

The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society



No 8

April 2006

Editor: John H. Luxton

# ***The Tow Line***



*Daniel Adamson Cammell Laird No. 4 Dry Dock – April 27, 2006. Dan Cross (DAPS)*

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Supported by the  
**Heritage Lottery Fund**

[www.danieladamson.com](http://www.danieladamson.com)

## **Competition - Name The Laid Up MSC Tug**

Can you identify this laid up Manchester Ship Canal steam tug? Please send your answer to Dan Cross, by June 30, 2006. – Prize for the first correct answer drawn – Bottle of Whisky. Previous quiz had 7 correct answers submitted. Of these Doug Banners' entry was drawn as the winner. The tug depicted was 'Cadishhead'. Mr. Banner's father, Arthur was Skipper of the 'Daniel Adamson' during his career and coincidentally he also served as Skipper of the 'Cadishhead' at one time. Well done Arthur.



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<b>The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society is supported by The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Fund for the Preservation of Industrial and Scientific Material (PRISM).</b>		

Editor's Notes
Welcome to edition 8 of "The Tow Line". Apologies for the delay in publication caused by virus and trojan problems on your Editor's computer during April.
Resolution of these problems, combined with a brief malicious virus attack on the DAPS web site, unfortunately wasted much time set aside for compiling "The Tow Line". However, one advantage of being a little late is that all the latest news concerning the dry docking of the 'Danny' can be included. Every cloud has a silver lining so they say!
Once again, this is a 20 page edition of "The Tow Line" with all the latest news, Part 2 of Neil Marsden's "A Remarkable Survivor" is reproduced for the benefit of those without web access. Member Tom Sherriff has provided further reminiscences of the London Docks. His previous feature in edition 7 being well received. – Enjoy!
- John H. Luxton, Editor
<b>The Tow Line - published end of January, April, July and October. Press date for contributions is the first day of the month of publication.</b>

## J.O. GRAVEL



The J.O. GRAVEL was an interesting tug that operated in Canada for a short time before she operated as the 'Clarendon' for the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

### J.O. GRAVEL

- 1909: Built by "A. McMillan & Son Ltd" at Dumbarton (GBR) (YN 427)
- 1909 -xx/05: delivered to "Sincennes McNaughton Line Ltd" at Montreal (CAN) (GBR) flag, regd Montreal, ON 126490)
- 1913: To "Roger Miller & Co (PEI) Ltd"
- 1916: acquired UK War Office, renamed H.S. 45 (GBR flag, reg. London, ON 126490)
- 1918: transferred to the UK Admiralty, renamed J.O. GRAVEL
- 1920: To "General Works Construction Co Ltd" London (GBR), renamed CLARENDON
- 1922: To "S. Pearson & Sons (Contracting Department) Ltd" at London (GBR)
- 1925: To "MSC - Manchester Ship Canal Co" at Manchester (GBR)
- 1952: To "J. Davies Towage & Salvage Co Ltd (G A Guy)" at Cardiff (GBR), renamed CAROLINE DAVIES
- 1962: broken up by "Haulbolwline Industries Ltd" at Passage West, County Cork (IRL)

### What a Coincidence!

Charles Brocklebank, a descendant of the Ralph after whom the *Danny* was originally named, has joined us as a

member. Surprisingly, the very next member to join was Mr. Adamson - though apparently not related.

It had been planned for the 'Kerne' to lay against the dock wall, sitting on the dock floor, whilst the 'DA' was to have sat on blocks in conventional fashion. Unlike our first dry-docking in 2004 at Clarence (sadly no longer available) Bidston is too large and of such a design that shores (timber support beams) cannot be used.

The responsibility for the safe dry-docking of vessels lies with the Foreman Shipwright. Normally in most cases is the shipwright is assisted by a 'docking plan'. Unfortunately in the case of the 'Danny' this no longer exists, or rather we don't have one!

In order that the vessel should sit safely on the centre blocks, added support is needed elsewhere. When shoring cannot be used, additional 'bilge' blocks must be placed in strategic positions to provide this added support and it is the responsibility of the foreman shipwright to judge where these should be placed. Without a full plan the difficulty of this task is made much worse.

Ultimately about 15:30 on Friday afternoon, the 'DA' began to settle, stern first on the blocks. All seemed well at first, but as the vessel levelled off it became apparent to the foreman shipwright, that there was a risk to the ship if we were to proceed further, accordingly the pumps were stopped.

Mr Wong the Foreman, declared his fears for the safety of proceeding further. There was a risk of the vessel falling from the blocks and being damaged beyond repair.

Safety is of paramount importance and despite great disappointment we were happy to concede to Mr Wong's professional opinion. Accordingly the dock was re-flooded and the vessels secured alongside. For those 'trapped' aboard 'Kerne' for the descent and now compelled to remain during the ascent also it was a very long, cold day.

Work didn't stop just because we had a problem dry-docking, NSL's Jim Ash set to work burning out a number of rivets from the centre furnace.

On a recent visit our boiler surveyor noted some wasting of the metal in the area towards the front of the lower part of the centre furnace, probably caused by the action of removing ash from the boiler over a number of years.

Appropriately named for the task in hand, NSL's Jim Ash burnt out the rivets in the affected area to allow closer examination and for consideration of an effective repair. In an effort to assist Jim I took up a small lump hammer and a metal drift to hammer out the remaining rivet ends.

Very regrettably one badly aimed blow struck Jim on the arm, fortunately without serious injury and my assistance was declined thereafter! I am pleased to report that Jim completed this task (unaided) and moved on to start burning out the boiler smoke tubes, apparently none the worse for my unintentional assault.

**- Neil Marsden**

## Chairman's Letter

I suppose the best way to start is to say 'it is happening'. We started the New Year with the news we had been awarded the HLF grant, but were short of money to be able to guarantee to complete the project.

One of our members then offered to lend us the money, so we were able to start and transfer half the HLF grant to our bank account. Work started in preparing the tug, but nothing is straightforward and unforeseen problems such as the closure of the dry dock adjacent to our mooring have appeared, (see Dan's report for the details). Due though to our good friends we have overcome them and by re scheduling the work we are not far off our target schedule.

Members have put in a tremendous amount of work, I think at one time we wondered if we would make the minimum number of hours of matching funding required by HLF but I am sure we will far exceed them. All contractors have bent over backwards to help us, in particular North Western Ship Repairers.

We have had our first meeting with experts from National Museums Liverpool to discuss the treatment of the saloons and start work on the Conservation Management Plan (CMP). John Broomby has even found a source of veneers.

## Officers and Committee – Who's who? - Part 6

### Tony Hirst's watery background

My interest in canals and industrial archaeology began in the late 1940s when I was taken to Lyme Park near Stockport and we had to walk across the Macclesfield Canal at Higher Poynton.

We have done well in raising the additional funds required to complete the project so far raising beyond the DAPS initial commitment from our reserves we have raised over £15,000 towards our £20,000 target with a number of other applications awaiting the potential funder's decision.

We are not there yet with the survey project but we are well into it and expect to have all the work completed not long after the original estimate in June. That though is only the start; we have then to make a number of important decisions about changes that have to be made to the boat to enable it to work within today's requirements, but without losing its historic integrity. A list has been produced and will be assessed while developing the CMP.

Once we have all the information from the surveys we have to develop an overall specification for the future and seek the cost of meeting the statutory and other requirements to operate with a vessel that is over a hundred years old.

A thank you to all those who have worked on this on and off the vessel. Lots of work but very satisfying to see such progress.

**- Tony Hirst April, 2006**

In the early 1960s a friend and I explored the tub boat canals around what is now Telford and so the interest grew and I was hooked.

In the early 1970s I got involved with the North Western Museum of Inland Navigation, which evolved into the Boat Museum. I became a member of the small group restoring the tug Worcester. Later I became the working party organiser for the restoration of the derelict site at Ellesmere Port. These became great family activities; our children enjoying themselves doing what would be seen today as dangerous and not allowed in today's over litigious world.

At the time I worked in the then new computer industry but was increasingly frustrated by working for a large organisation. When in 1980 the new post of Museum Director for the Boat Museum was created I applied for it and got the job.

Probably the hardest working, but most exciting and satisfying years followed, through the 1980s and 90s, working with some of the most talented and dedicated people.

I became involved with many associated organisations, chairing a number of them and I am still involved with some. Times were changing as we neared the millennium and I decided that it was time to retire. This

## Membership Notes

### Membership Renewal Approaches.

It was a tremendous act of faith for you all to support us at the outset - you undoubtedly saved the ship.

Now we've received our Project Planning Grant - that's alright then ...? No! We really have a tiger by the tail now - the Danny is being ruthlessly examined and big chunks literally

only after merging the management of the three waterways museums and their archives into a new financially supported trust, which I and others believed would secure their future. All has not worked out as we planned but let's hope our aspirations will finally be realised.

I thought retirement would bring less responsibilities and work but far from it. We have managed to spend months at a time on our boat but often ensuring that our route enables me to catch a train to go to a meeting. By 2004 I was trying to lessen my activities when I heard about the scrapping of the Daniel Adamson; making the fatal mistake of attending the protest meeting called by Dan, compounded by being in his view when seeking directors for the new company to take the project on, and as they say the rest is history.

I am now delighted that I went to that meeting, not just to see the Daniel Adamson's restoration progressing so well but it has brought me in touch with many new enthusiasts who share a vision for the return of the DA to full operation. The spirit and amount of work undertaken is just like the early days of the Boat Museum long may it continue. Such commitment is bound to lead to success.

Tony Hirst  
April 2006

dismantled, in the hunt for decay and the assessment of its remedy - and the determination to minimise cost and disruption long term.

You will read of the mighty efforts being made, and I'm sure you can imagine the costs involved. We have received generous help in finding

this the first time the 'Danny' had visited Birkenhead since she was built?

Work on the removal of the asbestos commenced week beginning February 13, 2006. Contractors Malrod arrived and prepared their on site facilities at NSL's Bidston quay

Tuesday working parties continued at Salisbury Dock during February this included the overhaul of some of the auxiliary machinery, along with the erection of a temporary 'shelter' in which to carry out work in some degree of comfort!

Work was undertaken on the 'Lamont' general service pump 'buckets' what a difference a wire brush makes! So far the pump and its engine seem to be in magnificent condition and in good working order. It is hoped that with the replacement of some small components it will soon be as good as new.

Saturday working party members have been busy 'off site' with many tasks, ranging from the recovery and delivery of some substantial timber baulks required to repair the coal bunker floor supports, visiting craftsmen with relevant skills whose talents may be of assistance to the project and sourcing potential archive material for the society.

Asbestos removal took a little longer than had been anticipated ending on March 17. With the asbestos lagging removed the boiler shell is now exposed, and much as we expected, appears to be in first class condition. The boiler fittings have, after several years lack of attention become reluctant to part company with the boiler shell and it has involved some considerable effort to remove many of these.

Once removed the various items have been stripped down, ready to be cleaned, overhauled and tested before being replaced at a later date. Naturally all have been carefully identified by their individual reference numbers and cross checked with our pipe drawings, prepared by member, Mike Williams.

Mike has also prepared drawings of the existing smoke box from which a new replacement will be manufactured as work on the boiler progresses.

At the present time all indications are that the boiler is in generally good shape and capable of a full restoration though a lot of work, including the renewal of tubes will be required.

At 08.30 on Friday April 7th a dozen volunteers from DAPS, along with several crew from the steam tug 'Kerne' and a number of dockyard shipwrights were in attendance to move the two vessels into the Bidston dry-dock.

'Kerne' was manhandled into the dock first and lay against the wall, while soon after the 'Daniel Adamson' was propelled in similar fashion to her designated spot in the middle of the dock. Though high winds tried to disrupt proceedings, within an hour or two, the 'DA' was secured in a central position as the dock was slowly pumped out.

Bidston Dry Dock is of considerable size the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's 'Ben-My-Chree' had vacated the dock just prior to our entry. With both the 'Kerne' and the 'DA' taking up very little space and displacing just a few hundred tons between them, there remained much water to drain before we could sit high and dry.

The organisation of the move largely fell on the shoulders of Dan Cross and we should take a moment to reflect upon what was involved. No transit would be possible unless the vessel was insured, additionally to the existing premium we pay. The insurance alone has added a significant extra cost to proceedings, so that the continued support of Svitzer Marine with towage has been crucial to this operation. The society has to comply with contractual obligations with contractors tasked with carrying out the work needed for the project planning phase, in other words, the clock had been ticking for some time.

The insurers also stipulate the terms and conditions applicable to the tow, the towing vessel, requirement for a pilot, the weather conditions, wind strength and a list of other factors, many of which are very much dependent upon the vagaries of the British winter!

An amazing amount of work was undertaken by working parties to ensure the watertight integrity of the vessel prior to the move. Special brackets were designed by Peter Irlam and John Huxley to immobilise the propellers thus preventing damage to machinery should they rotate.

We had hoped for some notice of a time and day when the move could take place, but a readily available group of volunteers stood by just in case. There were several false starts, when time, tide and the working schedule of the towing vessel caused us to abandon arrangements literally at the last moment, but on February 03 around 11.00 am things changed.

My telephone rang and Dan Cross asked if I could be at Salisbury Dock

by midday? I won't describe my predicament at that moment but suffice to say I made it! Importantly so too did Mersey River Pilot and DAPS Member, Stuart Wood, along with regular volunteers, John Deakin, Colin Leonard and Phil Janion from Runcorn and Pat Brennan from Manchester.

Tug 'Ashgarth' of Svitzer Marine was approaching the berth as we arrived at the dock, we hastily lifted the gangway aboard, singled up and securing the 'DA' bow to bow with the 'Ashgarth'

The last ropes were let go by members Wally Graham and Dave Owen, and we were off. The 'Ashgarth' was manoeuvred deftly through the docks towards the Gladstone Dock entrance by DAPS member Captain Stuart Honour while Dan Cross supervised the ropes, fenders and a hundred other things as well. Off Gladstone Lock, the 'Ashgarth' came alongside and the 'DA' was breasted up for the tow.

The river passage was accomplished quickly, in almost flat calm and in we were soon swinging to enter the Alfred Basin, Birkenhead.

When the basin levelled with the dock, moved off again, passing under the familiar road bridges straddling the Birkenhead dock estate.

Approaching the West Float berth we recognised as Jim Clarke, of Northwestern Shiprepairers standing by ready to take our ropes. Moments later the job was done and the 'Daniel Adamson' had returned to the Wirral.

It was quite a contrast to see the 'Danny' lying astern of a modern Incat ferry, nearly 100 years her junior. Was

most of the 'match funding' required to obtain the Grant, and despite docking difficulties the work has proceeded apace, with your volunteers reducing the cost wherever possible.

However, there is inevitably the need for more - this critical time - and support is just as important as it was at the outset - not only for the funds you provide, but also to demonstrate to Funder's that they can confidently support a society which has a loyal and growing membership.

So, please prepare for your subscription renewal, due on May the first (unless you joined this year). Why not do it now, while you remember? You will find a return slip in this newsletter for your convenience. - Better still why not take out a Standing Order?

## Memories of the Royal Docks

The final one and a half years of my apprenticeship were served in the Ship Drawing Office at Harland and Wolff's Number 10 Yard, North Woolwich. The works were bounded by a bend in the River Thames, the Locks of the King George V Dock and Marnot Way the main road from North Woolwich to East Ham.

The large windows of the drawing office gave a clear view down the length of the King George V Dock and many famous ships owned by Royal Mail Lines, P&O, Union Castle, British India, New Zealand Shipping Company were regular visitors to this dock.

The ships that stand out clearly in my memory were the Royal Mail Lines "Highland" ships: five of these ships were built for the Nelson Line between 1929 and 1932 by Harland

## Welcome to New Members

Another warm welcome to new members, supporting our work to restore the *Danny*

Charles McCrossan, Glasgow  
Alan Trueman, Liverpool  
George Hays, Runcorn  
Alf Turner, Liverpool  
Eddie Jannion, Frodsham  
Mike Burkett, West Kirby  
C. W. Brocklebank, Suffolk  
M. J. Adamson, Bournemouth  
Paul Smith, Birkenhead  
Robert Adam, Wallasey  
Gordon Ditchfield, Bebbington, Wirral

In the last edition I quoted 'over 230 members' - but meant the highest membership number - this is currently 243, while there are 215 current members.

- **Pat Crecraft Secretary**

and Wolff, Belfast. They were propelled by two blast injection engines, and were designed for the Argentine meat trade; each vessel was equipped with an ammonia refrigeration plant the compressors driven by horizontal Crossley oil engines.

The five vessels in the fleet comprised the "Highland Monarch", "Highland Brigade", "Highland Chieftain", "Highland Princess" and the "Highland Patriot". On the first of October 1940, the "Highland Patriot" was torpedoed by U34 when inbound from Argentina, and sank with the loss of three members of the engine room crew.

The first of a new class of ships the "RMS Amazon" for the River Plate was launched in 1959, and the Highland vessels were withdrawn from service commencing 1960. The

Nelson Line ran into problems during the depression and was absorbed into Royal Mail Lines. The River Plate run ended in 1969 when the Argentine beef trade was decimated by Foot and Mouth disease. Royal Mail Lines also operated a single screw motor cargo vessel "Gascony" registered in Liverpool, again propelled by a blast injection engine. I was given the job of measuring up the main injection valve chest, and preparing a set of drawings for a new chest.

The largest ship to use this dock was the "RMS Dominion Monarch" of Shaw Savill Lines, she had been built by Swan Hunter she was 26,463 tons, and was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1938 and sailed on her maiden voyage on September 16, 1939. Her four screws, driven by Doxford opposed piston engines, gave her a service speed of 20 knots and she had space for 13,000 tons of cargo. During the Second World War she was in service as a troop ship.

One of my strongest memories was the "Mooltan" being manoeuvred down the KGV Dock and into the lock, under the charge of four Gamecock tugs. The tugs would enter the dock first, waiting out in the Gallions Reach while the "Mooltan" was warped in the lock by the hydraulically operated capstans; once through the lock and into the deep water of Gallions Reach, the tugs would bring her about before heading downstream.

The "Mooltan" and her sister the "Maloja" were built for P&O by Harland and Wolff, Belfast and were designed to be the largest ships capable of passing through the Suez Canal, and were the first P&O ships to exceed 20,000 tons.

The "Mooltan" of 20,847 gross tons, was 600' 9" x 73' 5" beam and 46' 7" draught, her machinery by Harland and Wolff comprised six double ended

and two single ended scotch boilers. They had been intended for coal burning but conversion to oil firing took place during fitting out, steam was generated at 215psig.

Her two main engines were quadruple expansion giving her a speed of 16 knots with a total of 16,000 ihp. The cylinder bores were HP 33"; IP 47"; IP2 67½" and LP 97" by a stroke of 5'0". She was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1923 being handed over to her owners on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1923.

Like many of the P&O liners of her time she was fitted with hydraulic deck cranes, most probably because of their quiet operation. Hydraulic power was generated by a three crank triple expansion pumping engine referred to by the ship's engineers as "The Nutcracker".

She had a crew of 422, with 327 first class and 329 second class passengers. She sailed on her maiden voyage to Australia on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1923 calling at Colombo, Melbourne and Sydney. During 1929 she was fitted with two sets of exhaust steam turbines generating power for DC electric motors, one on each shaft. This increased the top speed to 17½ knots, she was routed via Bombay.

With the outbreak of the Second World War she was in October 1939, converted to an armed merchant cruiser and based at Freetown. Her aft funnel was cut down by half to improve the arc of fire of the anti-aircraft guns.

During 1941 she was converted to a troopship at Bombay and on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1942 she took part in the North African landings.

In 1948 she returned to service as a single class ship, with a capacity of 1030 tourist class passengers. On

## 2006 AGM Notice

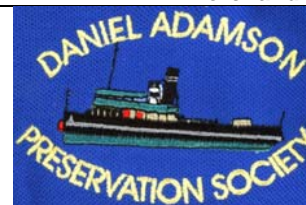
The Daniel Adamson 2006 Annual General Meeting will be held late September or early October. Details will be notified to members in due course. The later meeting will allow a full report on plans following survey as well as moving the meeting outside of the main holiday period when some members may be away.

## Working Parties

Those wishing to attend working parties should contact:  
Neil Marsden - Tel: 01516082868 Email: neil.marsden3@ntlworld.com  
John Deakin - Tel: 01928573877.

## The DAPS Shop

Please help support the restoration of the Daniel Adamson by purchasing merchandise from the society shop.



**Polo Shirts £16.50 inc P&P**  
Embroidered Daniel Adamson Logo  
Available in sizes: Small to XXL

**Sweat Shirts £18.25 inc P&P**  
Embroidered Daniel Adamson Logo  
Sizes Medium & Large Only

Limited quantities – please contact Alan Hughes to confirm availability.



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11, Rockwood Drive, Skipton, North Yorks, BD23 1NF

Tel: 01756 701320

Email: [hughes@skipton4.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:hughes@skipton4.fsnet.co.uk)

Cheques should be made payable to The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society.

## Restoration Diary

At very short notice on February 03, 2006 the 'Daniel Adamson' was moved from her Salisbury Dock berth across the River Mersey to West Float, Birkenhead and berthed outside the Northwestern Shiprepairers' Bidston Yard.

Perhaps those who might consider the task of moving an inert object like a 103 year old tug a couple of miles across a river, reasonably straightforward should perhaps consider the daunting logistical task this involves.

I have to say that our appointed surveyor from the Liverpool office, Alan Holmes has been great with this project from day one. He is utterly realistic about what we are setting out to achieve with what we have. In other words he is unfazed by the task off eventually re-issuing a passenger vessel of 103 years of age with a valid MCA Class V passenger certificate. He appreciates what we have and discusses at every level with us what he wants in terms of bringing the old girl back into class as it were.

The first internal survey went very well with no surprises in store, once all surveys are complete we will of course report back in greater detail.

So now (beginning of May) as I said at the start of this piece, the Danny is now in dry-dock with lots of practical work going on in conjunction with the many surveys needed.



*Boiler tubes being burned out by NSL's best Boiler Man – Jimmy Ash*

A full NDT electronic survey of the whole vessel is being carried out by Ocean Marine and again the results are very encouraging with no hidden surprises for us.

I was today asked by a reporter from the Liverpool Daily Post to describe what is going on and why.....

I replied that the simplest way to describe it is imagine owning a classic, 1930's double decker bus and you want to carry passengers again. Well to obtain a passenger license you would have to take that old bus to the MOT station where HM inspectorate would examine every inch of the bus and eventually issue a report detailing what has to be done to bring it "up to spec".

Well for us the MOT inspector is Alan Holmes (MCA) and Bob Garnett (Boiler- Royal & Sun) and there is no MOT station - we must create one!

Hopefully by the time you read this the Danny will be finally be back in Liverpool at her berth in Salisbury dock were the restoration and preservation will no doubt continue apace.

Finally another huge round of applause for the volunteers who especially since the turn of the new year have been working some times up to five days a week at times to prepare for surveys etc. Without you the project would basically be going backwards instead of forwards as it is at great pace. Thank you.

**- Dan Cross**

26<sup>th</sup> August 1948 she returned to the Australian service, many of her outward passengers taking advantage of the £10 assisted passage.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1953 she was sold to the British Iron and Steel Corporation and was broken up at Faslane.

Her sister the "Maloja" had a tonnage of 20827 and was launched on 19 April 1923, being handed over on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1923; sailing on her maiden voyage on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1924 to Colombo, Melbourne and Sydney. During 1930 her power and efficiency were improved by adding a geared exhaust steam turbine to each main engine. This increased her speed to 17½ knots.

In October 1939, she was converted to an armed merchant cruiser at Bombay; later during 1941 she was converted to a troop ship, being the largest troopship to enter Bone, North Africa.

On 10 June 1948 as a single class ship, she was returned to the Australian Service with 1030 tourist class passengers, many travelling on the £10 assisted passage scheme.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1954 she was sold for £170,000 to the British Iron and Steel Corporation and broken up at Inverkiething.

Another interesting ship was the "Chitral" one of three sister ships built for P&O, the other two being the "Cathay" and the "Cormorin", the "Chitral" being built by Alexander Stephen & Son, Linthouse, Glasgow; she was 15248 gross tons with a length of 526' 4" by 70' 2" and 46' 0" draught.

Her twin screws were driven by Alexander Stephen quadruple expansion engines with cylinder bores HP 29½", IP1 42½", 60¾" IP2 and LP

87" with a stroke of 4'6"; giving a total of 13000ihp. Steam at 215 psig was generated in three double and four single ended scotch boilers giving a speed of 16 knots.

She was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1925 and sailed on her maiden voyage from London to Australia on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1925.

During the 1930s her main engines were modified by the addition of geared exhaust steam turbines. With the outbreak of the Second World War she was in October 1939 commissioned as an armed merchant cruiser.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November that year she rescued the survivors of "HMS Rawalpindi", off Iceland after she sank at the end of a 40 minute engagement with the German battleships "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau"; later in 1943 she was converted for service as a troop ship.

During 1946 her main mast was replaced by twin posts and on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1948 she returned to Australian service with 740 immigrants on the outward bound voyage.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1953 she was sold for scrap to for £167,500 to the British Iron and Steel Corporation and broken up at Dalmuir.

Of her sisters the "Cathay" had been build and engined by Barclay Curle of Glasgow, being launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1924 by Lady Inchcape, the wife of the chairman of P&O. She sailed on her maiden voyage to Australia on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1925.

In December 1933 she lost a propeller while attempting to make up lost time between Colombo and Fremantle.

In 1943 she was converted for service as a troopship and on 11 November 1942 she was bombed at Bougie, North Africa when she caught fire; later a delayed action bomb set off her store of ammunition and she sank.

The other sister ship the "Cormorin" was also built and engined by Barclay Curle, being launched on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1924; sailing on her maiden voyage to Australia on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1925,

On 6<sup>th</sup> April 1941 while serving as "HMS Cormorin" the ship caught fire off Sierra Leone, in heavy seas and gale force winds. The crew of 450 men were taken off by the "Glenartney" and destroyers "HMS Lincoln" and "HMS Broke" which repeatedly came right alongside. Twenty men were lost. The next day "HMS Broke" torpedoed the blazing hulk.

To assist these ships in and out of the docks, several fleets of large tugs were maintained on standby. The names of companies that spring to mind are Watkins Tugs, Gamecock Tugs, Sun Tugs, Knights Towage Company and the Port of London Authority. Luckily one of the tugs – the "Challenge" has been preserved and I last saw her berthed in St. Katharine's Dock more than ten years ago.

*[Challenge visited Merseyside for the Mersey River Festival in 2004. – Editor]*

Around 1950 the Port of London Authority decided to replace their ageing fleet of steam ship-handling tugs with four new twin screw diesel tugs. They all bore names beginning "PLA" – "Plagal", "Plangent" and "Platina" are the ones I can remember. As built the "Plagal" was fitted with Kort nozzles, though they almost doubled her towage capacity,

large baulks of timber were drawn through them causing serious damage to the expensive Stone Manganese bronze propellers and the nozzles were removed after a few months in service. These tugs were propelled by two Crossley two stroke diesel engines.

The Port of London Authority operated a small passenger vessel the "St. Katharine", and during the summer months she brought groups of tourists down from Tower Pier to look at the big liners moored in the Royal Docks, no airport or aircraft can match such a spectacle. The "St. Katherine" had been built and engined by Philip of Dartmouth, and was propelled by two sets of enclosed triple expansion engines. Power for electric lighting was generated by a small Greenwood and Batley turbine generator set. "St. Katherine" was for a while in the 1950s berthed in St. Katherine's Dock as a floating office, she is now moored at the Thames Embankment at Westminster.

Today anyone seeing off a close relative leaves them at the check in and may not see them again; the departure of a large liner was more of an occasion and the dockside was often crowded with visitors seeing off relatives they may never see again.

As the ship passed through the bridge at Manor Way and into the lock, they would run out of the dock gates, and when the bascules came down crowded onto the bridge to watch her being warped out into the deep water of Gallions Reach. The passengers crowding the rails to catch a glimpse of their relatives and take in what was happening around them. A lot more interesting than being strapped in a seat during take off!

**- Thomas Sherriff (196)**

removal off the boiler fittings could only be described at best "very difficult" and at worst a "nightmare".

Some days only one valve could be coaxed off with the combined efforts of many so eventually we asked the shipyard to send us a burner down to assist with a lot of heat. Eventually after over a week all valves including the safety valves were off and ready for some attention from our engineers.

Soon after our first boiler survey took place with Bob Garnett, senior surveyor R&S declaring himself pleasantly surprised and "keen to see her back in steam".

Once the second, combined survey with R&S and the MCA has been completed I am sure someone a lot more qualified to do so will report in full the findings and recommendations for our boiler.

A couple of planned dates for dry-docking came and went so it was finally on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April DAPS volunteers along with many NSL shipwrights attended Bidston dry-dock to place our precious commodity "on the blocks" as it were.

It is worth pointing out at this stage that Daniel Adamson would be unable to be supported in Bidston dry-dock by "shores" (large baulks of timber acting as props from the ships side to the side of the dock) as in Clarence previously due to the immense size of the dock compared to the "Danny" and her diminutive dimensions in comparison. Therefore ordinarily the ships docking plan would be consulted and suitable "side-beds" placed on the dock floor in the appropriate places so as to support the ship.

Unfortunately a docking-plan we do not have so rough calculations were made off our midship and G.A plans.

For the sake of magazine space I will summarise what happened next only to say that after mustering at 08:00 hrs and many hours of pumping the dock out after much pushing and pulling, the chief shipwright, Barry Wong ordered the dock to be flooded again at 17:00 hrs as he was very unhappy with the way the Danny was settling on the blocks and of course we agreed and understood his reasons as we could not risk and damage to the Danny during this delicate operation.

NSL then decided to dry-dock us a few weeks later in their smallest dry-dock which although their smallest, #4 Monks Ferry (the "CSS Alabama" dock) is still unusually large for a tug of the Danny's size. Special 34ft shores (10" x 10") were ordered at great expense by NSL and fingers were crossed.



*Scaffolding rigged ready for the removal of the props which took some coaxing and the use of a 60 ton jack.*

Everything went to plan on this occasion; but not before an obstruction on the gate sill nearly meant yet another abandoned attempt but all was cleared at the last second.

Again the time waiting to move to Monks Ferry was well utilized preparing the vessel for and then having the Danny surveyed internally by the MCA.

time in January when we were given permission by HLF were many in number and varied in nature.

As previously reported, since the closure of Clarence dry-docks adjacent to our regular berth in Liverpool, we were requested by NSL to deliver the boat to their Bidston facility to enable the asbestos removal to begin by the sub-contractors, Malrod Ltd and eventual dry-docking at Bidston dry-dock.

A free tow was again hastily arranged with Svitzer Marine on a "as and when commercially viable" basis, basically when a tug was available during a slack period in the work. This "slack" period was unfortunately a long time coming but after several attempts which had to aborted at the last minute, Friday Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> saw the tug "Ashgarth" tow the "Danny" from Salisbury dock, Liverpool to Bidston in Birkenhead's West Float.

Several other factors as well as the kind generosity of Svitzer made this possible including of course the services of DAPS founder-member Capt. Stuart Honour and his crew and DAPS member and Liverpool pilot Stuart Wood as pilotage for dead-tows on the river is compulsory.

The weather also had to be on our side as condition of insurance was that the tow to be performed in no more than a force 4. Speaking of insurance, an additional premium of £800 has also had to be paid to cover DAPS to enable the Danny to be towed under UK standard towing conditions.

12<sup>th</sup> February saw Malrod Insulations begin work aboard the boat preparing her for the hazardous operation of stripping all the asbestos lagging from the boiler, removal of all pipe insulation and the insulation around the engines.

The HSE require notification before asbestos removal can begin on any site and have to give express permission once all precautions are in place. Some of the preparations include sealing the whole of the boat from outside air flow and fitting large extractors combined with a four flap door system which ensures a positive air pressure at all times. The sealing of all nooks and crannies and sheeting up all machinery and bilge space took the best part of 10 days combined with freezing weather bursting water pipes to their decontamination unit.

The job was complete nearly six weeks later and having seen the extent of the job ahead of them and the end result all I can say is what a professional job they have done.

March 17<sup>th</sup> saw the final chemist's checks successfully complete and upon inspection the vessel was handed back to us looking some what different than before in places!

We then had to await our turn in the cavernous Bidston dry-dock but this time was more than put to use by our dedicated band of volunteers. Before the Royal & Sun Alliance senior boiler surveyor, Bob Garnett attended for our first survey all boiler fittings (valves etc) had to be removed from the boiler shell. This will allow close inspection of the shell in way of all the boiler seatings and studs etc.

Working parties were becoming more and more frequent and our dedicated band of volunteers lead by John Deakin, Neil Marsden and Steve Lawrinson were now taking place up to four times a week to prepare the vessel.

I am not a technical person and will never pretend to be so but from first hand experience all I can do is take my hat off to the volunteers as the

## A Remarkable Survivor – Part 2

In Part 1 of this article [Tow Line 7] I have outlined some brief facts about the 'Daniel Adamson' from the vessel's launch in 1903 up to a point roughly in the mid 1920's following her acquisition, (still as 'Ralph Brocklebank') by the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

In this continuation I hope to carry on where I left off and if possible identify changes to the vessel over the years. Some of these are quite subtle while others are more drastic. I am almost certain to miss something and know that there are a number of people out there who will point out any errors or changes I overlook, which is exactly what I'm after. The better we know the 'Daniel Adamson' the more accurate will be the final restoration. In fairness, I should add that we will be restricted to some extent by present legislation and the need for security in these 'enlightened times' so that the end result may not be 100% 'as it was' but will be as close to the original as possible.

At present I am in possession of a copy of a 'general arrangement' plan\*\* drawn to a scale of 1/48, purporting to show 'Ralph Brocklebank' the plan includes some particulars of the vessel and the date '13.12.35' Most striking on the drawing is the location of the mast, which unlike any photograph of the ship, shows it emerging from the main deck actually ahead of the casing, unlike the photographs which in every case show the mast emerging from a point on what is now the promenade deck. Indeed the plan shows two stairways, one either side of the mast, connecting the main and promenade decks, once again all photographs of 'Ralph Brocklebank' and her two

consorts for that matter, show a single broad stairway set amidships.



*\*\*A section of the plan is reproduced; in this instance the outline marked in blue indicates areas to be removed in the 1936 re-build, while red denotes new structures/fittings. You will note that even this differs considerably from the final result.*

*Editor's Note: Unfortunately it has proved difficult to provide a reasonable reproduction of this plan for "The Tow Line". A larger version is downloadable from the web site.*

Now look at the photos again, firstly if we look at the 'Ralph Brocklebank' in 1907 when owned by the S.U.R. & C.Co. As a rough guide count how many fenders along the hull side appear to be positioned aft of the casing, I count just two, also look at the length of the casing aft of the funnel. I accept that the fenders could be placed in different positions, but look at closer views, the fenders were positioned over special reinforced 'pads' on the hull, so were specifically placed in these locations for maximum effect.

Subsequent views show three aft of the casing. A third and constant reference point is provided by the overboard discharge from the condenser (cooling water). Compare with the 1907 photo and others on the page, particularly the Royal visit views. The difference is very

apparent, also on the starboard side view from Part 1 of this article. For those not sure of what the 'overboard discharge' is, it is the water flow from the side of the ship, seen white against the hull of the vessel in the photographs.

I believe the following paragraph may offer an explanation. I quote 'The combined passenger carrying and towage service continued until 1915. From then until 1921 the "Ralph Brocklebank" and her two sisters "W.E. Dorrington" and "Lord Stalbridge" operated as tugs only. The Manchester Ship Canal Company acquired the three vessels in 1921.

In my humble submission, I believe that the year 1915 may have been significant in what appears to be a modification to the ship, in keeping with her change of role to pure towing duties.

The apparent reduction in length of the casing, together with attendant modifications to the towing gear, would have provided a much more versatile towing vessel, capable of handling a wider range of vessels from barges to quite large ships, no doubt a valuable expedient at this point in the Great War. At the same time it appears that the majority of her passenger accommodation located in the forward portion of the casing and below in the area between the boiler room and fore-peak was retained.

As already mentioned, plans hold the key to confirming what changes took place over the vessel's life. The plans also play an important part in planning the restoration. At present we are aware of the existence of further plan drawings and their location. An important element of the Project Planning stage is to obtain working copies of these. Many of the originals

are now extremely fragile and unsuitable for general use, so that it will be essential to make full size copies both on paper and on computer. The majority are very large, A1 & A0 size, so that a considerable cost will be incurred in this process. Should any member or reader have the means to assist in this vital process, we would be most grateful to hear from them.

Returning to the side elevation once more (and I do appreciate at the scale reproduced this is not an easy task) there appears to be a considerable gap between the funnel and the steering position, again something at complete variance with all the photographs.

The notes accompanying the drawing mention that the 'Ralph Brocklebank' received a new boiler in 1922, being 'single ended and with three furnaces, by W.J. Yarwood & Sons Ltd'. Naturally this replacement would have required the removal of the original boiler and the installation of the new one, through a section of the upper or promenade deck.

Obviously the work would have necessitated the removal of any deck fittings located in this area including the funnel and steering position, but photographic evidence suggests these were replaced in their 'original' (?) positions, so it is puzzling as to why the drawing suggests otherwise. Not visible on the side elevation but clearly marked on the plan view, the steam steering engine is shown as being located amidships in the after most part of the casing, (beneath the 'lifeboat and davit' again only seen on the plan and in no known photograph, certainly not in such close proximity to the funnel) whilst the steering wheel is marked as having 'gear' only, though no method of linkage or operation is shown!

Overall the plan appears to pose a great many questions, we know that for example the companionway pictured on the aft deck did indeed face the other way before the 1936 modifications, that an anchor windlass was carried forward (we are currently overhauling it today!!) we are aware that the stern frame forward of the rudder is open to allow the propeller blades clearance, but find that the marked off-set of the propellers in the drawing differs considerably from the actual appearance.

My intention had been to make this a two part article, but have now found that it is likely to be rather longer than anticipated! I do hope that you may find it of interest. Whilst aboard, the work continues as normal, with the short daylight hours and onset of the festive season, there really isn't a lot of news to relate at present, so that I hope these articles will make up for it.

I would be delighted to hear from anyone with knowledge concerning the issues I have raised in this article, any new photographs or personal recollections would be most welcome.

I have had a copy of this plan nearly eighteen months now and have only noticed these detail differences by writing this article, yet I must have

viewed the plans a hundred times before. There is much more of interest as we look to the overhead/plan view, but for now I think we should leave that to another time, part 3 perhaps?



In the meantime, for those who were hoping for another great photo from Alan Hughes' collection, how about this post 1936 view of 'Daniel Adamson' at work, with original open wheelhouse and for 'traffic duties' minus awnings.



Finally a view of 'Lord Stalbridge' after her disposal to W.D. Guy of Cardiff, as 'Rose' (1947-59).

## Daniel Adamson Dry-Dock Update.

Well I have to say firstly what a relief it is to be writing this update for our newsletter safe in the knowledge that the "Daniel Adamson" is now safe and sound on the blocks of Northwestern Ship repairers #4 Dry-dock, Monks Ferry, Birkenhead.

She is now officially free of asbestos, boiler surveys begun, Maritime & Coastguard surveys begun, removal

of all boiler tubes in progress, looking in great condition and more over receiving more attention from both lots of very dedicated volunteer members and shipyard workers than she probably ever has.

The road to this stage of great progress has though been a bumpy one and the challenges that lay between where we are now and a