

A Wandering Star ~ by John Anderson

At the mid-19th century Sunderland possessed sixty odd shipyards and produced more ships than any other port in Britain. On the NE coast of England, the port was conveniently located for receiving essential marine supplies from the Baltic – Scandinavian softwood, oak from Bremen, Danzig and Memel, tar, hemp, flax from various Baltic ports. Sunderland ships were sometimes said to be cheap, but the fact was they were built to whatever class the owner desired. Joseph Shepherd, owner of the *Star Queen* wanted high class. The *Star Queen* was built at the Pallion shipyard of Richard Wilkinson. The *Newcastle Journal* of 20 May 1854 notes the launch of four vessels on the River Wear, including the *Star Queen* – *a magnificent East Indiaman.... built of English oak and East India teak, and has been much admired as a fine specimen of naval architecture... intended for the transport service.*

Joseph Shepherd (1804-1862) was from Appleton le Moors in Yorkshire, a successful businessman and philanthropist. He was a manager of the Sun Life Assurance Society, a steward of the Merchant Seaman's Orphan Asylum, and owned a number of ships, the *Francis Spaight*, *Louisa*, *Mary Shepherd*, *Rookery* and *Scoresby* and possibly more. His ships were mainly engaged in trade with India and China. He was related by marriage to the Scoresby family of Whitby (very prominent in the Arctic whale fishery and pioneers of oceanography), may in fact have commenced seafaring with Wm. Scoresby. He built a school, a church and a home at his native village.¹

Lloyd's Register 1855 notes the *Star Queen* was built under special survey, a ship of 832 register tons, 836 gross, registered at London, class 13A1. As built the ship had single topsails, possibly wire standing rigging, and all spars of wood. Later editions of *Lloyd's Register* provide additional details – O.N. 4285, call sign JBTP: 165.7 x 32.2 x 20.4 ft, poop 51 ft, fo'castle 34 ft: 769 register and gross tons (New Measure), 678 tons under-deck (equal to about 50 TEU in modern terms). The latter provides an under-deck coefficient of 0.63, fairly fine lined. The tea clippers *Cleta*, *Lothair*, *Taiping* had the same coefficient.² It can be seen then that the main deck was 80 ft long; obstructed by the fife rail around the mainmast, hatch, pumps and spare spars; it didn't leave much room for 300 odd passengers to stroll around! In 1854 a ship of 800 tons was large. *Lloyd's Register 1856* lists over 11,000 sailing ships of which the vast majority were less than 500 tons. Of 508 sailing ships listed in excess of 800 tons, 341 (67%) were built in British North America, mainly Quebec and New Brunswick; 148 (29%) were built in Britain and 19 (4%) were built elsewhere.³ *Lloyd's Register* lists only two vessels of this name, but over the years newspaper reports make it clear that several vessels bore the name, not to mention sundry race horses, pedigree cattle and hotels.

The *Star Queen* departed Sunderland for London on 12 June 1854, whether loaded or in

ballast isn't known. Britain had recently become engaged in the Crimean War and numerous ships were being chartered as transports. The *Star Queen* however, was chartered by the Emigration Commissioners in August, to convey government emigrants to Adelaide, South Australia from Southampton, to sail on 22 September. A small amount of general cargo was loaded, otherwise the ship was filled with fresh water and provisions for the emigrants. The tween deck would be fitted out with bunks, partitions, water closets. On deck, a galley suitable for cooking for several hundred people would be installed, very likely a fresh water distiller too.

On 18 September 1854 the *Star Queen* departed the Thames from Gravesend, spent two days anchored off Deal (due to fresh SW winds) and arrived at Southampton on 23 September. At Southampton 370 emigrants were embarked, hardy souls seeking their fortune on the other side of the world. Daunting for all, but particularly for women who would give birth en route. There was a cholera scare during embarkation but the ship sailed for Adelaide on 30 September with Capt. Manning in charge. The *Star Queen* arrived at Adelaide anchorage on 30 December 1854, after a fair passage of 91 days. The *South Australian Register*, 1 January 1855 noted the arrival – 368 emigrants, ten deaths – one from cholera (there had been thirteen cases), nine from other causes of which eight were children or infants; eight births; barely commented on the voyage. By 5 January 1855 the ship had shifted from the anchorage, moored in the stream and commenced discharging.



Star Queen at Gravesend in 1875. PRG 1373/1/24 - Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia.

The *Star Queen* was old school in design. The quarter galleries, outboard channels, fore stay lead to the bowsprit were decidedly old fashioned by 1875. The fore and main lower masts, and

bowsprit were now iron or steel. A proper barque's mizen mast, i.e. two sections, replaces the original ship's mast of three sections, and double topsails have replaced the original singles. Possibly the sail plan is reduced from the original – she doesn't look heavily sparred. A number of clippers had their sail plan reduced as they aged, as a measure of economy. Ships carrying emigrants were not loaded as deeply as when carrying only cargo; freeboard of one third the depth of hold was required. The *Star Queen* may well have been of traditional, conservative design, but great changes were in the wings. On the day following her arrival at Adelaide the new barque *Bristow* arrived in 105 days from Liverpool. The *Bristow* was at the cutting edge of new hull technology, being composite built, i.e. a wood hull on an iron frame. This was found to be very strong, durable, with the added bonus of providing significantly more cargo space than a wood ship of like dimensions. The *Bristow* was engaged in world-wide trade until 1893, then in the coastal coal trade of Britain. In 1896 the barque was scrapped after being severely damaged in a collision. The composite barque *Cleta* sailed from 1866 until 1937, amply demonstrating the merits of the construction.

The *Star Queen* sailed on 21 February 1855 towards Point de Galle (Sri Lanka) for orders. Three other ships sailed the same day – for Mauritius, Batavia (Java) and Melbourne. Arrival date at Galle isn't known but the ship arrived at Colombo (Sri Lanka) on 6 April 1855, 44 days from Adelaide. Colombo then was an open roadstead, fully exposed to the SW Monsoon but considered a safe port. It was suggested that ships ride to a single anchor on 80 fathoms of cable in about 8 fathoms.⁴ Inside the bar there was anchorage for native craft and ships drawing less than 11 feet. The ship was loaded for London; sailed on 14 May, was at Port Louis, Mauritius from 12 – 16 June, and arrived at Gravesend on 17 September 1855, 93 days from Mauritius. Winter off South Africa probably extended the passage time. Thirty other ships from all over the world arrived at Gravesend on the same day. The *Star Queen* cargo was 12,934 cwt *Plan coffee*, 2,880 cwt *native coffee*; total 15,814 cwt or 790.7 long tons. Plantation coffee was shipped in casks of 8 cwt, native coffee in bags. This valuable commodity was very prone to damage by tainting – rum, sugar, salt, pepper, guano could ruin an entire cargo. It was also prone to 'steaming' and had to be kept well ventilated.⁵

The ship next loaded for Bombay (Mumbai), probably general cargo given the time in port. Capt. Manning was accompanied by his wife this voyage. Sailing on 18 November 1855 the *Star Queen* arrived at Bombay on 18 March 1856, 121 days, a very typical time given summer off South Africa and the last of the NE Monsoon approaching India. Bombay was then the greatest port in Asia, a fine harbour, with good facilities for all classes of ships. On 14 June the ship sailed for Whampoa, situated on the Pearl River, about 15 miles below the city of Canton (Guangzhou, China); cargo and arrival date unknown. Within China the murderous Taiping Rebellion (1850 –

1864) raged on but with little effect on shipping. The *Star Queen* sailed from Hong Kong on 6 November 1856, was at Singapore from 17 – 21 November and arrived at Bombay on 25 December, 45 days from China which was decent time. The ship had the benefit of favourable monsoons both to and from China.

Sailing from Bombay on 23 February 1857 for London she had a very long (but not uncommon) voyage home, being 101 days to Saint Helena (for provisions) and arriving at London on 28 July 1857, 155 days on passage. The highly varied commodities of the cargo, with all their particular requirements would have been a challenge for the chief mate. The mate was personally liable, signing receipts for all cargo delivered aboard, which details then appeared in the cargo manifest signed by the master. Court cases against ships and mates for short delivery, loss, spoilage and such were common. Fast passages might have been gratifying, but the correct stowage, ventilation and delivery of cargo undamaged was of paramount importance.

*965 bales cotton, 841 bales wool, 262 pkges coffee, 352 bales hemp, 5,247 pcs and 4 cases (11 tons) Elephant's teeth, Olebramum 270 chests, Indigo 46 cases, Coir Yarn 2,080 bundles (15 tons), Gum Ghatty 39 cases, Surseeseed 400 bags, Mustardseed 370 bags, Khoresanseed 27 bags, Crotonseed 11 bags, Murjeet 158 bales, Castor oil 105 casks, Sursee oil 44 casks, Gingelly oil 105 casks, Star Aniseseed 243 cases, Bhoysing oil 50 hogsheads, Ground Nut oil 21 hogsheads, Deer Horns 21 cwt, Cow hides 1,805, Linseed 2,400 bags, Tallow 21 cases.*⁶

The ship *American* had encountered the *Star Queen* on 12 July at 36°N, 36°W and reported her on arrival at Liverpool on 29 July, 132 days from Bombay. Presumably business was slow; over the next few months the ship was variously entered for Calcutta, Shanghai, Bombay; Calcutta won.

Coal and salt were exported in bulk from Britain, otherwise the cargo would be manufactured goods, literally anything then produced in Britain. Homeward cargo was largely raw materials to supply the manufacturers, and foodstuffs; synthetic products still lay in the future.

The *Star Queen* sailed on 7 January 1858, probably with a general cargo, for Calcutta (Kolkata), now commanded by Capt. Barber and arrived on 21 April after a good run of 104 days. The ship grounded on the infamous James and Mary Shoal coming up the river, and would be docked after discharging her cargo. The Hooghli pilot station was at the Sandheads, offshore from the extensive shoal banks fronting the river. The main channel entered the river at Saugor (Sagar) Island; it was about 84 miles up the winding channel, beset by several bars and narrows to Calcutta. The transit might take up to several days depending on draft, water level, weather, whether or not a steam tug was employed. The river was lowest from December to May, and could rise 20 feet by August. Tidal bores occurred between May and October, July to September being the

worst. These were 12-15 ft high, but occasionally up to 25 ft, being highest at the shorelines. Modern conservancy measures have greatly reduced the bore. Various reaches of the river could only be taken in daylight or at particular times of tide, depending on the wind. *Melancholy Point* and *Luff and be-damned Point* speak volumes of a challenging river!

After docking, then loading, the *Star Queen* sailed on 10 July 1858, bound for Boston, America. The ship was reported at Bermuda with loss of rudder and sails, having arrived prior to 24 November. A hurricane passed close to Bermuda on 23 October and likely caused the damage to the *Star Queen*. Details are lacking but the voyage continued and the *Star Queen* arrived at Saint John, NB, from Boston on 27 January 1859. Timber would be the likely cargo loaded there; possibly she had part cargo already from Boston. Departure is unknown but she arrived off Deal on 9 March 1859, took a tug and arrived at London the next day.⁷

The ship was duly entered for Bombay; assembling a cargo was a slow business, and sailed on 3 July 1859, still with Capt. Barber. The ship arrived at Bombay after an average run of 120 days on 31 October, at the change of the monsoons with their uncertain winds. A general cargo was again loaded for London:- 1,040 pkgs saltpetre, 880 bales cotton, 280 bales wool, 25 tons coir yarn, 68 chests Gum Arabic, 8 tons Ivory, 3,487 bags Linseed, 3,168 bags Surcee, 16 tons Ghingelly, 100 bags seed, 128 bales hides, 160 chests tea, 186 bags Turmeric, 60 cases Ginger, 7 chests Beeswax.⁸ Sailing on 7 February 1860 the ship made Saint Helena in 72 Days (versus 101 days from Bombay previously) and back to London on 4 June 1860, 118 days from Bombay and 46 from Saint Helena.

At London the ship was engaged by the Council of India to transport troops to Bombay, one of a dozen ships engaged to convey troops to various Indian ports. Troops, being under military discipline were probably an easier cargo than emigrants, a diverse group from all walks of life. At Gravesend 237 soldiers were embarked, at £10/4/9 per head and the *Star Queen* sailed on 26 July 1860, anchored off Deal, then proceeded on 28 July, light SE winds prevailing. The ship made its best passage yet; Capt. Barber would be pleased.

*The clipper ship Star Queen (consigned to Messrs. Huschke of this town) which arrived here on Tuesday last (23 October) with troops, has made a splendid run from London. She left the latter port on the 29th of July, so that she was no more than 88 days on her way out, being the shortest voyage of the year.*⁹

The fastest run to Bombay to the writer's knowledge was that of the famed *Sovereign of the Seas* – (20/3/58 – 5/6/58), a 77 days run, 75 from Deal. In 1853 this ship made a famous run of 82 days from Hawaii to New York. This fine ship was wrecked on Pyramid Shoal, Malacca Strait on 6 August 1859. In 1856 four ships made a race of the run from Liverpool to Bombay as follows.

Khimjee Oodowjee, iron ship, 903 tons: 22 April – 16 July = 85 days.

Conflict, iron ship, 1,171 tons: 26 April – 13 July = 78 days.

Aetos, wood American ship, 1,352 tons: 23 April – 10 July = 77½ days.

Tiger, wood Quebec-built ship, 1,028 tons: 22 April – 19 July = 88 days.

For most ships though, any run under 100 days was a good run. Hull fouling was a factor on homeward runs, particularly if the ship had been a long time in the tropics. Bombay harbour was notorious for fouling, whereas at Calcutta the water was relatively fresh and ships departed with a cleaner hull. Bombay, Calcutta and Melbourne were all, by sailing ship routes, nearly equidistant from Britain, about 14,000nm. The run to the Indian ports was complicated by an additional equatorial crossing and the seasonal monsoons.

The *Bombay Gazette*, 12 November 1860 lists 79 ships in port, of which 38 were fixed and 41 were looking for cargo. Shortly after, the *Star Queen* was chartered by the government to carry troops to New Zealand at £19/10/- per head. Having embarked 341 soldiers of the 57th Regiment, the Royal Middlesex, known as 'the Die-hards', the ship sailed on the evening of 23 November for Auckland. The *Star Queen* went north-about round New Zealand, passed the Three Kings on 10 January 1861, then had light variable winds and arrived on 14 January. This was a fine run of 51 days over about 8,000nm. The *Castilian* with another contingent of the 57th Regiment arrived at Auckland a few days later, 55 days from Bombay, having sailed south of New Zealand. After a day or two the *Star Queen* carried on to land the troops at Taranaki on the SW coast of North Island which was accomplished on 23 January. The *Star Queen* sailed from New Zealand on 26 January 1861 and made very good time arriving at Mauritius, 5,500nm to the westward, on 12 March, 45 days. Didn't linger, sailed the next day and arrived at Bombay on 12 April, between the Monsoons.

At Bombay a general cargo for London was again loaded:- 336 cwt Ginger, 1,016 bags saltpetre, 3,450 bales cotton, 250 bags Linseed, 12 tons Surcee, 21 cases Cardamoms.¹⁰ With a predominantly cotton cargo the ship probably had to take in some ballast. With a full cargo of cotton, ships frequently took 10% to 30% of their register tonnage as ballast. It was imperative that cotton be loaded dry, or risk spontaneous combustion, so the ship was well placed to do this before the SW Monsoon arrived in mid-June. The Civil War in America had erupted on 12 April and this caused a boom in the Indian cotton business for the next few years. The *Star Queen* sailed on 18 May 1861, was at Saint Helena on 19 July, 62 days out, and arrived at Gravesend on 4 September 1861 – a decent run of 109 days. Capt. Barber had the bit between his teeth this voyage, making good passages on every leg of the voyage, or was fortunate with the weather throughout.

London and China Telegraph, 28th September 1861

*Regular Line of Packet Ships. For Hong Kong and Whampoa,
the splendid clipper ship STAR QUEEN, A1, 13 years, 769 tons*

register, A. BARBER, Commander; lying in the East India Docks. This ship has proved herself to be one of the fastest ships afloat, and has very superior accommodation for passengers. For freight or passage apply to Phillips, Shaw and Lowther, 2 Royal Exchange Building, EC.

On 5 October papers noted the ship had been chartered by the War Department to carry stores to Hong Kong.¹¹ She also had five passengers.

The *Star Queen* sailed on 26 October 1861, passed Deal the following day and arrived at Hong Kong 15 February 1862.¹² The route taken isn't known but as the adverse NE Monsoon prevailed in the South China Sea, the Eastern Passage via Gilolo Passage is likely; a passage of 112 days was a good passage. The record for this run was made by the *Ariel* in 83 days, 14/10/66 to 5/1/67.¹³ The *Ariel* was composite-built, 853 register tons, one of the fastest purpose-built tea clippers. It was the only time she made the run in under 100 days. The Eastern Passage leads to the Pacific via one of the straits east of Java. Probably the most frequented was Ombai Strait between Alor and Wetar, immediately north of Timor. A ship then sailed northerly to pass west of Buru, or between Buru and Ceram via Manipa Strait into the Ceram Sea, popularly known as Pitt Passage. From here a ship could enter the Pacific via Dampier Strait or Pitt Strait, both close north of New Guinea, the former being considered safer. Or, a ship could take a more northerly course passing between Halmahera (formerly known as Gilolo) and Gebe. Once in Pitt Passage the choice depended on winds and currents experienced and the master's preferences. Once in the Pacific a northerly course could be taken up to the Bashi Channel between Luzon and Taiwan and into the South China Sea.

On 19 March 1862 the *Star Queen* sailed for Foochow-foo (Fuzhou) on the River Min and arrived on 6 April. Foochow-foo is 450nm NE of Hong Kong but the ship would sail much further – a steady slog to windward against the NE Monsoon. Probably Capt. Barber hoped for a lucrative cargo of early tea but would have stiff competition from the established traders there, which included the noted clippers *Fiery Cross*, *Min*, *Robin Hood* and *Flying Spur*. Instead, the *Star Queen* sailed on 10 May for Taku, whether loaded or in ballast isn't known, and arrived on 1 June 1862. Taku, in the Yellow Sea, was an anchorage off the mouth of the Pei Ho, or White River; today, due to land reclamation it is part of the vast port of Tianjin. The *Star Queen* was too big to navigate the river to the port of Tientsin. The cargo loaded would be for the Chinese market. By mid-July the ship was back at Foochow-foo and loading tea for London. Tea stowage was a very particular process, expertly conducted by Chinese stevedores. The ship would require up to 30% of register tonnage of ballast, clean, dry shingle for tea. The *Star Queen* sailed on 15 August 1862; loaded tea ships, due to their value, were towed out of the Min, a turbulent river with powerful currents. It

isn't known if the ship sailed down the South China Sea against the SW Monsoon or took one of the eastern routes, but she arrived at Gravesend on 31 December 1862, 138 days out. The *Invincible*, a very similar ship to the *Star Queen* arrived on 29 December, 148 days out; the *Sir W.F. Williams* arrived on 30 December 124 days out.¹⁴ The latter was one of very few Canadian-built ships in the tea trade. The *Maiden Queen*, a ship of 814 tons arrived on 30 December, 130 days out. The cargo of the *Star Queen* was – 1,027,200 lbs tea, (458.6 long tons) or more precisely – 8,173 chests, 4,104 half-chests, 5,574 boxes tea, 18,800 bundles bamboo.¹⁵ The tea considered at retail price, was worth a king's ransom! Joseph Shepherd had died earlier in 1862, so once the cargo was discharged the ship was put up for sale.

Sales by Auction

By Order of the Executors of the late Joseph Shepherd, Esq. At Lloyd's Captains Room, Royal Exchange, on Thursday, January 29, 1863, at Half-past Two o'clock. The splendid ship STAR QUEEN, 836 tons per register NMM, built at Sunderland, under the most particular inspection, in 1854, and classed thirteen years A1, is copper fastened, and was re-sheathed with yellow metal in 1861. The Star Queen is a very handsome model, has just delivered about 1,200 tons tea in first rate order, and is a very fast sailer, has a full poop conveniently fitted, and topgallant forecastle; her tween decks are laid fore and aft, with good heights for passengers, troops and emigrants, and is in every respect a very superior merchant ship; has always been well kept up, and is abundantly found in good and useful stores. Now lying in the West India Dock.

*Geo. Bayley and Wm. Ridley, 2 Cooper's Court, Cornhill, EC.*¹⁶

While owned by Joseph Shepherd the ship had largely been employed in the lucrative India and China trades, and had on four occasions been chartered by government agencies which speaks well of the ship. The new owners were Ryland Bros., of London. Capt. Barber moved on – he had served the *Star Queen* well. The new captain was named variously in papers as Eves, Eaves, and Evans, the former apparently correct.

The *Star Queen* departed London on 11 March 1863, in ballast for Cardiff where 840 tons of coal was loaded for Shanghai and sailed on 10 April 1863. The coal amounted to 109% of register tonnage, a comparatively light load, or indicative of the ship's fine lines. It would be Autumn rounding South Africa and she would have the favorable SW Monsoon in the South China Sea. The ship passed through Sunda Strait on 14 July (with six others bound for Shanghai) and arrived at Shanghai on 14 August, 126 days out. The paper listed 151 ships at Shanghai, of which 81 were British, Americans being the next most numerous. The ship was consigned to Jardine Matheson.¹⁷

Depending on the season, visibility and water levels, getting up the river to Shanghai (with a pilot) could occupy a couple of days sometimes. Once again the ship mainly loaded tea. The shingle ballast had to be judged to a nicety – familiarity with the ship would help. Too much ballast and the ship would be stiff and less sea kindly, and most importantly less room for tea. Too little – and the ship would be tender and unable to stand a press of sail resulting in a slower passage. The prevailing freight rates to London were – *Tea £3/15/- per ton, silk £4/15/-*.¹⁸ While departing Shanghai on 2 December Capt. Eves died. He was very promptly replaced by Capt. Shergold and the *Star Queen* departed Woosung (on which river Shanghai was located) on 3 December 1863. This time the ship had the NE Monsoon in her favour and she passed Sunda Strait on 29 December, as did four other ships bound for Britain. Arrival at London was on 10 April 1864, 129 days on passage. The *Star of the North*, 935 tons, was 115 days on the run, sailing 18 November, arriving 15 March. She was 19 days to Sunda versus the *Star Queen's* 26 days. Several ships leaving Shanghai later in December made exceptionally fast passages; the *Nonpareil* made a record run to Liverpool of 87 days (19 December – 15 March).¹⁹ The *Star Queen* cargo – *1,086,700 lbs tea, or 485 long tons; 3,945 chests, 4,676 half-chests, 2,043 pkgs, 1,500 baskets, 312 mats, 1 box tea, 101 bales silk, 55 bales silk waste, 5 jars Ginger, 1,320 chests tea*. Shanghai was noted for silk export more so than tea.

Newspapers provide the bare bones of a voyage; for the following voyage the *Crew Agreement** (courtesy of the Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of St John's) is an additional source. Crew Agreements provide indisputable dates and add some meat to the bones of a hard life. Capt. Shergold opened a new Crew Agreement on 6 May 1864 – Cardiff to Shanghai then anywhere in the world... voyage not to exceed three years. The owners were Seddon & Rylands, of Liverpool, but the ship was registered at London. The usual measly Board of Trade provisions were noted – 1½ lbs beef, 1¼ lbs pork on alternate days, 1 lb bread daily, peas 1/3 pint every other day, tea 1/8 oz, coffee ½ oz, sugar 2 oz, 3 quarts water daily. Men engaged, and monthly pay, were:- mate £7, second mate £4, carpenter £5/10/-, steward £3, cook £3, bosun £3/10/-, fourteen AB £2/10/-, two OS £1/10/-. Five of these seamen failed to join the ship. All had obtained an advance of a month's pay upon entry, which was standard practice. Four of the men were illiterate. The two mates and the carpenter, being frugal or having dependents, allotted half their pay monthly to the bank. On 11 May 1864 the ship departed London in ballast for Cardiff, where 969 tons coal (126% of register tonnage) was loaded for Shanghai. Six of the London crowd deserted at Cardiff, also the steward after stealing clothes from the carpenter. The illiterate cook was promoted to steward. Nine men were engaged on 13 June at the Cardiff rate of £2/12/6, but didn't show up until the 16th. One of them was paid £2/17/6 as *sailmaker and AB** Similarly five more, including a cook on the 15th. Labourers were engaged in their places and the cost would be

deducted from the men's wages. The crew came from all over the British Isles, varying from 19 to 40 years old. By 17 June 1864 the ship was outside in Penarth Roads where a final man joined and the *Star Queen* sailed. Such proceedings were common when getting a crew together.

Southbound, the ship would soon settle into seagoing routine. *28 June. 37°48'N, 15°32'W. Discovered the Limejuice cask to have fetched away and the head stove in and lost all the Limejuice.** The cook, a 24 year old from Malta had failed to please... *for being filthy dirty as regards his person and the food.** The cook was demoted to AB. The ship was about 300nm west of Lisbon, had made good better than 900nm. *4 July. 27°14'N, 18°39'W. George Seymour off duty with Venereal Bubo. Charles Newman reduced to the capacity of boy.** Newman, the former cook had proved equally useless as a sailor. *5 July. 24°36'N, 20°37'W. James Tweedie of duty with Venereal Bubo. 12 July. 9°37'N, 22°36'W. George Seymour returned to his duty. 13 July. 8°33'N, 21°12'W. James Tweedie returned to his duty.** The ship was now about 500nm west of Freetown, Sierra Leone, having passed close west of the Canary islands and east of the Cape Verde Islands, averaging about 120nm daily. Venereal bubo probably refers to Syphilis. The *Official Log* was largely reserved for medical and disciplinary issues, frequently an exercise in brevity.

One hundred and ten days later Capt. Shergold again put pen to paper. *31 October. 9°15'N, 139°02'E. Charles Newman being either mad or pretending to be mad put him in irons to prevent him doing Mischief till he comes to his senses which was on the following day when I let him out.** The position is about 300nm ENE of the Palau Islands, and probably 400nm east of where Capt. Shergold wished to be. The ship had taken the Eastern Passage avoiding the adverse NE Monsoon in the South China Sea, having had a tedious run from off West Africa. Fair winds must have then prevailed for the last 2,000nm, the *Star Queen* arriving at Shanghai on 17 November 1864. The 153 day run from Cardiff was about 16,000nm. She wasn't the only one to have a long passage; the *Annie Braginton* arrived on 12 December, 195 days from Newport, not far from Cardiff. Newman was discharged shortly after arrival, an AB a few days later. One man was logged for being drunk and several noted as off duty due to venereal disease. After a tedious five month passage and three months at Shanghai, the absence of disciplinary problems speaks of an orderly, well run ship. A cook was engaged at £3/10/- and two ABs at £2/15/-. On 11 February 1865 an AB was discharged – *left behind at this port on the grounds of sickness.**

Departure for Rangoon (Yangon, Burma) was probably shortly after; cargo, if any, is unknown. The run from Shanghai was about 3,500nm and had the favourable monsoon. Not all the consular notations are available in the existing Articles so the arrival date at Rangoon is unknown, but before 30 March 1865 when the ship was already loading. At Rangoon three men were discharged and a cook and 2 ABs engaged paid £3/10/- and £2/15/- respectively. Departure from Rangoon was on 16 April 1865, probably with rice; arrival date at Hong Kong is unknown but

before 11 June. At Hong Kong the chief mate and seven men were discharged. This included the cook who went to jail for assaulting a seaman with a knife, and a seaman for refusing duty. A new mate and six seamen were engaged at London wages, and a cook at £3/10/-. Business must have been slow, for the ship left Hong Kong on 1 August, for Singapore, arriving on 3 September after a tedious run against the height of the SW monsoon.

The *Star Queen* departed Singapore for Batavia on 8 or 9 September, presumably having obtained a cargo in Java. On 17 September 1865 at 1°40'S, 106°18'E an entry in the *Official Log* notes the captain is unwell. On 19 September, at 1°58'S, 106°31'E the captain is recorded as confined to his bed. Both positions are off the NE coast of Bangka, the ship heading for Gaspar Strait, obviously in near calm conditions having only made good about 20nm in two days.

*Sunday Sept 24th 1865. Captain Shergold, Master in a very bad state losed the use of his limbs while lying in bed with sickness he made the remark that his glass is run out. While sick Particularly attended to what ever he request by his officers.**

Monday Sept 25. Lat 5°58'S, Long 107°03'E.

*This is to certify that Charles Shergold Master of the British ship Star Queen Died on Monday the 25th September 1865 at 8h 30m am of a Feavour.**

The position is just outside Batavia, then the capital of the Dutch East Indies (Djakarta, Indonesia today). A sad end to Capt. Shergold who was only 29 years old. The ship arrived the same day. The passage from Singapore to Batavia was about 600nm through an area littered with islands and shoals, locally strong currents, and often very light winds, so a run of 16 days was nothing uncommon. These waters, indeed the entire Eastern Archipelago, were very imperfectly surveyed at this date, were distinctly hazardous seas. At Batavia the British consul appointed the mate, John Allen, as master and the second mate was promoted to chief mate. One man was discharged sick. Batavia was a notoriously unhealthy port for Europeans. The Articles were returned to the master on 2 October 1865 and the *Star Queen* sailed for Pasarowen (Pasuruan), about 450nm to the east. Sugar probably comprised the bulk of the cargo but rattans and arrack were also loaded, possibly other commodities too. Arrack was a spirit distilled variously from rice, sugar or a type of palm. Rattans – bundles of canes, used for dunnage, also as cargo at very low freight rates. Date of arrival at Pasarowen is unknown. On 25 October the sail-maker was drunk, having broached a cask of arrack in the cargo. Later a small fire broke out in the fore hold burning a couple of casks and some bundles of rattans but was quickly extinguished by the crew. This was caused by some of the crew taking a naked light into the hold to get at the arrack, of which there were 48 casks. The ship was at Surabaya before 3 November, very likely towed from Pasarowen, about 30nm away. Like Batavia,

the port had excellent anchorage and facilities for all classes of ships. Several men became sick and were sent ashore to hospital and two died of cholera, aged 26 and 27 years. With the support of the Port Medical Officer, Capt. Allen condemned eight casks of beef as unfit to feed the crew – an uncommonly humane act. Three seamen and a second mate were engaged on 8 December. On 12 December 1865 the ship was aground for a couple of hours, with a pilot aboard. This was presumably while leaving Surabaya bound for Amsterdam, there being extensive mud flats in the vicinity.

The NW Monsoon prevailing, the ship entered the Indian Ocean via Bali Strait. This narrow strait could be challenging with erratic tides, calms, and squalls coming off the adjacent mountains. A pilot was available at Banjoewangie (Banyuwangi), from which the ship cleared on 19 December 1865. The ship was reported at 14°S, 114°E on 1 January 1866, having made good about 350nm from the strait. On 21 February the ship was at 29°44'S, 11°56'E; noted in the *Official Log* when the crew refused lemon juice, taking sugar and vinegar instead. This position is about 450nm NW of Cape Town. Subsequent to the above Capt. Allen made a belated, undated entry regarding another death. *I regret to state that through a long illness which I have had, I omitted to make in this Official Log Book the entry of illness and death of Thomas Nugent (AB) who died of a Flux in Lat 9°56' Long 38°30' East on the 21st of December 1865 at 6 am.** Nugent, who had been engaged at Cardiff was 29 years old; flux was very likely dysentery. The stated longitude is nonsense, being inland east Africa! The *Official Log* also notes Nugent's wages and deductions. The latter included *Cab expense for taking effects from Ship to Shipping Office—3 shillings.** Similarly, when a seaman died in port his funeral costs were deducted from his balance of wages. Life was very cheap then, as noted in appalling annual statistics – *Deaths at Sea in 1867. House of Commons.... 5,283 among crew of British ships: 2,370 due disease, 1,808 due wrecks, 1,105 accidental drowning.*

Ships bound for Amsterdam took a Texel pilot to enter at Den Helder, then via the North Holland Canal towed by horses (2 to 4 days depending on the wind) 47 miles to the port. The Dutch coast, strongly tidal and fringed by extensive shoal banks, was very dangerous in strong westerly winds being devoid of shelter. The Texel pilot cutter cruised off the Isle of Wight in the English Channel though pilots could also be engaged off Texel. The Schulp Gat was the main channel through the banks off Texel, with 24 ft water on the bar, delineated by numerous buoys. At this time there were no standard buoys, they varied from port to port. Lighted buoys were an innovation in 1878; the first lighted British buoy was the East Oaze, Thames estuary in 1880. The *Star Queen* arrived at Texel on 14 April after a fair passage of 116 days. Instead of Amsterdam the ship berthed at Nieuwediep, immediately adjacent to Den Helder. The crew were discharged there on 20 April 1866. The chief mate was discharged on 5 May, having overseen discharge of the cargo. The ship had a nominal crew of 23 or so, but in the course of the voyage 58 men had passed

through the ship. Of those who had joined at London, only the carpenter, bosun, steward and one AB completed the voyage. Of those engaged at Cardiff only five completed the voyage.

The record is unclear but on 8 May Capt. Battie took over the command. He opened Home Trade Articles and engaged a mate and fourteen seamen, all Dutch, to take the ship to Cardiff. The ship sailed from Texel on 14 May 1866 and arrived at Cardiff four days later, obviously enjoying fair winds for the 600nm run through strongly tidal waters. At Cardiff Capt. Battie handed over to Capt. Forbes.

The cargo loaded was 1,000 tons (130% of register tonnage) of railway iron. This was a heavy dense cargo requiring very careful stowage and securing as it was prone to shifting. The *Star Queen* sailed on 14 August 1866, bound for Kurrachee (Karachi) with Capt. Forbes in command. The ship arrived at Karachi on 21 December 1866 after a typical run of 129 days. It would have been Spring off South Africa, and the NE Monsoon on the coast of Pakistan was far more benign than on the China coast. Kurrachee was still a smallish port being developed, hence the railway iron to connect with the interior. The ship sailed on 19 February 1867 with the last of the NE Monsoon bound for London, where she arrived on 14 June 1867, after a fair run of 114 days. The cargo was – *9,252 bags rapeseed, 110 bales wool, 1,050 bales cotton.*²⁰ The freight rate on the seed was £1/7/6 per ton. Turnaround was unusually rapid; by 12 July the ship was outbound for Liverpool where she arrived twelve days later to be very rapidly loaded for Hong Kong, probably with coal.

The *Star Queen* sailed on 31 July 1867; was reported at 14°S, 28°W on 15 September, about 1,000nm NE of Rio de Janeiro. The ship encountered a severe storm on 22 October in 39°S, 59°E, about 1,300nm south of Mauritius, and was obliged to put in at Port Louis, Mauritius on 18 November 1867.

*Mauritius, Nov 18. The Star Queen from Liverpool to Hong Kong, put in Nov 11, having experienced a severe hurricane from WNW to SSW on the 22nd October, in lat 39S, long 59E, during which she sprang a leak at the sternpost and wooden ends aft, and threw about 30 tons of cargo overboard. On the 24th she bore up for this port. A few days before her arrival a strong smell of fire proceeded from the hold, but after the water had been allowed to rise six feet there, the smell disappeared.*²¹

Wet coal was notoriously prone to spontaneous combustion. The necessary repairs being made the voyage to Hong Kong was abandoned and the ship sailed on 30 December for Bombay. Presumably the cargo was sold at Mauritius or Bombay. Date of arrival at Bombay is unknown, but a cargo of cotton, at £3/10/- per ton was loaded for Havre and she sailed on 28 April 1868. Between 16 March and 23 April, 15 ships loaded at Bombay for Havre. The *Star Queen* arrived at Havre on 7

September 1868, 132 days out. The ship had been reported off Ascension Island on 7 July, 70 days out; was reported on 6 August at 35°N, 40°W, 100 days out, several hundred miles west of the Azores, probably experiencing light, variable summer winds. The *Star Queen* sailed from Havre 16 September, having been discharged and ballasted very promptly, and arrived at Liverpool four days later, where she would again be sold. The ship was berthed in the West Float, across the river at Birkenhead, the owners, Seddon & Co., being insolvent.

By order of Official Liquidators of the Royal Bank. On Thursday the 10th December, at One o'clock, at the Broker's Saleroom, Walmer-buildings, Water-street, if not previously disposed of by private treaty, The fine clipper ship STAR QUEEN, 836 tons N.M., 769 tons N.N.M.; built at Sunderland in 1854, and then classed A1 at Lloyd's for 13 years; in August, in 1866, she was continued for 8 years, sheathed with yellow metal over felt, had nearly an entire new greenheart keelson and all new masts, yards and wire rigging. Has double topsail yards, sails very fast, and will bear the closest inspection..... C.W. Kellock & Co, Brokers.....

Kellock & Co., also had five other ships and five barques to go on auction. James Baines, the flamboyant owner of the Black Ball Line of Packets bought the *Star Queen* for £4,475, or £5/16/- per ton. Once again the ship would be fitted out with all the necessary fittings to cater to several hundred people. By 19 December the ship was being advertised as the packet for Queensland, to sail 20 January 1869. For reasons best known to Baines the sailing date was regularly deferred, which at the very least must have been confusing for prospective emigrants. Since 1851 the firm had bought and sold over 150 ships, and chartered many more. However, the financial crises of 1866-67 virtually bankrupted the firm. In 1866, forty of sixty-one ships owned were sold and another nine in 1867.²² Baines was hanging on by his fingernails; it seems surprising he even bought the ship. By March the *Star Queen* was advertised to sail from Glasgow for Queensland in April. On 16 April 1869 the ship was towed to Glasgow to embark emigrants.

The *Star Queen* sailed on 19 May 1869 with about 250 emigrants, with Capt. Evans in charge and arrived at Brisbane on 6 September, 110 days on passage. The ship lost three weeks trying to cross the Equator experiencing much stronger westerly currents than usual. Several other captains reported similar difficulties in Australian newspapers. There were a variety of complaints about provisions and water but nothing too serious. The general cargo included 170 tons of railway iron. The ship loaded – 1,832 bales wool, 16 bales cotton, 340 casks tallow, 7,111 horns, 1,040 hides, 15,000 treenails, 2 pkgs sundries plus nine passengers. Departing on 15 November 1869, the passengers were landed at Dover on 4 March 1870, 110 days out, very much a run of the mill

passage. The ship languished at London until August, was briefly advertised for sale. However, the ship returned to Liverpool on 12 August, to be advertised for the sailing of 15 September.

By 20 December 1870 the ship was anchored in the Mersey and sailed for Brisbane on the 21st, with 212 passengers, towed as far as Point Lynas (about 60nm – clear of Liverpool Bay), still with Capt. Evans. This was a far more agreeable voyage – *crossed the Equator on 21st day, passed the meridian of Cape of Good Hope on 48th day, rounded Tasmania on 73rd day, had unsettled weather with light winds on the east coast of Australia.... ran down her easting in 45°-46°S... never furled the topgallants from Biscay until the east coast of Australia.* Arriving on 20th March 1871, the Australian authorities were pleased with the fast passage of 89 days. The record run, once equaled but never surpassed, was 75 days (31/5/54 – 14/8/54) by the *Genghis Khan*. The return cargo was – *363 bales wool, 80 bales sheepskins, 1,065 bales cotton, 529 casks tallow, 2,527 hides, 796 cases preserved meat, 139 calf skins, 1,471 horns, 5 tons bones, 1 ton hoops, 15 casks manure.*²³ Passenger fares homeward were – *£50 saloon, £30 second cabin, £18/10/- steerage.* Departure was on 6 July with 2 saloon and 11 steerage passengers. The ship arrived at Gravesend on 19 October 1871, 105 days on passage. At London the ship passed to Taylor, Bethell & Roberts, who had a long business association with Baines, and the registry was changed from Liverpool back to London. Taylor & Co., had several ships engaged in the emigrant trade to Australia, all advertised as *superb, high classed Clipper Ships*. The ship was advertised for an emigrant run to Queensland for 30 April 1872 but it didn't materialize. While at London the rig was reduced to a barque, and no doubt the crew reduced accordingly. The next voyage was purely general cargo, no emigrants, apart from three cabin and eleven second cabin passengers. Which was just as well as the ship was a floating bomb. The cargo included – *168 barrels, 60 half-barrels, 2,200 quarter-barrels gunpowder.* Rounded up that is 748 barrels. An Admiralty powder barrel was 20 inches high and 16 inches in diameter, held 100 lbs. One cubic foot powder weighs 58 lbs. The barrels had copper hoops and nails. So the *Star Queen* had 33.4 long tons of powder aboard. The powder would be stowed in a wooden magazine constructed with copper nails, lined with felt or similar material.²⁴ Powder would be the last item loaded, at a remote anchorage, and the first discharged, again remote from other ships, buildings. In 1869 the barque *Lotty Sleigh*, with 11½ tons of powder aboard exploded while anchored in the Mersey. The explosion extinguished gas lights across Liverpool and Birkenhead, shook buildings and shattered countless windows.

On 7 June 1872 the *Star Queen* sailed for Melbourne with Capt. Davis, or possibly Davies in command. It was a tedious passage dogged by light winds most of the way, arriving at Melbourne on 30 September 1872, 115 days out. The powder was discharged at the outer anchorage then the ship shifted to Sandridge Pier to discharge the rest of the cargo. Capt. Davis described the voyage – *took ten days to get down the Channel, light, variable winds continued... crossed the line 43 days*

out.... the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope 78 days out in 42S... ran down the easting mostly in 43S with prevailing westerly winds.... until the meridian of Cape Leuwin. From thence easterly winds and calms... was abreast of Portland ten days ago..²⁵ Portland is 150nm west of Port Phillip Heads. Other arrivals around the same time were – on 21 September – *Moneta* 98 days from Boston; *Envoy* 117 days from New York; 11 October – *Wimmera* 90 days from London. The *Star Queen* was chartered to carry Chinese to Hong Kong plus the mail.

*The Star Queen, a clipper barque of 1,000 tons...is chartered for Hong Kong by a Chinese merchant of this town, and will leave for China on Tuesday. She takes nearly 300 Mongolians, the majority of whom represent a superior class of Chinese, those, it may be said, who have by their industry and frugality amassed sufficient means to return to their native country. Many of these men will, there is no doubt, take back with them large sums of money, for a compartment is being fitted up as a strong room for the better safety of the gold the ship will carry.*²⁶

The ship was hauled off Sandridge Pier on 7 December and anchored in the bay. The steamer *Titan* towed the ship out to Port Phillip heads on 13 December 1872 and she sailed for Hong Kong. The route was north past the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), skirting the Caroline Islands (Kiribati) to the Bashi Channel between the Philippines and Formosa (Taiwan), with arrival at Hong Kong on 2 February 1873, nearing the end of the NE Monsoon. The run was about 5,500nm so 51 days was fair average time. The record on this run was by the *Annandale* in 31 days (11/5/56 – 11/6/56); this ship had *one of the most extreme hull-forms to be found in a British clipper.*²⁷ In June 1873 several Australian newspapers published a letter sent from Rangoon by one of the mates to a friend in Australia.

...There was a great exodus of Chinese from Melbourne.. ship Star Queen...for Hong Kong with over 400 Celestials on board...Before the vessel left the Bay, she was boarded by a host of creditors of the departing ones, and several free fights took place..... It was very cold outside the Heads.... not a Chinaman was to be seen on deck. They were all suffering from a severe attack of 'mal de mer' and it was five days before one ventured to show his head above the hatchway.... On the morning of the 17th.... before midnight we had a fearful gale. We shortened all sail but the topsails.... On the 22nd another gale overtook us blowing the sails to ribbons. We wore ship and lay-to

until the storm abated. You can form no idea of the state of our 'tween deck passengers during these heavy gales.... such a picture of confusion I have never before witnessed in my life. The whole tribe were in their bunks perfectly prostrate, while their goods and chattels were heaped together, rolling here and there...had fine weather up to the 31st when a Chinaman died of apoplexy....The first of the new year ... it came on to blow great guns, and the ship was under bare poles. We were in a cyclone. We set the maintop staysail and a reefed foresail. When the storm abated a little wore ship and lay-to till daylight....On the 13th and 14th we caught eight sharks, and in the stomach of one of them we found one of Sands and M'Dougall's almanacs for 1872. On the 24th one of the sailors harpooned a large dolphin, and we had it for dinner. It was capital eating and an excellent substitute for pork... On the 29th (the Chinese New Year) we had great doings, and most of the Celestials were on their beam ends by night.... On the 31st another, the fourth Chinaman, was thrown over to the sharks, and again we had a severe gale. You may imagine the superstition of the sailors in this matter...We sighted one of the Bashee Islands on the 2nd February at ten the next morning we took a Chinese pilot on board , and by noon were at anchor in front of Hong Kong. We were immediately surrounded by a crowd of sampans and junks, which soon rid us of our passengers, and by two o'clock we had not one left aboard....(The Ballarat Star, 3 June 1873).

Sands and McDougall's Almanac contained general information – legal, trades, professional, geographic, about Australia; published from 1864 for over a century.

The *Star Queen* sailed on 18 February 1873 and arrived at Rangoon (Yangon, Burma) on 1 April, 41 days out. Ten other ships arrived the same day. Fog was common on the Burma coast in March. The Irrawaddy River is fronted by extensive drying banks with considerable tidal range and powerful currents, so it was a port to approach with considerable care. The port, under British control since 1852 was rapidly growing in importance and had good wharves for ships of all sizes; rice and timber were the main exports. Rice absorbs moisture, generates a lot of heat and condensation, so good ventilation was imperative on a long passage. Ballast was not required with a rice cargo. Bilge water from a rice cargo was notoriously foul-smelling and bad for the crew's health. Rice was mainly shipped from January to April, before the monsoon rains commenced. The *Star Queen* departed on 18 April 1873 and had a tedious passage home, arriving at Falmouth on 10 September, 145 days out. The ship *Wm. Poolman* departed Rangoon the same day and arrived at

Falmouth on 3 September. The *Star Queen* reported - ... *that about 10 pm June 18, in lat 32 30S, long 30 27E, saw a strong light bearing SE, supposed to be a ship on fire. At 2 am the light disappeared. During the forenoon of the 19th passed several pieces of wreck and charred wood, with rice attached, also a large spar. Several vessels were in company in direction of the fire.*²⁸ The *Star Queen* was ordered to Amsterdam on 13 September and arrived at Texel on the 16th. The ship returned to London on 18 October 1873 to load for Brisbane, optimistically advertised to sail on 10 November. Australia was still growing apace and needed people – *Navvies Wanted for the construction of the Railway between Ipswich and Brisbane, Queensland. Free passage granted to Single Men and Families by the ship Star Queen, from London, 26th November. Apply at the Emigration Office, 267 Burrage-road, Plumstead.*²⁹ For the more affluent –

*The beautiful clipper Star Queen, now loading in the East India Docks, has superior accommodation for second-class passengers in her spacious full poop cabins, and enclosed berths for each family in all classes. Carries a surgeon, and distilling apparatus for fresh water. Fares from 16, 20 and 22 guineas, with land order, transferable, given free. Apply to Taylor, Bethell and Roberts, 110, Fenchurch-street.*³⁰

The *Star Queen* departed Gravesend for Brisbane on 2 December 1873 and passed Deal the following day, with about 300 passengers, including 54 young men from Bradford bound for the railway. Arrival at Moreton Bay was on 3 March 1874, 90 days out, a very fair run, summer in the Southern Ocean. The local papers called it an *excellent passage of 87 days*, probably allowing 'pilot to pilot' or 'land to land.' Assembling a homeward cargo was a slow business from many suppliers and locations. The river at Brisbane was quite shallow so only partial loading was possible, then shifted down-river to Breakfast Creek, and ultimately Moreton Bay to complete loading. The cargo was – *1,400 bales cotton, 680 bales wool, 2,800 cases preserved meat, 60 tons tin ingots and other cargo*; other likely being tallow, bones, hides, horns, also a small number of cabin passengers. After four and a half months on the placid Brisbane River the *Star Queen* sailed from Moreton Bay on 24 July 1874, anchored, then sailed the next day. Winter Southern Ocean would prove very different to the outward passage. Arrival at Gravesend was on 3 November 1874, 101 days out, and Capt. Davis provided an account of the run to the papers.

Left Brisbane on the 24th July, and anchored off Cape Moreton. Proceeded the following day with light and variable winds from the NE, which continued until the 1st of August when we encountered a heavy gale, which increased during the evening to a terrific hurricane from NE, with a high, cross, turbulent sea, causing the ship to labour heavily. About daylight on Sunday the 2nd the hurricane increased in

force, and as the ship made a heavy lurch (on top of a heavy sea) the starboard lifeboat was stove in, and the force of the waves tore it away, breaking off the davits as if they were carrots. The ship behaved beautifully, and all the passengers were kept below until the gale abated. On the 4th the wind had hauled to the SW, accompanied with heavy thunder and lightning. From the 6th till the 16th experienced heavy gales from the south, in lat 44°56'S, long 146°56'W. The gales moderated on the 17th and two days later the wind veered to NNW, when the ship was caught in a heavy snow storm, which continued at intervals up to the 29th, when they sighted two vessels, a ship and a barque, standing to the westward under low sails. The Star Queen signaled both vessels but got no answer. The weather was intensely cold, and everything was frozen up..... From October 26th until the ship arrived off Folkstone, they experienced strong easterly winds....

Also noted six vessels spoken with, including two on 31 August at 57¼°S, 71¼°W, about 180nm WSW of Cape Horn which was probably passed the next day, 39 days out. The run to Cape Horn was about 6,000nm.

It is worth comparing the ship with cutting edge design. The American shipbuilder Donald MacKay, a very progressive builder, built the *Lightning* in 1854, a much larger ship, built with speed in mind. The renowned packet ship *Lightning* made the record run from Melbourne to Liverpool in 64½ days (20/8/54 – 23/10/54), during which she was 21 days to Cape Horn. This voyage was well documented in Liverpool newspapers with log abstracts, as 63½ days, a sensational run. Crossing the Date-Line eastbound added an extra day not mentioned, so it was actually 64½ days, and was never equaled. Just ten days earlier the papers had extolled the arrival of the *Red Jacket* in 73½ days, an unprecedented run.

'Records' are tricky without the ship's log, and newspapers were very fallible. In 1867 Australian papers celebrated the record 65 day run from Melbourne to London by the *Lightning*, but had the arrival date wrong. British papers noted her arrival off Deal on 30 January 1867 after a 67 day passage, also of the *George Thompson* in 67 days the same day but had the departure dates wrong. In Australian papers the *George Thompson* sailed on 21 November 1866 and the *Lightning* on 22 November 1866 and none accounted for an additional day crossing the Date Line. So, it appears the *Lightning's* passage was 69½ days and the *George Thompson* 70½ days; probably the record nonetheless. The aptly named *Lightning* made seventeen voyages to Australia and one to India, all her passages being fast, while commanded by five different captains. 'Passage' time was from dropping the pilot off Port Phillip Heads to picking up the British pilot. A dozen ships that

sailed in November 1866 from Port Phillip Heads made unusually fast passages on this long run of about 15,000nm; obviously a long spell of favourable weather prevailed over a great distance.

After sundry delays it was May 1875 before the *Star Queen* sailed for Maryborough, Queensland, with Capt. Downing in charge. It was a voyage that reflected no credit on the captain or the owners. Sailing on 13 May 1875 from Gravesend with over 300 emigrants it was another voyage of light winds. The ship was 31 days to the equator (not uncommon) but 73 to the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope. The *Star Queen* put in to Melbourne on 31 August 1875, 110 days out and short of provisions. Provisions were supplied and the ship continued on 8 September, having been ordered to Brisbane first where she arrived on 14 September 1875. The Australian authorities were not at all pleased with the situation and conducted an investigation. After some days the ship was allowed to proceed to Maryborough where she arrived on 25 September. The authorities found that the accommodation was filthy (had run out of disinfectant); the emigrants had systematically been served less water and provisions than required from day one; the ship should not have been carrying more than 242 statute adults. The surgeon had been at odds with the captain from day one. In short, there had been fraud – the ship insufficiently provisioned (supposed to carry 140 days supplies), the captain, third mate (a nephew of the captain) and purser were all party to the fraud, probably so too were some emigration officials, the supplier of the provisions and the owners. Fortunately, all the emigrants were landed in fine fettle and had praise for the surgeon's efforts on their behalf. The ship then shifted back to Brisbane to load for home. Capt. Downing was fined £211 for infringements of the Passenger Act. By late October Capt. Downing was sick and left the ship. He took passage back to Britain in the ship *Ramsay*, accompanied by another nephew (thirteen years old). This nephew, in the July and August issues of *Sea Breezes*, 1929, published a memoir of the voyage. He painted a more benevolent picture of his uncle and dismissed the surgeon as an interfering busybody; mentioned that most of the crew deserted at Maryborough.

Capt. Rainey took over the *Star Queen* and sailed, in ballast, for Newcastle NSW on 9 December 1875 and arrived four days later. Newcastle had been exporting coal since the 1830s; today it is the largest coal port in the world. There, 812 tons of coal was loaded and the *Star Queen* sailed on 19 January 1876 bound for Tuticorin in southern India. The passage, upwards of 6,000nm took 78 days, arriving on 6 April 1876. Crossing the Australian Bight westbound was frequently an uphill run, and the barque probably had light and uncertain winds approaching India between the monsoons. Cotton and salt were the main exports from Tuticorin; ships anchored a couple of miles offshore and cargo was handled by local boats. The barque sailed on 25 May 1876 and arrived at Penang, Malaya twelve days later. Penang, formerly a considerable entrepôt, was being rapidly superseded by Singapore. The barque was idle at Penang until 25 August when she sailed, with salt, for Singapore and arrived on 10 September 1876. The barque was reported sold for

\$10,000 on 2 November 1876 while at Singapore.³¹ The currency isn't known but Spanish and Mexican dollars were widely used in eastern ports then.

The new owner was Khoo Guan Hong, Singapore, to where the ship's registry was transferred. Hokkien Chinese, migrants from Fujian, became prominent in shipping, banking and insurance in Singapore and Malaysia. Hokkien is still the most widely used dialect among the Chinese business community of Malaysia. The *Star Queen* left Singapore for Bombay on 3 February 1877, probably having previously been to Bangkok, with Capt. M'Intosh in charge. She arrived at Bombay on 10 March 1877, 35 days from Singapore with the favourable NE Monsoon. The barque sailed on 26 April and arrived at Singapore on 28 May, 32 days, the monsoon being on the change, then sailed for Hong Kong on 26 June. The *Star Queen* plus ninety-seven other sailing ships, and ten steamers, was reported at Hong Kong on 25 August 1877.³² The barque had arrived from Singapore on 13 August. In September the barque was chartered – *British barque Star Queen, 769, Newchang to Swatow, 20 cents per picul, 30 lay days.*³³ There being 16.84 piculs per ton realizes \$3.37 per ton, for a cargo of 600-800 tons or so. The paper also notes eight other vessels chartered for the same run, and twenty others from Newchang to other Chinese ports. There was a vast coastal trade in China, which included numerous ships of Britain, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and America, besides innumerable Chinese craft. Newchang, like Taku and several other treaty ports was opened to foreign commerce as a result of the Second Opium War (1856-1860). Newchang (Yingkau) was an important port for the domestic trade in beans, bean-cake, or bean oil, or grain for southern ports, Swatow (Shantou) being one. Swatow, due to its location at the south end of Taiwan Strait, was particularly prone to being impacted by typhoons. Newchang, 30 miles up the Liao Ho, on the Yellow Sea, was a seasonal port ice-bound from November to March. Ships loaded about 15 miles up the river. The port was accessible to vessels drawing up to 18 ft, but the water level could be affected by the wind direction. The coast was low-lying and featureless, requiring careful approach. During the ice-free season a lightship was moored ten miles off the river entrance; so too at Taku in later years. The barque was reported sailing from Hong Kong on 20 October 1877 and arriving at Singapore on 6 November.

For much of 1878 the record is blank. The *Star Queen* departed Singapore for Amoy (Xiamen) and Shanghai with *sundries* on 30 July 1878 and arrived at Amoy on 23 August. The barque departed Amoy on 3 September and encountered a typhoon, arriving at Shanghai on 19 September 1878 with damage. *Shanghai. Oct 3. The Star Queen, M'Intosh, which arrived here Sept 19 from Amoy, reports that during the late gale she had to cut away main topmast, which took with it the mizen topmast, cutwater, knightheads etc started, i.e. some damage around the stem.*³⁴ Such damage could be repaired in short order as Shanghai had excellent facilities. Several other damaged vessels arrived around the same time. Papers surmised that two typhoons had

passed up the coast in quick succession. No further movements are known for 1878. The barque departed Shanghai for Nagasaki on 2 January 1879 - \$1,500 in full, 25 lay days, to load coal for Shanghai. Sailing from Nagasaki on 21 January 1879 the *Star Queen* was wrecked early on the 22nd on Kisima or Oosima near the western extremity of the Goto Islands. The islands are about 50nm west of Nagasaki, a group of rocky islands, not then completely surveyed. Few details are available; it blew hard from SSE that night, the barque was making 9 knots, stranded and rapidly became a total wreck. Thirty-three crew were aboard, mostly Malays and Chinese. Only the mate and ten crew survived. The captain was killed by the falling mizen mast. A Naval Court was held at the British Consulate, Nagasaki on 24 February.³⁵ The mate was the only one to testify and couldn't shed much light on the causes of the wreck. The very kind treatment of the survivors by the islanders was noted. The wreck and coal were subsequently sold for \$1,750. So, the *Star Queen*, like the majority of large wood ships met an untimely end.

By 1879 iron steamships, screw propelled, over 4,000 tons, were crossing the Atlantic in nine days. Tea clippers racing home from China in a hundred days were a sensation in 1854; by 1879 steamships were doing the same in forty odd days via the Suez Canal. The *Star Queen* arrived at Adelaide on 30 December 1854 but it was 7 March 1855 before her arrival was reported in British papers, over two months later. When the ship was wrecked on 21 January 1879 the news appeared in British papers on 30 January, just a few days. The telegraph and steamships had shrunk the world dramatically. If nothing else, the various voyages of the good ship *Star Queen*, fast and slow, demonstrated just how fickle a source of fuel the wind could be. Food for thought in this age of the Green Revolution!

For twenty five years the *Star Queen* provided good service, rarely in the news, with only one major leak. The majority of her voyages were with finer cargo, not bulk; no mention of water damaged cargo has been found and ballast passages were few. The ship made eight passages for government agencies, with troops, emigrants and government stores which speaks well of her. Staunch, tight and well found as a surveyor might have said.

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- 1 *Online article – Shepherd Family History, Lloyd's Registers and various newspapers.*
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