

Lloyd's List and th



250th ANNIVERSARY

DAVID BURRELL illustrates the value of shipping movements in Lloyd's List to historians examining the shipping trades of the world.

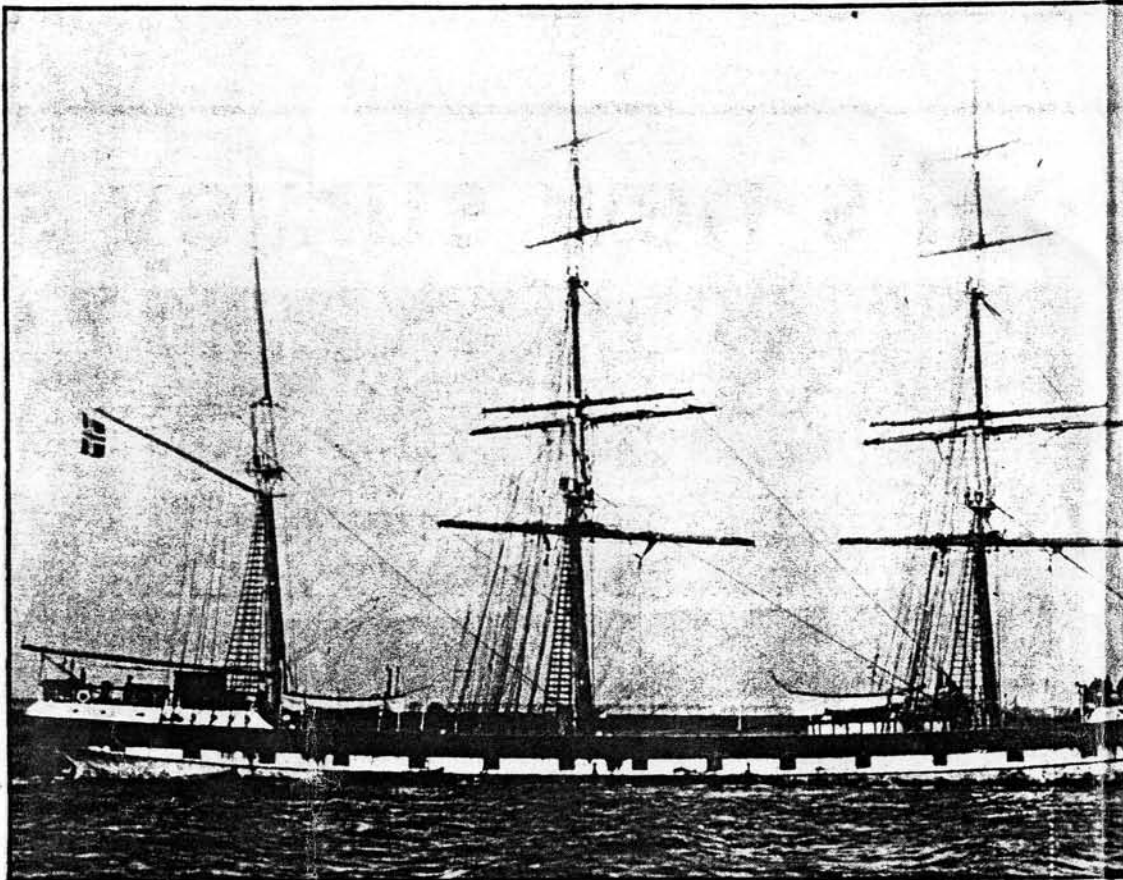
FROM 1839 an index of the shipping movements and casualties reported in Lloyd's List has been maintained and although the manuscript volumes no longer exist they were microfilmed prior to destruction.

Problems do arise in using it when a number of ships carried the same name, especially if the master's identity is not known, but these mundane-looking lists of dates of issue and column numbers open the door to a fascinating view of the everyday affairs of ships and trades.

This is especially so when allied to other material in the Lloyd's collection held by the Guildhall Library, the records of Lloyd's Register of Shipping at the National Maritime Museum, those of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen now cared for by the Public Record Office, Kew, and other archives.

Recently Lloyd's List (Friday Jan 27) reported on the *Lady Elizabeth*, featured on the new Isle of Man stamp issue. Apart from being known as a hulk beached at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, she was just an ordinary vessel taking whatever cargo was offered and making a reasonable living for her owners.

She quietly entered the waters of the Wear on June 4 1879, and Lloyd's Register's surveyor, who had first inspected the keel on Jan 29 that year, wrote that "the workmanship is of good quality." The Committee of Lloyd's Register accepted his opinion that she should be classed 100A1 although



The *Lady Elizabeth* at anchor when she passed into Norwegian ownership in 1906. (Copyright: Greenwich)

at this stage she is merely noted as "Barque Pro Tem 98," her yard number.

It would appear that she was a speculative venture by her builder Robert Thompson, Jnr, and was already afloat when seen and purchased by John Wilson, a London shipowner, who had her completed and named *Lady Elizabeth*.

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 a marked swing can be seen as British builders and owners turned from wood to iron, and later steel, for their ships.

Lady Elizabeth was typical, an iron barque of 1,208.18 tons gross and 1,154.90 tons net on registered dimensions of 223.0 x 35.0 x 21.4 ft. There was a 36 ft poop and 21 ft fore-castle, while a deadweight of 1,810 tons could be carried on a draught of 19 ft 8 ins. Important information for a sailing ship with her masts, rigging and canvas was that 200 tons of ballast was needed to stand upright safely and 450 tons to sail.

John Wilson has, so far, remained a shadowy figure. At the time he had a fleet of eight or nine sailing ships, mainly Sunderland built, including a previous *Lady Elizabeth* (673 tons, built in 1859)

which, on passage from Fremantle for Shanghai with sandalwood, put back due to stress of weather and went ashore off Rottneest Island on June 30 1878, becoming a total loss.

Census returns for 1871 and 1881 leave doubt as to his marital status but both mention his mother, Elizabeth Wilson, and it may be that the barque was named for her. But sadly, aged about 67, John Wilson petitioned the High Court of Justice in Bankruptcy on Mar 15, 1884, and exits from the story of the *Lady Elizabeth*.

However, by this time she had completed two voyages under the command of Alexander Findlay, born in Montrose in 1811. Reference to the Tyne Customs Bills of Entry reveal she sailed from North Shields on Sept 11 1879, with 1,760 tons of coal for Bombay. Angier's Freight Reports for the year record that the rate for such a cargo was between 25s and 30s per ton. After arriving in Bombay on Jan 30 1880, and discharging she moved south to load for London at Madras and Cocanada.

On arrival on Oct 30 she berthed in London's West India Dock to discharge a mixed cargo of jaggery, mvrabolams, turmeric, nux

vomica, redwood, goat and sheepskins, deer horns, hemp and hides.

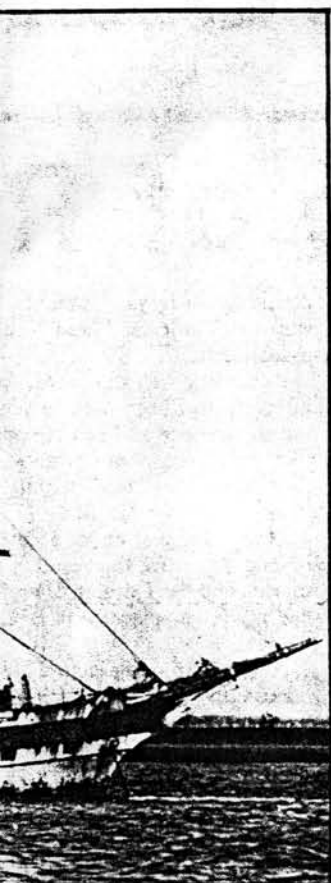
Her second voyage was more protracted and varied. In mid January 1881 she moved in ballast to Middlesbrough to load for Reunion, probably another cargo of coal, and it was to be Nov 6 1883, before she returned to London with 23,400 bags of rice loaded at Gopalpur. In the interval she had tramped the Indian Ocean, leaving Reunion to call at Mauritius and Galle before berthing at Chittagong on Dec 29 1881. My guess is that she loaded rice, jute or gunnies here for Mauritius, where she reported again on Mar 13 1882.

Shortly after it was learned that a charter had been arranged, Mauritius/Melbourne/Newcastle NSW/Mauritius, which occupied *Lady Elizabeth* until the end of October. It is likely her cargo was sugar to Melbourne and coal from Newcastle to Mauritius. Thereafter it was north to India and the rice cargo home.

Sad news awaited *Lady Elizabeth* on her return. John Wilson had sold three shares to her master and retained the other 61, using them as collateral for various loans, a total of £12,600 from R. S. Guinness in September-October

e 'Lady Elizabeth'

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National Maritime Museum,

1879 and £8,000 from G. Oliver in September 1882. The last, in favour of the Merchant Banking Company of London Ltd in Cannon Street, was security for his current account but being recorded first with the Registrar of Ships at the Custom House took precedence when the bank foreclosed and entered its name as agents for the ship in the London Bill of Entry.

The bank did not retain title for long, selling her to a Manx captain, George Christian Karran, who closed the London register and transferred her to his home port of Castletown on Jan 5 1884. Going to sea apprenticed to T. & J. Brocklebank, Liverpool, in 1871 George Karran had recently been in command of the 211 tons gross wooden brig *Rio Grande*, trading to China under the management of his eldest brother.

The Karran family were referred to in the Lloyd's List feature on Jan 17: three brothers went to sea, three stayed ashore with their six sisters but held financial stakes in their brothers' ships. Initially these were secondhand wooden vessels

until, in 1878, Robert Karran commissioned the new iron barque *Manx Queen*. *Lady Elizabeth* in 1884 was the second iron vessel, considerably larger than the 317 tons *Manx Queen*. Later the same year a new iron ship joined the family fleet, *Manx King* of 1,751 tons. Until the sale of the last ship in 1911 these three were to have only two others flying the Karran houseflag, both iron ships, *Macdiarmid* of 1,625 tons and *Imberhorne*, the largest at 2,042 tons.

George Karran was to make *Lady Elizabeth* home until 1890, his eldest son Tom being born aboard off the Chilean coast on May 3 1888. He then moved to the *Manx King* following the death of his brother Robert until retiring ashore in 1904.

The character of *Lady Elizabeth's* voyages now changed and the decade that followed revealed a pattern of liner charters with general cargo outward from the United Kingdom to Australia, then tramp passages back to Europe. This is first seen in her clearing outward from London on Jan 29 1884, with F. Green & Co, well known in these Antipodean trades, as agents.

The outward passage was to prove her to George Karran as she lived through a hurricane on Feb 23, losing a number of sails and sustaining damage of deck while later, on Mar 24, the front of the poop was stove in and the accommodation flooded.

Discharging at Sydney calls were then made at Newcastle, Valparaiso and Taltal before completing an 18-month voyage on arrival at Glasgow on June 15, 1885, where 12,672 bags of nitrate of soda from Taltal (1,779 tons, 12 cwt) were landed. Once again coal from Newcastle to Valparaiso is the likely cargo for the middle passage. The crew list and official log for this voyage are among material held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Six seamen deserted in Sydney and one, William Leech, a seaman aged 60 from Belfast, fell from aloft and died from his injuries on Sept 11 1884, two weeks before arriving at Valparaiso.

She sailed from Glasgow for Melbourne on Aug 17, 1885, on charter to Aitken, Lilburn & Co's famous Loch Line. Arriving at the end of November the familiar routine took her north for coal at

Newcastle, but this time to be discharged at San Francisco in the following summer. Having cleaned the hold of dust and debris from this commodity 28,058 bags of wheat were stowed on board and she sailed on Sept 16 bound "Queenstown for orders." When these orders were signalled to her off the Irish coast it resulted in a tow across the Irish Sea to Liverpool, arriving on Mar 20, 1887.

Voyage number five followed the same track, sailing from Liverpool for Melbourne on Apr 27, 1887, then to Newcastle and San Francisco. But instead of a direct passage home she sailed south to Lima, maybe with lumber or in ballast, and during May and June 1888 loaded nitrate which, after calling at Falmouth for orders, was discharged at Dunkirk in October.

A tow across to London brought a respite in the Thames Ironworks dry dock before sailing again under Green's agency for Brisbane. The Newcastle cargo this time took *Lady Elizabeth* to San Diego and on to load flour at Astoria in September-October 1889. Again this led to Queenstown where she was ordered to proceed to Londonderry for discharge at the end of March 1890.

Capt Karran transferred to the *Manx King* leaving Captain Lever to care for his old command, ploughing the ocean to Australian and North Pacific ports, although a direct cargo for London was obtained in 1892 and the following year she made her first visit to New Zealand.

The cargo loaded at Melbourne in 1892 was varied, including hides, horns, bones, old rails, tallow, peas, leather, gum and wool. Trinder, Anderson & Co, a familiar name in the Australian trade, was her agent when she berthed in the London Dock in January 1893.

George Karran continued as managing owner, although the majority of shares were in other hands within the family, among friends and business acquaintances. Sail was in retreat under the Red and Manx ensigns, so having passed special survey no 3 in 1904 the opportunity to sell in the early weeks of 1906 saw her pass to the Norwegian flag for £3,250. There she joined many other ex-British ships.

Third and final owners of *Lady Elizabeth* as a deep sea trader was Skibsaktieselskabet "Lady Eliza-

beth" of Sundet, managed by Mr L. Lydersen. Retaining her name she traded for a further six years until sailing from Vancouver on Dec 4, 1912, on what was to prove her last passage.

With lumber for Delagoa Bay all went well until she reached the Horn — the world was first alerted when a report datelined "Stanley (F1) Mar 18" was received at Lloyd's simply stating "*Lady Elizabeth* arrived damaged. Particulars follow." Off Cape Horn heavy weather had caused damage on deck and drowned four of the crew, after which, nearing the Falklands, she struck rocks off Volunteer Point on Mar 12, putting into Port Stanley the following day in distress.

The Falklands, although well situated as a port of refuge for ships badly handled by storms off Cape Horn, had few facilities to carry out repairs and so was a mixed blessing to owners and underwriters. For *Lady Elizabeth* this led to condemnation after a diver had established that striking the rock had both set up and broken the keel as well as punched a hole in her bottom.

The cost of repairs on a vessel now 34 years old exceeded her value and I believe she was sold for £1,000 for service as a floating warehouse, joining others, including the *Great Britain*, in that capacity. This duty lasted until 1936 when she was considered redundant, towed to Whalebone Cove and beached on Feb 17.

What of the future? Recent events in the Falklands have propelled the islands from a quiet backwater into the front line of world events and people, through television, have caught sight of the *Lady Elizabeth* lying forlorn on the beach.

Her existence previously had been known to museum curators in many places as the Falklands and Strait of Magellan, due to their isolation, are a storehouse of such maritime artefacts. Are we going to see the door open on another career for *Lady Elizabeth*, following the *Great Britain* into restoration as a member of the small band of survivors from the age of sail?

Time will tell, as it will also reveal the venue (Port Stanley, the Isle of Man, her Sunderland birthplace or elsewhere) and the source of funds to bring such a big task to a happy conclusion.