

RED ANCHOR LINE LTD (RAL), HONGKONG (1958)

St Merryn Shipping Co. Ltd (1964)
Redfern Shipping Co. Ltd (RSC), Bermuda (1965)

SHORT HISTORY & ILLUSTRATED FLEET LIST

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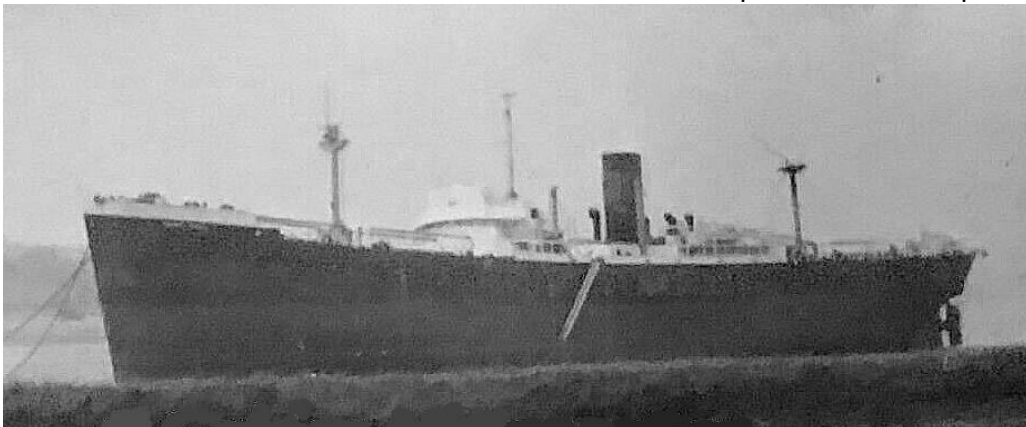
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From the reorganisation of the mid-1930s until the Japanese attack at the end of 1941, Eric (Jnr) and Chris Moller were the two sons of N.E.A. (Eric) Moller most active in managing the shipping side of the group. Not interned by the Japanese, Eric Moller (Jnr) was able to carry on the business from London and, after the war, took the initiative in Hong Kong as well. Whether because of business rivalry or for personal reasons, at the end of 1949 Chris resigned as director of Mollers Ltd and went his own way.

The Red Anchor Line was registered by Chris in Hongkong in August 1957 and in May 1958 acquired its first ship, the 'Empire' standard *Isabel Erica*. She was immediately laid up at Bideford to await improvement in the freight market. From 1960, when *Isabel Erica* was recommissioned and the company began trading, ships were added at the rate of about one per year, four of them motorships purchased from James Nourse Ltd. Although the company was based in Hongkong, the ships were registered in London, all British-built tramp-type cargo ships, three warbuilt and of four postwar construction. In 1964 the St Merryn Shg Co. Ltd was set up as a subsidiary, acquiring *Merryn Elizabeth* and *Shirley Christine* and, through transfer, *Isabel Erica*. *Merryn Elizabeth* became a familiar sight in Australian ports in the late 1960s, both on charter to the Indo-China S.N. Co. and in the scrap iron trade to Japan.



ISABEL ERICA laid up at Inston, Houlder funnel marks painted out (Ebay).

In 1965 Redfern Shipping Co. Ltd was registered as a Bermuda subsidiary acquiring two modern British cargo ships which were renamed *Nils Amelon*, in honour of N.E.A. Moller and in 1967 *Rosetta Maud*. But in 1967 *Denny Rose* was lost with all hands while carrying a cargo of 9,500 tonnes of iron ore and powdered magnesite, and Chris recognized that this class of vessel was becoming less attractive to charterers.

Red Anchor line thus turned to acquiring multipurpose cargo ships, and as a first step orders were placed with the highly regarded Mitsubishi Shimonoseki yard for two MM14 Liberty replacement design vessels. They are described on *Ships Nostalgia* by Dave Edge, an officer 1962 until 1982 with Common Brothers, Red Anchor Line, Mollers Ltd and Papua New Guinea Shipping Corporation and from 1982, a maritime pilot in Bluff, New Zealand as follows:

“This design, known as the MM14, was Mitsubishi's entry in the 'Liberty Replacement' stakes. Slightly larger and faster than the SD14 they had the great advantage of not requiring shifting boards when carrying grain. A very good design and strongly built the MM14 was probably too sophisticated and expensive for its intended market and in the end only five were built, two for Swiss owners and three...for Redfern Shipping (Red Anchor Line).”

In the pattern of the latest cargo ships of the era, the vessels were of an engines-aft design equipped with three sets of very large twin hatches serving the three largest holds, each of which had an intermediate deck as per Edge's comments above, and a single hatch forward. Cargo handling was served by eight 10-ton and two 5-ton long purchase derricks and one centrally located 5-ton deck crane. The ships all achieved 18 knots on trials and the published service speed was 15k. Crew was 50. The Red Anchor ships emerged in 1970 as *Isabel Erica* and *Nils Amelon* (II) and were allocated to Redfern and the very similar *Merry Captain* followed in 1973. At some point the latter vessel was retrofitted with a new foremast and heavy (probably 60-ton) derrick, as shown in the photographs. *Isabel Erica* and *Nils Amelon* each spent the final 20 years of their careers with COSCO which also acquired one of the Swiss sisters.

These three ships were followed by orders for two more vessels, *Viking Eric* and *Merry Viking* (I) of Mitsubishi's larger follow-on class, duly laid down for completion in 1975/76. Of 14,000 grt they were some 12 metres longer with an extra deck of superstructure, improved cargo handling (four 22-ton, two 15-ton derricks, a 60-ton heavylift boom, a 10-ton deck crane), and a significantly reduced complement of 40 crew. However, during 1975 all five ships were sold, the last pair after launching.

There was one final act. In 1977 Red Anchor Line took delivery from Mitsubishi of the 16,200 grt *Merry Viking*, a self-sustaining container vessel which, along with the subsequent *Muncaster Castle* of Mollers Ltd, built at the same yard, became a joint contribution to the Hongkong International Container Line. The vessels were equipped with five holds, the largest four of which were served by twin hatches, six 25-ton cranes, four of which could be paired for 50-ton lifts and had a service speed of 15.25k. The suspension of the service and the sale of both ships in 1981 seems to have marked the end of the Red Anchor Line as a shipping company and Mollers as a shipowning concern. The two vessels went on to have long lives at 34 and 32 years, both operated in their final years by an evident PRC FOC owner.

Conclusion

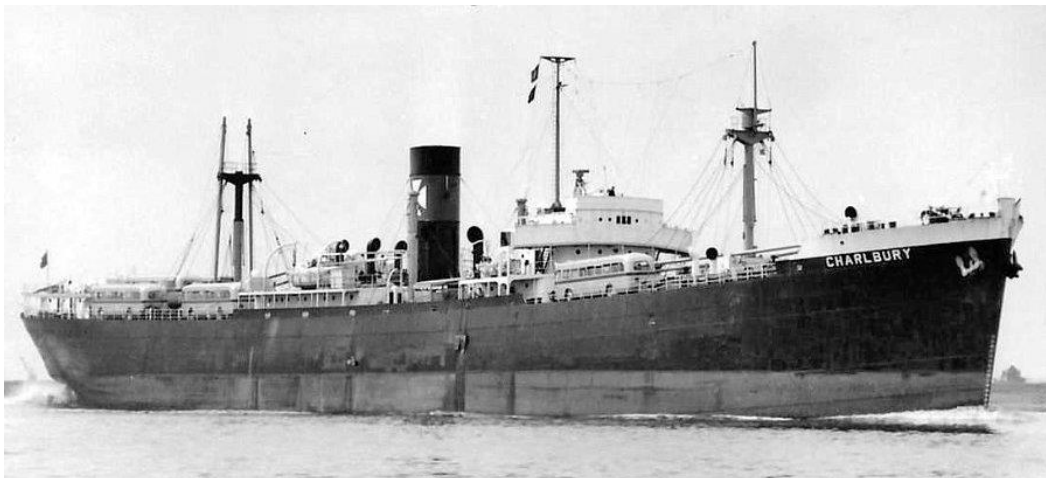
Chris's efforts with Red Anchor Line were an obvious attempt to sustain the Mollers shipowning line through a period of rapid technological change and low-cost entry into the world trampship industry. Logically he started with updated versions of the prewar tramps, focusing on motorships and he further sensibly transformed the fleet into new multipurpose vessels in the 1970s. However, with more expensive and sophisticated ships (as indicated by David Edge) and large crews, he would have been under financial pressure in the recession commencing in 1973 during which others with lesser costs would have been at an advantage. The answer appeared to move further upmarket with larger ships in a container service clearly reminiscent of the Castle Line service of earlier years, but again this proved to be a business area with active and sustained competitors. The sale of *Merry Viking (II)* in May 1981, around the same time as Mollers' sistership *Muncaster Castle* (sold 27 April) proved timely, given the shipping recession that began in July of that year.

Another consideration may have been that Chris, the youngest of the Eric Moller children, was now approaching 70 years of age. Chris retired to a horse stud in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), which had become independent in April 1980, then as the situation deteriorated and following the death of his brother Lindsay at Durban in July 1984 he moved to South Africa, where the family had held interests since 1946. Chris died at Durban on 27 May 2006 at age 94, the last of the four sons of Eric (N.E.A.) Moller.

Fleet List

ISABEL ERICA (1958-69) 7105 (9979)/41-8 (447.7 x 56.2', T3cy/10k)

Built by Cammell Laird & Co. Ltd, Birkenhead (#1061) for MOWT (Capper, Alexander & Co., London mgrs) as EMPIRE CLIVE. 1946 sold to Alexander Shg Co. Ltd (same mgrs), London r. CHARLBURY. 1947 controlling interest acquired by Houlder Bros & Co. Ltd. 26/5/58 arr. Avonmouth from Buenos Aires and after discharge del. to RAL r. ISABEL ERICA, 6/58 laid up a Bideford (Bristol Evening Post, 20/6/58) 1960 recommissioned. 1964 t/f to St Merryn Shg Co. Ltd (RAL mgrs). 4/8/69 arrived at Hongkong for breaking up.



ISABEL ERICA as Houlder Bros CHARLBURY (Photoship.co.uk).

NANCY DEE (1960-71) 6597 (9800)/43-7 (431.10 x 55.3', M3cy/11k)

Built by Cammell Laird & Co. Ltd, Birkenhead (#442) for James Nourse Ltd, London as HUGHLI. 1960 sold to RAL r. NANCY DEE. 8/4/71 arrived at Kaohsiung for breaking up.



NANCY DEE arriving Durban (Trevor Jones).



NANCY DEE at Singapore 19 August 1963 (Dr George Wilson/Malcolm Cranfield).

RUTHY ANN (1961-62) 5732 (9150)/46-5 (446.0 x 57.6', T3cy+LPT)

Built by W. Readhead & Sons Ltd, S. Shields (#549) for BISN Co. Ltd, London as OKHLA. 12/61 sold for £123,000 to RAL r. RUTHY ANN, 29/1/62 arr. Liverpool from Bombay. 1/6/62 arr. Hong Kong from Tsukumi, docked at HWD, then sold to Ta Hing Co. (HK) Ltd, Hongkong. 27/6/62 m/g to HKSB for \$105,750 during conversion to troopship with decks extended aft. 13/8/62 m/g discharged and register closed on sale to Republik Indonesia (Army) r. ADRI XV. 2/71 engine breakdown 250 m. E. of Singapore o/v Indonesia-Taiwan, towed into Singapore. 25/2/71 sold to China Steel (Kaohsiung) Ltd and 1/3/71 under demolition.



RUTHY ANN (I) as OKHLA in B.I. service (photoships.co.uk).

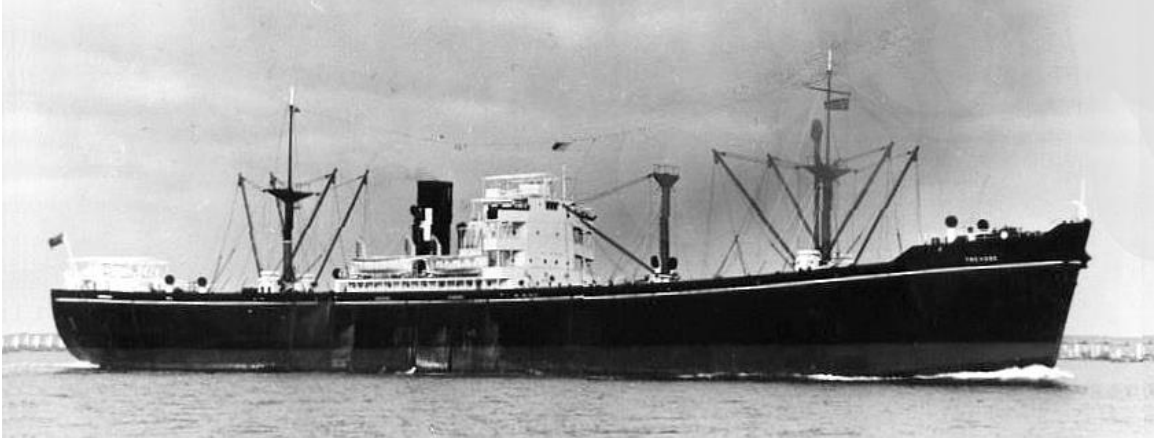


As Indonesian Army troopship ADRI XV

(<https://boassugiyarto.wordpress.com/kapal-tni-ad/3a-adri-xv-2/>)

RUTHY ANN (II) (1962-71) 7361 (9966)/44-8 (444.10 x 56.6', M3cy/11k)

Built by Wm Doxford & Sons Ltd, Sunderland (#716) for Hain S.S. Co. Ltd, London as TREVOSE. 1951 t/f to P&O S.N. Co. 1958 reverted to Hain S.S. Co. Ltd. 1962 sold to RAL r. RUTHY ANN, 2/10 sd Liverpool for Las Palmas (ballast). 1/9/62 broke adrift during typhoon 'Wanda' and collided with *Mayon*. 11/63 blacklisted by U.S. Government for trading with Cuba. 2/8/64 ashore at ?? Point, 10/8 refloated. 9/9/68 blown ashore at Haiphong by typhoon 'Wendy', 30/9 r/f extensively damaged. 1/2/71 arrived at Whampoa for demolition.



TREVOSE at Port Adelaide

(J.Y. Freeman/<https://www.shipsnostalgia.com/attachments/trevoze-adelaide-jpg.191357/>).



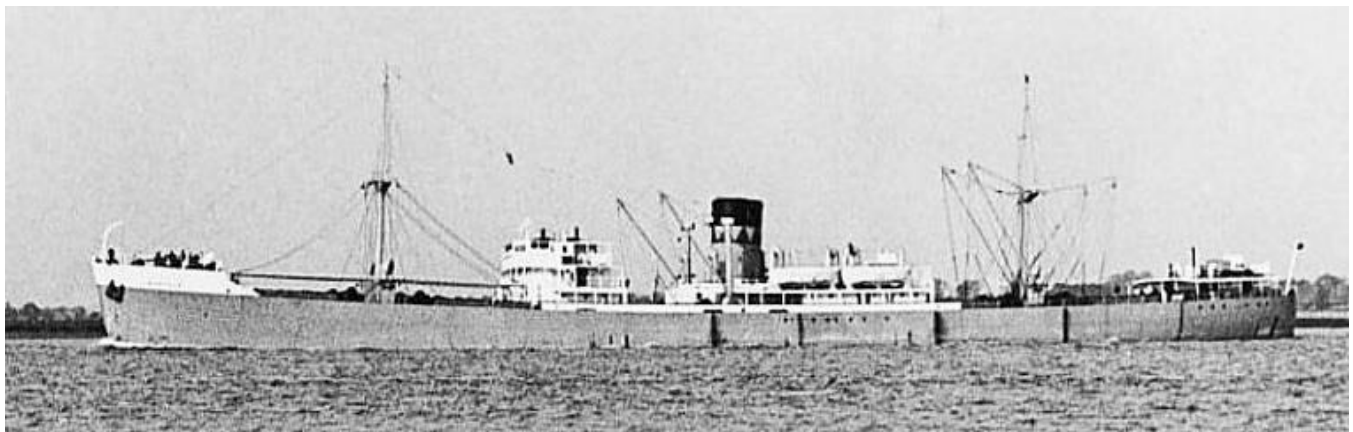
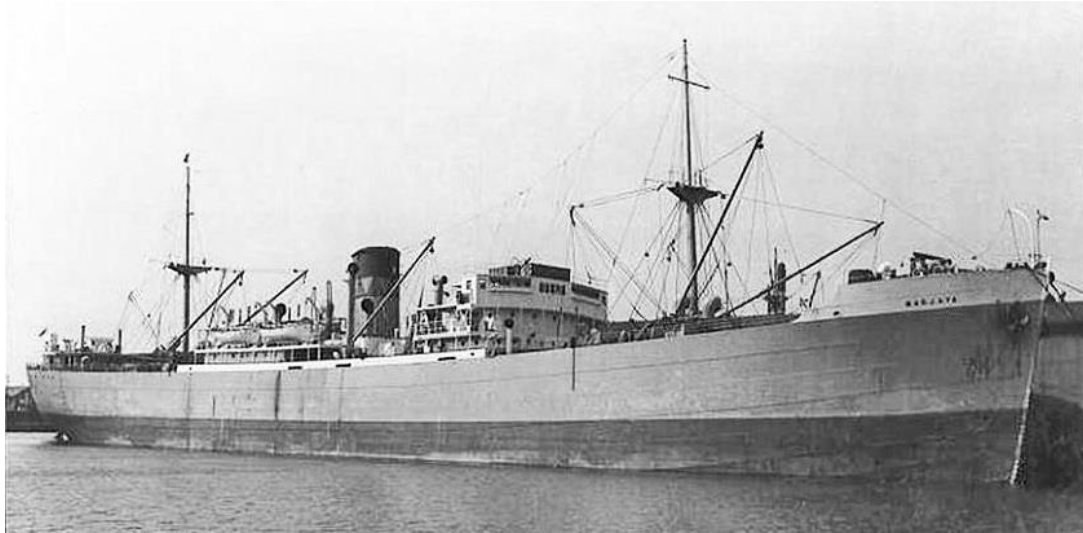
RUTHY ANN (II) in Malacca Strait (Peter Foxley*).

DENNY ROSE (1963-67) 6656 (9910)/46-10 (431.10 x 55.3', M3cy/11½k)

Built by C. Connell & Co. Ltd, Glasgow (#452) for James Nourse Ltd, London as MARJATA. 1963 sold to RAL r. DENNY ROSE. 13/9/67 last reported in typhoon in 25.15N, 134.23E on voyage Toledo (Phil.)-Chiba (iron ore/magnesite), 11/10 posted missing (42 crew).

['All 42 men aboard the British motor vessel Denny Rose, comprising of the New Zealand master Capt.Collin W.Williams Ireland, Chief Officer John Kennedy from Hong Kong , 38 Hong Kong Chinese, an Indian and a Singapore national were lost with their vessel when she disappeared south of Japan during heavy weather in mid-September 1967. Loaded with 9,500 tonnes of iron ore and powdered magnesite, Denny Rose sailed from Toledo,Cebu Island, Phillipines on Sept.4th 1967 bound for Chiba, Japan. While at Toledo she had reported grounding damage at the loading berth, causing buckling on her amidships deck plating. The last position message ever received from the vessel was dispatched by the master at 0448 am on Sept. 13th advising his noon position on September 12th to be Lat.25-15N, Long.134-23E-about 75 nm SW of Tokyo,which was within the fringe of typhoon "Opal". He advised that he was due to arrive Chiba three days later. An extensive search was mounted, but all that was found was an oil slick, seven miles long and half a mile wide, sighted about 180 nm SE of the southern tip of Kyushu Island, but it could not be determined whether or not this was from the overdue vessel. It was assumed that the Denny Rose, which was officially posted as a Missing Vessel at Lloyds, sank due to the heavy seas caused by the typhoon.'

<https://www.merchant-navy.net/forum/ask-the-forum/41402-mv-eastern-moon-mv-danny-rose.html>]



DENNY ROSE as Nourse's MARJATA (Photoships.co.uk; Old Ships Picture Galleries).

MERRYN ELIZABETH (1964-72) 6612 (9870)/46-3 (431.10 x 55.3', M3cy/11k)

Built by Cammell Laird & Co. Ltd, Birkenhead (#449) for James Nourse Ltd, London as KALLADA. 5/64 del. at Hong Kong to St Merryn Shg Co. Ltd (RAL mgrs) r. MERRYN ELIZABETH. 7/64-7/65 on charter to indo-China S.N. Co. Ltd for HK-Australia line. 18/4/72 arrived at Hongkong for breaking up by Lee Sing Co., 5/72 demolition commenced but rep. converted into lighter.

[P&O Heritage: 01.06.1972: Delivered. Reportedly resold to General Marine Corporation for further trading, but purchasers unable to complete the transaction. 04.09.1972: Demolition commenced]

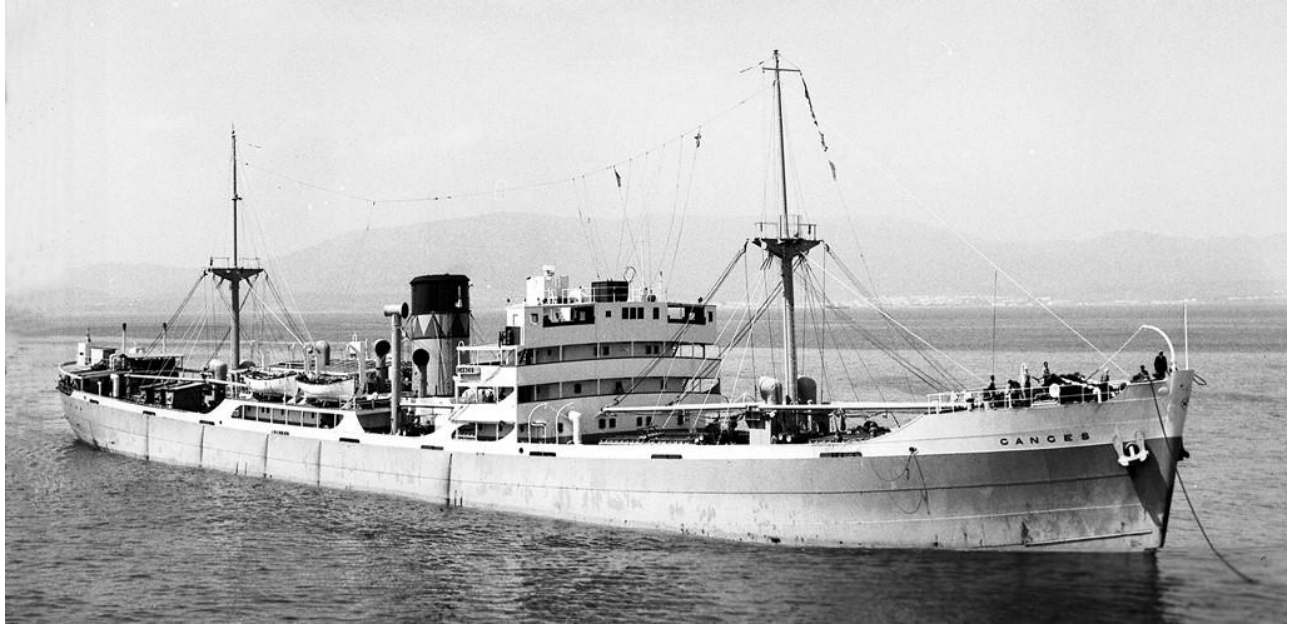


Nourse's KALLADA at Hobart, 8 Feb. 1964, loading scrap from E. Coast Australia for Japan prior to delivery to Red Anchor and renaming as MERRYN ELIZABETH (D. Kirby).



MERRYN ELIZABETH in Malacca Strait (Peter Foxley*).

SHIRLEY CHRISTINE (1965-68) 6724 (10,090)/50-5 (431.10 x 55.3', M3cy/11½k Doxford)
 Built by C. Connell & Co. Ltd, Glasgow (#464) for James Nourse Ltd, London as GANGES. 1965 sold to St Merryn Shg Co. Ltd (RAL mgrs) r. SHIRLEY CHRISTINE. 4/9/65 stranded on N. coast of Hainan Is., refloated. 2/66 blacklisted by U.S. Govt for shipping coal North Vietnam-Japan. 2/68 loaded coal from Newcastle (NSW) to Japan. 9/3/68 inbound from Narkhodka (coal) grounded off entrance to Muroran in bad weather, 20/3 master died of cerebral haemorrhage, 22/4 refloated. CTL, 6/68 advert. for sale 'as lies' at Hakodate. 7/68 sold to Darien Shg Co. Ltd, Hong Kong (Pan. flag). 1968 sold on to Achille Halcoussis, Piraeus r. LEONIS. 11/9/71 o/v Pointe Noire-Takoradi (manganese ore, logs) wrecked on reef off Takoradi [P&O Heritage].



SHIRLEY CHRISTINE as Nourse's GANGES (coll. Chris Howell).



SHIRLEY CHRISTINE at Birkenhead Wharf, Port Adelaide, New Year's Day 1968 (Chris Finney).

MERRY VIKING (II) (1977-81) 16,201/77-8 (162.01-bb x 22.94m, M6cy/15¼k Sulzer)

Built by Mitsubishi H.I. Ltd, Shimonoseki for RAL, Bermuda as MERRY VIKING. 6/81 rep. sold to Eastern Splendour Tpts Inc. (Fortuna Nay. Co. Ltd, Hongkong), Panama r. EASTERN SPLENDOUR. 1989 t/f to Liberian flag r. CMB SPLENDOUR. 1994-96 on charter to ?? r. DSR-SENATOR IVORY (Pan. flag). 1996 r. CMBT SPLENDOUR. 1999 sold to Seamar Inc., Nassau r. BLUE SPLENDOUR. 2000 sold to Corbett Tdg Ltd, Kingstown (VCT) r. SPLENDOUR. 2001 sold to Nanyuan Shg Co. Ltd r. ZHONG YANG MEN (VCT flag). 2010 sold to Jinxin Shg Co. Ltd (VCT flag). 28/11/11 arr. Alang and 1/12 beached for demolition by Ashish Ship Breakers.



MERRY VIKING achieved 17.81k on trials (builders).



MERRY VIKING subsequently as CMB SPLENDOR, outbound on the River Scheldt, 2 August 1994 (Oliver Sesemann).



As ZHONG YANG MEN heavily laden f'wd in Shanghai Roads, 4 August 2008 (Bengt-Rune Inberg).

Redfern Shipping Co. Ltd

NILS AMELON (1965-66) 6281 (10,400)/53-1 (477.7 x 61.9', T3cy/13k by NE Marine Eng. Co., Sunderland)
Built by Bartram & Sons Ltd, Sunderland (#337) for Red. A/B Wallenco (O. Wallenius mgr), Stockholm as BOHEME. 1965 sold to RSC, London r. NILS AMELON, 8/65 arr. Hong Kong ex Shanghai in transit. 10/66 del. at Hong Kong to Ocean-Wide Shg Co. Ltd (Compass Agencies Inc., Chicago), Liberia r. COMPASS SPIRIT. 1970 sold to El Libertad Corp. (Cape Shg Ltd, New York), Liberia r. MEANDROS. 1973 sold to Newcastle Shg Co. Ltd (P.B. Tdg Co. Inc., New York), Liberia r. NEWCASTLE TRADER. 1974 r. CARMEN. 1974 sold to Sea Spirit Nav. Co. Ltd (World Tide Shg Corp., Piraeus), Limassol r. CAPTAIN THEO. 6/1/76 cargo fire in Rotterdam - laid up. 13/3/77 arrived at Bruges for breaking up by Van Huyghen Freres.



NILS AMELON was built as BOHEME, seen here in Saint Marys River, Saulte Ste Marie, Canada in May 1963 (Harold Fricke).



As CAPTAIN THEO at Rotterdam Waalhaven with hull bracing, awaiting tow to Bruges for demolition (Wilhelm van Noort).

ROSETTA MAUD (1967-72) 5795 (9980)/54-2 (453.9 x 58.10', M7cy/11k B&W by J.G. Kincaid & Co.)
Built by Bartram & Sons, Sunderland (#340) for Monarch S.S. Co. Ltd (Raeburn & Verel Ltd mgrs.),
Glasgow as BRITISH MONARCH. 1959 mgrs Harrisons (Clyde) Ltd, Glasgow. 1964 sold to Mullion & Co.
Ltd (reg. Glasgow) r. ARDTARA. 1966 reg. t/f to Gibraltar r. HYPERION. 4-7/67 round voyage HK-Australia
ohn Dominion Far East Line charter. 8/67 del. at Hong Kong to Redfern Shg Co. Ltd, Bermuda (reg.
Gibraltar), docked at Taikoo r. ROSETTA MAUD. 3-12/69 on charter to Messageries Maritimes. 26/5/72
arr. Karachi in tow for demolition, 28/5 engine-room fire en route to breaking up beach.



BRITISH MONARCH on the ways at Bartram & Sons and departing from Hull (builders; PWR@shipspotting).



BRITISH MONARCH at Baton Rouge, May 1957 (<https://www.shipsnostalgia.com/media/british-monarch.26927/full>).



ROSETTA MAUD as HYPERION at Port Adelaide, 5 June 1967 on Dominion Far East Line charter (coll. M. Cranfield).

ISABEL ERICA (II) (1970-75) 10,715 (15,917)/70-3 (495.11 x 69.9', M6cy/15k Sulzer by MHI)
Built by Mitsubishi H.I. Ltd, Shimonoseki (#666) for RSC, Bermuda as ISABEL ERICA. 1975 sold to Sigalle Cia Nay. S.A., Piraeus r. SIGANTO A.S. 1977 sold to China Ocean Shg Co.(COSCO), Tianjin (Tientsin) r. CHANG PING. 23/4/97 arr. Calcutta, 1/7/97 demolition begun at Calcutta by Shamlal Jain Shipbreaking Co.



ISABEL ERICA with new Red Anchor Line funnel of red anchor on white band (Peter Foxley*).



ISABEL ERICA at Vancouver, early 1970s (coll. Chris Howell).



As COSCO's CHANG PING in the Kiel Canal, September 1988 (Brian Fisher).

NILS AMELON (II) (1970-75) 10,708 (16,150)/70-7 (495.11 x 69.9', M6cy/15k Sulzer by MHI)
Built by Mitsubishi H.I. Ltd, Shimoneseki (#668) for RSC, Bermuda as NILS AMELON. 1975 sold to Anchor Marit. Corp., Piraeus r. OCEAN SAILOR. 1977 sold to China Ocean Shg Co. (COSCO), Shanghai r. HONG GU CHENG. 22/8/97 arrived at Alang for demolition.



NILS AMELON at Sydney on Nakamura charter (J. Freeman*).



NILS AMELON at Malta as OCEAN SAILOR (coll. Chris Howell).

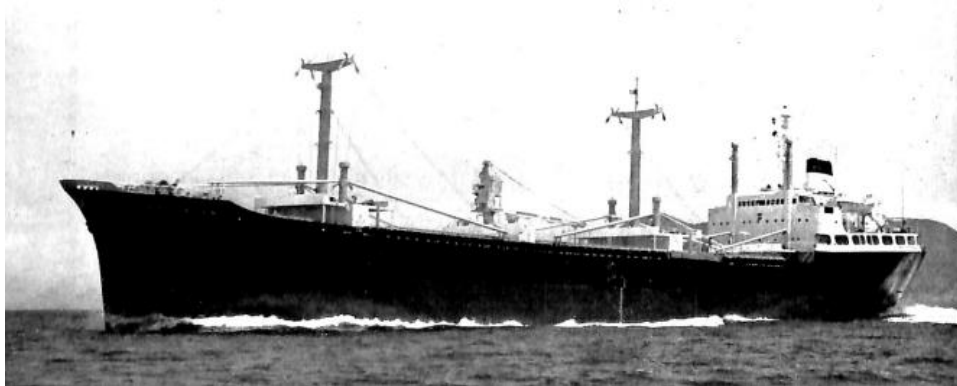


HONG GU CHENG heading down the Whangpu after offloading cargo at Hongkou (*The Yangtze River*).



HONG GU CHENG arriving Hamburg, 20 November 1994, in new COSCO colours (Joerg Seyler).

MERRY CAPTAIN (1973-75) 10735 (16,182)/73-7 (151.2 x 21.26m, M6cy/15k) Built by Mitsubishi H.I. Ltd, Shimoneseki (#714) for RSC (Mollers Ltd mgrs), London as MERRY CAPTAIN. 1975 sold to Marthanassa Cia Nay. S.A. (M.J. Lemos & Houllis Ltd, London), Piraeus r. THEOKRATES. 1982 t/f to Vasplaso Cia Nay. S.A. r. SAN MICHAEL BAY. 1983 mgrs Elpisaga Cia Nay. S.A., Piraeus. 1986 sold to Adelina Shg Corp. (Jayship Ltd, London agents), Nassau r. JAY GANESH. 1992 sold to Ballard Holdings S.A., Nassau r. MERY CAPTAIN. 1993 sold to Bayonet Shg Co. Ltd, Limassol r. LADY LELA (grt 9782). 1997 sold to Cedar Commercial S.A., Panama r. MARTIN. 6/97 under arrest at Mumbai, 15/9/97 arrived Alang for demolition.



MERRY CAPTAIN running trials July 1973 in Red Anchor colours (builders).



MERRY CAPTAIN as LADY LELA with new foremast and heavy derrick, southbound in the Suez Canal passing Port Tewfik on 26 May 1996 (M. Cranfield).

VIKING ERIC (1975) 14052 (21,368)/75-12 (162.06 x 22.92m, M6cy/15k Sulzer by MHI)
Launched 3/4/75 by Mitsubishi H.I. Ltd, Shimoneseki (#751) for RSC as VIKING ERIC but completed for K/S. m.s. "Cosmostar" Schiffahrts GmbH & co. K.G. (Marit. Tpt Overseas GmbH, Dusseldorf mgrs), Singapore as MARITIME CARRIER. 1983 sold to Skipper Marit. Corp. (Elpisaga Cia Nay. S.A., Piraeus), Liberia r. EASTER BAY. 1987 sold to Queens Quay Shg Corp., Liberia, also rep. as Cia Mar. Villa Nova S.A. (Bureau Mandataire Trident S.A., Lausanne), Panama r. AMADEUS. 1988 Sold to Amaouti Shg Co. Ltd (Columbia Ship Mgt Ltd), Limassol r. AMADE. 1990 sold to Concerto Shg. Corp., Limassol r. KASABA BRIDGE. 1991 r. FALCON CARRIE. 1992 r. BOSCOO II. 1994 r. FALCON CARRIER. 1995 sold to Ocean Breeze Maritime Corp., Liberia. 15/12/99 arrived at Alang for demolition.



AMADE, containers, raised derrick arms at eastern anchorage, Singapore 4 May 1987 (Simon WP).



KASABA BRIDGE Antwerp, 1 January 1991 (bs1mrc@shipspotting). In colours of Zambia National Shipping Line, service Hamburg-Antwerp-Grimsby-Walvis Bay-Durban-Beira-Dar Es Salaam-Mombasa.

MERRY VIKING (1975) 14,052 (21,368)/76-2 (162.06 x 22.92m, M6cy/15k Sulzer by MHI)
Launched 29/8/75 by Mitsubishi H.I. Ltd, Shimonoseki (#752) for RSC as MERRY VIKING but completed for Maritime Carriers Shiphldg GmbH (Marit. Tpt Overseas GmbH, Dusseldorf), Singapore as MARITIME TRADER. 1980 sold to Astromando Cia Nay. S.A. (Lemos & Pateras Ltd, London), Piraeus r. THALASSINI AVGI. 2/1/86 stranded outside Jeddah, 3/1 r/f but 4/2 engine room fire at Aden. 11/86 auctioned by order to Ghulam Hussein, Djibouti, resold to breakers and 22/1/87 arrived at Gadani Beach for breaking up by G.N. Brothers.



Intended MERRY VIKING on completion as MARITIME TRADER (builders).

