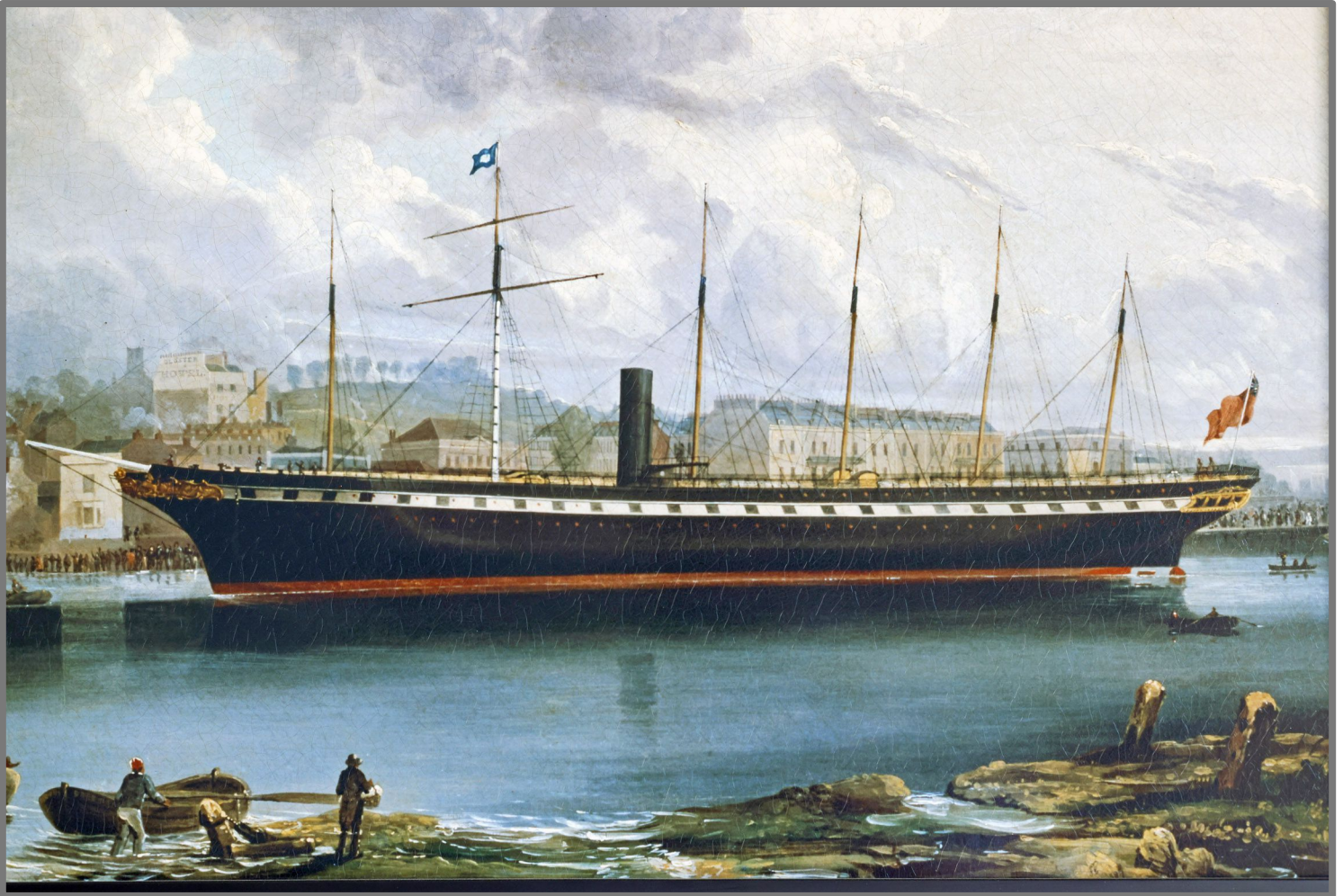


Ocean Times



SS Great Britain at Bristol, England being warped out from Avon quay 21 January 1845 in this painting by Joseph Walter (1783-1856).
painting: Author's Collection, graciously donated by Kate Baslow Carpmann

SS *Great Britain* Brunel's 1843 Masterpiece Returns to Her Birthplace

Story & photos by Nelson B. Arnstein, MD

Launched in 1843 in the city of Bristol, the SS *Great Britain* was the first ocean going ship in the world to be built of iron as well as the first to be driven by propeller instead of paddle wheel. Her designer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the greatest civil engineer of nineteenth century Britain. In addition to the *Great Britain*, Brunel designed the Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol Temple Meads train station, first tunnel under the Thames, the 1851 Crystal Palace and two other oceangoing legends: the *Great Western* and *Great Eastern*. He also built the Wapping Drydock from which the *Great Britain* was launched to begin a remarkable career.

She began as an express Atlantic liner, then, starting in 1852, took the long route to Sydney and Cape Town. Thirty years later her engine wore out and she was converted to a fully rigged sailing ship now repurposed as a cargo carrier. After four years of service taking her to San Francisco, Montevideo, and Liverpool, she ended up at the

Falkland Islands where she was laid up and left to rot for more than 80 years.

The idea of preserving the "forefather of all modern ships" came up in an 11 November 1967 letter to the London Times by naval architect Dr. E.C.B. Corlett saying that the *Great Britain* deserved the care and preservation given the *Cutty Sark* and HMS *Victory*. Ultimately the money was raised and research conducted to bring the *Great Britain* back home to her birthplace in Bristol.

At first a direct tow of over 6000 miles was proposed, but later a submersible pontoon was deemed less risky. The wreck was pumped out and refloated, the pontoon inserted underneath, and the *Great Britain* pulled out by the marine tug *Varius II* on 24 April 1970. The flotilla received a gala reception when it reached Avonmouth, and the voyage was completed on 19 July with the *Great Britain* once again in the Wapping Drydock where she was born 127 years before. The

SS *Great Britain* continues on Page 3

MEETING NOTICE

**The February 5, 2022
Chapter Meeting
will be a ZOOM event**

Kate Vescera will present
*Pre-World War I German
Ocean Liners.*

Wayne Yanda will present
*SS President Jackson
of 1940*

An invitation containing
the ZOOM meeting link
will be sent out in advance.

In This Issue...

Chapter Notes**SS Great Britain**

by Nelson B. Arnstein MD

**P&O's Chusan**

by Bill Miller

Ship Shot:**Sitmar's New Fairsky**

by Bill Miller

Ice Everywhere!

by Don Persson

**Panama Canal Reports
Record Tonnage**

by Panama Canal Authority

Tramping Cyber Space

by Bruce Vancil

In Our Wake ...**Chapter Notes from Bruce Vancil, President**

November 6th, the last meeting of 2021 saw us huddled yet again in Zoom. This meeting required participants to register to prevent the Zoom bombing experienced in the past, but the process was not universally appreciated. That includes yours truly. It seemed complicated and felt full of technical glitches. Maybe I'm just out of practice. Here's hoping we can gather again sometime soon.

We did have a fun and lively discussion as presenters shared items from their collections in an always popular edition of Show-n-Tell.

Mark Perry showed the scrapbook of the SS *United States*' maiden voyage captain. It is loaded with congratulatory telegrams from many sources and little tidbits of the voyage and the press coverage of the time. He acquired it at auction and donated it to the team at the SS United States Conservancy for preservation. Nice going Mark!

Peter Knego was at sea but provided us with a complete tour of his dining room with explanation of what items were from what ship including furniture, paneling, art, lighting, dishes, etc. The whole room is from a ship. As always, fascinating.

This writer presented two odd pieces of paper ephemera including a pre-World War II Cunard brochure with quotes from several notables in American and English society proclaiming that war would not break out for years, if ever. The piece was printed in spring of 1939, mere months before the outbreak of war. My only question was whether this was an act of great miscalculation and interpretation of the world around the Cunard's writers or a more callous promotion to pull in as many nonrefundable deposits as possible to help line the coffers of the company in anticipation for what was to come, or even for some other reason as yet unknown? I doubt anyone alive today would know. When asked, no one in the meeting had ever seen a brochure like it. I also showed an Italian Line passenger list for Andrea Doria dated for the final voyage. The big question here is were these printed on board, in which case it likely got off the ship in a lifeboat via a woman's purse – OR – are these printed on shore and this was a "not used on voyage" piece that never even participated in the famous sinking. If anyone knows the printing system they used, please let me know.

Jim Shuttleworth shared some of his collection with the feature being a painting that he helped identify and finally acquire.

Bill Keene shared a treasure from SS *Rotterdam* (v), his admittedly favorite ship. He made an assertion with which I cannot disagree: "Most comfortable ship I've ever sailed in."

Kate Vescera presented a souvenir silver tea strainer from the *Aquitania*.

Lovetta Kramer shared ship-related memorabilia from her career. First was a plaque displaying a page from the February 15, 1988 edition of ADWEEK magazine, showing the Spruce Goose and *Queen Mary*. Lovetta also shared two photos from the *Queen Mary 2* maiden voyage out of Long Beach. The first being of the two Queens while the second was of the Captain's table aboard the *QM2* during that voyage.

People seemed to go away happy despite the technical gaffs, having enjoyed seeing all of the beyond common collectibles.

The Board team is working to prepare the calendar of presenters for 2022 with some great options. Do you have a presentation that you would like to offer the members? Contact me and I'll make sure Jim Shuttleworth gets the info and see if we can make something fun and interesting happen. My email is steamer@pacbell.net.

Election results were tabulated with Board members Shuttleworth and Tilton easily being reelected to their seats. If you wish to look into joining the leadership as a Board member or volunteer, send me an email at the above address.

Your SoCal Chapter Board of Directors for 2022

Jim Shuttleworth, Terry Tilton ... Elected to three-year terms

Scott MacDonald, Sherrill Smith ... Two-year remaining terms

Bill Keene, Bruce Vancil, & Mary Pat Tilton ... One-year remaining terms

Bill Keene - Editor sshsaoceantimes@icloud.com | Alan Hugenot - Assistant Editor | Bruce Vancil - Editor Emeritus

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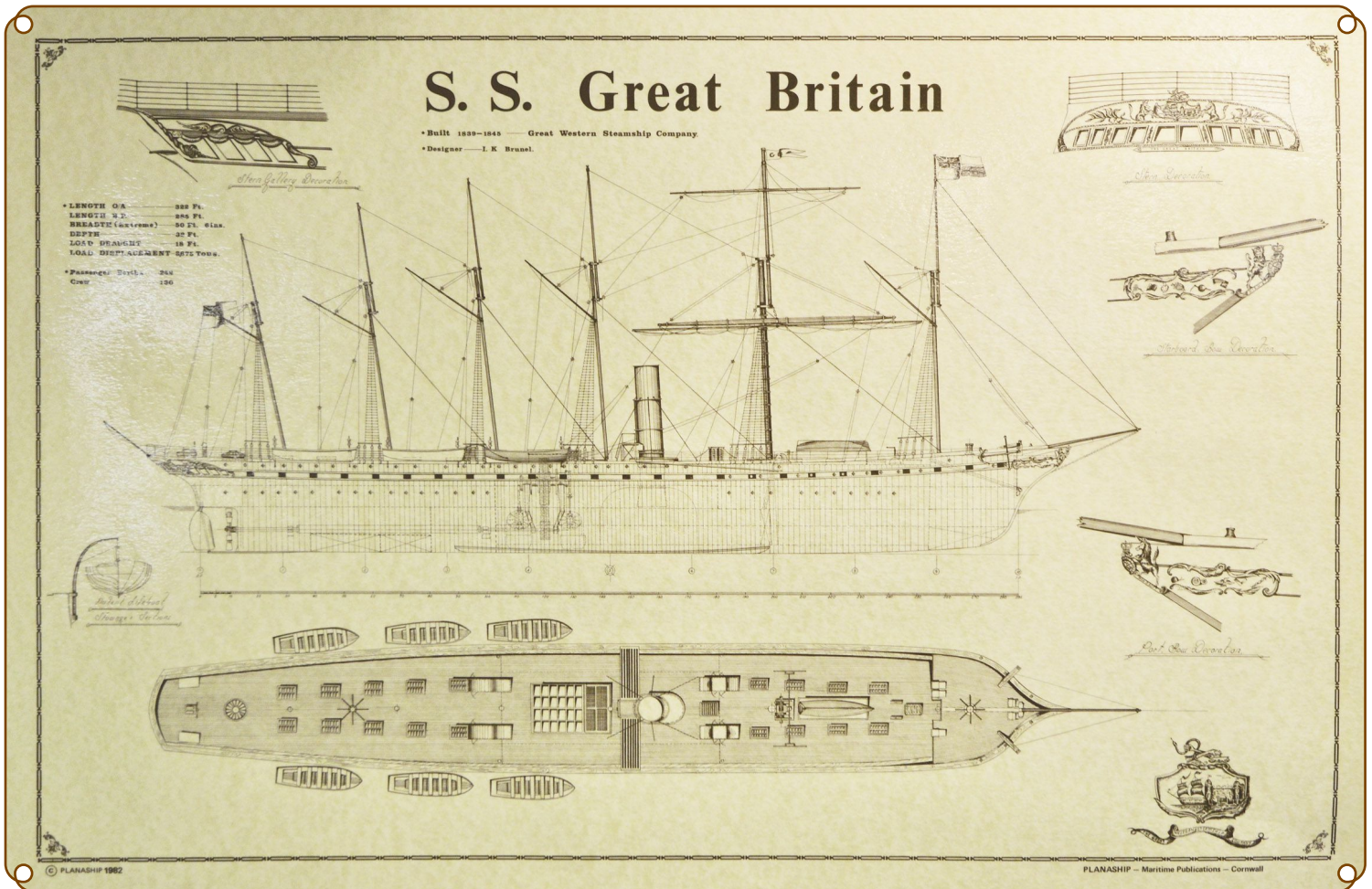
Great Britain was home!

Her subsequent renovation took over 30 years, including repairs to the severely damaged hull and decking, re-creation of the engine, original propeller and shaft, funnel, and all of her Victorian interiors. She is now a major attraction with a Visitors Center housing a wonderful collection of artifacts from not only the *Great Britain* but

the *Great Eastern* as well. Like the SS *Rotterdam* in the River Maas, the SS *Great Britain* is one of very few ships in the world to return to her birthplace as a permanent exhibit.

The following pictures give an idea what travel on the *Great Britain* was like, in both Saloon and Steerage classes. Not the same standard of luxury and convenience as on the *Rotterdam* or the *QE2*!

SSHA



Starboard elevation and Weather Deck plan of the SS *Great Britain* at the time it entered transatlantic service in 1845.



left: The SS *Great Britain* scuttled in the mud of Sparrow Cove not far from Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. right: The arrival trip up the River Avon on 5 July 1970 to Bristol before being returned to the Great Western Dockyard on 19 July, the 127th anniversary of the ship's launching. photos: left: Marion Morrison, ssGreatBritain.org, right: David Watkinson Collection, Research Gate



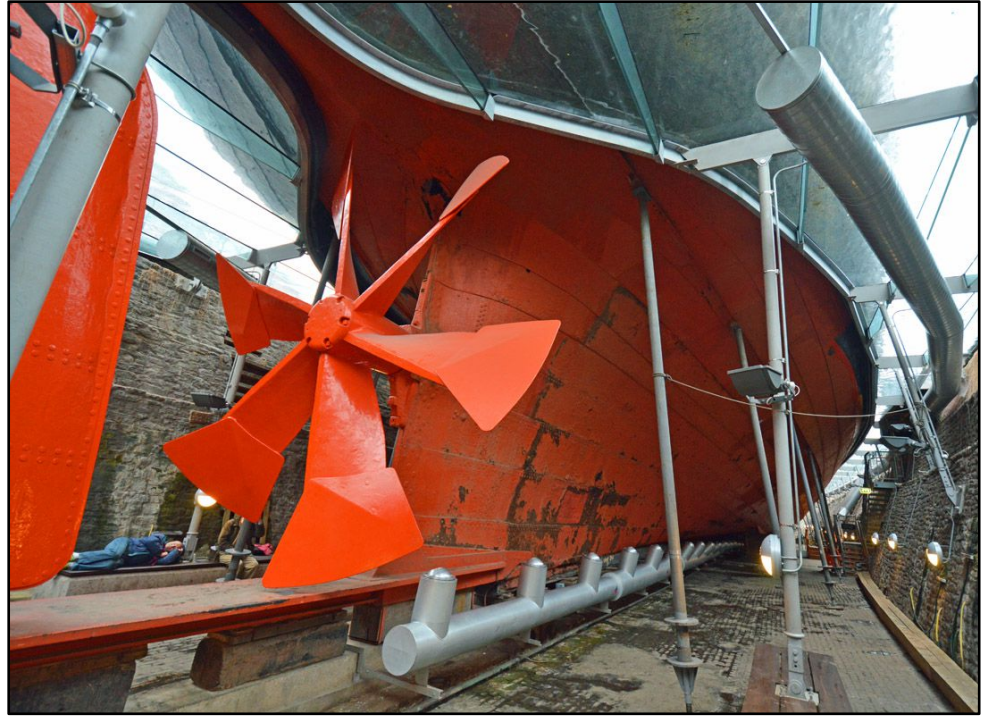
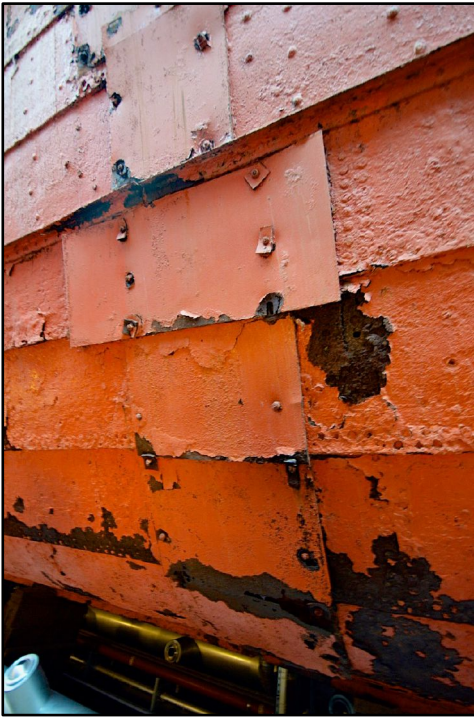
Above the Waterline

Today the Great Britain, in its preserved/restored splendor, rests in the Wapping Drydock at the Great Western Dockyard in Bristol, the same dry dock in which she was built 179 years before. The ship "floats" on a sea of water supported by a glass structure that provides protection to the iron hull below. The exterior of the ship is displayed as built in 1843. The interior has been restored to present what a passenger would have experienced during the ship's original transatlantic service and its later service as an emigrant ship between Britain and Australia.

Visitors can also enjoy the historic Great Western Dockyard where the Great Britain was built, the Dockyard Museum, the Global Traveller Trail that brings to life the stories of passengers aboard the Great Britain, a presentation of Conservation In Action, and Being Brunel, a journey into the world of Isambard Kingdom Brunel exploring the life and legacy of this innovative engineer. Also, the museum has a choice of cafes and a gift shop.

Visitors are able to circle around the Great Britain afloat on the "glass sea" of Wapping Drydock viewing Brunel's iron ship from all perspectives.



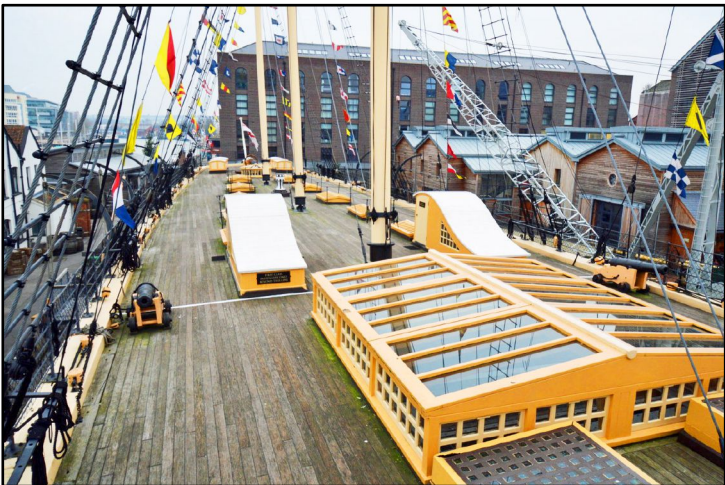


Below the Waterline

The Great Britain rests in the original dry dock where it was built. The "glass sea" serves a double function providing a water environment when viewing the ship from above the waterline while maintaining a dry environment for viewing and preserving the "submerged" hull below the waterline. This below the waterline exhibit is maintained at a constant 20% humidity to preserve the iron hull from deterioration.

At the time of the ship's salvage from the Falkland Islands in 1970 a huge split in the starboard side that continued from the upper deck down to the keel was discovered. This was patched with steel plates. Over 200 holes, some small and some large, were patched during the salvage operations.

The preserved hull includes a reproduction of Brunel's original six-bladed screw and an iron counterbalanced rudder that replaced the earlier wooden rudder that proved to be undersized.



Weather Deck



The Weather Deck is the only open deck on the Great Britain. Passengers took advantage of the fresh sea air when the weather cooperated.

Right: the ship's Bridge and funnel looking forward and across the ship.

Left: the Weather Deck looking forward from the Bridge. The near deck house provided access to the decks below. The low skylight structures provided daylight down into the Promenade Deck, view of the Weather Deck from the Fo'c'sle, and a view looking aft from the Bridge. The large skylight deck housing provided light and ventilation to the engine room. Beyond are two stairways serving the Promenade Deck below. Note the painted line across the deck this side of the stairs. The sign reads "FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS ONLY BEYOND THIS LINE".



The Promenade Deck

While the exterior has been preserved/restored to be as the ship was when it entered transatlantic service when new, the interior spaces have been restored to represent those of the various periods of the ship's 37 years in passenger service.

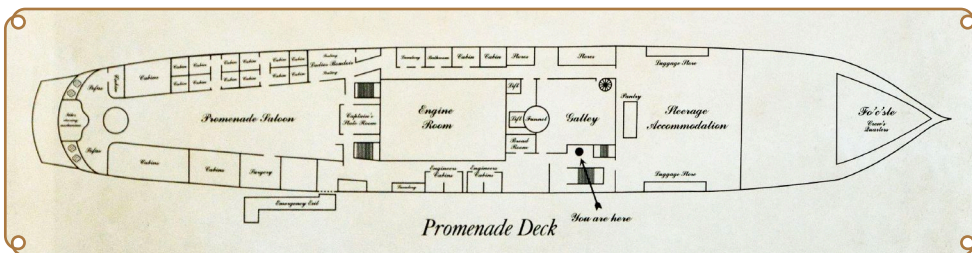
Located one deck down from the Weather Deck the Promenade Deck (upper left) included a great number of functional spaces. Not only was this a space for promenading during those times of rough weather that prohibited being out on deck it also served many other functions. Beginning at the stern and moving toward the bow there is the Promenade Saloon with First Class cabins of various berthing arrangements along each side. Some cabins were designated as "Women Only" and were easily convenient to a Ladies' Boudoir. The Surgery was located on the starboard side of the Saloon.

The Promenade Saloon received natural light from skylights mounted on the above Weather Deck and in turn, via borrowed lites (upper right and lower left), provide daylight to the Dining Saloon located below on the Saloon Deck.

The Captain's State Room is located at the forward end of the Saloon. Next forward came the Engine Room trunk that extended the full height of the ship's hull. Off the port side passageway are toilet and washing facilities including a bath with a cast enameled tub. The Surgeon's cabin and Second Class cabins were also along the passageway. The starboard passageway provides access to a number of Engineers' cabins.

The Galley, constructed with a sheet iron deck and including a brick bakery oven, was located midship forward of the Engine Room trunk and directly above the boilers. Second Class cabins lined the hull sides and extended forward to the cargo hold. After refitting as an emigrant ship this area became "Second Cabin Forward" (steerage) accommodations providing cramped space for 140 passengers.

Completing the Promenade Deck forward is a full hull width cargo area and the fo'c'sle that provides crew accommodations.





Second Class cabin. One passenger traveled with a pet monkey.

We enjoyed everything our journey in the First Class After Saloon had to offer – fine dinners with the captain, dancing and concerts on the deck, and making friends with their fellow travellers.

Annie Henning diary

Toilet in First Class.



The Great Britain was built to serve the luxury passenger trade between Britain and America. The original design accommodated 252 First and Second Class passengers and a crew of 130.

After only six round trip voyages the Great Britain was sold with the new owners refitting her as an emigrant ship between Britain and Australia with a capacity of 700 passengers—a trade the ship successfully maintained for 30 years.



Enameled bath in First Class. This cast iron tub was salvaged from the Falkland Islands during the salvage of the Great Britain in 1970 and is believed to be original to the ship.

Captain's Cabin: Captain Barnard R. Mathews and Purser John Anjer discuss the various complaints from Second Class/Steerage passengers regarding the accommodations and food during the Great Britain's first voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne.



First Class cabin.

Went on deck in the morning, very cold and frosty... Everyone went on deck after lunch and again between dinner and tea and walked as usual round the deck in the Grand Circle as we call it "two by two". This way of walking is great fun, but the noise is very great in the Saloon, however for those who are foolish enough to stay there. It sounds like a regiment of soldiers marching overhead.

Annie Henning diary 25 September 1853



above left: Samuel Archer, the ship's surgeon, attends to one of the cooks that has sustained an accidental wound while working in the Galley. Samuel Archer kept a prodigious journal of his many voyages aboard the SS Great Britain. He is also known for his extensive collection of shells collected along the way.

above right: The ship's surgery has a well-stocked pharmacy.

middle left: Samuel Archer's cabin was small but efficient. A copy of his journal is seen on the folding desktop. New specimens of his seashell collecting are drying on a cloth. A copy of 'The Life of Napoleon' that he read on the voyage can be found on the bookshelf.

middle right: One can sit ... and of course, snap a selfie ... with Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the designer/engineer of the SS Great Britain. He is usually found seated on the sofa at the stern of the Promenade Deck.

bottom right: A typical stairway connecting decks in the passenger spaces. This one from the Weather Deck above to the Promenade Deck and on down to the Saloon Deck below. In the background at the far left is a glimpse through the open door into the Ladies' Boudoir.





The Galley

The Galley is located on the Promenade Deck mid-ships forward of Engine Room trunk which placed it one deck above the ship's boilers. While most of the Great Britain's decking was wood planking the deck of the Galley is sheet iron.

The cooks and galley staff prepared meals for all passengers and crew. During the initial transatlantic service this could have been as many as 500 souls. During the time the ship was in Britain-to-Australia service the number of persons to be fed three meals a day could rise to close to 900 souls.

The galley display has cook John Dowdall busy preparing meals for those aboard. Dowdall served on Voyage 13 (Liverpool-Melbourne-Liverpool, 15 February – 21 August 1857), Voyage 14 (Cork-Mumbai-Cork, 23 September 1857 – 9 April 1858, voyage as a troop ship), and Voyage 15 (Liverpool-New York-Liverpool (27 July – 6 September 1858). John Dowdall was 24 years of age.

above left: the cast iron spiral stairway connecting the Galley to the Weather Deck above.

top and middle right: two views of the Galley. Sharp-eyed visitors can spot a rat or two scurrying in the cupboards along with a very well fed, and now lazy, cat.

bottom right: During the period that the Great Britain was on the Britain-Australia trade (1852-1876) meals for steerage passengers were served in groups at scheduled serving times. This is a view of the mess serving area.





The State Room (as it is called) allotted to us holds four viz Father, Brother Matthew, Robert Gow & myself. The distance between our Berths for the purposes of dressing is 2 feet broad & 6 feet long, so confined that only one can dress at once & even in this small space we have to build part of our luggage so that it is truly said that the accommodation possessed by the second Cabin passengers is on the most contracted scale allowed by Government.

Allan Gilmour (age 17) diary 21 August 1852

left: A Second Class cabin.

right: The small size of a "second cabin" (steerage), roughly six feet both in width and length, a total area of 36 square feet.

Births were not uncommon on long voyages. One 60+day voyage from Britain to Australia arrived in Melbourne with five more emigrant passengers aboard than at the start of the journey.



We are awoke in the morning by the crowing of cocks and cackling of ducks, the hens are dying off, partly by the heat and partly by the commands of the captain. There is one cock which has a particular crow and every day our expectations are agreeably disappointed. Such is the trifling motion of the ship when we are on our berths that on awakening we could readily imagine ourselves in a farm yard. We hear pigs grunting, sheep bleating, hens and ducks all very noisy to be fed. A fine large hound which is fastened near the forecabin often begins to bay at the same time which completes the illusion ... we have our meals much more regular, the provisions improve and we had a plum pudding yesterday, a great treat after salt provisions.

Edward Towle diary 3 September 1852

For some time past the Gentlemen have washed on deck & the Ladies below & today we have got two barrels placed on deck to serve as plunge Baths but it does not appear that any person has availed themselves of the opportunity.

Today there has been a regular clearing away from the deck, washing the pig houses, hencoops &c which has added greatly to our comfort on deck.

Allan Gilmour diary 26 September 1852



Steerage provided little space and even less privacy. Each passenger was allowed to have one piece of luggage in the area that had to fit below the lower berth. Any other luggage was consigned to the hold and not accessible during the voyage.

Berths were two feet wide and six feet in length. Many passengers chose these accommodations to save funds for setting up new lives in Australia. Others had little choice.

Meals were taken in the Mess which was too small to accommodate all diners which resulted in scheduled seatings. Many took their serving and went up on deck when the weather allowed such alfresco dining.

The only sitting Room we have is the Mess Room where also we get our own meals, this room is not large enough to accommodate more than half the passengers, so that on a wet day the rest either require to go to their Berths or remain on deck in the rain. Had we not however been so far fortunate as to get good weather, I have little doubt there would have been a great deal of sickness from the very cramped condition, in which we are placed.

Allan Gilmour diary 28 September 1852



The Saloon Deck

Located two decks down from the Weather Deck, the Saloon Deck included a number of functional spaces. Similar to the Promenade Deck above, the Saloon Deck was divided into an aft and forward section separated by the engine room trunk.

The aft area includes the dining saloon, 98 feet 6 inches long by 30 feet wide, fitted with rows of dining tables able to serve 360 passengers at one time. This Saloon was serviced from a large stewards' area at the forward end. Meals were prepared in the Galley located one deck above.

The Saloon Deck, being First Class accommodations, was finished in decorations that were considered chaste for the Victorian Era and yet elegant.

At the stern are a number of sofas for informal sitting. Cabins extended along both starboard and port sides of the ship

Forward of the engine room trunk as originally fitted out, cabins extended along both the starboard and port sides of the ship with a forward Saloon inboard. During the ship's 37 years of passenger service the forward area went through many refits. Today it is a display of a cargo area and provides viewing access to the hold below.



The bell rang for dinner and we sallied through passages, ascended steep flights of stairs to the saloon a beautiful, lighted apartment, with mirrors all around and tables laden with every variety of viands - a range of every colour glasses suspended from the ceiling, the seats covered with crimson velvet, and everything that luxury could invent to make the meal agreeable. Imagine our sensations at the sight of so many strange faces, all turned on us, the greatest novelty ever seen there for some time

Sister Mary Paul Mulquin diary 24 October 1873



China from the Great Britain: left: a salad dish, cup & saucer, and carafe for decanted wine;

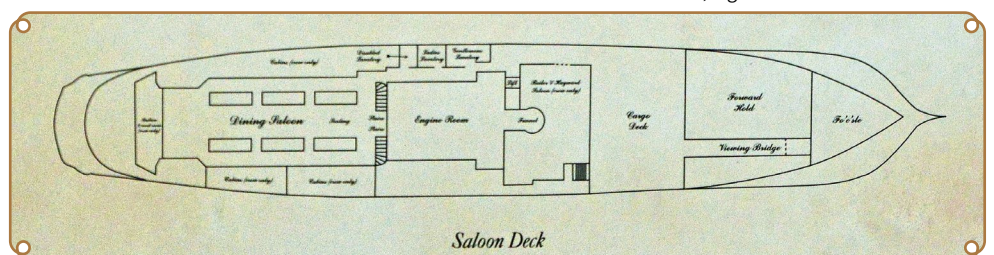
center: reproduction of a First Class place setting;

right: (from top clockwise) silver sugar bowl and cream pitcher, bottle commemorating the launch, souvenir medallions from the launch, maiden voyage, and the return of the Great Britain to Bristol, soup bowl, and a timber from the ship's teakwood decking.

Left & center: SS Great Britain collection, right: the author's collection

We get champagne Wednesdays and Sundays and last night they opened the Claret. The soda water they kept for the tropics.

Franses Duberly diary 14 October 1857





Non Human Passengers

Fresh meat, milk and eggs for the journey were supplied by the many live animals onboard. Most were housed in pens or cages located on the forward portion of the Weather Deck, sharing deck space with the Second Class and Steerage passengers.

The milk cow was provided first class accommodations in a small deck house stall midships on the Weather Deck.

Pigs, sheep, chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys were aboard as a source of fresh food.

One passenger made a list of the barnyard population aboard, including one cow, three bullocks, 150 sheep, 30 pigs, 500 chickens, 400 ducks, 100 geese, and 50 turkeys.

Our cabin is surrounded by the sheep pens, pig sties, Cow, and the fowl, houses and when we open any of our windows ... the smell from the fowls was the most offensive and sickening, which compelled us to keep our windows closed.

Mr. Dearlove diary 20 March 1862
commenting on the location of his 2nd class cabin

...their is 2 men shearing some of the sheep we have about 150 in all and 50 Pigs, they kills 3 to 4 sheep every day for the cabin passengers usage...

John MacLennan diary, 28 December 1867

Horses are notoriously bad sailors. To lessen the stress they were secured in stalls low in the hold. Horses were also expensive to ship. One passenger remarked:

Horses are so exorbitantly dear, that for the first year we shall be able to save comparatively nothing.

During the Crimean War the Great Britain transported soldiers and their horses to Malta to prepare themselves for battle. Conditions on the ship were hot and cramped and the horses brought many pests with them.

What with [flies] fleas and mosquitos &c &c it is not much sleep one gets. The [flies] are a regular plague here if you pour out a glass of sherry you have some in it before you can drink it.

Heyward Bright, 1855, Assistant Clerk and son of the Great Britain's owner

Fur Class Passengers

Rattus rattus, more commonly known as the black or ship rat, could be found on every voyage of the SS Great Britain. Most passenger accounts from the ship mention the rats.

Several of the passengers in our cabin have been annoyed by rats, which even at times have come into their beds. Tonight we were awoke by a lady screaming who being awake saw a rat walking the partition above her head

Allan Gilmour diary, Voyage 9 (1852)

In about half an hour I began to doze when I was again aroused. A vile rat ran up my curtains at the head, on to my bed, down my body and into a partition of the next state room. I again woke the doctor. We were very nervous having had a visit from the gents before and lost our socks

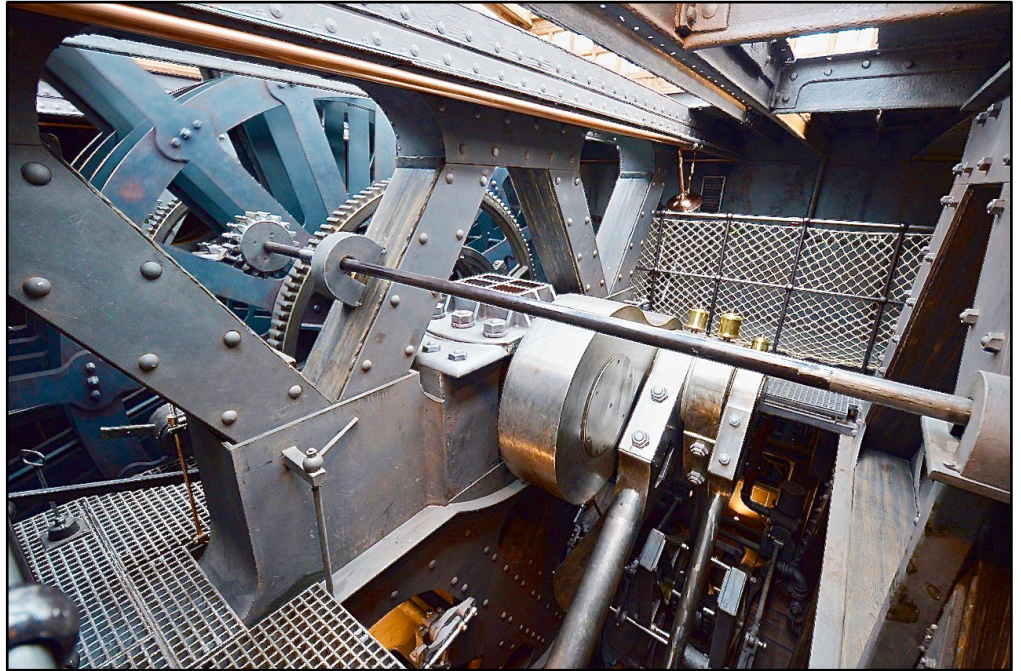
Olcher Fedden diary, Voyage 9 (1852)

We are beginning to see the rats. One came into my cabin the other night as I was going to bed, I jumped onto the berth and waited until Joe came down, then he & one of the stewards had a grand hunt but the gentleman escaped through a hole. Mrs Fenwick was awakened by one biting her toe nails & Jane Cuming has had a new stocking eaten by another.

Susan Mary Crompton diary, Voyage 28 (1866)

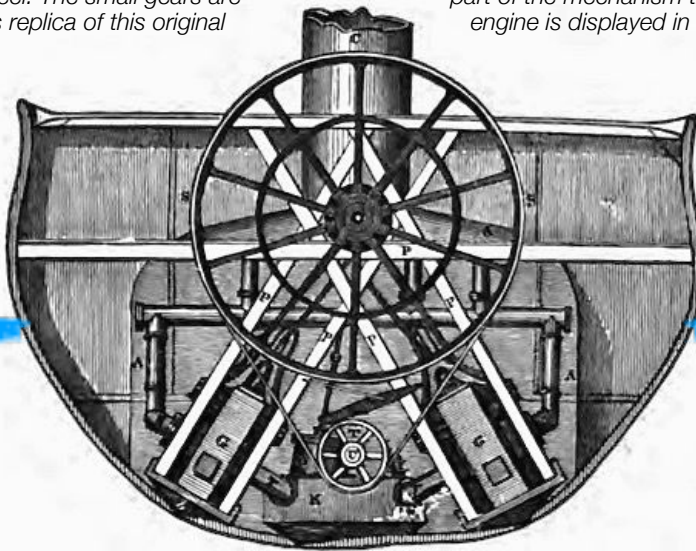


photo: SSGreatBritain.org



left: The 26ft-0in diameter driving wheel and the multi-link chain connecting to the screw shaft wheel below. Brunel chose this system in lieu of using cogwheels to eliminate noise and vibrations associated with such installations. right: The drive shaft, counterweights, and connecting rods that power the driving wheel. The small gears are part of the mechanism that reverses the direction of the driving wheel and thus the screw. This replica of this original machinery in action.

Cross section of the Engine Room showing the design of the cylinder layout, the large driving wheel, the screw shaft wheel and the structural framing of the steam engine.



illustrations:
History & Description of the
Steam-Ship Great Britain,
CAPT. Claxton, RN, 1845

ENGINE & MACHINERY

Four Cylinder, Inverted 60 degree "V"

Cylinder: bore, 7ft - 4in
stroke: 6ft - 0in

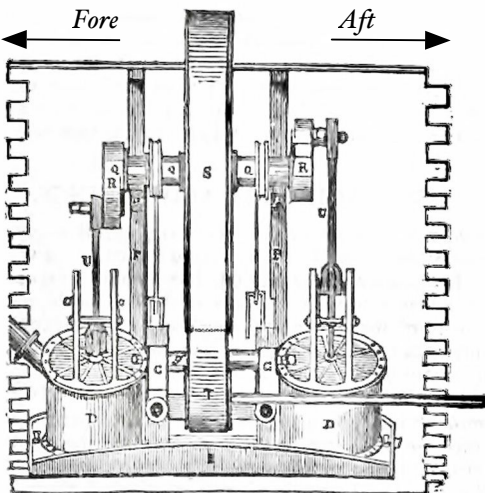
Steam Pressure: 5psi

Horsepower: 1,000

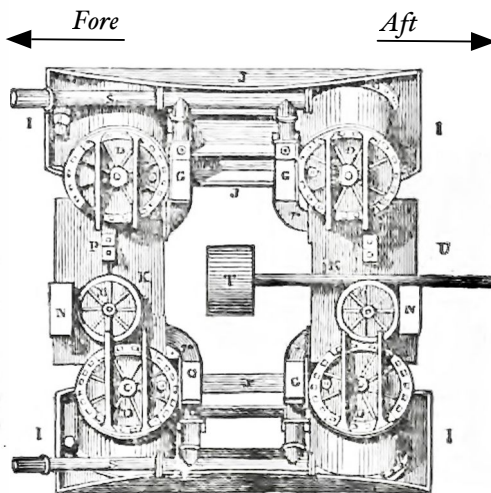
Dia. of large driving wheel: 26ft - 0in

Dia. of screw shaft wheel: 6ft - 0in

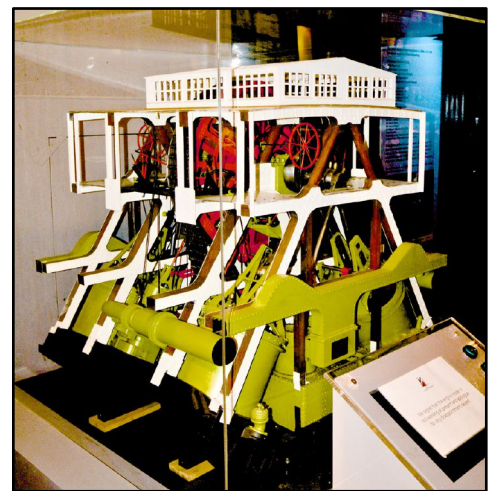
Dia. of Screw: 15ft - 0in



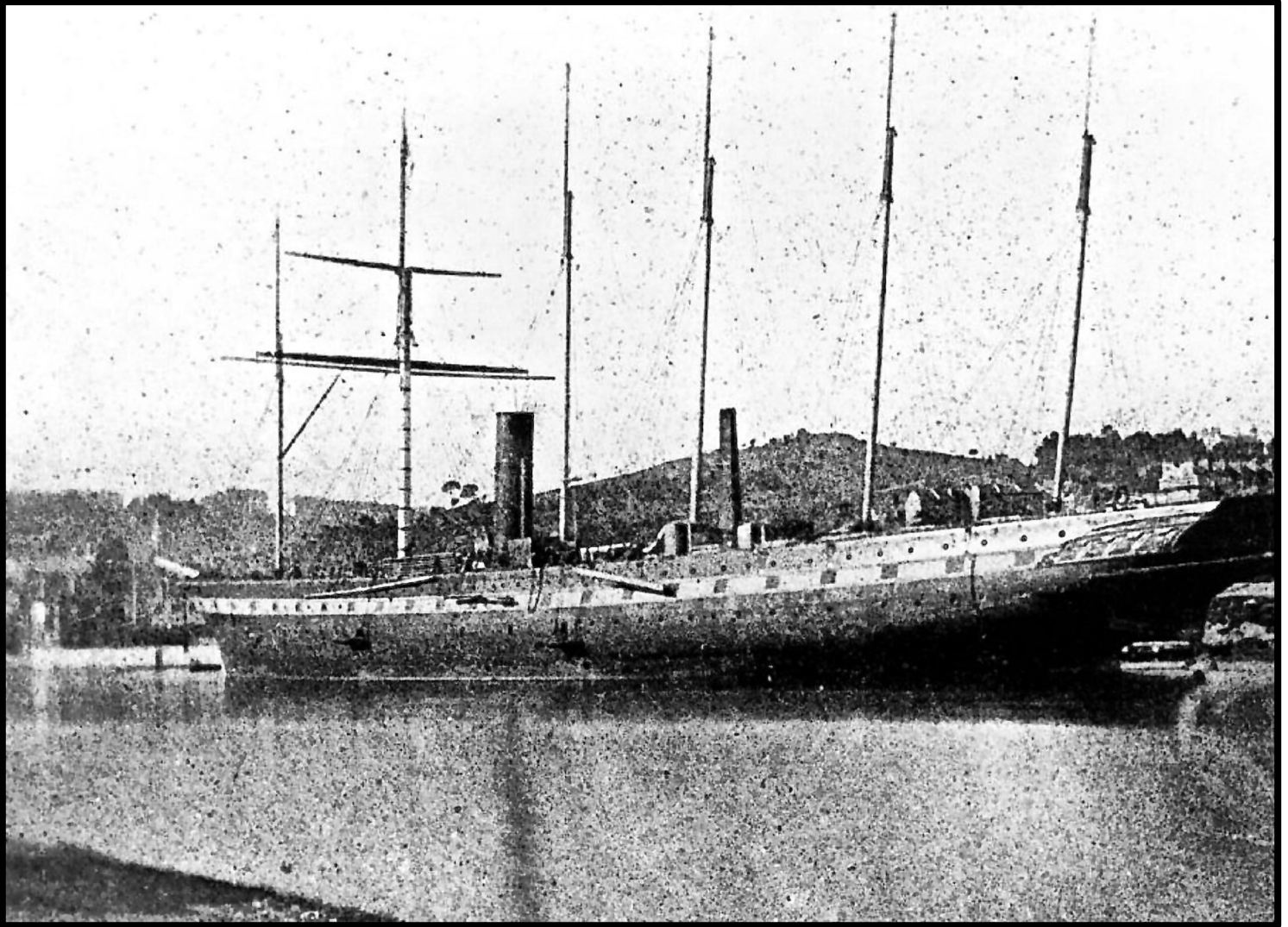
Section and elevation of starboard cylinders



View of cylinder layout of Brunel's engine



Working model of the engine and machinery on display in the shoreside museum.



SS Great Britain fitting out alongside Gasworks quay in Bristol Floating Harbour, April 1844. This photograph of Great Britain taken by pioneering photographer William Henry Fox Talbot is not only the first taken of Great Britain, but is also believed to be the first photograph ever taken of a ship.
photo: William Henry Fox Talbot, Wikipedia Commons, public domain

SS Great Britain

History

Built: 1843 Great Western Steamship Co.

Designer: Isambard Kingdom Brunel Builder: William Patterson

Launched: 19 July 1843 Maiden Voyage: 26 July 1845

In service: 1845 - 1886

Salvaged: 1970 from Sparrow Cove near Port Stanley, Falkland Islands

General Characteristics

Length: 322 ft (98 m), Beam: 50 ft 6 in (15.39 m), Draft: 16 ft (4.88 m)

Depth of hold: 32.5 ft (9.9 m), Displacement: 3,018 long tons (3,380 short tons, 1,990 tonnes)

Engine: four cylinder inverted "V", bore: 88 inches (223.5 cm), stroke: 72 inches (182.9 cm)

Pressure: 5 psi (34 kPa), RPM: Max: 20 rpm

Weight of engine & machinery: 340 long tons (380 short tons, 350 tonnes)

Screw (propeller) dia: 15.5 ft (4.72 m) speed: 55 rpm

Weight: 77 long hundredweight (3,900 kg)

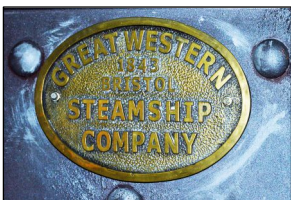
Speed: 10 to 11 knots (12 to 13 mph, 19 to 20 kp/h)

Sail Plan: Original: five schooner-rigged & one square-rigged mast

1852 and after: Three square-rigged masts

Capacity: 360 passengers, later increased to 730, 1,200 long tons (1,300 short tons, 1,200 tonnes) of cargo

Complement: 130 officers & crew (when completed)



Special Visitor to Pier 40, New York P&O's *Chusan*

by Bill Miller



above: The sun highlights the lines of P&O's *Chusan*. Built by Vickers Armstrong, the ship was 205.1 meters (672.9 feet) long with a beam of 25.6 meters (84 feet) with a service speed of 22 knots.

photo: Don Hazeldine | *The World's Passenger Ships*

below: The *Chusan* arriving in New York City with a charter from Capetown, South Africa,

photo: Braun Bruthers | SSHSA Archives, www.sshsa.org

A dozen ship enthusiasts and I were invited by the P&O Lines to lunch and a tour of the liner *Chusan*. Happily, we all but “ran” down to Pier 40, where the 24,000-ton liner was berthed. She was on her maiden call, once only visit, to the Port of New York. It was all very special. And the ship itself was on a special voyage: She was chartered to make a long cruise from Capetown all the way to New York. Some 700 passengers made the trip. The date was October 1971.

The late Frank Jackson and his wife Evelyn, a longtime and well-

known P&O team, did the port lectures and escorted shoreside excursions. I recall him telling me that it was especially exciting to sail into New York harbor and then walk ashore in Greenwich Village. The *Chusan* remained in port for three days and Frank spent one afternoon bicycling around the City.

Onboard, we found the 672-foot long *Chusan* to be quite a “decorative mix”. Oversized chairs in floral prints, polished veneers, sconce lighting, carpets and linoleum, period artworks, leather sofas





P&O's *Chusan* at New York City during her one and only visit in October 1971.

photo: Braun Bruthers | SSHSA Archives, www.sshsa.org

and rattan chairs. I especially recall she smelled of a mixture: Indian cooking, floor wax and soap. Throughout, she was immaculate.

Chusan was built back in 1950, not for P&O's well-known London-Suez-Australia service, but as the London-based company's biggest, finest and fastest ship for its secondary Far East service—from London to Suez, across the Indian Ocean and to Bombay, Singapore and Hong Kong (and extended to Kobe and Yokohama in Japan in 1954). Built by the famed Vickers-Armstrong shipbuilders at Barrow-in-Furness in northwest England, the ship also had an added notation: She was the first large liner to be fitted with Denny-Brown fin stabilizers.

The twin-screw, 22-knot *Chusan* was in all ways a classic ocean liner, indeed a classic British liner. She carried up to 1,026 passengers in two classes (first and tourist) as well as cargo in six holds (British manufactured & of course the Royal Mail going out, lots of the cheap Eastern made goods that would later find their way into the likes of Woolworth's on the main streets of British cities).

The *Chusan* began its career, in June 1950, with a short cruise from London over to Rotterdam and return for the International Freight Conference. Afterward, and rare in Britain in those still-rationed post-war years, she made four cruises—to the Mediterranean and to Spain, Portugal and the Atlantic isles. Quickly, according to long-ago P&O staff, the *Chusan* became the favorite in the fleet. One captain told me, "She had a distinctive personality, was very friendly and was the best

A view of the port side of the *Chusan* shows the pleasing lines of the 24,215 gross ton ocean liner.

photo: Braun Bruthers | SSHSA Archives, www.sshsa.org

run liner in the P&O fleet of the 1950s."

An accident was added to her history when, in thick fog in the English Channel, in June 1953, the *Chusan* collided with the Harrison Line freighter *Prospector*. The *Chusan* had serious damages. In 1959, she made P&O's first complete around-the-world voyage and by the end of that year, in December, had an extensive refit that included modernization of her interiors and the installation of a welcome amenity: complete air-conditioning was installed.

Her accommodation remained much the same; however, about half the first class cabins had private bathroom facilities whereas there were no such facilities for less-expensive tourist class rooms.



Business was changing, however, and the old Far East run was declining. By 1963, the *Chusan* was moved over to the still busy Australian run, sailing to Fremantle, Melbourne and Sydney—and sometimes onward to Auckland and Wellington. The *Chusan* had varied itineraries and might sail out via Suez or even the South African Cape, but might return to England by sailing to Fiji, Honolulu, Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles and then homeward through the Panama Canal, the Caribbean and stopping at Port Everglades, Nassau and sometimes Bermuda. But the airlines finally intruded and,

by 1970, the *Chusan* made P&O's last "line voyage" homeward from Bombay to London. The historic P&O Indian service was finished. Afterward, the ship went cruising most of the time, running charter cruises. These included the charter cruises from Capetown in 1971-72.

Altogether, *Chusan* sailed for twenty-three years. But being outmoded, fuel-hungry and therefore too expensive to operate, she was sold in May 1973 to Taiwanese scrap merchants. I saw her in August 1972, at Amsterdam and then Copenhagen, on what must have been her last "Northern Cities" cruise.

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P&O Chusan arriving at Capetown, South Africa. The Chusan was slightly smaller than P&O's other post war liners: Himalaya, Iberia, and Arcadia.
photo: Mick Lindsay Collection

Panama Canal Closes Fiscal Year 2021 with Record Tonnage

by Panama Canal Authority

The Panama Canal closed its fiscal year 2021 (FY21) with a record-breaking annual tonnage of 516.7 million Panama Canal tons (PC/UMS), coming in 8.7% higher compared to the 2020 fiscal year (FY20) and 10% above tonnage registered in FY19, the waterway's last pre-pandemic fiscal year.

Containerships continue to reflect a surge in demand for finished consumer products, as increased purchases during the pandemic stressed supply chains and caused congestion in ports worldwide. Containerships registered 184.3 million PC/UMS tons through the Panama Canal this year, a 2% increase from tonnage compared to FY20, followed by dry bulk (90 million PC/UMS tons), chemical carriers (65 million PC/UMS tons), LNG (61 million PC/UMS tons) and LPG (52.8 million PC/UMS tons).

LNG carriers registered a 31.4% increase in tonnage through the

Panama Canal, representing the largest gain across all segments. LNG also set new annual records for total tonnage and transits,

LPG and vehicle carriers followed LNG in segment growth, closing FY21 with an 18.4% and 15.6% increase in tonnage through the waterway, respectively. While the latter saw growth in FY21, vehicle carriers are yet to fully recover from the pandemic-driven dip in traffic, similar to passenger vessels, which are expected to continue their gradual return to the waterway in FY22.

All in all, the Panama Canal recorded a total of 13,342 transits in FY21, driven by an increase in Neopanamax transits. Though their average size increased, Panamax transits declined in total, an anticipated shift accelerated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as shipping lines consolidated more cargo onto larger ships to decrease frequent transits.

SSUSA

Tramping Cyber Space ...

by Bruce Vancil

Notable, Important & Fascinating Ships

In this edition of Ocean Times, we examine facts and details of some notable and important and, to me anyway, fascinating ships both famous and lesser known.

We start with the Royal Yacht *Britannia* and details of what it takes to dry dock her for scheduled service. Still lovely and quite stately, *Britannia* has become a popular tourist attraction. When SSHSA organized a group cruise for the transatlantic crossing of Norway back in 2001 our group trip to the Royal Yacht was very popular. We warned them to staff up in the gift shop, but they did not or could not manage that request. The line for the gift shop check-out wrapped around the entire museum section. By the way, our Scottish stop was our first landfall after 9/11. What a trip that was.

We move on to what was a German wars, cargo and passenger ship in Germany's colonies in Africa – she's still in operation. It is one amazing story. Check it out.

Last, we look at a class of White Star liners that represented the best around in their day, but times changed quickly in those days. Obsolescence was always two steps behind you and giving chase fast.

painting: Alfred Memelink



Dry Docking the Royal Yacht (2012)

Following years of careful planning in preparation for her hull to be inspected and repainted, *Britannia* was moved for the first time in 14 years in January 2012 to dry dock. Take a look at this video to see how the dry docking progressed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnLTLYWLnMY>



The Indestructible Warship: WW1 Beyond the Trenches

I found a couple of shows about this ship. She was built as an armed merchantman for use on a large African lake to protect Germany's colonies there, later and still used for cargo and passenger service TODAY. One hundred years ago, she was the fearsome German warship that ruled the waters of Lake Tanganyika; today the MV *Liemba* runs as the world's oldest passenger ferry. The *Goetzen*, as she was known then, was sent to East Africa where she defended Germany's colony against the Allied forces during World War One. As part of a series looking at stories beyond the trenches of Europe, BBC Swahili's Zuhura Yunus travels to Tanzania and takes a journey aboard the indestructible warship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NM2BCqS5WUc>



The Big Four: The Cumbersome Pride of the White Star Line

I have always been interested in late 19th century passenger ships. It was a time of rapid technological improvements and development. White Star was not late to that game. The RMS *Celtic*, RMS *Cedric*, RMS *Baltic*, and RMS *Adriatic* were four White Star ocean liners designated to run the Britain-to-America route in the early 20th century. Every one of these ships except the *Cedric* took their names from previous White Star liners from the *Oceanic* class in the early 1870s.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXVovg6s9gE>

Ice Everywhere!

story & photos by Don Persson



*Ice covers the deck, railings, tank tops, pipes, and even the ROBERT E. HOPKINS' bell.
Ice everywhere!*

It was late February 1957 when my company, Tidewater Associated Oil Company, received a plea from the City of Albany, New York that it was nearly out of heating oil and low on gasoline due to an extremely harsh winter. On an absolutely freezing day, we loaded 125,000 barrels of gasoline and heating oil at our refinery in Delaware City, Delaware. We were told, "this shipment must get to Albany!"

We sailed at 2:00 pm (1400 hours), down the Delaware River and out onto an extremely stormy Atlantic. I'd never experienced such heavy weather. We couldn't cook dinners — and ate cold sandwiches, which was a first for me. We rolled and pitched as the water just flew over us. The bow actually disappeared under the waves.

My bunk, along with all the stewards, was fore and aft, so with the rolling it was impossible to



Iced-up catwalk ... Hours of chipping ice ahead

sleep. I got up after midnight and threw-up over the stern! Since I was only 18 years old, and the deck crew liked playing jokes on new guys, they told me to go to the bridge and ask the captain to “put out the stabilizers”. I did as they suggested and got a laugh from the Captain. He told me that we would be changing course at 0400 and I’d be just fine after that. He was correct!

When the sun came up we were already inside New York harbor. What a shock to see our ship **TOTALLY WHITE!** Ice was **EVERYWHERE!** The deck sailors had to use fire axes to chop their way along the catwalk connecting the two deckhouses. We had to get the ice off fast as our draft was already up to 36 feet. All hands put to and we chopped decks, railings, tank tops, pipes, etc. and threw the ice overboard. My

photo of the bell says it all!

We proceeded north on the Hudson, which was in places solid ice!! We acted like an icebreaker—plowing ahead, astern, ahead, astern—breaking the ice. It took us 12 hours to reach Albany. Crowds came to cheer us, which was amazing to tanker men.

We had damaged hull plates on our ship and had to go to Savannah Machine & Foundry for replacement plates. But we made it successfully to Albany!

What a first year onboard the *Hopkins*. In July I was rowing a lifeboat to save the last passengers from the sinking *Andrea Doria* and now, in February I spent hours chopping ice to save the men of the *Robert E. Hopkins*..

SSHA



Ice everywhere.... Covering everything!



An able-bodied seaman on the deckhouse stairs



photo: Auke Visser Collection

Robert E. Hopkins

Builder:	Sun Shipbuilding Company, Chester, Pennsylvania
Build date:	1945 Builder Number: 485 Ship Design: T2-SE-A1
Dimensions:	Length: 159.6 m (523.6 ft), Beam: 20.7 m (67.9 ft),
Gross Tonnage:	10,297 DWT: 16,613
Engine:	Steam Turbine Electric Horsepower: 6,000
Speed:	15 knots
Number of screws:	1
History:	1945, Built as <i>Camp Charlotte</i> for U.M.S.C, 1947, to <i>Robert E. Hopkins</i> , Tidewater Associated Oil Company 1964, to <i>Louisianan</i> , Hendy International Company 1965 to <i>Louisiana Brimstone</i> , Mutual Life Insurance Co. of New York (Converted to molten sulphur tanker w/ new bow & cargo section, 13,118 gt, 186.6 m (612.1 ft) LOA, 24.4 m (80 ft) beam) Wrecked Coatzacoalcos, Mexico 20 FEB 1991 Scrapped Alang, India 21 JAN 1993

Ship Shot: SITMAR FAIRSKY... Balloons—and Goodies Too!!!



Balloons fly above in celebration at the christening of Sitmar's **FAIRSKY** on May 5, 1984 in San Pedro, California by Ginny Ueberroth—wife of Los Angeles Olympic Organization Committee President Peter Ueberroth. Later that day the ship made its maiden voyage of a 10-day Mexican Cruise.

It was an age when cruise line publicity departments had not just budgets, but big budgets. Events such as ship christenings and maiden voyages were handled with seemingly unbridled limits. I attended a good number—and one that comes readily to mind was the naming ceremonies for Sitmar Cruises' **FAIRSKY** at San Pedro in May 1984.

I was flown out (from New Jersey and in a roomy first class), met by a chauffeur and a big, shiny, black limousine and then put up for the night in the tower of a glamorous Los Angeles hotel. Back in a limousine, we were brought over the following morning to the flag-bedecked **FAIRSKY**. She was Sitmar's first newbuild, its largest passenger ship yet and its most luxurious. It all went like clockwork: the naming ceremony, the release of hundreds of balloons, a speech by the normally reclusive Boris Vlasov (owner of Sitmar) and then onboard for drinks, a gala lunch, and tours of the 42,000-ton ship.

On the homeward flight later that same day, I had the addition of **FAIRSKY** presents: a tote bag, photos, boxed Sitmar cookies & candies, and a little brass model of a Sitmar cruise ship. Yes, it was quite a memorable weekend!

photo & story: Bill Miller



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In Our Wake...



Congratulations

Congratulations go to three Chapter members for articles published in the Fall 2021 issue of *PowerShips*.

Member and past Director and Chapter President **Shawn Dake** for the publication of an excerpted version of his always appreciated *Cruise Ships 2020, The Year In Review*. The complete version of the review is available online at bit.ly/CruiseShips2020.



Member **Jim Shaw** introduces us to Ivaran Lines in *Ivaran Lines: A Norwegian Cross Trader*. Jim tells the story about cross traders, liner operators that trade their ships between countries other than their own.

Member **Bill Miller** brings us the story of the *Empress of Canada*, which became the very last liner for the Canadian Pacific Steamships Company, in *The Last Empress*.

Bill of Fare

April 2022 *Ocean Times*

Whatever Happened to Crusader Shipping?

SS California

Whatever Happened to Catalina Cruises?

The L'Atlantique, Art Deco and the Run to Buenos Aires

Raffaello at Sint Maarten

Tramping Cyber Space



Flotsam & Jetsam

The goal and mission of the SS Great Britain Trust is "To conserve and preserve the SS Great Britain in the Great Western Dockyard for all time for the benefit of the public as a ship of historic and scientific interest and to place the same upon public display as a museum accessible for all."

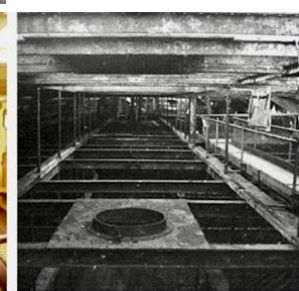
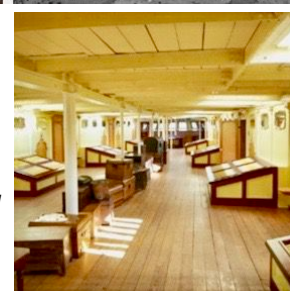
The rescue, preservation, restoration, and presentation of the *Great Britain* over the past 50+ years has provided all of us with a view of eras long past. The ship is just a part of the historical interpretation that includes the Dockyard Museum, Being Brunel, and a vast historical archive.

When she was rescued from the Falkland Islands in 1970, the SS Great Britain was in poor shape with deck timbers rotted and splintering. Today, the decks, skylights and masts have been carefully reconstructed, and the original iron hull conserved.



As the world's first luxury ocean liner, the SS Great Britain could carry up to 360 passengers and 130 crew to New York on each voyage. The First Class Dining Saloon has been painstakingly recreated, seen here alongside the interiors in 1970

The SS Great Britain was refitted as an emigrant steam clipper in 1852, and an extra deck added in 1857. On voyages to Australia, she carried up to 700 passengers in a mixture of first, second and steerage classes. The Promenade Deck as restored and as in 1970.



The preservation/restoration of the SS Great Britain is a successful example of promoting the study of history, engineering, and science for the benefit of the public. Perhaps the SS Great Britain Trust could be an example to follow for the continued operation and preservation of the *Queen Mary*. photos: ssGreatBritain.org

Thank You

Most of us have a favorite ship, be it an ocean liner, cruise ship, freighter, or tugboat. Some are lucky enough to have more than one favorite. **Dr. Nelson Arnstein** shares with us another of his multiple of favorites, the SS *Great Britain*, with a tour of this first iron hull, steam powered, and screw propelled oceangoing liner in *SS Great Britain — Brunel's 1843 Masterpiece Returns to Her Birthplace*.

Chapter member **Bill Miller** brings us the story of P&O's *Chusan* making a rare visit to New York. Bill tells of his visit to the ship docked at Pier 40 and presents a brief history of the 24,000 gross ton liner. Also, a special Thank You to **Astrid Drew**, Archivist, for providing photos from the SSHSA Archives to illustrate Bill's article.

Bill also entertains us remembering the christening of Sitmar's *Fairsky* at San Pedro in May 1984 in this issue's *Ship Shot*.

The winter of 1957 was a harsh season, especially in Albany, New York where the city was running dangerously low of heating oil and gasoline. Chapter member **Don Persson** brings us the story, *Ice Everywhere!*, of the successful effort of Tidewater Associated Oil Company's *Robert E. Hopkins*' voyage up the ice choked Hudson River to deliver the much needed fuels.

Director and President **Bruce Vancil** presents us with a selection of videos of Notable, Important, and Fascinating ships in the current installment of *Tramping Cyber Space*.

Thank You to all that made this issue of the *Ocean Times* a success.