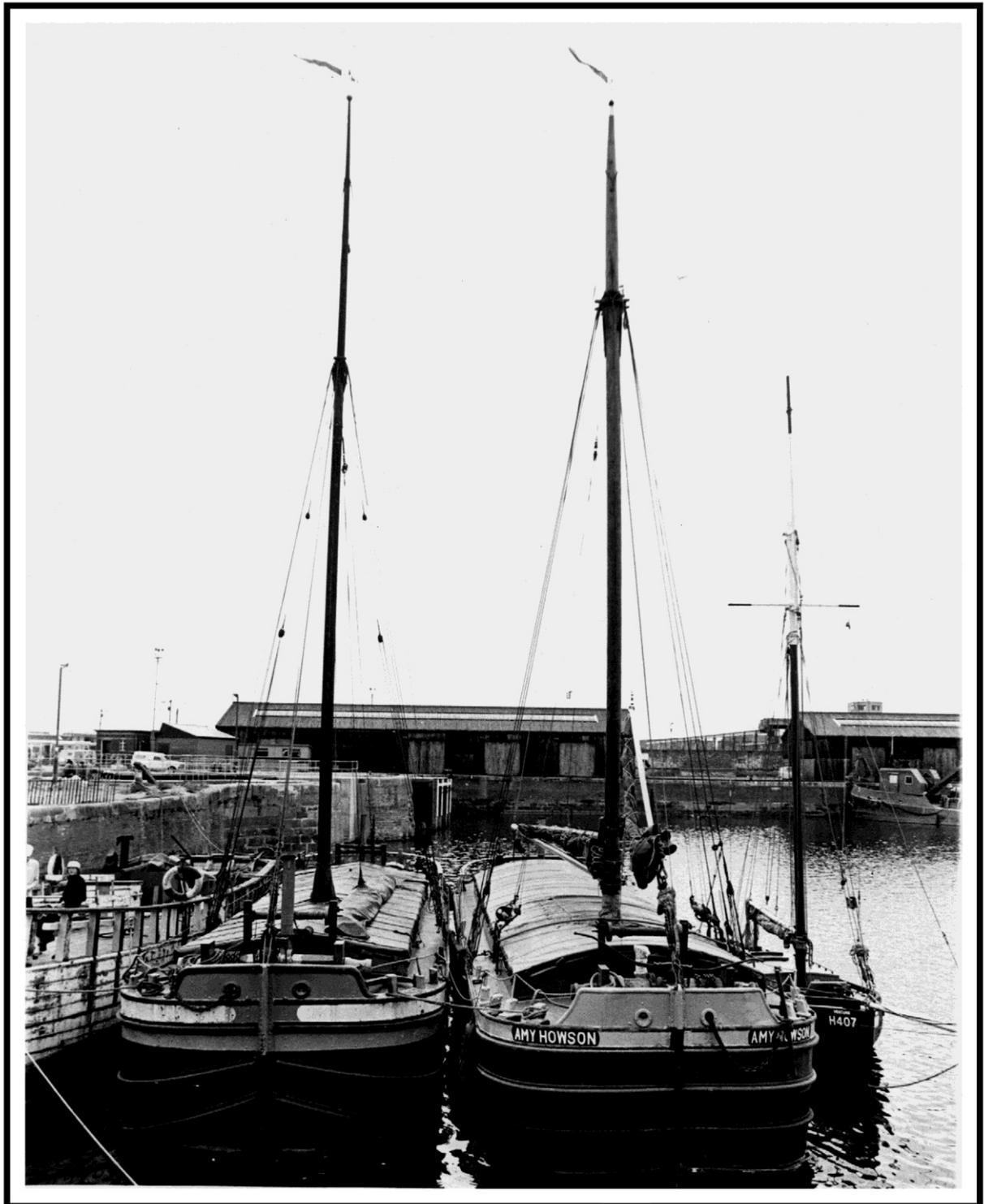


The Slabline



JOURNAL OF THE HUMBER KEEL AND SLOOP PRESERVATION SOCIETY

THE HUMBER KEEL and SLOOP PRESERVATION SOCIETY LIMITED

Registered as a Charity

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	<u>THE SOCIETY'S SHIPS:</u>
<u>'COMRADE'</u>	Humber Keel - Purchased December 1974
Hon Sailing Master:	C S Screeton
Relief Sailing Masters:	J Thompson
<u>'AMY HOWSON'</u>	Humber Sloop - Purchased March 1976
Hon Sailing Master:	R Clapson
Relief Sailing Masters:	C Harrison, P Winship
<u>COVER PHOTO:</u>	COMRADE and AMY HOWSON in Humber Dock

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

At the Council Meeting on 17 March, Fred Schofield formally handed over as Sailing Master of 'Comrade' to Colin S Sreeton.

Fred became Sailing Master in 1974, when the Society acquired 'Comrade'. In the Society's early days, when we were enquiring around the river and looking both for a ship to preserve and the sources of knowledge and experience Fred Schofield's name was mentioned to us again and again. Clearly he was held in great respect by everyone we spoke to. When he agreed not only to sell us his ship but also to superintend her restoration our own standing was greatly enhanced. The professionals knew that if Fred set out to do something, then it was worth doing and would be done well.

Re-rigging of 'Comrade' could so easily have been hit and miss. No keel had sailed for over thirty years and recollections had become hazy. Fred with habitual thoroughness and with a historian's instinct had committed details not to memory but to paper. Two yellowing notebooks had been filled with specifications and dimensions, just in case the information should ever be needed. Then, once the design had been determined, the execution proceeded under the Sailing Master's watchful eye. The quality of workmanship had to be good, and it was.

The Keel's rig makes the method of sailing her quite literally unique. We have set out not just to preserve a ship but to keep alive the traditional technique, evolved over centuries of handling the single square sail in its ultimate form. We were lucky to have in Fred Schofield the one man who possessed the knowledge and also the patience, sorely tried at times – to train a new generation of keelmen. To do this over a limited number of weekends, rather than through the daily practice which the professional takes for granted, is a lengthy and laborious process, with at least one step back for every two steps forward. But after seven seasons, Fred believes he has reached the stage when he can confidently hand over the tiller.

Fred Schofield has accepted the office of Honorary Commodore of the Society. We are glad that he will continue to be a member of the Society's Council, and that we will still have the benefit of his long experience and shrewd judgement. Moreover, his contribution to nautical history is far from over. Fred has just completed the second volume of his memoirs and the Society hope to have a hand in publishing these in the coming months.

SOCIETY NEWS

Both 'Comrade' and 'Amy Howson' were stripped for inspection at New Holland in April. 'Amy' required only minor work, but 'Comrade's' doublings proved to be wearing thin along the bilge and a substantial area had to be renewed.

Thanks to last year's successful fund raising, in particular 'Amy Howson's' Bridlington visit, our reserves should just stretch to meet the bill, estimated at around £2,000, when it arrives. However, we are aware of having to run quite fast in order to stand still! Our coffers are empty once again and more work will be required to replenish them.

BEVERLEY RALLY

'Comrade' will attend a Rally on Beverley Beck over the weekend of 21-22 May. This is being organised by the Inland Waterways Association as part of the National Waterways Fortnight and a variety of activities are planned to bring out the crowds.

REUBEN CHAPPELL PAINTINGS

In the last issue we reported on the donation to the Society of two paintings showing the Keels 'Beaver' and 'Walkington' by Reuben Chappell. With the help of the Ferens Art Gallery we have now received a quotation of £65 for each painting for essential conservation work. We hope that we can find the money.

HULL MARINA

Our hopes that 'Comrade' may find a berth in the new marina in Humber Dock have not yet been realised. As 'Slabline' goes to press we are trying to arrange a meeting with the marina operator in order to clarify the position and to put our case. Meanwhile, the lengthy passage between Hull and Beverley before and after every trip is continuing to put a strain on available crew and restricts the amount of sailing that can be done.

LEEBOARDS

One of 'Comrade's' leeboards is now complete and the other is ready for final assembly. We look forward to having them in use this summer and to having a little more space in the hold where these have been constructed.

FRONT COVER

The front cover of this issue shows 'Comrade' and 'Amy Howson' lying in Humber Dock, in readiness for last year's 'Edwardian Sunday'. It is reproduced by kind permission of the Hull Daily Mail.

INFORMATION ON SAILINGS

Information on sailings for both vessels can be obtained by contacting:-

T Dunce, 15 Woodcroft Avenue, off Oldstead Avenue, Hull HU6 8LH. Tel: (0482) 802182.

A LIFETIME ON KEELS...

Fred Schofield is probably the last survivor of a boating tradition which dates back in the east of England for centuries. Fred is Sailing Master of the Humber Keel Comrade, once his boat, now owned by the Humber Keel and Sloop Preservation Society. It is the only keel complete with rigging which can still be seen majestically sailing on the Humber, where there were once dozens plying between Humber ports and as far inland as York, Leeds and Newark.

The sailing ships, which were usually square-rigged, just survived into the 1950's. They were the last square-riggers in Europe. According to Fred, the demise of the keel ended 1,500 years of tradition. For the first reference to the name relates to Hengist and Horsa, who arrived in this country in 449, to be found in the Kingdom of Kent. They came, says Fred, in three 'ceolas', an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning ship. The word keel derived from that, and it has been on keels that Fred has spent all his life.

He maintains: " I have only sailed one barge in my life." That was when a friend brought his Thames sailing barge on a visit to the Humber. In the east of England there were Keels, Sloops and Billy Boys – but no barges. All three types had the same wide-beamed, bluff bowed hulls. The difference was in the rigging. Keels are square-rigged ships, best suited for sailing up rivers, says Fred, the Sloops were ideal on the Humber, and the Billy Boys were best for coastal work.

Fred can call on a family tradition of boating for generations. He was born and brought up at Stainforth, near Doncaster, in a house within sight of the dry dock where his ships were later repaired. "I am told I was carried aboard one when I was three weeks old, and I have never been far away from one since," he says.

He started work – officially – in 1919, at the age of 13½ when he began aboard his father's vessel. "We worked all the Humber ports, Hull, Grimsby, Immingham and Goole, and practically every place on the Humber, Ouse and Trent, and the canals connected with them," he says. The square-rig might appear to be an unwieldy ship for narrow rivers and canals, but Fred says: "She will sail as near to wind as a yacht."

"On the lower Humber and Ouse you could use the tide when you had a head wind, but on canals you had to pull it yourself or hire a horse to do it. It was sometimes a necessity to haul it yourself. If you were between places you had to pull it to where you could get horse haulage."

Loaded with more than 100 tons of cargo, the keels carried everything from chrome ore to canned food, fertiliser to flour, fruit pulp for jam making, pig iron, tractors, barley, wine, cocoa beans, wood and seeds. "They were long hours and awkward hours. I remember on day doing 22 hours, but another day you might only work two. It didn't seem hard work, because it was what you expected and were used to," says Fred.

When Fred was in his twenties, the wind of change was already blowing hard for Humber shipping. In 1932 his keel was one of the first to be fitted with an engine and her rigging was taken out. But it wasn't quite the end of Fred's commercial sailing. When he bought

Vigilant from a keelman cousin in 1939 it was hard to obtain engines because of the war, and he sailed her for eighteen months.

Business dictated the use of an engine, but Fred says: "It's a different thing, is sailing. Motoring, well it's like a lorry driver. Anyone can do it, if you know where you are going. Sailing, you have to know what you are doing. In a light condition you could do about seven knots in a suitable wind. Loaded, four or five knots would be your limit, then she would be coming unmanageable. In a narrow river, like the River Hull or a canal, you were restricted in any case, to 3 mph on a canal and 4 mph in a river. Three mph with a loaded vessel under sail was travelling, anyway."

Keels had two cabins, one aft for the captain, the other in the foc's'le for the mate. Both had fires and chimneys, but the cooking was usually carried out in the mate's cabin. But they rarely spent the night aboard ship. "Keelmen always had a base ashore. When we were little we used to spend a lot of time aboard in the summertime and the holidays. When I married, my wife came with me until the family came along. I was always home for Saturday teatime and mostly Sunday night," he says. His wife came from a farming family in Beverley – though she had an uncle who was a keelman – and Fred moved to the town after their marriage.

Fred finally retired in March 1975, but he says: "I had slowed down a long time before that. I sold my vessel in December 1974 to the preservation society, but I worked for three months more to finish my contracts." His last load was a cargo of myrobalans – a fruit from India used for making dyes and tanning leather – from Hull to Beverley.

Fred had been concentrating on the run between Hull and Beverley for some years. "It's very narrow. There is a big rise of about 20 feet. Its half tide before you can use it at all. You have got to know all these things to work it easily and efficiently."

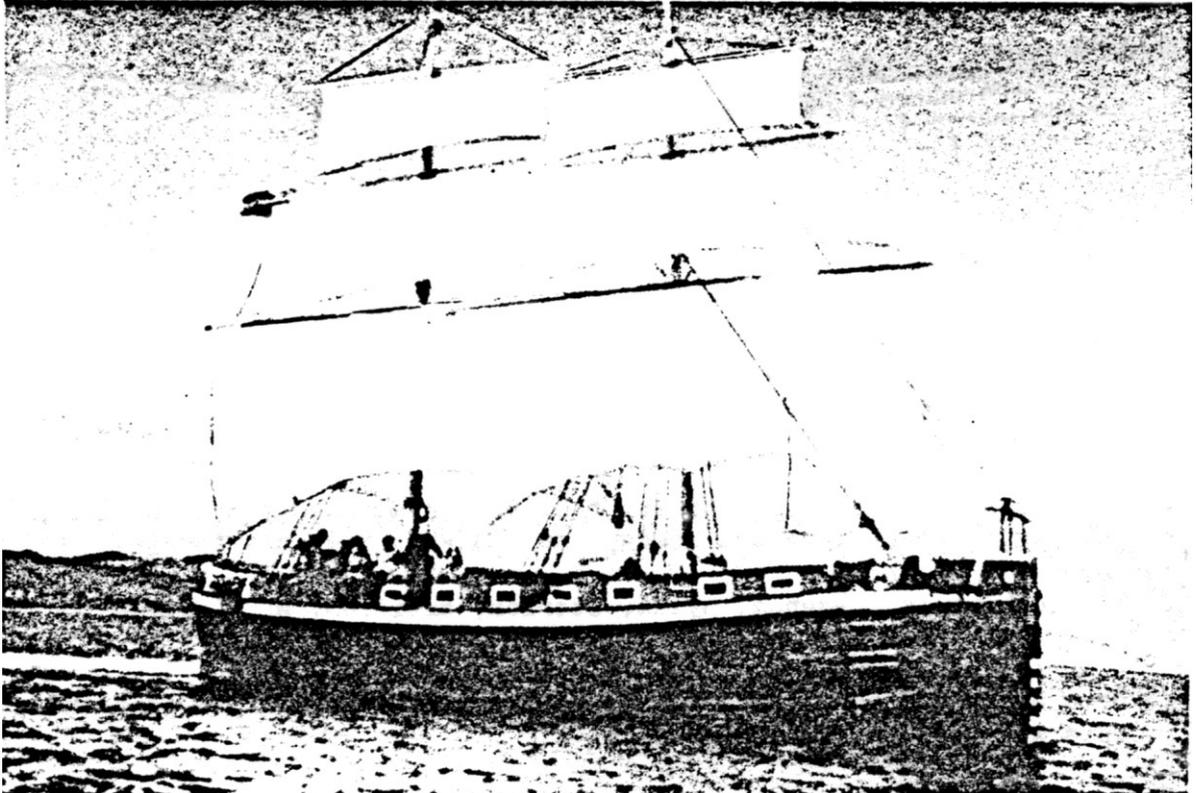
But even though he sold the Comrade, he never lost sight of her. She is moored in Beverley Beck and Fred is the only one who could tell the volunteers from the Society how she should be rigged and sailed. "You get very attached to them," he admits.

Fred's knowledge of the river was called upon after he retired. He took the last tug built by the now defunct Phoenix shipbuilders down the Humber for trials. "It was only at the top of the tide that you could get down to Hull in three tides, but it was more commonly four or five."

"Now," he says, "the Comrade only sails at weekends. This spring she will be taken down the river for her season's work – seven or eight pleasure voyages and exhibitions."

"It's been a fairly uneventful life," he maintains, "but I've enjoyed it – and I'm still enjoying life."

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YORKSHIRE & NORTH HUMBERSIDE TIMES
March 4, 1983



This photograph shows the former Humber Keel JOHN WILLIAM, re-rigged as a Brig, underway on Loch Ness last summer. Our members Eric and Fiona Hutchinson own JOHN WILLIAM as well as the former Humber Sloop PHYLLIS.

JOHN WILLIAM was built at Warren's Shipyard, New Holland for John William Barraclough of Barton-on-Humber in 1904. PHYLLIS was built at the same shipyard but for James Barraclough and Co, Imperial Chambers, Hull in 1907.

The Hutchinson's converted JOHN WILLIAM into a floating hotel in the late 1970's and have operated her on the east and west coasts of Scotland.

PHYLLIS has also been converted and both ships were under charter on Loch Ness last summer and Eric and Fiona intend to carry out a full survey of the Loch, probably lasting some five years.

Here is a brief outline of their scheme:

LOCH NESS EXPLORERS CLUB

Loch Ness is 22 miles long, averages a mile wide and has a mean depth of over 400 feet. At its deepest it is well over 700 feet.

The Great Glen has been a much-travelled route by water for thousands of years, carrying people from one shore to the other. Over the years things have got dropped overboard, ships will have sunk, day-to-day items will have been thrown into the water, and then, of course, there is Nessie. Does she exist?

In January, 1983 the LOCH NESS EXPLORERS CLUB was launched on the world.

The club seeks volunteers to help in surveying, mapping, video-taping, data-collecting and collating, archaeology, biology, diving, computing, electronics, and general boat work.

Hobbyists are welcome to design, build and test equipment. Things like robots, remote controlled grabs, low-level lighting systems, tight beam sonar, position fixing systems, TV cameras, computing, data recording techniques, programmes, water-tight cases, etc. The list is endless, like the Loch, in which we shall be playing. Even ideas on paper are welcome.

We hope that the hobbyist will come up to our research vessel PHYLLIS, and try out their equipment under practical conditions. If they can't we will test it for them and write a report on performance. Because there is no time limit on the project, any modifications may be made and equipment retested. There is no limit to how often.

As well as the hobbyists we are hoping that any interested people will lend a hand with ideas, suggestions, time and energy, as and when they can manage.

We are looking for legends, myths, stories, articles; any information at all on Loch Ness.

We have accommodation and facilities for members who wish to join the team on site. Costs will be kept to the minimum.

There is an exhibition being set up at FOYERS where video will be shown of our finds, artefacts exhibited, material for sale, TV cameras showing live pictures of underwater activity. We shall have a variety of things for sale as and when they become available, e.g. charts of Loch Ness, video tapes, cine films, and so forth. Any interested persons in this side of the club will be most welcome to help. All suggestions and ideas are welcomed.

By the end of 5 years or so we will have a complete video record of Loch Ness underwater, detailed maps, a fairly comprehensive record of archaeological finds and, if there is a Nessie, pictures of her too. We will know just about all there is to know of Loch Ness and its history.

The club will be giving talks, film shows and exhibitions around the country during the winter of 1983. Again, anyone interested here are welcome.

As you can see, we have something for everyone, and as things progress, the field will expand. For details of any part of the club's intended activities, or enquiries about membership, which costs £5 per year and includes a quarterly progress report, please drop a line to:

Fiona and Eric, 'JOHN WILLIAM', FOYERS, Inverness-shire, IV1 2YB

LOCH NESS EXPLORERS CLUB AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the LOCH NESS EXPLORERS CLUB are:

1. To carry out a complete and accurate visual and written record of Loch Ness, e.g. depths, bottom, sides, biological, botanical, historical, archaeological.
2. To have video recording of the entire bottom and sides of Loch Ness.
3. To gather samples for analysis, e.g. biological, botanical, archaeological.

4. To find hobbyists to design and build various equipment for use on Loch Ness in depths of 800 feet. Test facilities will be available.
5. To eventually have maps, charts, written records, video film, cine film, still pictures, samples, archaeological discoveries, for sale to raise money to fund the project.
6. To do film shows and talks on Loch Ness around the country during winter 1983.
7. To set up an exhibition at our site headquarters at FOYERS, on Loch Ness, where items may be purchased as and when available, films, live underwater cameras, video, etc. may be watched.
8. Up to date progress reports to be issued regularly.
9. To make public any relevant information on Loch Ness. All members must be prepared to ask the club's permission prior to publication and advertising of any material obtained whilst involved with the project.
10. For members to have the use of all equipment on the research vessel.
11. The question of 'Nessie' will inevitably be raised. We are not monster hunting, but if and when we find proof of its existence this will be made public.
12. The overall objective of the LOCH NESS EXPLORERS CLUB is to explore and learn everything possible about Loch Ness, one of the last unexplored parts of Britain, getting as many people as we can involved.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLUB ENTITLES YOU TO:

1. Progress reports every quarter, or thereabouts.
2. Priority reports of any unusual finds and pictures.
3. Priority to purchase material such as maps, pictures, film, etc.
4. Opportunities to come and visit the research vessel PHYLLIS on site, and help monitor equipment.
5. Opportunities to test equipment of your own on board.
6. Opportunities to design equipment for the project.
7. The first-ever chance to actively become involved in a proper, methodical search of Loch Ness. It is all being done by amateurs, hobbyists, etc.
8. Opportunities to become permanently involved in the organisation team, based all year round on site.
9. Offer constructive criticism and ideas to further the project's objectives.
10. The cost of membership is £5 per year. (Two colour photographs of yourself required for membership card identity).

DÉJÀ VU

In the latter half of the nineteenth century an American full-rigged ship on a voyage southbound from New York to Charleston, South Carolina, encountered another vessel under full sail steering north. Both ships having the wind abeam, one on the port tack, the other on the starboard, their courses were altered to converge with the intention of exchanging their 'numbers'. With the distance between the two ships rapidly decreasing in the stiff breeze, the Master of the southbound ship, raised his trumpet, moved to hail the other, which was steering to pass to windward of him. The other Captain, however, anticipated this action and the questions; "What ship?" "Where bound?" borne down on the wind, were quickly answered with the name of his ship, that they were bound New York to Charleston and the number of days out. The other vessel now being nearly abeam, the Master again raised his trumpet and enquired "What ship?"

Across the heaving sea came the reply "Ino".

The southbound Skipper being unfamiliar with Greek mythology had never heard of 'Ino', so assuming he had misunderstood the reply, repeated the question "What ship?"

This time there could be no mistaking the name shouted back from the windward vessel: "Ino!"

The puzzled New York Commander turned to his officers as if seeking an explanation but blank expressions met his gaze. He turned back to windward and said aloud "It would be very strange if he didn't know the name of his own ship, does the man mean to insult me?"

Up again went the speaking trumpet. "What name did you say?" was bellowed at the southerner now drawing astern.

The two ships were now so far apart that it was doubtful if a human voice would carry across the distance, but to the surprise of all aboard the southbound packet, back came the reply, faintly but distinctly, "Ino".

Although normally a polite man and one who never swore in front of ladies, the packet Master's anger overcame his sense of propriety and once more lifting his trumpet to his mouth he shouted "Go to ----- Kamchatka!"

Whether the Master of the 'Ino' heard the last words of the angry skipper is debatable, but certain it is that they were not heeded as the safe arrival of that ship was reported shortly afterwards in New York.

Sixty years later or so, a certain Humber Sloop was leaving a lock-head when the lock keeper enquired, "What ship are you?"

From the Sloop came the reply "I know!"

The lock keeper cupping his hand to his ear exclaimed, "I said what ship are you?"

The shadowy figure on the receding Sloop hurled back, "I know!!"

The lock keeper giving vent to his anger and exasperation bellowed, "I know that you know, you daft b-----!!!! – I WANT TO KNOW !!!!!"

This vessel didn't voyage to Kamchatka either but plied her lawful trade on the Humber for a number of years after the incident. Legend has it that the vessel concerned was Fred Knott's wooden Barton Sloop and that the incident took place at Grimsby about 1912.

Then of course there was the west country Keel called 'UNO'

'DEADEYES'

Cover of November Issue of Slabline

Many readers may not have realised, as there was no comment in the last issue of Slabline, that the cover drawing depicted Amy Howson, with 'Briar' berthed behind her at Bridlington in August last year. This of course was during the Gala, when it was arranged for 'Briar' to berth alongside 'Amy' for a few days. The movements of 'Amy Howson' at that time have already been covered but a few details of 'Briar' may be of general interest.

'Briar' was built in 1934 and registered as a motor fishing vessel in Fraserburgh. She had no sails, contrary to the comment in last summer's Slabline issue, in the article on Hull's Old Town Docks area, which suggests they were there originally. She has now been rigged as a gaff ketch like the old sailing trawlers, although the old sailing drifters would have had a lugsail. 'Briar' is a traditional North Sea herring drifter.

'Briar's' present owners, Jean and Peter Halstad made preparations for chartered sailing before their present voyage to Australia with their family on board. In a leaflet describing the accommodation facilities, they gave a brief history.

A 54ft Scottish fishing vessel, 'Briar's' only owner was Willie Buchan of Fraserburgh who had her built to replace the family's steam drifter, which was destroyed by fire. He sold her after 43 years when he retired aged 76.

'Briar' spent most of her career following the herring fisheries from the Moray Firth down as far as Yarmouth, until the fishery died out during the 1950's, when she concentrated on fly-shooting for cod and other round fish. She was also one of the pioneers of this method, the Scottish version of seine netting which had been introduced into Britain by Danish fishermen.

Her present owners, who began their fishing career with a 27ft Yorkshire coble in the Humber Estuary, took 'Briar' to the long-line fishery out of Grimsby, and worked together the Silver Pits and Dogger Bank for cod and dogfish.

'Briar' finished her fishing career in Whitby, Captain Cook's home port, where she was given her present rig.

'Briar' left the Humber on Friday October 22, 1982 for Southampton to pick up the remaining crew that are sailing with them to Australia.

There are 14 persons on board for the voyage, including the Halstad's two children and two people from Cottingham. The remaining crew are from various parts of the UK and one American university student. One of the crew is a national press photographer.

Their voyage will take them to the Canary Islands, Barbados, Panama, Galapagos Island, Marquesos Islands, Tahiti and Fiji. They should sail under Sydney Harbour Bridge in late June 1983.

The latest information is that they are now through Panama, and heading out into the Pacific.

Many thanks to Carole Crossland for providing the leaflet on 'Briar', which also included most of the details of the present voyage and to Dr Henry Irving and Peter Tomlinson for further information on her history.

MARY INGLEBY

BOOK REVIEWS

'PLAIN TALES FROM YORKSHIRE' tells the life stories of four men and three women, all born and bred in the 'broad acres' county.

Members of our Society will find the last thirty-five pages of most interest to them. Jennie Porter was born in Beverley in 1892 and spent most of her young life on a keel. She stayed afloat most of her life, "though she was always frightened of water", and learnt to cook a sea-pie that would win any keelman's heart.

Life on board a keel is graphically explained, of sailing as a family in the slow-paced world of estuary and canal. Written by fellow Tyke, Roger Mason, 'Plain Tales from Yorkshire' is published by Macdonald and Co., price £9.95.

M E ULYATT

Kathleen Crosby has compiled an interesting history of the OLD GROVEHILL FERRY BRIDGE, BEVERLEY (Lockington Publishing Co., North Ferriby) with nine photographs and five diagrams.

The 34 page booklet gives a brief outline of ferry rights over the River Hull at Grovehill and goes on to give details of the bridge itself, which was designed, built and owned by Joseph Scarr (Shipbuilder) of Beverley. The bridge was constructed during the late 1890's and fell into disrepair in the mid-1940's, to be replaced by a modern structure, officially opened in 1953.

The booklet is a well-researched piece of local history. Did any of 'Slabline's' readers ever use the bridge? Perhaps you can write to the Editor with any interesting comments for use in a future issue of 'Slabline'.

M E ULYATT

A HUMBER FERRY MISCELLANY

I first saw the Humber ferries in 1970, soon after I moved to Gainsborough from Leeds. I knew that the estuary was crossed by ferries, but I expected the vessels to be modern craft, of a type similar to the 'Farringford' which was in fact the last Humber ferry, and I was pleasantly surprised to see the old coal-fired paddle-steamers. There were three on the Humber at that time, although 'Tattershall Castle' did not seem to be in use, as it was always moored at New Holland pier whenever I saw it.

My first ride on the ferries was in January 1971, when I went across on the 'Wingfield Castle' with a young lady from Gainsborough on a Sunday visit to a friend of hers who lived in Hull. My companion stayed overnight with her friend, but I returned that evening, retrieving my car at New Holland. The ride across to Hull in the mild afternoon sunshine was very pleasant, but the journey back after dark was more impressive, and it felt very adventurous to be riding on a ship on a moonlit winter night; in the dark distances seemed greater, and it did not take much imagination to picture myself riding on an ocean liner of long ago, with its tall funnel and cloud of black smoke, instead of on a humble ferry!

I never took my car across on the ferry, but I went over as a pedestrian on several occasions. Usually I was going to Hull, but one Wednesday in August 1972 I went to

Scarborough via the ferry, travelling by train beyond Hull, as a change from driving round via Boothferry.

The dates of my last rides on the steamers were October 1973 for the 'Wingfield Castle' and August 1976 for the 'Lincoln Castle'. I saw the 'Lincoln Castle' at work in October 1976, and again, for what was probably the last time, in September 1977, but on both occasions I was travelling on the 'Farringford'. Returning from Hull that day in October 1976, I got talking to a young woman and her mother in the buffet saloon, they were making their way by car from Teesside down to Suffolk that day, but had only got as far as Hull by evening! The young woman asked me whether we were riding on the paddle-steamer, of which she had heard; I had to reply that no, the 'Farringford' was not the 'Lincoln Castle', but I was pleased to be able to point out the 'Lincoln Castle' through the rain – it was the only time that I ever did the ferry crossing in wet weather – when the two vessels passed each other in mid-estuary.

Since I first got to know the Humber ferries, I have seen many references to them in factual books and magazines, and they have also been celebrated in poetry! I only know of one instance, however, of the ferries appearing in a novel; the book is 'I want what I want' by Geoff Brown, which is set in Hull. The hero is a boy who, rather strangely, wishes he was a girl, and insists on dressing up in women's clothes; for a time his masquerade is successful, and a man goes with him, thinking he is a girl, on a trip to New Holland and back. There is a brief reference to the 'big white paddleboats' and the wake of disturbed water they leave behind. On arrival at New Holland, the hero's escort says that they should stay on the boat, as there is nothing to get off for; true enough I suppose, but I have always done the round trip from the south bank, and have found that Hull is worth getting off the boat to see! A film was made of 'I want what I want', but I very much doubt whether the Humber ferry episode was included.

To continue the literary theme, I have sometimes tried my hand at writing fiction, and the 'Lincoln Castle' appeared in three stories which I wrote a few years ago. I set all of them in the 1976 heat-wave, but gave them a fictitious setting in that the hero, or narrator, comes back to North Lincolnshire, where he used to work, for a visit to former colleagues, having recently moved to a new job in the West Midlands; I got this idea firstly from the fact that a few years ago I nearly applied for a job in Telford New Town, and secondly from the contrast between the relative cool of the Humber and the baking heat inland during the summer of 1976. My last trip on the 'Lincoln Castle' in August 1976 was the basis of two of the stories, and the third story was also largely set by the Humber, the 'Lincoln Castle' making a brief appearance. I am not entirely satisfied with the stories, and they were not particularly well received when I read them to writers' groups, but one of them, 'The Paddle-steamer Trip', was among a batch of my stories which I recently recorded for broadcasting on the Lincoln hospital radio service.

In 1979 I had my last ride on the 'Farringford', and in 1981 I drove for the first time over the new Humber Bridge, admiring as I did so the 'Lincoln Castle' now preserved at Hessle. The following year, I spent a Sunday afternoon by the north end of the bridge, photographing a passing ship from the bridge with the 'Lincoln Castle' in the background, admiring the old steamer at close range, photographing it against the bridge, and finally going on board for a snack. It was sad to walk around the vessel and remember the days when I used to ride it out on the water, the funnel pouring smoke, the wash from the paddles streaming under the stern, and the pistons performing their stately, archaic movements; but time marches on and progress must come, and at least the ship is preserved.

PAUL SLATER

WORLD SHIP TRUST

Our Founder Member Frank Carr, who is Chairman of the World Ship Trust, has sent us a cutting from The Times of 21.1.83. It gives the following report of the Trust's latest activities:

The new Falklands rescue operation

By John Witherow

The first archaeological expedition to visit the Falkland Islands, since the war with Argentina, is planned to start salvage work next month on the wreck of an American clipper in Port Stanley harbour.

Led by Dr Fred Yalouris, a Harvard and Oxford-trained archaeologist and rowing blue, the six-person team plans to prepare part of the clipper Snow Squall for eventual return to Maine, where it was built in 1851.

Because travel has been severed between Argentina and the islands, the expedition is to be flown by the RAF to Port Stanley via Ascension Island. Dr Yalouris is at present seeking financial backing from the National Geographic Society to meet the estimated cost of £20,000.

The Harvard team has also agreed to survey the Lady Elizabeth, the three-masted Sunderland-built ship which has become a landmark.

The World Ship Trust, a conservation society based in London, has proposed that the Lady Elizabeth be restored and fitted with its full rigging to act as a tourist attraction for the islands. Frank Carr, chairman of the Trust, suggested the Falkland Museum, which he says was looted by the Argentines, be installed on the ship and that some of the restoration work be done by Royal Engineers to alleviate the boredom of garrison duty.

"Can you imagine a greater tourist attraction?" asked Mr Carr. "People arriving by air or sea would see this great steel ship, built in 1879, sitting in the harbour, fully rigged, just as in the great days of sail. It would be the Cutty Sark of the Falklands." His proposals, he said, were being considered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Army.

Dr Yalouris, aged 33, assistant director of the Harvard Summer School was in Port Stanley 10 days before the Argentines invaded on April 2. He appealed to the British and Argentine during the war not to damage the 160 foot Snow Squall, which lies semi-submerged in 12 feet of water.

Like many merchant vessels rounding Cape Horn the fine-lined clipper, which held the sailing record of 29 days from New York to Rio de Janeiro, was driven onto rocks in heavy seas and limped into Port Stanley in 1864.

The captain of the Snow Squall, which is the last surviving American Clipper, could not afford the islanders' bill for repairs and abandoned the vessel to be converted into a warehouse for wool.

Dr Yalouris hopes that the four-week expedition, which will include an engineer and a conservationist in waterlogged wood, will prepare for the major task of removing the starboard bow in 1984.

Dr Yalouris said there are more than 200 documented wrecks around the Falklands, many of which are remarkably well preserved.

Only two ships have ever been removed from the islands. The SS Great Britain, Isambard Kingdom Brunel's great screw-driven vessel, was refloated in the Falklands in 1970 and towed back to Bristol on a pontoon. In 1967 the Fennia was removed by an American businessman who planned to turn it into a floating restaurant, but this buyer went broke and the vessel was sold for scrap. The World Ship Trust is forming an international committee to save the Falkland ships and prevent a recurrence of such incidents, which angered the islanders.

Two other ships in the islands, the Vicar of Bray at Goose Green, and the Charles Cooper in Port Stanley, are owned by museums in San Francisco and New York, although neither has plans to remove the vessels in the immediate future.

A SHIPPING ENTHUSIAST IN LONDON

One of the books produced as part of the recent celebration of Britain's maritime heritage showed 'Comrade' under sail on the front cover. Another one showed the cruiser HMS 'Belfast' moored on the Thames near Tower Bridge, and the sight of that book in the library where I work, reminded me that for several years I had been intending to visit the 'Belfast' should I ever be in London with time to spare.

In fact, London is not a place I visit much nowadays, and when I at last get round to going up for the day, on a wintry Tuesday in January 1983, I calculated that it was eight years since I had last treated myself to a day out in our capital city! There were various things that I wanted to see, and it was well into the afternoon before I was standing on London Bridge looking downstream at the 'Belfast'.

The cruiser is not very easy to get to, as although it is a large object, and very visible, it is moored close to the south bank, and access is through a rather dingy and labyrinthine part of the Southwark waterfront. I had quite a long walk from London Bridge; I was, of course, visiting out of season, and in the winter twilight the warehouses and alleyways of the waterfront were deserted and distinctly eerie!

However, I eventually found myself on board the 'Belfast', having been allowed on at half-price as it was within one hour of closing time. I found the vessel very interesting; visitors may enter every part of it – I had to be selective because of shortage of time – and I enjoyed seeing inside the bridge and the gun-turrets as well as walking the decks. The last time that I had been on board a large warship was back in the late 1950's, during open days at Portsmouth and Plymouth dockyards, and then it was possible to visit only certain parts of the ships.

The history of the 'Belfast', briefly, is that it was launched in 1938, fought in the Second World War and in the Korean War, was put into reserve for the last time in 1965, and was decommissioned to become a museum ship in 1971. It has twelve six-inch guns arranged in four turrets of three, two fore and two aft, as well as a secondary armament of four-inch guns and light anti-aircraft weapons. It is a bigger ship than I expected and half a day could easily be spent on board if it is to be visited thoroughly.

From the decks of the 'Belfast' I could admire the tugs and barges and passenger boats on the Thames, and the Tower of London, and Tower Bridge, and upstream, London Bridge, the twin towers of Cannon Street, the dome of St Paul's and other landmarks of London. A

cold wind on the Thames made it easy to imagine that I was out at sea on the cruiser, and even from the nearby waterfront the great river through the heart of London had an undeniable splendour as the short winter day ended.

All too soon it was nearly dark, and I had to retrace my steps through the alleys and streets to London Bridge, and then take the tube to Kings Cross for a fast ride on the 'Hull Executive' back to Retford. There are other preserved ships on the Thames, and I hope before too long to make another journey up to London and see something of what I missed this time!

(P.S. You may see the former Humber Paddle Steamer 'Tattershall Castle', now a popular tourist attraction, with her famous engine room faithfully restored – Editor).

IRONBRIDGE, SIR JOHN BETJEMAN AND THE SHROPSHIRE CANAL

Ironbridge in Shropshire must be the most extensive open-air museum in the country. It is in fact a whole complex of museums, spread over a considerable area, and it is not recommended to try and visit them all in one day.

Ironbridge is principally of interest to the industrial archaeologist and the enthusiast for industrial history, but there is something there for railway buffs and devotees of waterways, as well as for anyone who is simply interested in seeing more of the varied face of Britain. The museum complex embraces a number of villages and townships on the southern fringe of the expanding new town of Telford: Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Coalport, and Madeley in particular. The area claims, justifiably, to be the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, and among the most notable exhibits to be seen are: the world's first iron bridge, built in 1779 and still elegantly spanning the River Severn, and the Bedlam furnaces, built in 1757, where iron was first smelted with coke. The iron bridge has, of course, given its name to the town beside it and to the whole museum complex.

The River Severn flows through the area, feeding water to Ironbridge power station as well as, less usefully but more aesthetically, providing an attractive focus to the steep wooded valley along which the old industrial towns grew. It is a fast-flowing river, used by anglers but strictly forbidden to bathers; it looked barley navigable when I last saw it so far from its mouth, but at one time the Severn was navigable right up to Shrewsbury and beyond, and it developed its own distinctive type of sailing barge, the Severn trow. The trow varied in size from a diminutive river barge to what was virtually a small coasting ship; some were definitely built at Ironbridge during the 19th century. Two unusual features of them were their D-shaped transom sterns and their lack of decking beside the cargo holds amidships.

Coalport, two miles down-river from Ironbridge, is perhaps a less well-known name than Coalbrookdale at the other end of the museum complex, but I found it of great interest when I made it the destination of a walk along the Severn during a visit to Ironbridge. On the east bank of the Severn stands Coalport china works, open to visitors and presenting an unusual spectacle with their two big bottle-shaped kilns; across the river is the Boat Inn, where I paused for refreshment during my Severnside walk. On a warm sunny day the garden of the inn was a very pleasant place; it afforded a view of the river, the iron footbridge – in fact, a First World War memorial – across to the other bank, the mellow red-brick buildings of Coalport itself, and a double set of rails climbing at a steep angle through the trees beyond. The sign of the Boat Inn depicts what I take to be a passenger-carrying

narrow boat, but displayed on walls of the bar inside are old photographs of Severn trows at Coalport. Riverside walks along the route of derelict railways – the Severn Valley Way on the west bank and the Silkin Way across the water – leading to Coalport Bridge, a handsome iron structure dating from 1818, rather similar to the more famous iron bridge upstream and, unlike the 1779 bridge, still carrying road traffic.

Sir John Betjeman, our esteemed poet laureate, is noted – if not notorious! – for his devotion to Victoriana and the less appreciated aspects of the recent past, so it is not surprising that he has expressed a liking for the old industrial area of Shropshire. He wrote the first edition of the 'Shell guide to Shropshire', which included some loving descriptions of the Coalbrookdale district, and one of his poems, 'A Shropshire Lad' – not to be confused with the better-known volume of poems of the same title by A E Housman! – is set in this area.

Betjeman's poem tells of the ghost of Captain Webb, a famed swimmer, originally from Dawley and related by marriage to Shropshire novelist Mary Webb, swimming one evening along "the old canal that carried the bricks to Lawley". The poem has been set to music and recorded, and I have also heard it sung at a folk festival. Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge and other places in the area are mentioned, as well as the River Severn, and the industrial atmosphere is well conveyed. "The old canal that carried the bricks to Lawley", which is repeated in the poem as a refrain, may be a piece of poetic licence, put in for the sake of the rhyme with Captain Webb's birthplace, Dawley; but there is a place called Lawley near Coalbrookdale, and Betjeman's line may refer to an actual branch of the Shropshire Canal, a now defunct system which once served this industrial area.

The Shropshire Canal was opened in 1792; most of it closed in 1857, but a small section was not finally abandoned until 1944. It was part of a network known as the Shropshire tub-boat canals, used not by the traditional narrow boats but by small compartment boats or tub-boats, joined together in trains and towed by horses. The main Shropshire Canal extended from the junction with Shrewsbury Canal at Wrockwardine to Coalport on the Severn, with branches to Ketley and Brierly Hill. Coal was the principal traffic carried. Most traces of the canal have now disappeared under the spreading estates of Telford.

The Shropshire Canal in 1845 became part of a much larger system, the Shropshire Union, and much of this, unlike the Shropshire Canal itself, is still in use. It extends into adjacent counties, and my only real view of it was at the Cheshire town of Middlewich, where an arm of the Shropshire Union connects with the Trent & Mersey Canal; on a still summer morning, with perfect reflections, a solitary narrow-boat made a fine picture as it headed away from the junction. The attractive and historic iron bridge spanning the A5 just over the Staffordshire border carries another arm of the Shropshire Union; one day I hope to explore the system more fully.

The Shropshire tub-boat canals included several inclined planes, and it is one of these, the Hay incline, that can be seen climbing the hillside above Coalport. The last mile or so of the Shropshire Canal has been preserved within the Blists Hill open-air museum; this was the part of the canal, which survived until 1944, connecting the Blists Hill furnaces with the Hay incline. I find Blists Hill a most interesting part of the Ironbridge museum complex, with its restored buildings, factories, engines and railway, and a pleasant path running beside the old canal. A typical tub-boat is moored in the canal. At the end of the path are the remains of the dock, with its rails and stone-sided lock chamber, where the canal boats were transferred to the inclined plane. The incline was last used in about 1894.

A final short stretch of the Shropshire Canal runs from the foot of the incline at Coalport, parallel to the Severn, as far as the china works. There was never any physical connection

between canal and river, no lock where boats could move from one to the other, but goods could no doubt be trans-shipped across a quay from tub-boat to Severn trow.

It was a brilliant spring day when I was last at Ironbridge, and the walks beside the river and the old canal were quite delightful. I look forward to returning soon to that part of England, and I shall read Sir John Betjeman's 'Shropshire Lad' with renewed pleasure!

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STOP PRESS

Mrs Harrison has told the Council that she would like to relinquish the post of Sales Officer.

We owe Floss Harrison a considerable debt for the highly efficient and energetic way in which she has done this job over the last few years. The benefit to the Society, in financial terms, has been substantial, and many professionals might envy her sales technique. On the north bank, Miss Helen Darby has also worked hard, and has been a loyal supporter of the Society functions despite the problems posed by living in a village without independent transport.

The Society is now seeking someone who might be prepared to take over the job as Sales Officer. This is as demanding as one cares to make it; apart from organising the sale of materials at meetings and by post, it can involve following up new ideas and developing new lines. Any member who is tempted is asked to contact the Chairman, John Hainsworth, at Amen Cottage, Church Lane, Ellerker, Brough, HU15 2DT. Telephone North Cave (04302) 3147.