



**Sue Gresham Research**

## **THIRTEEN SHIPS OF BLAKENEY**



**Researched - December 2023**

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## FOREWORD

This research has been “inspired” by the paintings of local sailing vessels by the late marine artist Patrick Kearney of Cley and it has long been my intention to discover what I could about the Blakeney vessels he painted ... and about others.

Patrick did twenty-three paintings of ships registered to Blakeney, Cley, Lynn and Wells, and I decided to restrict myself - initially at least - to finding out more about the ships which were and are still familiar names in the port of Blakeney. Suffice to say that I began my research with seven ships but, as time passed and more information came to the surface, the number of vessels rose to thirteen.

I hope my research about the history of these familiar vessels will add to the information already available about them.



A Billyboy ketch and other vessels at Blakeney Quay - circa 1906

## DISSEMINATION

This research may be used free of charge for academic or other not-for-profit purposes but the material must be acknowledged as the work of the author.

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## SHIP OWNERS IN BLAKENEY PAGE & TURNER

Many of the familiar ships of Blakeney were owned by Martin Fountain Page and Edward Clifford Turner whose partnership made them the principal merchants and ship owners in Blakeney, with offices at the north end of the High Street, in the building currently in use as a restaurant. Martin Page and Edward Turner lived on either side of Little Lane and a tunnel connected the two properties



A Public Notice issued by Martin Fountain Page and Edward Clifford Turner shows that the two men were working in partnership as Corn, Seed, Coal and Coke Merchant and Ship Owners. The "1890 History, Gazetteer & Directory of Norfolk" shows that Page & Turner were "corn, coal, cake, seed and manure merchants and ship owners" of Cley next the Sea and Holt. The partnership was dissolved in 1896.

**Public Notices.**

**N**OTICE is hereby given that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us, the undersigned, **MARTIN FOUNTAIN PAGE** and **EDWARD CLIFFORD TURNER**, carrying on Business as Corn, Coal, Cake, and General Merchants, at Blakeney, Cley, Holt, and elsewhere in the County of Norfolk, under the style or firm of **PAGE and TURNER**, has been dissolved by Mutual Consent, as and from the 17th day of July, 1896. The said Business will be carried on in future by the said Edward Clifford Turner, under the style of Page and Turner, by whom all accounts will be received and all liabilities discharged.

Dated this 22nd day of July, 1896.

**M. F. PAGE.**  
**E. CLIFFORD TURNER.**

Witness to the Signature of the said Martin Fountain Page, **GEORGE WILKINSON**, Solicitor, Holt.

Witness to the Signature of the said Edward Clifford Turner, **L. J. TILLET**, Solicitor, Norwich. (9971)

The Norfolk News - Saturday 25th July 1896

The Notice of Sale following the dissolution of the firm Page & Turner details eight named vessels of the eleven in its ownership: the ketches *T.M.P.*, *Mary Ann*, *Blue Jacket*, *John Lee* and *Palmers*; the barges *Lion* and *Lioness*; and the steamer *Yankee*. Other vessels in their ownership were the steamer *Taffy* and the tugs *Comet* and *Patriot*.

**BLAKENEY, NORFOLK**  
**SALE of COASTING VESSELS, STEAM LIGHTER, BARGES, &c.**

Mr. W. BAKER has received instructions from Messrs. PAGE and TURNER to sell by AUCTION  
On TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1896, the following VESSELS:-

**LOT. 1.** - Ketch T.M.P. of Blakeney, Port Lynn, Registered Tonnage 43 tons, carrying 83 tons; this Vessel was thoroughly overhauled at Goole the end of last year, when new masts, new rigging, &c., were fitted, and hull repaired and caulked throughout.

**LOT. 2.** - Ketch MARY ANN, of Blakeney, Port Lynn, Registered Tonnage 47 tons, carrying 85 tons; this Vessel has within the last few weeks been surveyed at Newcastle and passed by Board of Trade and certificate given. She has just returned from a voyage to Calais.

**LOT. 3.** - Ketch BLUE JACKET, of Blakeney, Port Lynn, Registered Tonnage 56 tons, carrying 83 tons; a strong useful Vessel, and one of the finest sea-boats on the coast in bad weather.

**LOT. 4.** - Ketch JOHN LEE, of Blakeney, Port Lynn, registered tonnage 57 tons, carrying 100 tons; this Vessel is well known, bearing a good character and will be found in first class order.

**LOT. 5.** - Ketch PALMERS, of Lowestoft, Registered Tonnage 55 tons, carrying 120 tons; has recently been under heavy repairs; Board of Trade survey, &c., when 18 tons was taken off her registered tonnage.

**LOT. 6.** - Ketch-rigged Barge LION, of Blakeney, Port Lynn, Registered Tonnage 35 tons, carrying 73 tons on 3 ½ feet water; exceptionally strong, having been built for harbour work.

**LOT. 7.** - The Twin-Screw Steam Lighter YANKEE, Iron Boat, carrying about 30 tons on 5 feet water, and towing at the same time if needed; a fine pair of engines about 18-horse power.

**LOT. 8.** - Barge LIONESS, built at the same time as the Lion, but the extensive alterations which were completed to the Lion at Blakeney previous to her being registered this year have been only partially completed in the case of the Lioness.

**LOT. 9.** - Large Corn Lighter, carrying 45 tons on about 4 feet water.

**LOT. 10.** - Corn Lighter, carrying 40 tons on about 4 feet water.

**Lot. 11.** - Coal Lighter, carrying 45 tons on 4 feet water.

Also several SHIPS' BOATS, patent STEAM CAPSTAN, recently removed from a stranded Trawling Vessel, nearly new.

The above VESSELS, now lying at Blakeney Quay, have been running to Tidal Harbours, are strongly built, having to lay aground with perishable cargoes in bulk, without damage; exceptionally well found in sails and materials, an inventory of which can be seen on board each Vessel., and will also be produced at time of Sale.

N.B. - Arrangements can be made for inspection on the Hard, Aug. 27th to 29th inclusive, by giving the Auctioneer two days' previous notice. Sale to commence at 12.30 P.M.

W. BAKER, Auctioneer and Valuer, Blakeney, Norfolk

Eastern Daily Press - Monday 24th August 1896

Subsequently, "The Eastern Daily Press" and "The Norfolk News" in July and August 1900 both detail sales by auction of premises previously owned by Page & Turner.

Preliminary information from the Vendor's Solicitors, given in the "Eastern Daily Press" of 14th July 1900, described the "valuable property" as offering "unusual facilities for development as a site for a Hotel or Lodging-houses, Residences for which there is a great demand". It also stated that "the present buildings are substantial, and well adapted as Mercantile Premises".

**CLEY-NEXT-THE-SEA  
TO HOTEL SPECULATORS, BUILDERS, MERCHANTS, AND OTHERS**

S. MEALING MILLS is instructed by Miss Lucy Turner to Sell by Auction, at the George Hotel, Cley-next-the-Sea, on THURSDAY, THE 16TH DAY OF AUGUST 1900, at Four for Five o'clock in the afternoon, in One Lot,

THE EXTENSIVE FREEHOLD GRANARIES AND MALTING, WITH 10 QUARTER STEEP, STABLING, AND 3 LARGE COAL STORES, TWO COTTAGES, YARDS AND STAITHE,

situate at Cley-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, fronting the Main Street and the Cley Road, immediately opposite the George Hotel, abutting on the river Glaven, and having an uninterrupted Sea View, forming a highly valuable

**BUILDING SITE**

for the erection of an HOTEL, RESIDENCES, OR LODGING-HOUSES, as lately occupied by Messrs. Page & Turner, as shown on the plan, with an area of  
6A, 2R, 20P

Possession of all the property can be obtained at Michelmas next.

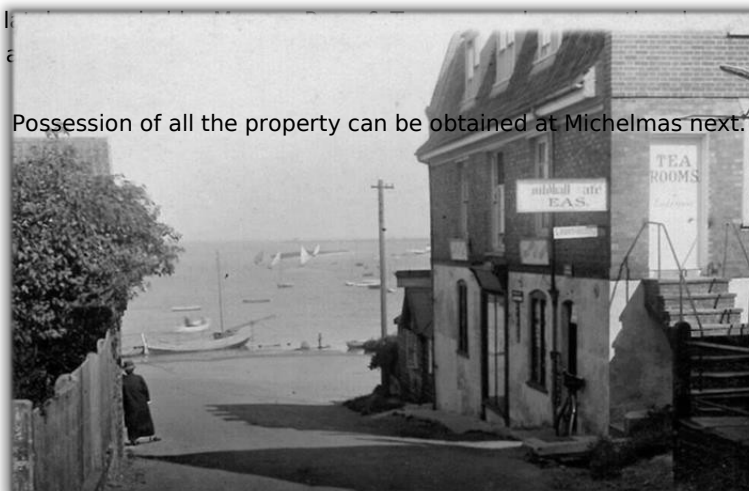
W.H. TILLET & CO.,  
St. Andrew's Street, Norwich, Vendor's Solicitors

The Norfolk News - 28th July 1900

Note: Wilton Tillett, Solicitor, was married to Janette Turner, one of Edward Clifford Turner's sisters.

A postcard of the High Street, Blakeney circa 1900 shows the premises formerly used as offices by Page & Turner operating as Tea Rooms.

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Page & Turner - former offices, Blakeney - circa 1900

## MARTIN FOUNTAIN PAGE

Martin Fountain Page was born on 25th January 1838 and baptised in that year in Brinton, the second son of John and Sarah (née Fountain) Page.

John Page was a General Merchant in Brinton and, the 1861 Census shows, the owner of a Grocery Shop and employer of four people. Living in the household was Martin, a Merchant's Clerk (presumably to his father), two of his brothers Frederick and Walter, two cousins Mary and Arthur, and two family servants.

In 1871, Martin Page, described now as a "General Merchant and Landowner", was still living in Brinton with his parents, an older brother Philip, his brother Walter, and two family servants.

John Page died on 26th April 1873; his Will was proved by his three sons "Philip Samuel Page of Brinton, Gentleman, Charles Page of Barningham Northwood, Farmer, and Martin Fountain Page of Brinton, Merchant"

Martin Page had evidently moved to Blakeney by 1878, buying the merchandise and shipping business of the late Charles Temple Lynes, and conducted an extensive trade with branches in Holt, Fakenham and Norwich. The "desirable property" he occupied was advertised in a number of local newspapers for sale in one Lot.

### TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY

MR. WILLIAM BAKER, at the King's Arms Inn, Blakeney, on FRIDAY 28th MARCH 1879, at Three for Four o'clock in the Afternoon, (by order of the Mortgagees with power of sale, and subject to conditions of sale which will be then and there produced), in One Lot, the following Desirable PROPERTY, viz.,

All that well-built MESSUAGE or DWELLING HOUSE, containing entrance-hall, parlour, sitting-room, four bed-rooms, store-room, cellar, and kitchens; together with an extensive enclosed Yard, large Coal-house, Granary, Stabling, Gig and Harness-houses, a newly built room now used as a School-room but well adapted for a Merchant's office), and other convenient Outbuildings at the rear, the whole having a frontage of 48 feet next Westgate Street, and adjoining property of the Rev. R.B. Brereton and Mr. William Starling.

There is a Pump and Well of excellent water on the Premises, which were lately occupied by Mr. Benjamin Henry Nichols, Coal Merchant, but now by Mr. Martin Fountain Page, under a Lease for four years from Michelmas, 1878, at an annual rent of £29.

The property is partly Freehold and the residue Copyhold of the Manor of Snitterley Calthorpes.

Printed particulars and conditions of sale may shortly be had on application to Messieurs. Watson, Watson and Digby, Fakenham, Norfolk, vendors' solicitors; or the Auctioneer, Blakeney.

Norfolk Chronicle - Saturday 15th March 1879

One year after the sale of the house, Martin Fountain Page was married in February 1880 to Emma Eliza Salmon, daughter of Joseph Salmon, an Ale and Porter Merchant, and his wife Sarah, of Colchester.

A year later, the 1881 Census shows Martin Page, 42, a "Lead Merchant and Ship Owner", and his wife, 33, living in the High Street, Blakeney; also in the household was Martin Page's widowed mother and two household servants.

In 1884 Martin Fountain Page purchased the Merchant House in Blakeney, where he installed an imposing "Tudor" gate and high walls around the property.

By 1891, the Census shows Martin and Emma Page still in the High Street, Blakeney, and now with two daughters, Sarah Fountain, 8, Marion, 6, and three sons, John, 5, Martin Fountain, 4, and Dennis Salmon, 3, and four family servants. A third daughter, Emma Eliza, was born in 1891.

Martin Page retired from business circa 1895, coinciding perhaps with him suffering a stroke; he remained in Blakeney but his partnership with Edward Clifford Turner was dissolved. He and his family were significant benefactors and in February 1898, "The Norfolk Chronicle" records, Martin Page made a £1,000 donation to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, for which he and his eldest son John were offered Life Governorships.

Emma Page has not been found in the 1901 Blakeney Census but Martin and his brother Philip, both "Living on Own Means", are shown in the High Street, together with one of Martin Page's daughters, Sarah, 18. Also in the household were two family servants and, suggesting Martin Page's evidently now failing health, a Sick Nurse.

Martin Page died on 17th January 1903, leaving £53,940. 10s. 1d, equivalent to £8m in 2024. Newspapers reporting his death describe a man who achieved much success and wealth in business but who was also a kind and very generous benefactor to the community in which he lived.

**DEATH OF MR. MARTIN PAGE  
OF BLAKENEY**

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Martin Fountain Page, senior partner and founder of the firm of Page & Turner, corn, coal, and cake merchants, of Blakeney and Holt. About nine years ago deceased had a stroke of paralysis, which affected his speech, and rendered him incapable of following the active business life to which he had been accustomed. During last week he suffered another stroke, and passed away on Sunday morning at ten o'clock. Mr. Skrimshire of Holt was in attendance. Mr Page was 64 years of age, and leaves a widow and six children, the eldest of whom is twenty years of age. He was a man of high business capabilities, and Blakeney owes its prosperity in a large measure to the firm of which he was for many years the head. He retired from any active share in the business in 1897. His death will be greatly felt by all in the district, especially by the poor, who will miss a generous and sympathetic helper. His liberality was also extended to every worthy object in the neighbourhood; and to all amusements and sports he was a contributor. Nor was his generosity confined to the parish of Blakeney. Not long ago the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital received £1000 at his hands, and the churches in the neighbourhood, too, notably Melton and Cley, and his own church of Blakeney, of which he was church warden, have received handsome donations from him. He will be buried at Blakeney, probably near the new church porch, which was lately built by him.

Eastern Daily Press - Tuesday 20th January 1903

**BLAKENEY**

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Martin Fountain Page, which took place on Sunday morning at his residence in Blakeney. The deceased gentleman had been in failing health for some considerable time, suffering from paralysis, but there was a sudden change for the worse during the latter end of last week. Mr Page possessed excellent business abilities, and was very successful. In his younger days he carried on a wholesale grocery business at Brinton, but subsequently he migrated to Blakeney, and bought the old-established merchandise and shipping business of the late Mr. Charles Temple Lynes, and carried on an extensive trade, having branches at Holt, Fakenham and Norwich. He retired from business some eight years since. He had accumulated a handsome fortune, and distributed large donations to hospitals, charities, churches, and benevolent societies. Blakeney, Cley, the neighbourhood and county will most certainly miss such a liberal and kind-hearted man. He seemed most happy when doing some kind act for the poor and needy. He was for many years church-warden of Blakeney, and assisted most liberally with his purse in bringing about the unique restoration of the noble edifice. Quite recently he rebuilt the north porch of the church at his own expense, and lastly gave a handsome sum to erect new iron gates at the western entrance to the churchyard. He leaves a widow and six children to mourn their loss, and the family have the deepest sympathy of Blakeney and the neighbourhood.

The Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette - Saturday 24th January 1903



In December 1909, the same newspapers reported that a men's social club was erected near the Quay at Blakeney, the buildings being funded by Emma Page and her family and erected in memory of the late Martin Fountain Page. The couple's son John was the architect.

The 1911 Census shows Emma Eliza Page, in receipt of a "Private Income", living with her three unmarried daughters in the High Street, Blakeney, in a house with fifteen rooms.

Emma Page outlived her husband by twenty-three years. She died on 13th November 1926, leaving effects of £7,347, equivalent to £560,000 in 2024.

## EDWARD CLIFFORD TURNER

Edward Clifford Turner was born in Trowse Newton in 1853, the youngest of nine children - five daughters and four sons - of John and Elizabeth (née Capps) Turner. John Turner was a Widower and sixteen years older than Elizabeth Capps when they were married in May 1840 in the Parish Church of Paddington, London.

Eleven years after their marriage, the 1851 Census shows John and Elizabeth Turner living at Trowse Hall with eight children, including twins, aged from one to nine years, together with five family servants including a Governess and a Nurse.

The 1861 Census shows John Turner and his family still living at Trowse Hall. John Turner was a Farmer, with 615 acres of land, and employing nineteen men and nine boys; he also employed three family servants within his household.

Ten years later, the Census of 1871 shows the family reduced in size with John, described as a Merchant, and Elizabeth Turner, two daughters, son Edward Clifford, 17, and two family servants now living at the Bishop's House in Cley.

Edward Clifford Turner was married in February 1882 to Anna Buck, second daughter of William Henry Gifford Buck of Wiveton Hall.

IPSWICH, AND SUFFOLK HERALD	
NORWICH.	
	<b>MARRIED.</b>
IEY,	On the 1st inst., at Wiveton, EDWARD CLIFFORD
	TURNER, youngest son of the late John Turner, Esq., of
46,	Cley-next-the-Sea, to ANNA, second daughter of W. H.
	G. BUCK, Esq., of Wiveton-hall.
IAH,	On the 2nd inst., at St. John's Church, Brixton, by
itts	the Rev. F. Brearley Sauberg, B.A., of St. Mary's,
	the Ipswich Mercury, Wednesday Oct. February 1882

The 1891 Census shows Edward, 37, described as a "Corn and General Merchant", and Anna, 32, with four sons, living now in the High Street, Blakeney, together with two family servants. The couple had five sons born between 1883 and 1895: Clifford John, Ellis Capps, William Buck, Alfred Edward and Harry Page. While Edward Turner was foremost at this time a Corn and General Merchant and Shop Owner, "The Ipswich Journal" of 7th January 1888 reported that he had been granted a patent for an invention for "Improvement in railway signalling apparatus".

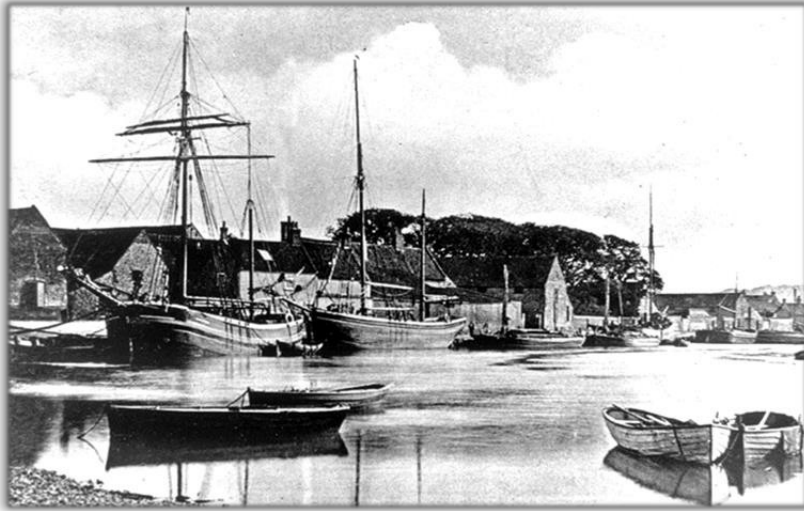
Ten years later, the 1901 Census shows Edward, a "Corn Merchant and Ship Owner" and an employer, and Anna Turner now living in The Lane in Blakeney with their family and two servants. Three of their four sons - Clifford, 18, Ellis, 17, and William, 16, were all employed as Commercial Clerks, presumably in their father's business. Son Harry Page Turner (whose middle name takes the surname of his father's business partner) had died in 1894, aged 10.

Edward, Anna and son Alfred Turner, and one servant, were living at "Sunnyside", a house with twelve rooms, in Blakeney in 1911.

Edward Clifford Turner died on 16th July 1916, leaving £12,191 1s., equivalent to £1.3m in 2024. Anna Turner outlived her husband by nine years. She died on 11th December 1925, leaving effects of £2,402 4s 9d, equivalent to £182,000 in 2024.

## MARY ANN - KETCH - 1832

The 52-ton *Mary Ann* - official number 23300 - was built in Whitstable but first registered to the Port of Faversham on 22nd June 1854. Her dimensions were: Length 73'4" x Breadth 19'3" x Depth 7'5". Her gross registered tonnage was 55.29, net registered tonnage 47.43 and her cargo capacity was 80 tons.



*Mary Ann* (centre, behind *Blue Jacket*) moored at Blakeney

The first Mercantile Navy List to show her owner, in 1865, gives his name as Thomas Gunn of Whitstable until 1881 when she was owned by George Gunn, also of Whitstable. In 1883, *Mary Ann's* registered owner was Edward Turner of Blakeney; in the following year, her registry was changed to the Port of Lynn.

In November 1897, the *Mary Ann* was one of three vessels owned by Messrs. Page & Turner to be at sea at the time of a fierce gale which resulted in the loss of the *John Lee* and all her crew. Reports in "The Norfolk News" describe the circumstances, also the safe return of the *Mary Ann*.

Grave fears are still entertained of two other Blakeney vessels, belonging to Messrs. Page & Turner, named the *Blue Jacket* and the *Mary Ann*, from whom nothing has been heard, although it is believed that a vessel which the tug is bringing into the Blakeney Pit is the *Mary Ann*.

The crew of the *John Lee* numbered four, and were William Bowles, master; James Jarvis, mate; William Starling, seaman; and J. Pells (Stiffkey), lad. The crew of the *Mary Ann* are Loder Thompson, master; James Brought, mate; James Newland, seaman; and William Bolding, lad; while the *Blue Jacket* had on board Samuel Jary, master; Hiram Cooper (Wiveton), mate; Isaac Stanford, seaman; and Robert Thompson, lad. It can only be hoped that by some fortuitous circumstances these twelve men will return, but, as may be suspected, their friends and the entire district are suffering extreme suspense in the absence of any knowledge of their fate.

### CAST UP BY THE SEA AT BLAKENEY

It is gratifying to be able to announce the safety of the *Blue Jacket* and *Mary Ann*. The last-named entered Blakeney on Friday bringing the news of the *Blue Jacket*, which she left in the Humber, and yesterday the *Blue Jacket* was reported to have got in. It is a pleasing duty to record that all on board are safe and well.

The Norfolk News - Saturday 11th December 1897

The *Mary Ann's* Captain was John Broughton and the 1901 Census shows him, a Sailor, aged 44, born in Morston, living with his wife and a lodger in the High Street, Blakeney. Ten years later, the Census shows him still living in the High Street, Blakeney, described now as a Master Mariner engaged in the mercantile coasting trade.

The *Mary Ann* retained her registration at Lynn but from 1918 her Managing Owner was Matthew Butcher junior, a Shipping Agent of 52 South Quay, Yarmouth.

After nearly one hundred years in service, the registry was closed in 1923 and the *Mary Ann* was broken up.

The *Mary Ann* was one of two ships recalled in a retrospective about the small ships of Blakeney.

#### **TWIXT WEAR AND NORFOLK**

The mention of small sailing vessels which trade to Seaham Harbour recalls the name of the two tiny sailing vessels, the *Fiducia* and the *Mary Ann*, which used to run between the Wear and Blakeney Pit, in Norfolk, up to about 1913.

The *Fiducia* carried 25 tons, and the *Mary Ann* used to load about 40 tons of coal, while each vessel brought grain to Sunderland. They were at that time owned by Matthew Butcher, of Yarmouth.

Tugmasters did not mind towing these vessels into the river or the docks, because the towage rates for the *Fiducia* and the *Mary Ann* were the same or very little less than those for schooners from between 200 to 500 tons.

[The Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 21st November 1929](#)

## JOHN LEE - SCHOONER - 1852

The *John Lee* - official number 21209 - was a wooden sailing ship, rigged as a schooner, built in 1852 by William Lawrence at the St. Lawrence yard at Newcastle. Her dimensions were: Length 64' 0" x Breadth 18'0" x Depth 8'5". Her net registered tonnage was 66.

She was registered to the Port of Cley in April 1855; her original owner is unknown but in 1865 was J.W. Porritt of Cley. By 1866 the *John Lee* was registered to the Port of Wells and her sole owner was John Turner (Edward Clifford Turner's father) of Calton, Norfolk; he remained her owner but by 1875 was living in Cley.

The Mercantile Navy Lists show that the *John Lee* was still registered to Wells in 1880 but her ownership had changed again; her owner in 1878 was Martin Fountain Page of Brinton but subsequently, from 1883, of Blakeney. Further changes occurred when Edward Clifford Turner of Blakeney became the *John Lee's* Sole Registered Owner from 1887 and, while still in his ownership, the ship was registered to the Port of Lynn in 1893. By 1895 the ship was rigged as a ketch.

The *John Lee* was one of eleven coasting vessels, steam lighter and barges to be put up for sale by auction by Messrs. Page & Turner on 1st September 1896; she perhaps did not sell for the Mercantile Navy List shows Edward Turner still her owner in 1897.

**LOT 4. Ketch JOHN LEE**, of Blakeney, Port Lynn, registered tonnage 57 tons, carrying 100 tons. This vessel is well known, bearing a good character, and will be found in first class order.

Eastern Daily Press - Monday 24th August 1896

Later that year and shortly after the dissolution of the Page & Turner partnership, the *John Lee* sailed from Blakeney for Sunderland on 28th November 1897 with 95 tons of wheat when she was lost off Hunstanton on the following day, having gone ashore on Gore Sands.

An early report surmised that wreckage and buoys marked "Blakeney" and recovered at Hunstanton on 1st December were possibly from the *John Lee*, which was later confirmed.

A Yarmouth telegram states that wreckage washed upon Clay Beach has established the identify of the schooner lost on Woolpack Sand. The vessel proves to be the John Lee, of Blakeney, the crew of which hailed from that port, and have, it is feared, all perished.

The Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List - Monday 6th December 1897

Also on the same date, the "Eastern Daily Press" confirmed that the crew of the *John Lee* had numbered four and named them as: William Bowles, master; James Pentney Jarvis, mate; William Starling, seaman; and J. Pells of Stiffkey, lad.

### THE GREAT GALE

A quantity of wreckage and the body of a dog which have been washed up at Cley prove that the vessel wrecked on the Woolpack during the recent great storm, and which the Hunstanton lifeboat was asked to assist, was the Blakeney ketch, John Lee. Nothing has since been heard of the crew, and it is assumed that they perished in the storm.

St James's Gazette - Monday 6th December 1897

“The Norfolk News” of 11th December reported “... no person any longer doubts that the crew are the victims of the terrible November gale”, a fear confirmed in a second report on the same day.

Blakeney was in a mournful condition, as it is more than feared that the John Lee, which is ashore upon the Woolpack Sands, has lost all hands. This fear is intensified by the discovery of a forecastle, hoodway, and cabin skylight and other wreckage upon Clay Beach, which Howard Brett identifies as portions of the ill-fated ketch. Oddly enough Brett, who found the wreckage, is a ship’s carpenter, and made the articles.

**The Norfolk News - 11th December 1897**

As referenced earlier, three vessels owned by Messrs. Page & Turner were at sea at the time of a fierce gale in 1897 which resulted in the loss of the Blakeney ship *John Lee* and all her crew.

Grave fears are still entertained of two other Blakeney vessels, belonging to Messrs. Page & Turner, named the Blue Jacket and the Mary Ann, from whom nothing has been heard, although it is believed that a vessel which the tug is bringing into the Blakeney Pit is the Mary Ann.

The crew of the John Lee numbered four, and were William Bowles, master; James Jarvis, mate; William Starling, seaman; and J. Pells (Stiffkey), lad. The crew of the Mary Ann are Loder Thompson \*, master; James Broughton \*, mate; James Newland, seaman; and William Bolding, lad; while the Blue Jacket had on board Samuel Jary, master; Hiram Cooper (Wiveton), mate; Isaac Stanford, seaman; and Robert Thompson, lad. It can only be hoped that by some fortuitous circumstances these twelve men will return, but, as may be suspected, their friends and the entire district are suffering extreme suspense in the absence of any knowledge of their fate.

**The Norfolk News - 11th December 1897**

\*actually Loads Thompson and James Broughton

The loss of the ship and her entire crew were evidently two avoidable events.

The “St. James’s Gazette” of 4th December 1897 reported that so grave were the charges about the “failure of the Hunstanton lifeboat to effect the rescue of the crew” that it had made its own enquiries of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. A subsequent report made by a Captain Holmes, R.N, the Lifeboat Inspector for the RNLI Eastern District to the RNLI in London - into the “unfortunate failure” on the part of the Hunstanton lifeboat to render immediate assistance to the ketch - bore out the findings of inquiries made to the Institution by the Gazette.

Information from the lifeboat men was that, observing a coaster to be in distress, the coxswain of the Hunstanton lifeboat summoned a crew and was ready to launch half an hour after the first distress signal. In order to reach the shore, the lifeboat at Old Hunstanton had to be hauled through a narrow gap in the sand dunes; a further difficulty sometimes arose because the tide at this point goes out a long way and the lifeboat sometimes had to be taken on its transporting carriage a significant distance before it was able to be launched. A team of horses - alternately supplied by two local farmers - was needed to transport the boat to the water. On this occasion, the farmer whose turn it was to supply the horses sent word that all his animals had influenza and were not available. The owner of the second team resolutely refused to provide his horses, saying it was not his turn to do so.

The coxswain telegraphed to Skegness and telephoned Brancaster and Skegness, acquainting the lifeboat stations with the position of the wreck and of the reasons which prevented the launching of the Hunstanton boat. The Skegness boat was launched shortly afterwards. In the meantime, the agent to Mr L’Estrange, lord of the manor and chairman of the local lifeboat committee, remonstrated with the second farmer and told him that his horses were urgently needed but he still refused to send them.

Had horses been available, there would have been no difficulty in getting the lifeboat afloat since there was only a surface swell and it was not blowing a gale. Efforts were made to get other horses but, even if they had been obtained, there was doubt about their usefulness as they would be unfamiliar with the task and of having to wade knee-deep for a considerable distance in the water.

Coincidentally, Captain Holmes had arrived in Hunstanton on the evening of the wreck for his half-yearly visit to the lifeboat station. He concluded from consultations with the coxswain and others that it would be useless to launch the lifeboat until daylight because it was too dark to locate the vessel. However, in the early hours of the morning, it was decided to serve a writ signed by Mr L'Estrange, a magistrate, on the second farmer. The horses were forthcoming and the lifeboat was launched at 4.30 a.m., Captain Holmes himself taking a place in the boat.

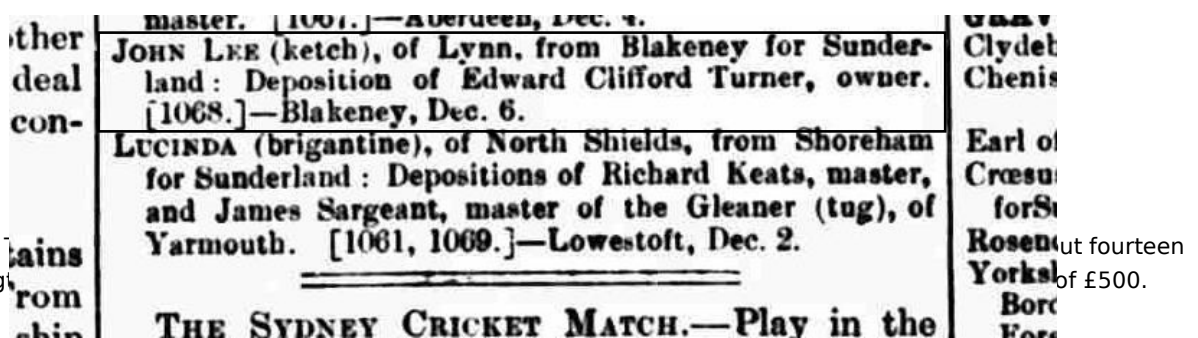
The crew pulled about until 7.30 a.m., when the wreck of the *John Lee* was sighted. She was boarded immediately but the vessel, described as a "rotten old dandy", was completely water-logged and no trace could be found of her crew. The lifeboat was beached at Brancaster at 9.00 a.m. and returned to Hunstanton during the afternoon.

It was reported that responsibility for the delays in getting the lifeboat afloat lay with the farmer refusing to supply horses and with the (young and - implied - less experienced) coxswain not using a Statutory Instrument in the form of an Act of Parliament to make a compulsory demand for the team of horses.

The Gazette reported that while lifeboat coxswains act under the direction of the local RNLI management committees, in the case of shipwreck, they are instructed "immediately on intimation of a wreck or a vessel in distress, to use their utmost exertions to assemble the crews, launch the boat, and proceed to the vessel's assistance". Pertinent to this was a regulation whereby, in the event of a wreck occurring at such a distance from the lifeboat station as to require the boat to be transported along the coast, the coxswain was to "procure sufficient horses for the purpose and to proceed with all dispatch to the scene of the wreck". Further, if the coxswain encountered any difficulty in procuring the horses, application should be made to the nearest Receiver of Wreck or, in their absence, any one of a list of named officials.

However, a successful launch might not necessarily have saved the *John Lee* or her crew members. The vessel was "an old and rotten hulk". Captain Holmes, the District Inspector, thought she must have broken up soon after her first signals of distress were observed and he could not say whether the lives of the crew might have been saved.

Lloyd's List of Thursday 16th December 1897 records a Maritime Deposition sworn by Edward Clifford Turner before a Receiver of Wreck or Justice of the Peace relating to the *John Lee*.



A Board of ... feet in length

Edward Turner gave a poignant account of the ship's wrecking.

She sailed from Lynn with a crew of four hands for Sunderland, on Saturday 28th November. The captain, Mr. Bowles, had been in his service for over twenty years, and was a careful navigator. The schooner carried one boat, two lifeboats, and four lifebelts. At the time she left Lynn she was in a first-rate condition. The witness had identified the pieces of wreckage and the collar of the ship's dog, which was washed ashore at Hunstanton.

Eastern Evening News - Wednesday 12th January 1898

Shortly after the loss of the *John Lee*, in 1899 Edward Clifford Turner became the owner of the *Taffy*.

## LIONESS - TUG -1854

The *Lioness* - official number 6682 - was a 13-ton steam tug, registered to the Port of Lynn on 22nd December 1854. Newspaper reports confirm that, like other vessels working out of Blakeney, *Lioness* was owned by Matthew Butcher and Sons, shipping agents of 52 South Quay, Yarmouth.

Just two years after her build, "The Norwich Mercury" of Wednesdays 16th and 23rd May 1855 advertised that *Lioness* was one of two vessels to be sold by private contract.

**And also TO BE SOLD, on reasonable terms, the STEAM TUG "LIONESS," 26-horse power, large part engine work nearly new, and in capital working condition. For further particulars apply to Messrs. Matthew Butcher and Sons, Ship and General Commission Agents, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. (4185**

The Norwich Mercury - Wednesdays 16th and 23rd May 1855

There is scant further information about the *Lioness* but evidently no sale took place for newspaper reports of 1856 refer to Matthew Butcher and Sons as still owning the vessel. Four years after their first attempt to sell *Lioness* by private contract, her owners offered her for sale again in 1859, this time by auction.

**PORT OF GREAT YARMOUTH.**  
**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY**  
**B. THOMPSON,**  
At the Star Hotel, Great Yarmouth, on Thursday, the 24th day of March, 1859, at seven o'clock in the evening precisely, by order of the mortgagee.  
**T**HE Brig "NEW ISABELLA," of Great Yarmouth, Jonathan Dabnaham, master, of the Burthen of 160 tons or thereabouts, with all her stores and materials as from sea. The above vessel had nearly £400 expended in repairs upon her hull in the year 1857, when she may be said to have been rebuilt.  
Immediately after will be sold, if not sooner disposed of, or let for a term, the Hull, Machinery, and Boilers, of the Steam Tug "LIONESS," of Great Yarmouth. The Hull is clenched built with Oak and Elm, and partially copper fastened, and in 1857 was doubled. Length of vessel about 59 feet.  
The Beam Engine works equal to 24 horse-power, the Boilers are in excellent repair. Considerable money last year was expended in repairs of her Hull and Machinery; she is now in every way adapted for immediately going to work, (except fuel.)  
For particulars enquire of Messrs. M. Butcher and Sons, Ship Agents, Yarmouth and Lowestoft, or of the Auctioneer, corner of Regent-road, Great Yarmouth. [1827

The Norfolk News - Saturday 5th March 1859

No information has been found about *Lioness* in the period from 1855, when she was first advertised for sale, and August 1896 when a notice of the "Sale of Coasting Vessels, Steam Lighter, Barges etc" included the steam tug. The Sale was to be held over three days in August 1896 at Blakeney Hard at the instruction of the owners Page & Turner; the Auctioneer and Valuer was Mr W. Baker of Blakeney. The decision to sell *Lioness*, along with other vessels, was evidently made before proposed "extensive alterations" were completed.

**LOT 8. - Barge LIONESS,** built at the same time as the Lion, but the extensive alterations which were completed to the Lion at Blakeney previous to her being registered this year have been only partially completed in the case of the *Lioness*.

East Anglian Daily Times - Saturday 22nd August 1896

Eastern Daily Press - Monday 24th August 1896

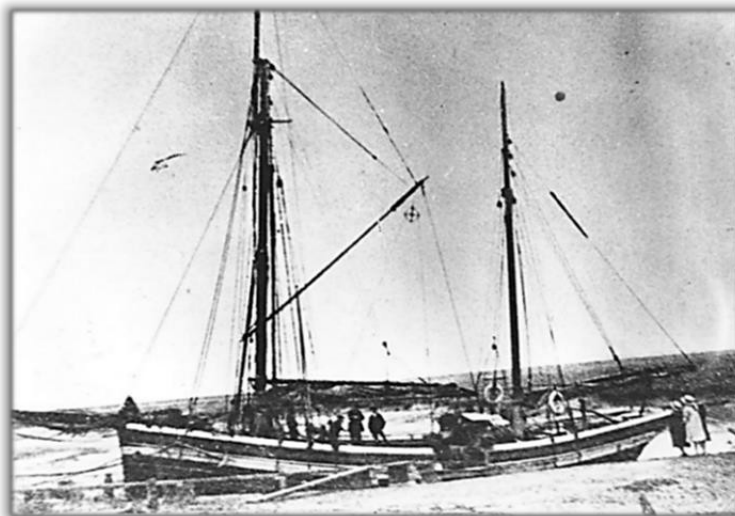
## FIDUCIA - KETCH - 1857

The coaster *Fiducia*, described variously as a ketch or yawl - official number 22078 - was built in 1857 at Scarborough and registered to that port in 1860.



*Fiducia* moored at Blakeney

In 1865, when her ownership details were first recorded, until 1874, her Sole Registered Owner was Richard Cross M.D., a General Practitioner of Scarborough, and from 1875 George Newby of Scarborough. Further changes followed and the *Fiducia* then had Managing Owners who were, from 1895, William Mansfield, also of Scarborough, and from 1904, George William Nichols of Goole.



*Fiducia* moored at Blakeney

There is then no record of the ship's ownership until 1909 when, now registered to the Port of Hull and with registered tonnage of 25, her Managing Owner was Clifford John Turner of Blakeney, the eldest son of Edward Clifford Turner of Blakeney. Ellis Capps Turner, another of Clifford Turner's sons, was her Managing Owner from 1913 until 1917.

Newspaper (Lloyd's List) records show the Captain of the *Fiducia* in 1912 was Captain Samuel Breese, who was born in Beckham circa 1875. The 1901 Census for Durham shows Samuel Breese, aged 26 and married, as an Able Seaman on board the *Taffy*; the Master of the ship was Loads Thompson, 48, who was born in Blakeney.

Ten years later, Samuel Breese, a "Mariner in the Merchant Service", was living with his wife and family in Westgate Street, Blakeney. The last reference found for the *Fiducia* and her Master, Captain Breese was dated February 1915.

The 1939 Register shows Samuel Breese, now a "Mariner, Mercantile Marine, Retired", living in the High Street, Blakeney.



“The Life-Boat”, the Journal of the Royal National Life-Boat | the Southwold No. 1 Life-boat was launched at 1.20 pm on | and two lives”, but no further details have been found.

Mercantile Navy List records show Matthew Butcher of Sout | from 1918 to 1925. However, the *Fiducia* was one of two sh | the *Mary Ann* - advertised for sale by auction in 1922; the ir | Butcher remained her Managing Owner. The Registry was c

**NORFORD SUFFLING, Limited.**  
*To Ship Owners, Ship Breakers, Marine  
 Store Dealers and others.*  
**GREAT YARMOUTH.**  
**NORFORD SUFFLING, Limited.**  
 have received instructions from the Mort-  
 gagees to sell by auction, without reserve,  
 the undermentioned Ketch Rigged  
**SAILING COASTERS,**  
 namely :—  
**“FIDUCIA,”**  
 Official number 22073, built at Scarborough  
 in 1859, length 58·3, breadth 18·2, depth 6·8,  
 gross tons 37·54, nett 24·69, cargo capacity  
 60 tons on a draft of about 8 feet, requires  
 no ballast when light.  
**“SUCCESSOR,”**  
 Official number 104003, built at Lowestoft in  
 1893, length 69·5, breadth 19·3, depth 8·9,  
 gross tons 54·38, nett 49·15, cargo capacity  
 70 tons on 11 feet draft.

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 gross tons 54·38, nett 49·15, cargo capacity  
 70 tons on 11 feet draft.

**“MARY ANN,”**  
 Official number 23300, built at Whitstable  
 in 1832, length 73·4, breadth 17·5, depth 7·5,  
 gross tons 55·29, nett 47·43, cargo capacity  
 80 tons on 8·5 feet draft.

The above vessels will be sold as they  
 now lie in Great Yarmouth Harbour, above  
 bridge, with all their sea-going stores, com-  
 prising masts, spars, standing and running  
 rigging, sails, anchors, cables, lamps, com-  
 passes, small boat, etc.

The Sale will be held at the Star Hotel,  
 Great Yarmouth, on THURSDAY, 14th Sep-  
 tember, 1922, at 3.30 o'clock in the afternoon.

For further particulars and orders to  
 inspect, apply to the Auctioneers, Fish  
 Wharf, Great Yarmouth.

The Yarmouth Independent - Saturday 2nd September 1922

The *Fiducia* and the *Mary Ann* were both recalled in a retrospective about small ships of Blakeney.

**TWIXT WEAR AND NORFOLK**

The mention of small sailing vessels which trade to Seaham Harbour recalls the name of the two tiny sailing vessels, the *Fiducia* and the *Mary Ann*, which used to run between the Wear and Blakeney Pit, in Norfolk, up to about 1913.

The *Fiducia* carried 25 tons, and the *Mary Ann* used to load about 40 tons of coal, while each vessel brought grain to Sunderland. They were at that time owned by Matthew Butcher, of Yarmouth.

Tugmasters did not mind towing these vessels into the river or the docks, because the towage rates for the *Fiducia* and the *Mary Ann* were the same or very little less than those for schooners from between 200 to 500 tons.

The Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette - Thursday 21st November 1929

## YANKEE - STEAMER - 1858

The *Yankee* - official number 55455 - was an iron twin screw steamer built in 1858 by an unknown builder - possibly Laurence Hill or John Reid - at Port Glasgow.

Her dimensions were: Length 78' 0" x Breadth 14'1" x Depth 5'0". Her gross registered tonnage was 46, net registered tonnage was 32. She had a 2-cylinder engine and a nominal horsepower of 18.



*Yankee* moored at Blakeney

No information has been found about the *Yankee's* first owner and she was unregistered for approximately nine years. She was first registered to the Port of Greenock on 12th July 1867 when her owners were William and Robert McNab and Duncan McCallum of Greenock.

A number of changes in ownership and registration occurred over the following five years. In 1867, *Yankee* was registered to the Port of Liverpool and her owner was Alexander Cansh of Birkenhead; in 1868 she was registered to the Port of Glasgow and her owner was John Laird.

*Yankee* was still registered to the Port of Glasgow in 1871 and 1872, when her owner was then Edwin Popplewell Dawson, an evidently wealthy Brewer and brewery owner of Kirkstall, Yorkshire, later residing in Stowmarket, Suffolk, then Long Clawson Hall, near Melton Mowbray. *Yankee's* British registry was closed on 8th June 1872 when it was recorded that the ship was "to be used solely in inland navigation".

*Yankee* was one of a number of Blakeney vessels - including the *Blue Jacket*, *Lion*, *Mary Ann* and *Palmers* - to be put up for sale by auction in August 1896 by Martin Fountain Page and Edward Clifford Turner on the dissolution of their partnership as Corn, Seed, Coal and Coke Merchant and Ship Owners.

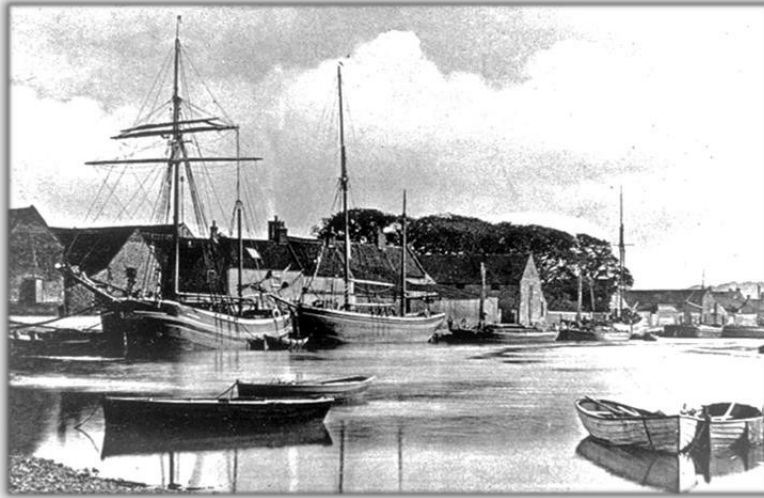
The listing for the *Yankee* describes her: "The Twin-Screw Steam Lighter YANKEE, Iron Boat, carrying about 50 tons on 5 feet water, and towing at the same time if needed; a fine pair of engines about 18-horse power."

No information has been found about any subsequent owner or any inland journeys *Yankee* might have made but she is known to have spent her remaining years on land, as a houseboat, resting on a part of Blakeney Point now named for the ship and known as Yankee Ridge.

The Norfolk Rapid Coastal Zone Archaeological Survey of 2004 reported: "A wreck/hulk was found ... on a sand dune ridge. It measured 24m long by 4.5 m wide and had a steel hull with concrete panelling towards the prow". The survey team was told at the time that it was the *Yankee* from which the sand dune was named. The Survey further recorded that a metal drum/cylinder measuring 1.70m long with a diameter of 0.8m was recorded loose amongst the dunes and surmised that it was likely to be a boiler from the ship/wreck.

## BLUE JACKET - KETCH - 1860

The Billy Boy ketch *Blue Jacket* - official number 27793 - was a 57 ton ketch, capable of carrying 83 tons, built in Walsoken in 1860 and first registered to the Port of Wisbeach in 1861. Her first recorded owners were in 1866 Elizabeth Haley and in 1867 John T. Smith, both of Wisbeach.



*Blue Jacket* (far left) moored at Blakeney

The term "Billy Boy" given to local coasting barges derives from their link with the Humberside community whose inhabitants were strong supporters of the Dutch King William, "King Billy", for which they were nicknamed "Billy Boys".

Like other Billy Boys, *Blue Jacket* was a strange looking vessel, flat bottomed, with ungainly hulls and a more rounded bilge than the keel, with bluff bows - which made her very slow at going windward - and a rounded stern.

Billy Boys were designed for maximum cargo capacity but their shape compromised their sailing abilities and the practice was to sail while the tide was favouring the vessel and to anchor when the tide turned. This might explain why, it was recorded, the *Mary Ann*, a much faster Blakeney ketch, had made the round trip between Blakeney and the Humber three times in the time it had taken *Blue Jacket* to make one.

The Blakeney Master Mariner and Shipowner Benjamin Henry Nichols bought all sixty-four shares in *Blue Jacket* in 1868 and brought her to Blakeney.

Newspaper reports of shipping movements show that in the period from 1869 to 1888, the Master of *Blue Jacket* was William (Otty) Grout. William Otty Grout was the uncle of Charles William Grout, Master Mariner, of "Greencroft", Blakeney.

The 1871 Census shows William Grout as Master of *Blue Jacket* onboard the vessel at the Royal Dock, Grimsby.

LIST of OFFICERS, CREW, and OTHERS on BOARD of the SHIP or VESSEL named the <i>Blue Jacket</i> on the NIGHT of SUNDAY, APRIL 2nd, 1871.						
NAME and SURNAME	CONDITION	AGE [Last Birthday] of	RANK or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	If (1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame or Paralytic (4) Lunatic	
Write, after the Name of the Master, the Names of the Officers and Crew and then the Names of Passengers and of all other Persons	Write "Married" or "Unmarried" or "Widower" against the Names of all Persons except Young Children.	Male Females	State here the rank of the Officers, and the rating of the Men and Boys of the Crew. The rank or occupation of Passengers and of all other Persons should be stated as fully and clearly as possible.	Opposite the Names of those born in England, write the County and Town, or Parish. If born in Scotland, Ireland, the British Colonies, or the East Indies, state the Country or District. If born in Foreign parts, write the particular State or Country, and if also a British Subject, add "British Subject." If "Naturalized British Subject," so the case may be.	Write the sympoms of infirmities against the names of the affected Persons, and if so from Birth, add "from Birth."	
<i>William Grout</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>Master</i>	<i>Spalthouse Norfolk</i>		
<i>Richard Holliday</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Boat</i>	<i>Blakeney Norfolk</i>		
<i>John Walker</i>	<i>unmarried</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>A. B. Seaman</i>	<i>Blakeney Norfolk</i>		
<i>Charles Johnson</i>	<i>unmarried</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>C. Seaman</i>	<i>Blakeney Norfolk</i>		
I declare the foregoing to be a true Return, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.						
			Witness my Hand,	(Signature) <i>William Grout</i>		

1871 Census

Two years later, while under the command of William Grout, *Blue Jacket* was in collision with another vessel but suffered no damage.

BLAKENEY, May 17th - The Blue Jacket, Grout, arrived here this morning from Hartlepool without damage. She reports that the collision with the Alfred of Colchester, took place on the 15th May, near Hornsea.

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Thursday 19th May 1870

**COLLISION OFF LOWESTOFT.**  
The schooner Alfred, of Colchester, Syrett, from Seaham for London, was assisted into Lowestoft on Wednesday with considerable damage to port bow, having been in collision with the Blue Jacket, of Wells. Another despatch states that the Blue Jacket, Grout, arrived at Blakeney on Tuesday morning from Hartlepool without damage. She reports that the collision with the Alfred, of Colchester, took place on Sunday, near Hornsea.

Shields Daily Gazette - Friday 20th May 1870

The ship's ownership changed again when Benjamin Nichols sold her to Martin Fountain Page in 1879. Martin Page was her Sole or Managing Owner until 1887 when her Sole or Managing Owner became Edward C. Turner.

There are no further reports of *Blue Jacket* suffering anything untoward until 1881 when the "Shields Daily Gazette" carried a report of numerous "Shipping Casualties During The Gale", one of which was the *Blue Jacket*.

The Blue Jacket, Grout, of and from Blakeney for Sunderland, with a cargo of wheat and barley has been assisted into Yarmouth with loss of anchor and chain. The cargo has shifted and vessel makes water. Agreement with tug.

Shields Daily Gazette - Tuesday 18th October 1881

These various reports refer to *Blue Jacket* sustaining damage while plying to and from Blakeney but perhaps the most significant incident occurred in 1887. During a spell of bad weather, *Blue Jacket* was loading at a coal staithe in Hartlepool when a truck laden with coal - which would normally tip its load into the hold - itself fell in. *Blue Jacket's* main beam was broken and significant other damage was caused. Her Master, Robert Pells (born in Shields and resident in Stiffkey), arranged for her to be towed back to Blakeney where repairs were carried out.

*Blue Jacket* was one of a number of Blakeney vessels to be put up for sale by auction in 1896 by Martin Fountain Page and Edward Clifford Turner on the dissolution of their partnership as Corn, Seed, Coal and Coke Merchants and Ship Owners. The listing for *Blue Jacket* describes: "This vessel is well known, bearing a good character, and one of the finest sea boats on the coast in bad weather".

*Blue Jacket* evidently did not sell at auction. As referenced earlier, she was one of three vessels owned by Messrs. Page & Turner to be at sea at the time of a fierce gale in 1897 which resulted in the loss of the Blakeney ship *John Lee* and all her crew.

"The Norfolk News" of Saturday 11th December 1897 reported that in the absence of any knowledge of either the *Blue Jacket* or the *Mary Ann*, there were grave fears about their fate although it was believed that the *Mary Ann* was being brought back to Blakeney by tug.

A further report in the same newspaper brought news that both the *Blue Jacket* and the *Mary Ann* were safe and all on board were safe and well; the *Mary Ann* had returned to Blakeney the previous day, on Friday 10th, bringing news that she had left *Blue Jacket* in the Humber; *Blue Jacket* had also got in to Blakeney on Friday 10th; she had on board Samuel Jary, master; Hiram Cooper (Wiveton), mate; Isaac Stanford, seaman; and Robert Thompson, lad.

Of the crew of the *Blue Jacket*, the 1891, 1901 and 1911 Censuses all show (the widowed) Samuel Jary, born circa 1834 in Morston, living in the High Street, Blakeney. The 1891 Census shows Hiram Cooper, born circa 1855 in Wiveton, as a Mate on the *Blue Jacket* moored in Blakeney Harbour. Robert Thompson, born in 1880, is shown on the 1939 Register as a Retired Master Mariner living at West View, Blakeney.

In 1909 Page & Turner removed *Blue Jacket's* masts and used her in the harbour as a lighter, pulled by the tug *Comet*. However, a cumbersome vessel, *Blue Jacket* did not make an effective lighter and, after two years in service, was sold to the Cozens-Hardy family.



*Blue Jacket* (far left) as a lighter moored at Blakeney

*Blue Jacket* was sold subsequently to the Hamond family to be converted for use as a houseboat. She spent her final days berthed at Morston, where she rotted away in 1932.

## **PATRIOT - TUG -1861**

The tug *Patriot* – official number 29116 – was a wooden paddle vessel built in May 1861 in South Shields; she was launched in the same year. Her dimensions were 71' 7" x 15'2" x 7'6". Her gross registered tonnage was 44, net registered tonnage 14, subsequently changed in 1871 to gross registered tonnage 45, net registered tonnage 8. She was powered by a 1-cylinder engine built by J.P. Almond of North Shields.

The *Patriot* was registered to the Port of Newcastle in 1862 when her first Owner and Manager from 7th May that year until 1870 was Johnston & James Hagg of Newcastle.



**Tug *Patriot* moored at Blakeney - circa 1877**

In the period from 1871 to 1877, the tug had three owners: the first was Charles Chrystall Duncan of Middlesbrough (also the owners of the tug *Comet*), at which port the *Patriot* was registered in 1870. It was during this period that *Patriot* was beached on 9th September 1874 following a collision with the vessel *Thames* on the River Tees.

### **COLLISION ON THE TEES - A STEAM BOAT SUNK**

Yesterday afternoon, about half-past four o'clock, a collision took place on the Tees, opposite Messrs Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co.'s wharf, which resulted in the total loss of a steamboat. The steam tug *Patriot*, belonging to Mr Duncan, Middlesbrough, which has been undergoing repairs for the past five or six months, and which has just been completed, was going up the river when she was struck by the s.s. *Thames*, of Stockton, bound for London with general cargo. The boat was seriously injured, and at once began to sink. She was taken in tow by a steamer close to and towed into shallow water, near to Messrs Bell Brothers' works, where she settled down rapidly. The *Thames* proceeded to sea. It is not quite certain who is to blame for the accident.

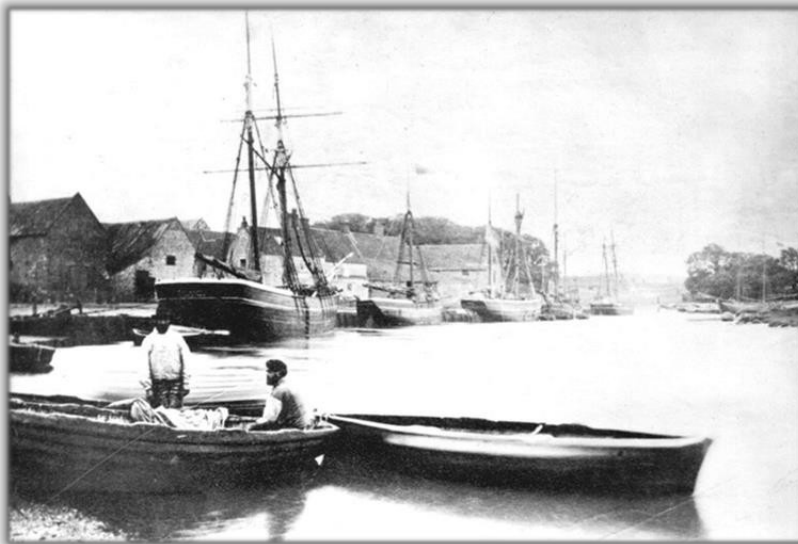
**The Northern Echo - Thursday 10th September 1874**

From 1877 *Patriot* was owned by Henry Wilson of Malings Rugg, Sunderland, where the tug was registered. A year later, *Patriot* came to Norfolk and was the first tug to be based at Blakeney. Her owner from 1878 and for the next ten years of her service was Martin Fountain Page of Brinton and she was registered at Wells. From 1888 to 1896, *Patriot's* owner was Edward C. Turner. She was also allocated the fishing registration number LN74 at Lynn (now King's Lynn).

*Patriot* was evidently sold in 1897 when her new owner was the Pendennis Co. Ltd. of Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire, her Managing Owner Alfred English of Wisbeach. From 1898 to 1901 *Patriot's* Managing Owner was Thomas Simpson of Thomas & Joseph Simpson of Newcastle. Her last Managing Owner, in 1901, was Frederick Gray of Heworth Shore, Durham. *Patriot* was broken up on the Tyne in July 1902.

## PALMERS - KETCH - 1862

The 73-ton schooner *Palmers* – official number 44346 – was built in Hartlepool in 1862, possibly by John Pile but more likely by Blumer & Son, and first registered to James Palmer. She was registered to the Port of Lowestoft in 1867, when her owners were John and George Smith of Bacton, Norfolk, one or possibly both (shipping records giving only the Master's surname) was also her Master.



*Palmers* (left) moored at Blakeney

*Palmers* was involved in a number of incidents while in the ownership of John and George Smith.

**WEST HARTLEPOOL - April 20 :** The *Palmers*, Smith, from Lynn, has arrived with loss of mainmast, jibboom, and greater part of rigging, and starboard bows stove from fore rigging forward, having been run into last night by a schooner.

The Shipping and Mercantile Gazette - Monday 22nd April 1867

### TWO VESSELS ASHORE AT LOWESTOFT

LOWESTOFT, March 28. – The schooner *Palmers*, Smith, of this port, from Southwold to Hartlepool (ballast), missed stays and drove on shore at Kessingland at 4 p.m. yesterday; crew saved; vessel expected off.

Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 30th March 1868

“Lloyd’s List” reported that *Palmers* had “been got off today (Monday 6th April 1868) and into harbour, leaking” and, with repairs evidently taking some time, that the ship had sailed from Lowestoft for Hartlepool on 8th May “after repairing”.

Shortly after her repairs, *Palmers* suffered damage again when she was in collision with another ship.

On the 12th inst., the schooner *Palmers*, Smith, of Lowestoft, from the north, for Bacton Beach, coals, slight damage, having been fouled by the lugger *Joan*, of this port, in the roads.

The Norfolk News - Saturday 21st November 1868

On 15th April 1872 the ship was laid on Walcott Beach to discharge her cargo when a strong gale resulted in extensive damage to the ship and to the loss of her cargo. Despite fears for her survival, *Palmers* was able to be refloated; repairs took a month to complete and she was able to resume trading in late May that year. However, later in the same year *Palmers* sustained further damage and had to put in to Lowestoft.

derland.  
**The schooner Palmers, Smith, arrived here, reports having been fouled, whilst riding off Hasbro' at midnight on the 1st inst., by the schooner Empress, of Shoreham, and lost jibboom.**  
**The Olivebranch smack, of Brixham, Berry, came into harbour this morning. The master, (Clark), reports that William Jordan, apprentice, aged 19, was drowned about**

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Reports in the "Sh... until c1873. The Mercantile Navy List shows a subsequent change of ownership, when the ship's Sole Registered Owner from 1874 until 1881 was William Henry Markby Starling.

*Palmers'* first voyage for William Starling was to be a potential three-month voyage from Newcastle to the Baltic under the captaincy of Robert Thurston, a Master Mariner of Blakeney; in the event she was away for five weeks, the voyage taking her only to Gothenburg. On her return from the Baltic, *Palmers* was sailing to and from Newcastle and Blakeney, now with Captain R. Holmes of Blakeney as her Master.

*Palmers* was involved in a number of incidents during her Blakeney ownership, the first being the most significant.

The ship's Mate, James Robert Bell, reported that on 19th November 1875, while on passage from Shields for Blakeney with a cargo of coal and in a force 8 NNW gale, *Palmers* lost her sails and the Master was washed overboard about six miles off Scarborough.

The Master's name is not recorded but was very likely Robert Martin Holmes, born in Yarmouth in 1815, a Master Mariner and Merchant who captained *Palmers* from 1874 to 1875. The "Shipping and Mercantile Gazette" shows *Palmers*, Master, Holmes sailing to and from Blakeney and Newcastle in the period from July 1873 to November 1875, after which there are no further entries.

12		
LOWESTOFT	... arrived	RIG
[22, 11.20 a.m.]		No
— Countess of Durham (s), Way	London	MEI
(ballast) — for Sunderland —		No
short of coal		
Normanby Blampied	Newcastle	PIL
(coal) — for Jersey — for refuge		No
Palmers, Bell	Shields	
for Blakeney — master drowned		Both
Eider (s), Hewett	Ipswich	19
(general) — for Hull — short of coal		Mar
WARWICK	arrived	

"Lloyd's List" of Tuesday 23rd November 1875 further reported that *Palmers* had had to put in to Lowestoft on 22nd November 1875 on her return from Shields to Blakeney with her sails split. She was assisted by a tug on 21st November 1875 but the crew was shorthanded and she touched the ground when re-entering port the next day. James Bell was the "Acting" Master. James Robert Bell was born in Cley circa 1841, the son of John Bell, a Master Mariner. He had served as a Boy on the *John Lee*, one of the ships owned by the Turners.

The 1881 Census shows that Loads Thompson, later to be Master of the *Taffy*, was one of four Blakeney mariners on board *Palmers* which was moored in London.

Name	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
William Bowles	Married	40	Master	Blakeney, Norfolk
William Starling	Married	38	Mate	Blakeney, Norfolk
Loads Thompson	Married	29	Able Seaman	Blakeney, Norfolk
Jacob Dew	Unmarried	16	Ordinary Seaman	Blakeney, Norfolk

1881 Census



Just over a year after the Census was taken, it was reported on 15th April 1882 that *Palmers* was laid on Walcott Beach to discharge her cargo when a gale damaged her and her cargo was lost.

*Palmers'* ownership remained in Blakeney for the next twenty-three years but from 1882 her Sole Registered Owner was William Fountain Page and from 1887 Edward Clifford Turner.

In 1894 it was reported that, while in Blakeney harbour, *Palmers* had suffered damage necessitating repairs.

#### **BLAKENEY**

**SINKING OF A VESSEL** - On Saturday afternoon the vessel *Palmers*, belonging to Messrs. Page & Turner of this place, sank at the quay. It appears a plank had been removed to test her timber, and owing to the smallness of the tides she was laid on the lowest place. Her billage catching the quay, gave her a lift over, and she speedily filled. As soon as men could be got on board she was pumped out, and at present is removed to the gridiron to undergo repairs.

The Norfolk News - 8th September 1894

The partnership between William Fountain Page and Edward Clifford Turner was dissolved in 1896 and *Palmers* was one of eleven vessels advertised for sale by auction. It was reported that the ship had been "under heavy repair", presumably after she sank in 1894, carried a Board of Trade survey, and her registered tonnage had been reduced by 18 tons.

*Palmers'* ownership changed in 1897 when John Wallace Taylor of Sunderland became her Managing Owner.

Three years later, *Palmers* was bound for Sunderland with a cargo of wheat when, in what were evidently extreme weather conditions, the ship sustained irreparable damage after going ashore off Aldborough and became a total wreck. She had a crew of five and no lives were lost.

#### **PALMERS - Aldborough, Feb. 14, 8.10 a.m.**

Ketch *Palmers*, of Lowestoft, reported ashore this morning at East Lane, from London for Sunderland, cargo wheat, went ashore at 1 this morning opposite Battery Tower, near Orford Haven. Crew safe at East Lane. Vessel high and dry. Further particulars later.

#### **PALMERS - Aldborough, Feb. 14, 4.52 p.m.**

Ketch *Palmers*, of Lowestoft, reported ashore this morning at East Lane, cargo 490 quarters of wheat, from London for Sunderland. Cargo washing out of her; bulwarks gone. Removing cable and heavy gear. If not floated next tide will become a total wreck.

Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List - Thursday 15th February 1900

The "Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List" reported the following day, on Friday 16th February 1900, that *Palmers* and her cargo were a total loss. The Register was closed in 1900.

#### **PALMERS - Aldborough, Feb. 15, 5.46 p.m.**

*Palmers* cargo a total loss. There has been no chance of doing anything. The weather does not moderate, and the vessel is breaking up.

## T.M.P. - KETCH - 1874

The 45-ton ketch *T.M.P.*- official number 68862 - was built in Portreath, Cornwall in 1874. The Mercantile Navy List gives the first listing for the ship in 1877 when she was registered to the Port of Hayle. Her registered tonnage was 43 tons, carrying 83 tons.

Her first owner was Thomas Henry Massey of Portreath, Cornwall, who, the 1871 Census shows, was a Ship's Captain and Inn Keeper. By 1876 her owner is shown as Richard Martin, also of Portreath. Richard Martin was a "Quay Hobbler", someone skilled in sailing who would undertake the often very dangerous task of guiding a ship entering and berthing in a harbour.

By 1882, the *T.M.P.*'s owner was Martin Fountain Page and from 1886 to 1896, Edward Clifford Turner. The first of a number of incidents involving the *T.M.P.* occurred in 1889 when an action against Messrs. Page and Turner was brought for damages arising from a collision with the vessel.

**GARIBALDI.**—*Bridlington, Feb. 5, 9 49 a.m.*—Small French coaster Garibaldi, of Gravelines, Lavallo, in ballast, for Dysart, has been towed into the harbour with loss of foremast, &c., having been run into, whilst riding at anchor in the bay, by the ketch T. M. P., of Blakeney, at 9 45 a.m. on Tuesday.

Lloyd's List - Tuesday 5th February 1889

### COLLISION IN BRIDLINGTON BAY

At the Hull Admiralty Court on Saturday before his Honour Judge Bedwell, an action was commenced by Charles Lavallie, master and owner of the French two-masted lugger Garibaldi, of Gravelines, against the owners of the ketch T.M.P. of Blakeney.

Mr A.M. Jackson appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Lambert for the defendants. From the opening statement, it appears that on Sunday, the 3rd February inst., a strong breeze was blowing from the northward, and a large number of vessels collected in Bridlington Bay for shelter. Amongst them were the two vessels named, and the Garibaldi, which is of 62 tons register, with a crew of five all told, and was bound for Scotland, in ballast, after dragging her anchor for some time, settled about  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles south-east of the pier. At that time the wind was from the north-east, and the vessel was away from the proper riding grounds of the fleet, and from a half to a quarter-of-a-mile distant from any other ship. Soon after they brought up the master set the crew to double-reef the canvas, and while they were so engaged they noticed the T.M.P. bearing down upon them. The Garibaldi's crew shouted to the crew of the ketch, which was without a sidelight, and was some six or seven ship-lengths off. The ketch's helm was put down to luff to cross the bows of the Garibaldi, but she did not succeed in getting clear. She drove foul of the Garibaldi, carrying away her foremast, broke her own bowsprit against the main rigging, broke the Garibaldi's port cable and disappeared.

The action was not to recover damages, but to settle the point as to who was to blame for the collision. Mr Lambert had filed a notice admitting that his vessel was partly to blame for the collision on account of having no sidelights, but Mr Jackson submitted that he was solely to blame.

The Eastern Morning News (Hull) - Monday 25th February 1889

Despite this report, an account almost a month later of the (adjourned) case against the owners of the *T.M.P.* stated that the action *was* for damages arising from the collision.

A Captain Masurier, Master of the schooner *Morning Star*, which was lying in Bridlington Bay at the time of the collision appeared on behalf of the defendants. The case was adjourned but the outcome was unfortunately not reported.

A subsequent collision involving *T.M.P.* occurred seven years later, on Wednesday 25th September 1895.

#### **COLLISION IN THE OUSE AT GOOLE**

Yesterday morning, about 11.30, as the steamship *Cassel*, 237 tons, of London, Capt. Thorne, was leaving Goole for London with a cargo of coals, she collided near the South Pier with the ketch *T.M.P.*, 45 tons, of Lynn (Captain Massingham), which was laden with a cargo of barley from Blakeney. The ketch was struck in the after quarter and was towed along the South Pier, where she sank. The crew got onboard the *Cassel*, and were shortly afterwards landed.

Shields Daily Gazette - Thursday 26th September 1895

The *T.M.P.*, along with other small vessels, was being towed up the Goole Reach of the River Ouse with a cargo of barley. The screw steamer *Cassel* was bound for London with a cargo of coal and had just left Goole docks. The ketch sustained so much damage that she sank in a few minutes and her cargo was badly damaged.

The "Hull Daily Mail" of Friday 27th September reported on recovery efforts.

#### **GOOLE INTELLIGENCE**

**COLLISION IN THE OUSE** - Efforts are being made to raise the ketch *T.M.P.*, which was sunk in the Ouse, near the South Pier, in consequence of a collision with the s.s. *Cassel*. A gang of men have been engaged discharging the cargo of grain by the aid of a steam crane.

Hull Daily Mail - Friday 27th September 1895

The action on this occasion was brought by the owners, Page and Turner against the owners of the steamship *Cassel*; the hearing was conducted in the Admiralty Court.

#### **ADMIRALTY COURT JUDGMENT.**

##### **COLLISION IN THE OUSE.**

In the Admiralty Court to-day, Mr Justice Barnes delivered judgment in the action brought by Page and Others, the owners of the Goole ketch *T.M.P.*, against the owners of the London steamer *Cassel*, which ran into the ketch, and sank her at a time when she, along with other craft, was being towed up the Goole reach of the River Ouse by a tug.—His Lordship said the Elder Brethren advised him that the tug and her tows began to turn round at an improper time, when the steamer was too close for her to have avoided the collision. The *Cassel* could not under the circumstances have done other than she did, and she could not be said to be negligent. The fault of the collision was solely due to the improper turning round of the tug and tows, and judgment would be for the defendants.

Hull Daily Mail - Thursday 18th June 1896

It was judged that there was no negligence on the part of the *Cassel* and that the collision was the result of improper action by a third party, the tug and her tows, including the *T.M.P.* which had begun to turn round when it was improper to do so and when the *Cassel* was so close to the tug that she could not have acted differently. The judgement was for the defendants, with costs.

In a subsequent legal action, in December 1896, the owners of the *Cassel* brought an action for damages against the owners of the Goole Towing Company claiming that the collision was caused by the negligent navigation of the steam tug. Counsel for the defendants stressed that the plaintiffs had never mentioned at the previous Admiralty trial - which the owners of the *T.M.P.* had brought against the *Cassel* - that the *Cassel* had sustained any damage. The plaintiffs had waited until the result of the previous action before they thought fit to claim any damages. Judgement was for the plaintiff with costs.

The efforts to raise the ketch *T.M.P.* were evidently successful. The *T.M.P.* of Blakeney, Port Lynn, was one of eleven named vessels offered for sale by auction, on 1st September 1896, by Page & Turner, when she was described as being "thoroughly overhauled at Goole the end of last year, when new masts, new rigging, &c., were fitted, and hull repaired and caulked throughout". The ketch was, however, apparently unsold and remained in the same ownership but shortly afterwards was involved in another "near miss".

#### THE NARROW ESCAPE OF A VESSEL

Respecting the narrow escape of a vessel on Saturday night during the prevalence of a strong south-easterly Gale, from further particulars obtained it now appears that she was the ketch *T.M.P.* which was running for Shields through stress of weather. It is regarded as most fortunate that the tug *Great Britain* was near at hand to render prompt assistance, as the ketch was within an ace of being wrecked near to the end of the Tynemouth Pier. The *Great Britain* was at the time engaged piloting. The wind had suddenly fallen away, but the sea was still running heavily, and there was a strong ebb tide with a great deal of fresh on the river. The ketch was rapidly carried in towards the end of the north pier. The night was very dark, with a drizzling rain, and it was a difficult matter to discern anything at a distance. Those on board the *Great Britain* had not a moment to lose, for as soon as the vessel was observed she was in great danger of being dashed on the rocks. The greatest promptitude had to be used to get a tow rope aboard the ketch and get her clear. The action of the captain and those on board the *Great Britain* in no small measure prevented a serious disaster. The *T.M.P.* is laden with wheat and is from Blakeney, bound for Sunderland. The master reported having had very severe weather on the passage, being obliged to seek shelter in the Humber.

Shields Daily Gazette - Monday 7th December 1896

The *T.M.P.* then had two further changes of ownership, the first in 1897 when she was sold to a third Blakeney owner; her Managing Owner was Robert John Butters of Blakeney.

She was bought the following year by Sydney John Incedon, son of a Master Mariner, of Braunton, Devon, in whose ownership she remained until 1909 when her Managing Owner was Susan Incedon of Braunton. The registration was transferred to Barnstaple in 1898.

A year later, Henry Smith G. Clarke, Master Mariner, also of Braunton, is shown as her Managing Owner in 1910. The *T.M.P.* was wrecked seventeen years later.

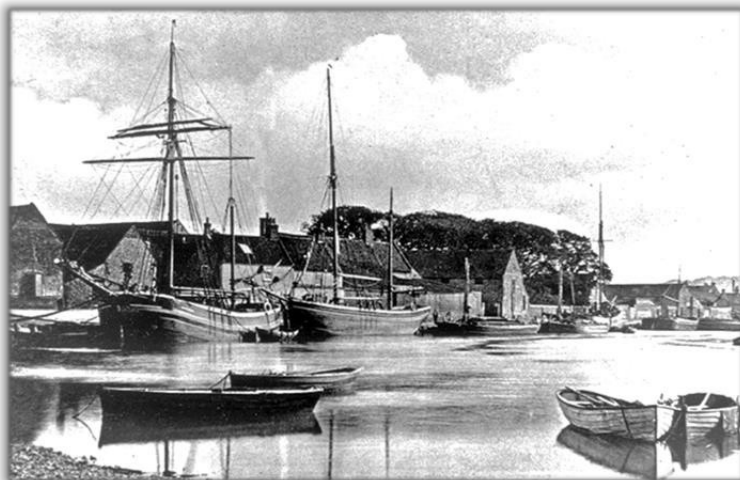
**WRECKS AND CASUALTIES.**  
**FROM LLOYD'S LIST.**  
The motor ketch *T.M.P.* struck rocks on Monday afternoon and is now full of water and a total wreck. Crew safe. A considerable quantity of gear has been landed.

Belfast News-Letter - Wednesday 14th February 1917

The final entry for *T.M.P.* in the Mercantile Navy List is dated 1916 and the Register was closed in 1917.

## LION - BARGE - 1880

The ketch-rigged barge *Lion* - official number 93652 - was built at Gorleston in 1880 and registered to the Port of Lynn in February 1896. Her registered tonnage was 35 tons, carrying 73 tons on  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet water.



Blakeney (early 20th Century) - from left - *Blue Jacket, Mary Ann, Clam, Fiducia and Lion*

No information has been found about *Lion* in the period between her build and August 1896, when she was one of eleven vessels and other ships' boats and maritime equipment listed as being for sale by auction.

The notice of the "Sale of Coasting Vessels, Steam Lighter, Barges etc", to be held over three days in August 1896 at Blakeney Hard at the instruction of the owners Page & Turner, describes the vessel as being "exceptionally strong, having been built for harbour work". The same notice refers to the *Lion* and the *Lioness* being built at the same time and refers to the *Lion* as having had extensive alterations before her registration.

**Lot 6.** Ketch-rigged Barge, "Lion", of Blakeney, Port of Lynn. Registered Tonnage 35 Tons, carrying 75 Tons on  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ft. water, exceptionally strong, having been built for Harbour work.

**Lot 8.** Barge, "Lioness", built at the same time as the "Lion", but the extensive alterations which were completed to the "Lion" at Blakeney, previous to her being registered this year, have been only partially completed in the case of the "Lioness".

Eastern Daily Press - Monday 24th August 1896

A newspaper report of one year after the auction date implies that *Lion* was not sold but remained in Page & Turner's ownership.

### THE GALE IN NORTH NORFOLK

The little seaport of Blakeney was fortunate in escaping so severe a visitation as its neighbours, although it has suffered extensively, the bank being damaged to the computed amount of over £2,000. The road is blocked with debris of all description. Mr A. Hill, timber merchant has been flooded, and will no doubt have cause to remember the great tidal wave, while the barge *Lion*, belonging to Messrs. Page and Turner, after threatening to deposit herself in Westgate Street, was carried to Morston Quay.

Thetford & Watton Times - Saturday 4th December 1897

The last entry for *Lion* in the Mercantile Navy List is in 1916, when her Managing Owner was still Edward Clifford Turner.

## COMET - TUG -1889

The tug *Comet* was a steel, single screw vessel – 97950 - built in 1889 by W.E. Cook of Middlesbrough and launched in the same year.

Her dimensions were 60'2" x 14'1" x 7'0". Her gross registered tonnage was 29, net registered tonnage 5. She was powered by a 2-cylinder engine (12 & 12 x 12ins), built in 1882 by Vosper & Clark of Portsmouth; her nominal horsepower was 18.



Comet moored at Blakeney

The *Comet* was registered to the Port of Newcastle in 1889 when her first Owner and Manager was Allen Brown Ltd. of Quayside, Newcastle.

In the relatively short period from 1897 to 1920, the tug had a series of owners, the first and longest being Edward Clifford Turner, her Managing Owner and trading as Page & Turner, of Blakeney, from October 1897 to March 1908.

From March 1908 until May 1916 *Comet* was owned by Edward Clifford Turner and two of his sons, Ellis and Alfred, still trading as Page & Turner.

The *Comet* was used to tow ships belonging to the Page & Turner Company in and out of the Blakeney channel; she was maintained by the local firm of Blakeney blacksmiths – Herbert Ernest Smith, his father James Curry Smith and grandfather Robert Smith who acted as engineers to the *Comet*. Trading as “Smith, James Curry and Son blacksmiths, agricultural and general smiths, pump work, hot and cold-water engineers and sheet metal workers; ornamental work forged”, they had a forge on the quayside.

The first Captain of the *Comet* was James Newland who, the 1901 Census shows as a Sailor (Merchant Service), aged 41, living in the High Street Blakeney.

The *Comet's* next Captain was Robert John (otherwise known as John) Butters, Master Mariner, who was born in Morston circa 1847. The 1901 Census shows him, a “Captain, (Seas) Merchant Service”, aged 54, and his wife living at Shipley House, 8 Westgate Street, Blakeney. Ten years later, now widowed, he was at the same address, which the Census shows was a house with five rooms.

The *Comet's* ownership changed in May 1916 to Charles S. Robinson of Great Yarmouth and soon after, in August the same year, Walter C. Reeder of London became her Managing Owner.

There were then two further changes in the *Comet's* ownership, the first from March 1917 when John T. Rayfield of Gravesend became her Managing Owner. For the short period from January to March 1918, the *Comet* was owned by Joseph E. Turner of Weymouth.

The *Comet* changed hands again and she was owned by a Tees tug company operating out of Middlesbrough. Her Owners were, in March 1918 William Chrystal Duncan of Redcar, and from October of the same year, Charles Duncan & Sons Ltd. of Middlesbrough. A number of ships owned by the company carried the names of the owners' family members and in January 1919 *Comet* was renamed *Betsy Duncan*.

In subsequent further changes, the *Betsy Duncan* was owned by G. Wardle & T. Mowat of South Shields from April 1920 and from November 1920 by J.G. Potts of Sunderland.

The *Betsy Duncan* sank on 27th March 1922 in the South Dock, Sunderland and she was broken up.

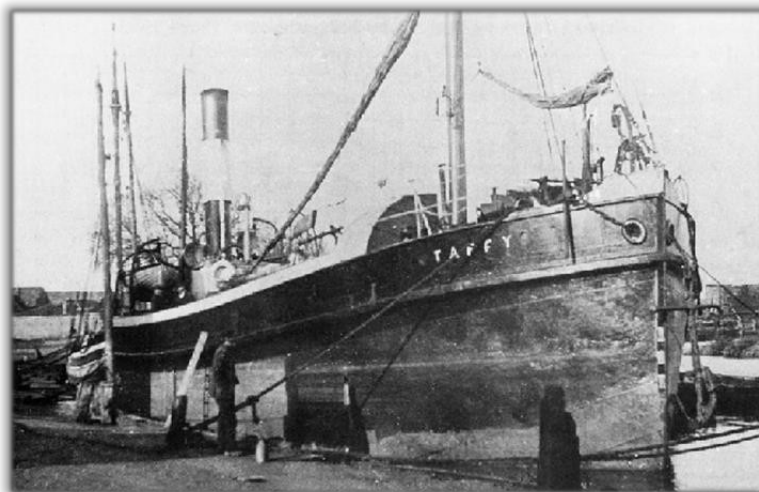


*Comet* moored - place unknown

## TAFFY - STEAMER - 1894

The coaster *Taffy* was a steel screw steamer - official number 102368 - built in 1894 for the Wales-Mersey granite trade - by David J. Dunlop & Co. of Port Glasgow at Inch Yard (224) and launched on 19th June 1894.

Her dimensions were: Length 100' 5" x Breadth 21' 1" x Depth 9'3". Her gross registered tonnage was 165, net registered tonnage 90, and she was powered by a single screw, 2-cylinder engine; her nominal horsepower was 37.



*Taffy* moored at Blakeney

The *Taffy's* first owner, in 1895, was The Taffy Steam Ship Co. Ltd. of High Street, Runcorn, Cheshire; her Managing Owner was John Brundrit, described variously as a Quarry Proprietor, Stone Merchant, also a Magistrate, of "The Highlands", Runcorn; her Master was Joseph Bettley. *Taffy's* gross and net registered tonnage in 1895 was recorded as 173 and 67 respectively. In 1898 her manager was George W. Hayes of Bonastre, Cheshire.

The *Taffy's* ownership changed in 1899 and her owner for the next fourteen years was Edward Clifford Turner of Blakeney.

A large tonnage coasting vessel - her gross and net registered tonnage in 1899 were then recorded as 173 and 73 - *Taffy* was the only steam ship to come up to the Quay, all the others being sailing ships, and, given her size, she had to be part unloaded by lighters at anchor in the Pit.

The *Taffy's* Captain was Loads Thompson. Records of Apprentices indentured in the Merchant Navy show that Loads Thompson was aged 14 when he was indentured on 24th April 1866 for a period of four years to Charles Johnson Temple (later Temple Lynes) of Blakeney, and to serve on the Wells registered *Camellia*.

The 1881 Census shows Loads Thompson as one of four Blakeney mariners on board the *Palmers* moored in London. The Master of the ship was William Bowles, who was subsequently the Master and one of the four crew members who lost their lives when the *John Lee* was lost in 1897.

Name	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
William Bowles	Married	40	Master	Blakeney, Norfolk
William Starling	Married	38	Mate	Blakeney, Norfolk
Loads Thompson	Married	29	Able Seaman	Blakeney, Norfolk
Jacob Dew	Unmarried	16	Ordinary Seaman	Blakeney, Norfolk

1881 Census

The "1890 History, Gazetteer & Directory of Norfolk" shows Loads Thompson, Master Mariner, living in Blakeney.



At the time of the 1901 Census on 31st March, Loads Thompson was on board the *Taffy*, moored in Sunderland, with three other Norfolk mariners, of whom Samuel Breese went on to become Master of the *Fiducia*.

Name	Relation to Vessel	Condition	Age	Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
Loads Thompson	Master	Widower	48	Master Mariner	Blakeney, Norfolk
John Edward Seales	Crew	Married	29	Second Engineer	Morston, Norfolk
Charles Cole	Mate	Married	52	Chief Mate	Poole, Dorset
Samuel Breese	Crew	Single	26	Able Seaman	Beckham, Norfolk
Ernest Warman	Crew	Single	16	Ordinary Seaman	Blakeney, Norfolk

1901 Census

Loads Thompson was presumably still Master of the *Taffy* when, after rendering assistance to a ship in distress, a court action ensued.

**NEWCASTLE COUNTY COURT**  
**Salvage - The Taffy (s) and the Vigilant (s)**  
**(Before his Honour Judge Greenwell, April 26)**

This was an Admiralty action, in which the owners of the *Taffy*, Messrs. Page and Turner of Blakeney, Norfolk, claimed £300 from Messrs Thomas Thompson and Son, of Broad Chare, Newcastle, for salvage services rendered to their coasting steamer *Vigilant* on Feb. 27. Mr Meynell (instructed by Mr. Jas. Storey, of Sunderland represented the owners of the *Taffy*, and Mr. R. Temperley (instructed by Messrs. Burnicle and Morton) was counsel for the owners of the *Vigilant*.

The *Taffy* is an iron screw coasting steamer of 73 tons register and 37 nominal horse-power, of the estimated value, with the cargo she was carrying at the time, of £3,500. The *Vigilant* is a wooden screw coasting steamer of 62 tons register, and of the estimated value, with her then cargo, of £1,520. On the afternoon of Feb. 27 the *Taffy*, which was proceeding with a cargo of barley from Sunderland to Leith, encountered off Holy Island, between Emmanuel Head and the Windgate, the *Vigilant*, which was bound from Dundee to Newcastle with a cargo of wheat. The *Vigilant*, according to the case for the plaintiffs, was labouring heavily in a cross sea and a strong breeze from the north-east, and was flying distress signals, about half-a-mile off the Plough Seat Reef. Her tail-end shaft was broken, and she was in great danger of drifting on to Holy Island. A steel hawser from the *Taffy* was made fast to the *Vigilant*, an operation which occupied about 20 minutes during which time the *Vigilant* was drifting apparently nearer the island. After the *Taffy* had been towing the *Vigilant* for about a quarter of an hour the hawser parted, and, after further manoeuvring, the *Taffy* succeeded in getting two ropes made fast to the *Vigilant* and recommenced towing. On getting into the shoal waters of, or Narrows of Holy Island Harbour, they encountered a heavy ground swell, and both ropes parted. The *Vigilant* then let go her anchor, and the *Taffy*, having turned round, steamed out again to the assistance of the *Vigilant*, which in the meantime was drifting to the south-west. Two more ropes were made fast, and the *Taffy* then succeeded in towing the *Vigilant* into harbour. It was contended that the *Taffy* exposed herself to considerable danger by these operations, and that, owing to the absence of safe anchorage, she removed the *Vigilant* from a position of considerable danger.

His HONOUR, in giving judgement, said there did not seem to have been very great danger incurred by those on board the *Taffy* in rendering the salvage services, though the *Vigilant* had been rescued from a considerable risk. He awarded £125 for the salvage, to be apportioned - £90 to the owners, and £35 between the captain and crew.

Further newspaper reports, including editions of the "Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List", from the early 1900s suggest that the *Taffy* encountered a number of misadventures, sometimes suffering damage as a result.

**WAPPING, Aug. 17.** - The steamer Frederick Snowdon, of Newcastle (coal laden), in swinging off Surrey Commercial Docks, collided with the steamer Taffy, of Runcorn (light), at anchor, doing considerable damage to port side. No damage to other steamer.

**BRISTOL, Sept. 3, 6.30 p.m.**

Taffy, of Runcorn, arrived here, with oilcake, from Hull, reports having collided on Aug. 25, in Hull Harbour, with hopper No. 2, steam on, damaging her. It is not known what damage the Taffy has sustained.

Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List - Monday 19th August 1901

**ALARM AT BLAKENEY**

Shortly after six o'clock on Monday morning flares were observed from the direction of Blakeney Beach. The Blakeney lifeboat crew quickly assembled, and proceeded to the mouth of the harbour, where it was found that the s.s. Taffy, belonging to Messrs. Page & Turner, had dragged her anchors just inside the harbour, and had fouled another vessel at anchor. Matters were quickly righted and the lifeboat proceeded home. The Cley Rocket Brigade were also assembled by the Chief-Boatman Heighton, and proceeded some distance down the Beach before finding that their services would not be required.

Eastern Daily Press - Tuesday 28th November 1905

The 1911 Census shows the *Taffy's* Captain, Loads Thompson, 59, Master Mariner, was living in Edinburgh Place, Kent Square, Great Yarmouth in a property with eight rooms. His first wife, Hannah Ellis née Baker, also of Blakeney, who he married in 1875, had died in 1900 aged 47; he married Gertrude née Pond in 1901.

Robert Rix (Robert Rix and Sons) of High Street, Hull became the *Taffy's* registered owner in 1913 and she was registered to that port. Her final change of ownership was in 1914, to the Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway Company of Albert Street, Cork; her manager was Richard H. Good of the same address and she was registered to that port in 1915.

Shortly after she came into service with new owners, the *Taffy* had several "near misses".

**TAFFY (s) -Newhaven, Feb. 16, 10 3 a.m.**  
Steamer Taffy, from Hull for Southampton, cargo oilcake, put in here yesterday leaky; pumps gave out last night. Tug Alert engaged (to) keep her from filling.

A Llantwit Major telegram says: - The steamer Taffy, from Cork for Newport, with pitwood, went ashore on Colhugh Beach, but refloated and proceeded without assistance.

Lloyd's List - Monday 16th February 1914

Liverpool Journal of Commerce - Saturday 18th March 1916

Newspapers of November 1916 carried news of a severe storm which caused many vessels to be wrecked.

"The Belfast News-Letter" of Monday 20th November 1916 detailed that "Reports from various parts of the British and Irish coasts indicate that terrific storms prevailed during Friday night and Saturday, with consequence of the loss of a number of vessels and many lives".

One of these ships was the *Taffy*. She foundered in November 1916 when about eight miles south offshore of St Govan's, Gower, Glamorganshire while on passage from Cardiff for Cork with a cargo of coal. Her crew of eight men were rescued and were put ashore at Dunmore, east of Cloger Head, Co. Louth.

**CORK COLLIER LOST OFF THE TUSKAR  
CREW RESCUED**

A Wexford telegram states that during the terrific gale a vessel, supposed to be the steam collier Taffy, of Cork, foundered near the Tuskar Rock. Distress signals were observed off the Wexford coast and patrol boats and the lifeboat put out from Rosslare Pier, but before they reached the scene the vessel sank and boats and lifeboats only were picked up. The crew, it is believed, were rescued by a steamer proceeding southwards. A Waterford message says that the captain and crew of eight of the Taffy were landed at Dunmore East.

**Waterford, Saturday**

The captain and crew of the s.s. Taffy of Cork numbering eight were landed at Dunmore today. The vessel foundered off the harbour, and the crew took to the boats. They were subsequently brought to Waterford and taken in charge by Mr Jacob, the local representative of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society.

**SHIPWRECKED CREW AT WATERFORD**

The crew of the steamer Taffy, owned by the Cork, Blackrock, and Passage Railway Company, arrived in Waterford. The master of the vessel (Captain Harvey of Cork) said that they left Cardiff on Thursday, bound to Cork with a cargo of 170 tons of coal. All went well until a gale from S.S.E. sprang up, and they shipped very heavy seas, which flooded the engine room, put out the fires, and choked the pumps. The ship became unmanageable, and they tried to bale her out with buckets, but the water gained on them. They were then halfway down the Bristol Channel, near Milford, and showed signals of distress on Friday night, but got no response, although several vessels passed them. He supposed it was too rough to come near them. On Saturday morning they got their lifeboat into the water, and managed to scramble into it as best they could. They were picked up about an hour afterwards by the City of Bombay, and landed in Dunmore on Saturday afternoon.

The Dublin Daily Express - Tuesday 21st November 1916

Weekly Freeman's Journal - Saturday 25th November 1916

The rescue of the *Taffy's* crew was evidently not without some controversy. Interviewed by journalists after the ship was wrecked, Captain Harvey told of the battle with waves which extinguished the fires, of putting out signals of distress in vain, of the refusal of the Captain of another vessel (the government transport ship *City of Bombay*) to take the *Taffy* in tow, and of getting off the ship in a lifeboat.

**DISTRESS SIGNALS NOT ANSWERED  
Complaint by Captain of Lost Steamer  
(From Our Correspondent)**

**Waterford, Monday**

Captain Harvey, of the steamer Taffy, belonging to the Cork, Blackrock, and Passage Railway Company, which foundered near the Tuskar Rock on Saturday, was interviewed by Press representatives at Waterford. He said - We left Cardiff on Thursday bound for Cork with a cargo of coals. All went well until a gale of wind from the S.S.E. sprang up and we shipped very heavy seas which flooded the engine room, put the fires out and choked the pumps. The ship became unmanageable, and we were at the mercy of the wind and waves. The pumps being unworkable, we tried to bail her out with buckets, but the water gained on us. At this time we were half-ways down the Bristol Channel and nearly opposite to Milford. All through Friday night we showed signals of distress, but we got no response from any vessel, although several passed. They probably did not like to chance coming near us, the weather being bad. On Saturday morning at about 8 o'clock a vessel hove in sight. She turned out to be a Government transport, outward bound. She bore down on us, but the captain refused to take us in tow, as our vessel was settling down at the stern. We got the lifeboat into the water and scrambled into her as best we could, and we were taken up by the transport. About an hour afterwards we were landed.

The Daily Express - Tuesday 21st November 1916

The Captain Harvey referred to was Henry Harvey, born circa 1869 in Cork, and who, the 1901 Census shows, was a Master Mariner, living in Cork. A Crew List for the *Taffy* shows - in the first entry - Henry Harvey, aged 45, as Master of the *Taffy* and the dates of this particular engagement on the ship as from 29th January to 13th May 1916.

PARTICULARS OF ENGAGEMENT.										PARTICULARS OF PROCEEDS.										
Name of										Ship <i>S.S. Taffy</i>										
Serial	Name of Ship	Port	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days
1	<i>H. Harvey</i>	28	1812																	
2	<i>J. Desmond</i>	26	1812																	
3	<i>Thomas Murphy</i>	28	1812																	
4	<i>Patrick McCarthy</i>	28	1812																	
5	<i>J. Linnam</i>	27	1812																	
6	<i>J. Gallagher</i>	25	1812																	
7	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
8	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
9	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
10	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
11	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
12	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
13	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
14	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
15	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
16	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
17	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
18	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
19	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	
20	<i>John Fleming</i>	27	1812																	

Crew List - Taffy - 1916

The official log book for *Taffy*, signed by Captain Henry Harvey, records that in Newport in March 1916 and in Cardiff in April 1916 lifeboats and new boats were put in the water and "all the gear belonging to boats overhauled".

OFFICIAL OF A VESSEL EMPLOYED EXCLUSIVELY		LOG BOOK ON THE COASTS OF THE	
Name of		Ship <i>Taffy</i>	
Date and Place of Occurrence.	Date of Entry.	Date and Place of Occurrence.	Date of Entry.
Newport	20/3/16	put life boats in water & overhauled all gear attached	
Cardiff	24/4/16	put life boats in water & overhauled all gear belonging to boats	

Log Book - Taffy - 1916

The Registry for the *Taffy* was closed in 1916.

## SIR JOHN COLOMB - KETCH - 1896

The *Sir John Colomb* - official number 104081 - was a 42-ton sailing ship, a dandy and former herring drifter built in Yarmouth and registered to that port in 1896. Her Managing Owner until 1909 was Edward A. Baker of The Hollies, Gorleston, Yarmouth.

Sir John Charles Ready Colomb, KCMG (1838-1909), after whom the ketch was named, was a British naval strategist, politician and the author of many publications on Imperial affairs and defence. He was elected to parliament in 1886, subsequently becoming the Member of Parliament for Great Yarmouth from 1895 to 1906



Sir John Colomb of Blakeney - by Patrick Kearney

The "Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List" of Wednesday 18th August 1909 reported the *Sir John Colomb* as a "Casualty", the vessel having stranded off Blakeney in thick fog the previous day. The ship was bought by Page & Turner, who had the vessel winched off Blakeney Point and towed to the harbour where she was repaired.

The ship was unregistered in 1910 but the Mercantile Navy List shows that she was rebuilt at Blakeney as a ketch in that year. In 1911 she was registered to the Port of Blakeney when her Managing Owner was Alfred Edward Turner of Blakeney, the fourth son of Edward Clifford Turner.

**SHIPPING NOTE** - The ketch *Sir John Colomb* sailed on Friday from the Harbour for Hull with a cargo of sand. This vessel was a well-known sailing drifter, built here at a time when Sir John Colomb was the member for Yarmouth. A few months since, in a spell of bad weather, she went ashore near Blakeney. She was sold as she lay for the proverbial old song, it not being thought that she could be sailed, but a local man who bought her succeeded in a very short time in refloating her. Since then a considerable sum has been spent upon her conversion to a coaster, and now she makes a smart little craft, able to carry between 60 and 70 tons, and in this capacity revisited her former home.

Yarmouth Mercury - Saturday 19th August 1911

The "Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List" of Tuesday 27th August 1912 reported that the *Sir John Colomb* was stranded on Brancaster Bar at 6.30 a.m. the previous day but was floated off ten hours later with no damage.

The ship's Crew List shows that William George Bridges of Stiffkey had been Master of the *Sir John Colomb's* since 1915. Her Log Book for the period 8th July to 2nd September 1915 shows her sailing from Sunderland to Blakeney to South Shields to Blakeney and then records, "Vessel laid up from September 2nd 1915".

By 1917 she was registered to Ellis Clifford Turner, the second son of Edward Clifford Turner. The *Sir John Colomb* changed hands the following year, when the Mercantile Navy List shows her Managing Owner in 1918 and 1919 as Ernest Bagley of Boston, Lincolnshire. Bagley's ownership of the ship was short-lived, the Register closed in 1919.

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## NOTE

- Extracts from newspapers reproduced in this research are the Copyright of the British Library Board, © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.
- Place name spellings - e.g. Clay (Cley), Wisbeach (Wisbech) - are as recorded in original documents.

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