouth Dockyard, heading to the Shell Mex and BP distribution depot seaward of Dunball, also the BONANZA 400g/60 "Gruno" Mgrs. heading towards Bridgwater.

It's worth mentioning, at this time and for a few more years, Bridgwater Dock was still operating and the local coal boats of Sully & Co., CROWPILL 190g/1911 ex Tynesider, built on the Tyne by J.P. Rennoldson & Sons, and LEASPRAY 190g/1932 ex Goldeve, built by J. Pollock & Sons Ltd. at Faversham, were regularly in port. Also seen was the INDORITA 201g/1920 built by I.J. Abdela & Mitchell at Queensferry, as with Carita in a previous article, doubtful if she was still owned by Coppack Bros of Chester.

During July '61 numerous holiday trips were made to shipping locations as follows:

Southampton on the 17th with six liners in port, including first time sightings of WINDSOR CASTLE, IVERNIA and P&O's STRATHMORE built in 1935 by Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd. at Barrow, she was requisitioned as a troopship in World War II, and in 1963 sold to John S. Latsis and renamed Marianna Latsis for use on occasional pilgrim voyages, finally being broken up in 1969. also present P&O's SUNDA 9235g/52 and Fyffes SULACO 7602g/1931 built by Newport News Shipbuilding Co. as Talamanca for United Fruit Co. Though it was two U.S. freighters that caught my eye, the Lykes Bros. JAMES Mc KAY 8181g/45 ex Canvasback, built by North Carolina S.B. Co. at Wilmington, and the States Marine Lines WOLVERINE STATE 10747g/45 ex Marine Runner, built by Sun Shipbuilding Co. at Chester Pa. Also present General Steam Nav's LAPWING and PETREL both 921g/44-45, and a fascinating selection of coastal / bunkering tankers including, Everard's ATTUNITY 149g/45, Rowbotham's LEADSMAN 396g/44 ex Chant 11, built by Henry Scarr at Hessle, (See "50 Years ago Nov.'63" by Tom, who I guess could also shed some light on the following vessels also in port); Esso's ALLEGHENY 828g/1921 built by J. Crichton & Co. at Connah's Quay, plus INVERITCHEN 708g/1920, & oil barge BRITMEX No.4 474g/1920 both built by Harland & Wolff, & BRITMEX No.3 (details unknown). The homeward journey incorporated a visit to Poole with Stephenson Clarke's BEEDING 1142g/50 and COWDRAY 1748g/59, and Thomas Metcalfs (Wimaisha Shipping Co.) DAVID M 350g/33 Dutch built at Groningen, in port.

On 20th July to Bideford, with Everards ALACRITY 554g/40 built by Goole Shipbuilding Co. and, FORTUNITY 411g/44 ex Seabrook, ex Empire Faraway, built by Henry Scarr Ltd at Hessle. (Ref. Leadsman above) alongside the quay. Also Capt. Peter Herbert's MARY STEWART of Greenock 77g/1876 one of the last iron sailing ships (topsail schooner) which had recently been trading off Scotland. Further along the Torridge at Appledore the shipyard were fitting out the tugs MSC TALISMAN 124g for the Manchester Ship Canal Co., and the AGNES 38g for the Admiralty.

Finally a trip to Dartmouth and Kingswear on the 24th found Everards ANTIQUITY 311g/1933 built by Fellows & Co. of Yarmouth, alongside at Kingswear, and laid up in the River Dart two S.G. Embiricos controlled freighters; AZUERO 7176g/44 Liberty ship built by J.A. Jones Const. Co. as the James H. Kimball, and the NICO 7003g/45 Empire Type (ex Empire Morley) built by Shipbuilding Corp. at Newcastle, both ships having been there for a couple of years, but apparently as many as 20 had been there in previous years.

Being complimentary to the notes above I will include the following trip to Southampton a year later:

On 18th July '62, found seven liners in port, with my first sightings of PENDENNIS CASTLE, CANBERRA, HIMALAYA, and ATHLONE CASTLE built in 1936 by Harland & Wolff Ltd. at Belfast, which served as a troopship in W.W.II, and was finally broken up in Japan in 1965, also present Fyffes SINALOA 7513g/1932 built by Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corp. at Quincy, Mass. as Veragua for United Fruit Co. Also in port Coast Lines FRISIAN COAST 592g/1937 built in Holland, G.S.N.'s KINGFISHER 493g/44 built by Henry Robb at Leith, five Dutch & W.German coasters, the ESSO LYNDHURST 856g/58, and another old steam bunkering tanker, Hemsley Bell's ATTENDANT 999g/1914 built at H.M.Dockyard, Chatham. Carrying on to Southsea I observed Holland America's STATENDAM pass through the Solent.

Reference above to SINALOA and SULACO both had previously been passenger carrying fruit ships operating from Central America to New York and during World War II they served as U.S. Navy Mizar-class stores ships Sinaloa ex Veragua as USS Merak in the North Atlantic, and Sulaco as USS Talamanca in the Pacific Ocean theatre, both were scrapped at Ghent in 1965.

2015 World Ship Society AGM

David Walker

The World Ship Society's 2015 annual general meeting was organised in May by Bernard McCall and the Bristol branch. The weekend began with a presentation by Bernard about Bristol's maritime heritage, featuring photographs of vessels using the city docks, a video of conventional cargo handling at Avonmouth, and some recent views of ships passing Battery Point.

Prior to the AGM on Saturday afternoon, members were hosted by Associated British Ports at Cardiff. Following an informative talk by the port management we were taken on a guided bus tour of the port. This included a stop in the container terminal, with an opportunity to get out and photograph the two ships in port - Iberica Hav, awaiting discharge, and Coronel in the container terminal, which is operated on a service between Cardiff, Warrenpoint and Dublin, a feeder service connecting to a Borchard lines service that was withdrawn from Cardiff several years ago. Returning to Bristol, Saturday afternoon saw the AGM, followed by dinner.

On Sunday, two trips had been organised. The first of these was a visit to M-Shed, the Bristol maritime museum. More accurately, we were taken around L-shed, the museum's repository of items not currently on display. A warehouse built to replace those destroyed in the war, L-shed is ideally suited to storing large items such as those held by the collection. Of particular interest were the museum's extensive model collection. They also hold a significant collection of photographs of the port areas, and are in the process of digitising these with the eventual aim of making them available online. The second trip was an excellent tour of the city docks on the preserved steam tug John King. Bristol's myriad collection of small vessels were viewed from this excellent vantage point, as were the various areas of the port that we had heard about on Friday night. Finishing off the weekend was an added bonus tour of Balmoral, preparing to enter service following extensive refitting at Sharpness. So closed an excellent weekend, with many thanks due to Bernard and the Bristol branch for their exceptional organisation.



A view of Coronel in Cardiff container terminal on Saturday morning (left) and John King operating in Bristol docks on Sunday afternoon (David Walker).

Many thanks to this month's contributors: Ken Cload, Rodge Musselwhite, Hugh Rodway and Tom Walker. Contributions for future issues, either short articles or news with a local maritime theme, are welcome. Please email them to David Walker.