

Her Name Was “Trevesa”

(Part Two)

During recent communications with Mr. Terry Sylvester of Barry South Wales with regard to the PS. Barry project, report, poem and presentations etc, we were pleased that he could relay some information sought on the SS. Trevesa. We were due to present a copy and details of both Joe Earl’s poem and our research on the Barry / Waverley on board her namesake earlier this month. Waverley has been held up from her planned tour (2008 Season) and we hope to continue with the event later as her cruising agenda continues.

Mr. Sylvester during our talks was able to also confirm details on a Merchant Seaman: Barry boy Arthur Phillips. Arthur was the young apprentice that managed prior to the sinking and loss of Trevesa to retrieve the ship’s “Red Ensign”.

The Red Ensign from the Trevesa was saved from the sinking ship by Arthur Phillips in an act of bravery, an act not dissimilar in my mind to saving the Queen’s Colours in army terms. Apparently he clutched the “Jack”, the Flag of the Merchant Navy and emblem of Trevesa to his chest until rescued.

The ensign was apparently presented to St. Paul’s church, Barry by his late mother Dora Phillips. The ensign recovered from the Trevesa in 1923 is hung near the alter in St. Paul’s as a tribute to Arthur and the officers and crew of Trevesa.

Arthur was a Barrian, a Merchant Seaman, a hero, previously a choir boy at St. Paul’s. This youngster decided at a time when most would wish to abandon ship, escape and fend for oneself etc, to save the flag, the emblem of the Trevesa and crew that he must have loved so much. In doing so his name should live forever more. Let those that come after him, remember him and all those lost.

Arthur lived with his parents on Porthkerry Road, Barry. He attended St. Paul’s and a fitting memorial to him and all that sailed, not only in or upon Trevesa, but in open boats from the Indian Ocean to Mauritius is that a little of Trevesa’s tonnage remains.

Arthur, must have had such a love for the Trevesa, the forgotten fourth service and his Captain and fellow crewmen. We are certain that his faith in his God carried him safely homeward and the emblem of his faith. A wooden cross that cannot appear on the graves of so many seamen lost, although they float on the oceans and seas now in remembrance. May his act of retrieving and saving a Red Ensign be remembered for evermore. And be forever a symbol of safeguard or remembrance to or for all seafarers in peril on the seas.

Let them never be forgotten.

I have been advised that Tom Clemett, an eminent local / Barry (Maritime) historian has recently published an article that includes 'Trevesa'. We have not seen Tom's latest work as yet and hope that he will post all on his web pages. We have had an interest in this for some time and if there are any similar mentions or detail obviously the source of such may be the same.

We have scoured all available information and release the findings in tribute. We would welcome any additional information and if by chance we have used any copyrighted material etc, please allow this on this occasion, again by way of tribute. We can remove any offending material, but again act in good faith and hope that we can continue.

Our thanks to Terry Sylvester for the immense help in our research and remembrance. We can only continue with Part 3 of Her Name Was "Trevesa" if and when we can find new or further information and ask all that can assist further to contact Keith at Tregenna: hernamewas.ss@tiscali.co.uk We will attempt to discover more of the Trevesa / Arthur Phillips story and will contact Mauritius etc. We hope that possibly Mr. Sylvester or a member of the clergy or congregation at St. Paul, may take a photo or two of the ensign etc and pass onto us or allow us to do the same during a future visit. Any info the church may be privvy to would assist us further.

Recap Trevesa:

Trevesa. Steel steamer, 5004 tons. Built as the German ship Imkenturm in 1909. Taken over by Great Britain at the close of World War 1. When lost, was owned by the Hain Steamship Company. Lbd 401 x 52.5 x 28.2 ft. Captain Foster. Left Fremantle on 25 May 1923 for British and Belgian ports carrying a cargo of zinc concentrates; sank in the Indian Ocean during rough weather, 23 June 1923. Two boats launched. One made Rodriguez Island on 26 June 1923, and all landed safely after twenty-three days at sea. The other boat however experienced a tragic passage. Water ran short and despite repeated warnings, four Indian members of the crew drank sea water and died. The second engineer fell overboard during rough weather, and another crewman died two hours before land was sighted. This boat missed Rodriguez Island and sighted Mauritius on 28 June. The survivors were so exhausted by this time they had to be carried ashore, and the chief cook died soon after arrival. Captain Foster and the mate were awarded Lloyd's Silver Medal for their splendid seamanship and courage, and were received by the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Her Name Was Trevesa – His Name Was: and shall remain Arthur Phillips.