

## **McIlwraith MacEacharn & its fleet [The Scottish Line]**

**The copyrighted 2008 research of Fraser Morrison of Inverness, Scotland.**

### **McIlwraith MacEacharn [The Scottish Line]**

An account of the establishment and growth of McIlwraith MacEacharn Ltd. of Melbourne. The author acknowledges the assistance of Mr. N. L. McKellar of N.S.W. and the Central Record of the World Ship Society in the U.K. Other material has been obtained from articles published in "Fairplay" and in the Melbourne periodical "Age."

By T. S. Stevens of Sydney N.S.W. [Sea Breezes July 1962].

The firm of McIlwraith MacEacharn was originally founded in London on February 1st 1875 by Andrew McIlwraith and Malcolm MacEacharn when they began business as shipping and insurance agents. A year later they entered the ranks of ship owners following an agreement with the State of Queensland for the carriage of migrants from Britain to Queensland ports north of Maryborough. Their first vessel, the Scottish Bard was completed in April 1876 and in the same year the Scottish Hero and Scottish Knight, were delivered. In 1877 the Scottish Lassie joined the fleet and during the next year the Scottish Admiral and Scottish Prince were completed. Additional to these vessels the wooden barque Sir William Wallace was acquired in 1879.

These vessels were all employed carrying immigrants until 1880 when the Queensland Government arranged a contract with the British India Associated Steamers. Thereafter the sailing ships continued to trade to Australia, particularly in the carriage of wool, primary produce and passengers to Britain. They were however also to be seen in the U.S., Chile and wherever else suitable cargoes were offered. Just prior to 1880 a further vessel had been purchased, the wooden barque City of Aberdeen, while in 1881 the last of the Scottish ships was completed and named Scottish Wizard.

The line by this time had become known as the Scottish Line but that title fell into disuse with the final disposal of the sailing ships, although it is interesting to note that all the buildings presently occupied by the company in Australia are called "Scottish House." These sailing vessels have been described as handsome clipper-built ships with a reputation for a reasonable turn of speed and according to one report in 1886 the Scottish Wizard made the passage from Bristol to Melbourne in 92 days. The only major accident was in 1880 when the Scottish Bard struck a shoal near Sandy Cape, Queensland and had to be beached to prevent her from sinking. She was subsequently repaired.

In 1879 the company chartered the steamer Strathleven for a round voyage to Australia and before her departure from London she was fitted with the Bell-Coleman mechanical refrigeration plant. On the return passage from Australia an experimental shipment of 30 tons of frozen beef with 2 tons of butter were carried and when the Strathleven ultimately arrived back in London in February the shipments were found to be in excellent condition. A special luncheon was held on board to celebrate this first successful shipment from Australia.

The first two steamers were introduced to the fleet in 1884, the sisters Cloncurry and New Guinea both of over 2,500 tons. They made their first appearance in Australian waters under charter to the British India Steam Navigation Company at the end of 1884 when they arrived in Brisbane with migrants. The same year the Sir William Wallace was sold and Scottish Prince was lost when she stranded near Southport, Queensland in 1887. Also in 1887 the steel barque Frances Fisher was bought. By virtue of their vessels trading to Queensland ports the company developed other interests in the state and the London office operated an extensive mercantile

and export department. A branch of the company was established in Melbourne in 1887 and subsequently branches were opened in Newcastle, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Fremantle. All of these exist today.

During 1893 the company began to dispose of its sailing ships. The Scottish Hero and Frances Fisher were sold in 1893 and the Scottish Bard the following year. The Scottish Admiral was sunk in a collision in 1894 and the steamer Eddystone, which had been in trouble the previous year, was wrecked near Cossack, West Australia in September 1894. The Scottish Lassie was sold in 1895 and in February the following year the Scottish Knight sank after a collision off Cornwall while nearing the end of a passage from Toccopilla to Leith.

With the expansion of the company's interests in Australia, Malcolm MacEacharn had settled in Melbourne about the time that a branch was opened and during his years in this country he took a leading part in public affairs, becoming a Commissioner of the Melbourne Harbour Trust in 1893 and in the same year was returned as a member of the Melbourne City Council ultimately becoming the city's second Lord Mayor. In 1900 he was knighted and in 1901 elected to represent Melbourne in the first federal parliament.

Four years later Sir Malcolm returned to Scotland and died in 1910 at the age of 58. His partner Andrew McIlwraith outlived him by many years dying in 1932 in his 90<sup>th</sup> year.

### **Scottish Bard**

A two deck iron barque built in 1876 by the London & Glasgow Co. of Glasgow for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co. of London. Dimensions: 189.2ft. + 33.0 + 19.2 and tonnage 850 gross 803 net and 766 under deck British Reg. No. 68640 and signal PNCB. .

#### **1885/86**

Captain J. R. Mowat

#### **1889**

Captain W. Little

#### **1894**

Sold to Danish owners and renamed Thor.

#### **1900**

August, abandoned at sea in the South Atlantic.

### **Scottish Hero**

A two deck iron barque built in 1876 by W. Doxford & Sons, of Sunderland, as yard no. 79. for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co. London. Dimensions: 196.6ft. + 33.0 + 19.1 and tonnage 911 gross, 869 net and 795 under deck. British Reg. No. 73670 and signal PWNM.

#### **1876 -1877**

Captain Neil McEachern born Islay 1813. Master's Cert. 1970 Glasgow 1849.

#### **1878 - 1880**

Captain Thomas Robertson Mowat born Stromness, Orkney 1851.

#### **1881 - 1890**

Captain James Fraser born Aberdeen 1845. Master's Cert. 92418, Aberdeen.

#### **1891 - 1893**

Captain W. Little born Harrington 1847. Master's Cert. 84675, Liverpool.

#### **1893**

Sold to A.H. Arnold, Brake, Germany and renamed Saturnas.

**1905**

Sold to Norwegian owners.

**1914**

Sold to Swedish owners.

**1915**

October 13<sup>th</sup>. abandoned in the North Atlantic at 49.4N 29.48W dangerous to shipping, crew onboard steamer Colorado. Was bound from Miramichi to Cork with timber.

### **Scottish Knight**

A two deck iron barque built as yard no. 80 in 1876 by W. Doxford & Sons, of Sunderland for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co. of London. Dimensions: 196ft. + 32.9 + 19.3 and tonnage 916 gross 875 net and 802 under deck. British Reg. No. 73682 and signal PWNV.

**1880**

Scottish Knight [Lawson] January 12, 1880 beached at Port Curtis near Sandy Cape, Qld., later refloated.

**1890 - 1891**

Captain J. Fowler

**1894 - 96**

Captain W. Little.

**1896**

February, sank after a collision off Cornwall while nearing the end of a passage from Tocopilla to Leith. Scottish Knight: Penzance Feb 11, 5.35 pm, - From the news just received, the barque foundered off Pendeen is the Scottish Knight, of London. She was taken in tow, off Longships by steamer Henry Fisher, for St. Ives, but foundered two miles off the coast, near Pendeen. Lifeboat and several other boats standing by. Scottish Knight: St. Ives Feb.11, 7.50 pm. Barque Scottish Knight of London official no. 73682, from Tocopilla and Queenstown for Leith, with nitrate struck Longships at noon today, and after being in tow of steamer, foundered near Three Sisters Oar. Crew [18 all told] landed at St. Ives by pilot cutter 49, of Cardiff. Struck Longships in fog. Master Little. St. Ives, Feb 12, The large lifeboat of the Scottish Knight was the only thing landed here belonging to the vessel.

### **Scottish Lassie**

A two deck iron barque built in 1877 by A. Hall & Co. of Aberdeen, for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co. of London. Dimensions: 201.2ft. + 32.0 + 18.0 and tonnage 849 gross 852 net and 762 under deck. British Reg. No. 77001 and signal RBLM.

**1880**

The fine barque Scottish Lassie, 852 tons, chartered by the New Zealand Shipping Co. arrived in Auckland on August 19, 1880, 94 days from the Start or 96 days from the docks. She brought 35 passengers. The voyage was remarkable for the fine weather experienced up to the time she crossed the Line, 28 days from port not a sail had been furled. It was not until the end of June that the ship experienced her first gale, her best days' work then being logged at 257 miles. The Meridian of the Cape was crossed on July 10, and land, near Cape Maria Van Diemen, sighted on

August 17. The Scottish Lassie was in command of Captain Le Couteur.

**1895**

Sold to France and renamed Alexandria.

**1925**

Broken up as Le Galion.

### **Scottish Prince**

A two deck iron barque built in 1878 by A. Hall and Sons, of Aberdeen for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co, of London. Dimensions 210.2ft + 32.6 + 18.0 and tonnage 950 gross 895 net and 808 under deck. British Reg. No. 79622 and signal RTWP.

**1879**

Captain G. Scale, born Pembrokeshire 1839, master's cert. 26415 Liverpool 1867.

**1880**

Captain James Robertson Mowat, born Stromness 1849, master's cert. 94419, Dundee 1880. Brother of T. R. Mowat.

**1887**

February, stranded and broke up near Southport, Queensland.

### **Scottish Admiral**

A two deck iron barque built in 1878 by W. Doxford & Sons, of Sunderland for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co. of London. Dimensions: 217.8ft. + 32.8 + 18.1 and tonnage 986 gross 939 net and 860 under deck. British Reg. No. 77111 and signal RSGN.

**1888/89**

Captain Alexander Ross, born Aberdeen 1851, master's cert 94792, Aberdeen 1878.

**1894**

February 10, while at anchor in the Medway was struck by HMS Edinburgh and sunk in deep water. The steam steering gear of HMS Edinburgh gave out. The battleship received no damage.

### **Scottish Wizard**

A two deck iron barque built in 1881 by A. Hall of Aberdeen for McIlwraith MacEacharn & Co. of London. Dimensions: 226.6ft. + 36 + 20 and tonnage 1209 gross 1140 net 1044 under deck. British Reg. No. 85060 and signal WCVT.

**1881**

Captain J. R. Mowat.

**1890-92**

Captain A. Ross

**1900**

Sold to Italian owners and renamed Pasquale Lauro.

**1917**

Missing presumed lost.

### **City of Aberdeen**

A wooden barque built in 1862 by Duthie & Co. of Aberdeen. Dimensions: 157.0ft. + 29.4 + 18.0 and tonnage 586 gross 569 net and 483 under deck. British Reg. No. 43558 and signal TPKS.

**1877/78**

Captain G. Scale.

**1879**

Bought by McIlwraith MacEacharn.

**1878 - 80**

Captain J. Fraser

**1881**

Captain T. Routledge

**1889**

Sold to Norwegian owners.

**1891**

Renamed Louis.

**1893**

March 29, abandoned on voyage from Halifax N.S. to Barry, Wales, at 42.27N 52W.

### **Frances Fisher**

A one deck steel barque built as yard no. 265 in 1885 [July] by A. McMillan & Son, of Dunbarton for Frances Fisher Sailings Co [LM] Chadwick Wainwright & Co. 28 Brunswick St. Liverpool. Dimensions: 244.0ft. + 37.5 + 19.1 and tonnage 1477 gross 1430 net and 1368 under deck. British Reg. No. 91852 and signal KDBV.

**1887**

Sold to McIlwraith MacEacharn.

**1890 - 93**

Captain J. Fraser.

**1893**

Sold to Liverpool owners.

**1909**

November 17th, abandoned [Master Jones] near the Royal Sovereign Lightship after a collision with the steamer Dalmatia. Beached near St. Valery-en Caux, France. Refloated by the tug Nord and proceeded towards Dieppe. Beached near Dieppe Casino and completely broke up during the night of December 1.

### **Sir William Wallace**

A wooden barque built by Duthie & Co. of Aberdeen in 1866. Dimensions: 195.6ft + 34.2 + 21.1 and tonnage 968 gross 968 net and 888 under deck. British Reg. No. 53245 and signal RCBS.

**1880/1**

Captain J. Colville

**1890**

Hulked at Sydney.