

# Queen of the Colonies

A few remarks on the voyage of the *Queen of the Colonies*,  
full rigged ship from London to Brisbane. Queensland during  
the year 1865.

by H. H. C. HURLE

I am writing this account of our voyage, after having lived for over fifty years in the State of Queensland, Australia, mostly from memory, and with the help of a short diary, which I kept during the voyage.

The ship, belonging to the Black Ball fleet of Emigrant Ships, left the East India Docks, London, on Friday the seventh day of July 1865, and anchored off Gravesend until four O'clock on the Morning of the ninth. I joined the Ship on the Evening of the Eighth. Going to Gravesend by train, with my Father & Brother. There were a large number of Emigrants on board. There were not many 1<sup>st</sup> cabin passengers, of whom I was one. We were a very jolly party. Some returning to Australia, and the rest New-Chums like myself. The list of Passengers in the Saloon were: Mr & Mrs Huxtable, a licensed Surveyor, returning to Australia, Mr & Mrs Hughes & Daughter. Mr Hughes an Indian civil engineer, intending to try Australia for his field of labour. Mr & Mrs Drew and Son. Mr Drew, a Chemist, returning to Brisbane, his shop was at the Top of Queens Street. Mrs Lister & Child Mrs Lister, a sister of T. P. Pugh, of Brisbane. Miss Samble, voyaging to Australia to join her Brother on a Sheep Station The Rev<sup>d</sup> Clayton, a recently ordained Clergyman, with his Brother. Both coming to Australia for the first time. The rest were like myself coming to Australia to make or try to make our fortunes. Messrs. Greenfield, Frazer, Harvey. Hurle, The Hon. E. Ellis, Allen, & St. George.<sup>1</sup> Our Captain, Captain Jones, a Welsh-Man a rough diamond, but a thorough seaman. Our Doctor, Dr Underhay, was quite the opposite of the Captain, and therefore an enmity soon sprang up between the Captain & Doctor, which illfeeling spread amongst most of the Passengers, so that the Doctor had not, a very good time, during most of the voyage. An inquiry into the conduct of the Captain & Doctor, was held by the Emigration Department at Brisbane, the result of which I never heard.<sup>2</sup> But I believe the Captain was exonerated.\* I have now introduced some of my fellow Passengers, as I knew them, So that we will proceed on our voyage. The ship was taken in charge of a steam tug, which took us a long way down the English Channel, and it was evening before the Pilot-Boat left us, by which we sent letters ashore. All sail was now set, but the Wind was contrary, and blowing very hard. My first experience of a rough sea. Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> Heavy rain during the night, In the Morning, a fair wind, sighted the Channel Islands, and Portland Isle, Passed the Lizard point, during the Night, when we saw the Edystone light house. Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> raining nearly all day, with a strong South West wind, so the ship made no head-way. The 14<sup>th</sup> was a fine, warm day, but by evening the wind freshened up, and blew hard all night, and by the 15<sup>th</sup> we were out of the English Channel, & in the North Atlantic, The wind still ahead, and a good deal of rain. To day was witnessed one of the most touching and mournful sights to be seen. A corps committed to the deep. A child had died during the night. The 16<sup>th</sup>. The first Sunday at Sea where Sunday & Monday are much the same. Any-how in spite of rain the Doctor conducted the Church of England Church service, the Rev<sup>d</sup> Clayton being too sea-sick to do so. By Monday 17<sup>th</sup> the weather was fine again, the wind also becoming fair for our

course. The Mizzen top-sail yard was carried away this evening, the wind blowing very hard A great commotion on deck. Sails ropes, pully. blocks etc dashing about in all direction, and the women, screaming, the night was very squally. A proposition was made to establish a weekly paper on board, all those who wished could write something, The proposition fell through, no body taking the lead, and so nobody was interested Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> The first real bit of excitement was caused by our sighting two large ships, which we soon over took, and passed. Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> The wind still fair, a new yard-arm was placed in position, and all sail set again, Saw one of the most beautiful sights, to be seen at sea, really a very bright rain-bow, but what a sailor calls a sun-dog. The 20<sup>th</sup> was a dull, uneventful, day, nothing to do but smoke and talk. By Friday 21<sup>st</sup> The day time, was getting much warmer, the sea was alive with flying-fish. Porpoises, Dolphins Etc Able to play quoits on deck to-day. Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> was a very warm day. Music & dancing on deck in the Evening. A fair wind all day, but not high, just enough to keep the ship steady. Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> The second Sunday at Sea. Service was read by the Rev<sup>d</sup> Clayton, who had got over his sea sickness. During the Service a small craft, Now in sight, and before the Church Service was over came along side of us, putting a stop to any more Church for the day. The ship was the Lucetta of Glasgow, home-ward bound.

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Getting along in first rate stile, as the wind was in our favour, in fact we had got into the trade winds. Sighted two ships to day An attempt was made to allow the steerage passengers to come on the poop deck, during our meal time, but the saloon passengers at once said No, not on any account. If they had been allowed on our part of the ship, only once, it would have ment for always. It was the Doctors idea, so on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> a quarrel started between the Doctor, & Captain, which had been brewing for some time. It took place in the Saloon and most of the Passengers took the Captain's part, for a few minutes things were very lively, but at last the Doctor retired to his own cabin. On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> no excitement whatever, but on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> we reached to Tropic of Cancer. The weather was very warm, with very little wind. The Doctor started another quarrel with the Saloon passengers this time. He lost his temper, and it was thought necessary to put him in Irons,<sup>3</sup> which really was only a threat, however he was sent to Coventry for the rest of the voyage, which ment that he kept to his own Cabin, and the Passengers took no further notice of him. I must here state that the Doctor, had nothing whatever to do with the Saloon Passengers. But had full power over the Emigrants. Friday 28<sup>th</sup> was a warm day, and very nearly a dead calm. Another corps was committed to the deep. A child. The 29<sup>th</sup> a change in weather, fresh and cool all day. Paid my footing, with a bottle of Rum, for being caught on the Ship's riggin by one of the sailors. Music, singing & dancing in the Evening. Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> a dreadfully hot day. All denominations held Church Services. Monday 31<sup>st</sup> Fair but light wind, sighted three ships, all homeward bound and so more excitement.

Tuesday. August 1<sup>st</sup> A dead calm until the Evening, when a good breeze sprang up. Another child was buried in the afternoon.

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> there was a fresh but head wind, so we made very little headway. A good deal of tacking about had to be done, watching which, helped to pass the time. or it would have been a dull day.

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> There was a very heavy squall with a good deal of rain in the Evening which caused some excitement Friday

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\*In introducing my fellow Passengers I omitted to mention Mr Edwin Norris, a lawyer returning to Brisbane. & Mr Carmichal, a chemist from Scotland.

4<sup>th</sup> was what may be called a very dirty day. Heavy squalls at times and a good deal of rain. Many fish following the Ship. Played a game of whist in Evening to pass the time away.

Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> was marked by being just one month since the Crew had been hired for the voyage, and had received a months pay in advance, so that they had worked off the dead horse, as the saying is, amongst sailors so to commemorate the day, the sailors had made up an effigy of a horse, which was hauled to the Main yard arm, and then let drop into the Sea. That is what is so often referred to, as burying the dead horse. There was more dancing and singing on deck, in the evening, or I may say by Moon light.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Wind against us all day so the Captain not in the best of tempers. Sighted five ships. Morning service, & Rev<sup>d</sup> Clayton preached a sermon, I should say the first time he had ever preached. He was dreadfully nervous, and nobody seemed to understand what he was preaching about, every body was dreadfully wicked, he must have taken his Brother's character, as the basis of his discourse.

On Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> The wind was a little more in our favour. Sighted two ships one came along side of us to have a talk, which we could only do, by means of Flags, it was a Spaniard, bound from Barcelona to Monte-Video.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> A favourable wind so we made good head-way. Passed quite close to the St Peter, and St Paul rocks standing up in mid-ocean. At 12 O'Clock mid-night, we crossed the Equator, when a message, supposed to come from Neptune, was circulated on board, that he would hold his court the next day. For an hour or so the sailors had a good time. Blue lights were set alight on the Main-yard arm. and a tar-barrel in full blaze was sent over board. It was 2 a.m. before quiet on ship board was restored. Sighted one ship to-day.

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> One of the most eventful days of the voyage. The Morning was fine, and a fair wind, so the Captain was in a good humour. At 4 P.M. Neptune came on board, The whole affair was splendidly got up And one of the sailors dressed up, made a splendid Neptune, who was drawn along the deck on a truck, by his four Bears, to the first saloon door, where he was met by the Captain and other Officers of the ship. After he had made his speech, and given us a hearty welcome into his Kingdom, he was given a good stiff glass of Rum, no doubt to prevent him from catching cold. Grog was also sent forward to all the other members of the Crew, a collection having been made in the morning on their behalf. The time honored custom of shaving all those who had not crossed the line before, was the next item on the program. The Captain gave his consent, so long as no body was forced, for really, the custom was then illegal. Anyhow I got shaved, and had good fun over it, although it cost me a bottle of grog. It is no use my giving a description of what Shaving means on board a ship, Captain Mariette has give a description of it in detail, better than I could.<sup>4</sup>

The 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Passed over without any excitement. The wind was fair what there was of it, and the weather fine & warm, so every body was comfortable.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Weather fine. Sighted an other ship, early in morning, and came up along side of it about 9 a.m. An American ship bound to St Francisco. Church service on deck in morning, also a sermon, to which I think very few listened.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> Not far from land, saw a great number of Birds, and two fishing boats, only coulored men in each. Bought fish off them, did a good deal of tacking about to day, as the wind was very changeable.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> was a wet morning, but soon cleared. We were now in shallow water, 19 fathoms. Got all available fishing lines out, but only three fish were caught, of the snapper species, also a small species of Albitross was taken by hook & line, and brought on deck. The beak was long, with a great expansion of wing.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> Heavy rain the fore part of the day, fine in afternoon. No excitement to day, even the Doctor was quiet.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> All the luggage was brought on deck, so that all the passengers could get out more clothing. Just when all the boxes were open and mostly un-packed, a very heavy squall came up, which struck the ship, and all luggage had to be sent below again with all haste. It blew very hard for the rest of afternoon and night.

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> Much calmer weather, but the wind was contrary. Getting much colder.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> A day never to be forgotten. A dead calm all day so the ships boats were all lowered into the sea. and races were rowed around the ship. When the races were all over, one of the boats, in which there were five or six or us, myself being one of the number, left the side of the ship, and rowed ourselves away for about a half mile, and then had a good bath in the sea. I shall never forget the feeling of swimming in deep water. The sea was without a ripple, although there was a very heavy ground swell Mountains high. When we got back to the ship, feeling like heroes, The Captain was in a towering rage, with us, for leaving the side of the ship and all boats were at once ordered up again. If a breeze had sprung up, whilst we were away bathing, the ship would have gone on, and left us behind, at least the Captain said so.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Service as usual, when three children were Christened. No wind again to day, and shark were seen about the ship the first we had seen.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> A good fair breeze all day. Another child was buried, no wonder there were sharks about.<sup>5</sup> A dirty night. rain & high wind.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Blowing fresh, so we did good travelling. Weather getting much colder.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Still a good breeze. no rain. A great number of birds following us. Cape pigeons, Cape hens, and Albitrosses. Some of the passengers were beginning to raffle their effects, no doubt money was getting short with them, or they wanted to have a good booze before getting to land.

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> A contrary and very high wind, the first time we had seen, and had to travel over a very rough sea

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Wind not so high, and more favourable. An Auction sale on deck passengers selling a quantity of useless articles to one another. Cold sent us to bed early.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> A dead calm this Morning. But later on the wind got up a fine evening and night, so no body went to bed early. Singing, telling yarns etc. A song called the Queen of the Colonies Doctor was sang for the first time.<sup>6</sup> It was composed by one of the passengers.

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> A strong and fair wind with a good deal of rain. No service to day, the sea was too rough.

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> Very cold this Morning, being a fine sunny day, the sea looked very grand. Two children buried in evening.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Very cold, and squally, more like a winters day in England. We are now off the Cape of Good Hope. Caught the South West trade winds, which will most likely take us to the Australian coast Very few on deck, wind too high and cold.

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> Wind against us, another child died. very cold.

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> a calm morning, and later on a dead calm. Boat practice in afternoon. and boat racing round the ship. A few Cape pigeons were caught, a pretty bird, The first we had seen.

Friday, September 1<sup>st</sup> Passed the day catching Cape Pigeons, wind against us so had to sail quite off our course.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Not getting on too well Had to tack about several times, as we were going too much off our course. Sailing all day under furled Royals, and reefed topsails. Caught two large Albitrosses, but both got away, they must have measured about 14ft, from tip to tip of wings. Cards in Evening.

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Church Service at four O'Clock in afternoon, The Morning was too rough and squally, & heavy rain also brought the Church Service to a sudden end.



Monday 4<sup>th</sup>. Sighted a ship in Morning. Wind very high, and the ship rolled a great deal, More so than it had ever done before. Impossible to keep plates and dishes, on the dinner table, rather good fun, on the whole. Saw a lunar rain bow in evening

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> Able to keep on our right course. Another Auction sale, when the Doctor sent word, that Auction sales, were not legal, Nobody took any notice of him, but any how he had done his duty. A wet night.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>. Heavy squalls during the day.

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> Sighted a ship this Morning another cause for excitement. Rifle shooting during the day, Guns were also brought out to have shots at the birds, of which there were some hundreds. One Lady challenged the Captain the knock over the most birds, but when the time came, she backed out of it.

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Dreadfully cold, but a strong fair wind, carried us along about 14 knots an hour. A little snow towards evening.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> Still very cold, but with little or no wind. A good deal of snow. Whist in Evening .

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Too cold to have Church Service on deck, so it took place down below, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class saloon. More snow to day.

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> Passed during Sunday Night the Crozet Islands, and during the day a great many more Islands, all covered with snow, we are now in the track of the Whale boats, one of which we saw, leaving a small bay at one of the Islands. All the Islands seemed to be very rocky, with high perpendicular cliffs. Passed through a shoal of Grampies, Rifles were brought up, but the fish soon disappeared, So sooner than not have a shot at all, a target was made, at a mark on one of the sails. The Hon Ellis, was the best shot.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> A horrible dirty day with cold wind and rain, and it blew hard all night.

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> Rolling about a good deal, for the sea was rough. Not far from Kergullan's Land but too far North to see it

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> A beautiful fine day, with a bright clear winter sky, and a fare wind, but too cold to be pleasant.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Blowing a gale of wind, so we ran, with only our topsails set, but by the evening there was nearly a calm.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Wind from the South West, so not so cold.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> A gentle wind all day. No service to day on deck too cold, with a good deal of snow and rain, and blowing hard all night.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> The roughest day we have had, Three sails were carried away, and many seas broke over the ship and many cabins got flooded, but luckely Mine escaped.

Tuesday 19, Quite an uneventful day, Much rain, so that we all remained below.

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> A rough day Many seas breaking over the ship.

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> A fine day, wind Not so high, and so the sea had fallen a good deal, before the Evening.

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Ran along very well indeed all day a stiff breeze blowing. In the longitude of Cape Leuwin, although many miles to the south of it. Cape Leeuwin, is the South West Point of Australia so we begin to look for land again.

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Plenty of wind. Sighted a ship in morning, which we passed, about mid-day. High sea all night ship rolling a great deal.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> A north wind, with rain. no church service on deck. The Captain informed us, that he intended to take the ship to the south of Tasmania.

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> Not much wind. Weather much warmer. Birds which had kept with the ship, all the way from the Cape of Good Hope are now beginning to leave us.

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> A very high wind, had a sail carried away. Much rain. No sun all day, so not able to take our latitude, or longitude.

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> A good deal of rain in morning, ending up with a very heavy thunder storm in afternoon. Sighted the east coast of Tasmania. Cape Pigeons still numerous.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> Not much wind, but fair, so we were able to make a good deal of Nothing, may be in Moreton Bay by the middle of next week.

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> Quite a different climate. The ship's Cow died, so had to be pitched over board. Many fish following the ship.

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> Weather fine, but a head wind. Many birds about, amongst them a very large species of Albitross also saw several Boobies. A most peculiar bird, long neck, large wings and very small body.

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October. Light and contary winds. Church Service.

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> By the evening a fair wind so we made good head way. It then came on to blow very hard, and at last a gale, but it did not last long enough to do any damage

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> We are now off the Australian East coast. The birds have all left the ship. A meeting to propose giving the Captain a present for his kindness during the Voyage.

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> Nearly a calm not very pleasant, when all are so anxious to arrive at Brisbane. The evenings and Son-sets are now very grand, such colous as one never sees in England. Only a hundred Miles from Moreton Bay.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Still a calm all day but by the Evening a nice breaze sprang up. Sum land to-day, very tantilizing had to remain were we where.

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> In Morton Bay at last. All day the wind had been contrary. A little speechifing in Evening, when a vote of thanks was returned for the Captain "and a present made to him" for his goodness to all the Passengers. The Pilot came on board, between four & five. P.M. It was on the 5<sup>th</sup> October that we first sighted the Moreton Island light house. which caused more excitement than any. thing else did, during the Voyage. All hands, "I mean the Passengers" crowded the decks to see it, except all the Single Girls, who, by the Doctors orders, were locked up below in their Cabin which I must state, was directly under the Saloon Cabin, through which a large glass sky-light and ventilator passed. From the poop deck, one could look down on the anxious faces, locked up below, but it was not long before we pined a block,<sup>7</sup> and rope and so had all the Girls on deck, to enjoy the exciting seen of looking at a light house. No-body went to Bed early that Night. On the 6<sup>th</sup> we sailed to the Anchorage with a light and fair wind, and between nine & ten o'clock P.M. the Anchor was let go, the Sails furled, and the good Ship, The Queen of the Colonies was at last still. There was one instance during the Voyage which was most amusing, and which I think is worth recording. At the beginning of this diary I made mention only slightly of our Ship's Doctor. All through the Voyage he was Most unsociable, and did all he could, "one would think" to make himself disliked. I Must explain that the ship, a full rigged one, had what is called a house on deck, so that all the first saloon port holes, opened on to a broad gang-way, which was accessible to the Single Girls for their promenade, when they were allowed on deck. The Doctor had made himself very objectionable to all the Girls, and two of them, were determined to have their revenge. Now, One hot afternoon the Doctor was fast asleep, with his head, close to his port-hole, when the two Girls saw him. Here was a chance too good to be missed. They procured a cup full of treacle, which they poured over his head and face. The Doctor awoke, rushed on deck in a great fright, not knowing what had happened & appealing for protection. The sight of him was most laughable. The whole voyage from England to Australia was a most enjoyable one. A good ship. Nice people, as fellow passengers, and for a sailing ship, a quick passage. After remaining two days before we were allowed to leave the Ship, we all went up the Brisbane River to Brisbane. The capital of the new Colony of Queensland.

## NOTES

The story which precedes these explanatory notes relates to a voyage undertaken in 1865 by Henry Hartley Charles Hurle on the ship *Queen of the Colonies*. The writer, in later years, was a well-known figure in Charters Towers. He wrote a small book of reminiscences in 1914, and in 1963 his son, Mr R. E. Hurle, who still lives in Charters Towers, presented the Oxley Memorial Library with a copy of that book.<sup>8</sup> Henry Hartley Charles Hurle took over Windsor Station, on the range dividing the waters of the Campaspe and Broughton Rivers near Charters Towers, in 1884. Under the Crown Lands Act, 1884, the lease held by Hurle was for a consolidated holding of 46 square miles, for which he paid an annual rental of £41.0.0 (at the rate of £1 a square mile on the "available" area of 41 square miles). He sold out in 1914 to Patrick Maurice Costello of Charters Towers.<sup>9</sup> Amongst other records presented by Mr R. E. Hurle relating to his father and the Hurle brothers were the station diaries of Windsor, covering the years 1885 to 1888.

The Reminiscences published in this edition of *Queensland Heritage* are in manuscript form in the possession of Mr R. E. Hurle, who kindly made them available to the Editor for copying. The spelling, as reproduced, is H. H. C. Hurle's own, and we have tried to reproduce it in the same form as the original.

The *Queen of the Colonies* was a famous ship in the annals of Queensland migration. She was a full-rigged ship of the Black Ball line, estimated to displace 1346 tons. On her most memorable voyage to Australia, in 1863, she lost sight of her life boat, with thirteen people on board, after entering Moreton Bay, and many still on the ship must have abandoned all hope of seeing next-of-kin on the boat ever again. It came about this way. On reaching the entrance to Moreton Bay at Cape Moreton on 6 April 1863, the pilot boarded the vessel as usual. A few hours later, a woman passenger, Mrs Barnsfield or Barnfield, died. It was not permissible for her to be buried at sea, for the vessel was too close to land; furthermore, her widowed husband wanted the body to be interred on land.

Permission was thus obtained from the Captain for the burial to take place on Moreton Island, near the lighthouse. The first mate, the fourth officer, four sailors; the widowed Barnfield, a cabin passenger named Hill, and five other passengers went in the life boat, along with the coffin, and Hill read a burial service on Moreton Island. They set off back to the ship in their boat, but before long a severe squall struck them. Despite all efforts to row towards the ship, the boat was carried away from its goal. It was then just about dusk. The sailors rowed for all they were worth throughout the night, but, though they occasionally saw the ship's lights, they could not reach her. Next morning the *Queen of the Colonies* was still visible from the boat, but they could not even hold their ground. By 4.00 p.m. they decided to let the boat run before the wind, so that they could make the beach near Caloundra. They reached the shore in safety, and pulled the boat up the beach after them. There they remained for thirteen days and fourteen nights, living on shell fish and fresh water. They found the wreck of the *Everton*, with which they built a rough shelter.

They made one attempt to launch the boat again, on about 14 April, but the high waves were being carried in so fiercely that the small craft overturned and Barnfield, whose wife's burial had caused all the trouble in the first place, was never seen again. The others managed to struggle back to the shore.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile Inspector McDonald of the Water Police set out in the steamer *Brisbane*, for of course the ship had long since come into the River and the alarm had been given. The Inspector could bring the steamer no closer than six miles to the shore, so provisioned a boat and with several other men made for Bribie Island. They beached their boat with difficulty, and explored the Island thoroughly. They then proceeded by boat to the mainland. There after leaving the majority of his men to recuperate

(the crossing having so fatigued them) McDonald proceeded with one man along the coast, until at last he reached the distraught party from the *Queen of the Colonies*. They were taken by boat to the steamer, and then back to Brisbane. Three of the party had, a few days earlier, set out for civilization by a land route, and they were met by a party proceeding overland. At Caloundra to-day the "Queen of the Colonies Parade" and a memorial exist to recall this strange adventure.<sup>11</sup>

It was more than two years later that the voyage recalled by H. H. C. Hurle took place. The *Queen of the Colonies* sailed from Gravesend on 9 July 1865, and took her final departure from Lizard Point on 15 July. She came by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and had 552 passengers on board on her arrival — twenty-eight cabin passengers, twenty second cabin, six intermediate and 498 steerage. The ship arrived at Brisbane on 7 Oct 1865.<sup>12</sup>

Even the newspaper accounts of the arrival bear reference to the unpopularity of the surgeon, Dr Underhay. The *Courier* speaks of the high esteem in which Henry Jones, the master, was held, and to the complimentary address that was published in that paper by the passengers.

Unfortunately, we cannot apply the same remark to Dr. Underhay, for, by the address referred to, he seems to have made himself very obnoxious to the majority of the passengers.<sup>13</sup>

The "address" referred to did not pull any punches as far as the doctor was concerned. It says:—

The insolent, overbearing demeanor, and general neglect of duty of the Doctor have been to us a source of much annoyance and discomfort.<sup>14</sup>

The voyage out, as H. H. C. Hurle indicates, had been nothing but a long series of disputes between the surgeon and the master. Such disagreements were, indeed, rather the rule than the exception for immigrant vessels coming to Queensland at the time. Whatever the cause of friction between these two functionaries, it is safe to predict that one would certainly accuse the other with having permitted, or possibly even taken part in, immoral conduct. Our Victorian ancestors were, of course, so preoccupied with thoughts about sex that the word "immoral" could refer only to sexual matters. For good measure, the possibility was usually hinted at that some poor, innocent and honest working girls had been seduced.

True to what was almost a nautical tradition, the surgeon superintendent on the 1865 voyage of the *Queen of the Colonies*, Dr S. F. Underhay, accused the master, Captain Henry Jones, of misconduct on three counts:—

1. Drunkenness
2. Indecent language to women — and undue familiarity with single females
3. Giving, or allowing to be sold, wine and spirits to the steerage passengers.

The Captain made counter-charges on the first and third of these headings against the surgeon. The Immigration Agent, A. C. Kembell, was himself in some trouble over the affair, for, acting on his own authority and without, apparently, consulting the Colonial Secretary, he sought to convene a meeting of the Immigration Board of which he was Chairman in order to investigate the charges which Underhay had brought against the Master. The Colonial Secretary apparently rebuked Kembell for acting without proper authority. On 10 Oct 1865 the Immigration Agent addressed an indignant letter to R. G. W. Herbert, Colonial Secretary, in which he stated:

As Immigration Agent of this Colony and Chairman of the Immigration Board, I claim the unquestionable privilege of summoning the members of the Board, whenever I see the necessity of doing so; and such privilege, I beg to remark, has never till now been questioned. If upon any known occasion, when in possession of grounds justifying an Enquiry, I have neglected to convene a Meeting, or if, in



any single instance, I have convened one unnecessarily, or, when convened, have been found incompetent to conduct the cases brought before the Board, I shall be ready to admit the justice of depriving me of the responsibility of exercising such functions. But permit me, with all possible deference, to point out to you that, to deprive me of a privilege attached to my position, as recognised in every like one in all the other British Colonies, would detract seriously from the utility of my office. On the present occasion the Surgeon of the "Queen of the Colonies" addressed a letter to me embracing serious charges against the Captain and Officers of that vessel, and I should consider myself most unfitted for the office I hold, if, with the experience I have had, I flinched from at once deciding whether matters of such importance, and so intimately connected with this Department required investigation, or otherwise.

Irrespective of all these considerations which I have presumed to advance, I would submit that the XIX Clause of the Immigration Act of 1864, clothes me with authority to convene the Immigration Board, when I deem it necessary to do so.

In reply to this outburst, Herbert delivered a lesson in responsible government to Kemball. He noted on the letter:

The Immigration Agent like all other permanent Civil Servants is under a ministerial head and must obey his instruction on all points. The Minister is responsible to the Parliament and not to the Immigration Agent, if he gives instructions contrary to the terms of the Act.

Then, almost as if he were making an aside to the Under Secretary, he said, "It was very improper of Dr Kemball to return the answer he did to an instruction of this nature."<sup>15</sup>

The Surgeon, however, proved himself to be the most intransigent of the participants in this drama. He was unwilling to meet any of the demands made upon him. He had a violent disagreement with Dr Purdie, the Health Officer.<sup>16</sup> He refused to deliver to the Collector of Customs a list of the passengers on board the vessel.<sup>17</sup> He refused to supply the Registrar General with a list of births and deaths on board.<sup>18</sup> In both of these matters he was made to co-operate, of course, but he did so most unwillingly. He also refused to give his certificate to the claims of the schoolmaster, the passengers' cook and the ship's baker for gratuities. As these men were living in impoverished circumstances, it was cruelty indeed on Underhay's part to refuse to certify to the payment of these amounts. Underhay's excuse was that these people might be implicated in the charges he was bringing against the master and crew. When a Board of Inquiry did finally meet to consider these charges and other matters, the Under Secretary was annoyed to discover that nothing whatever in Underhay's evidence had the slightest connexion with the conduct of these persons. The Under Secretary ordered:

Write to Dr Underhay and request him to state on what grounds he persists in refusing to certify to claims that do not appear in the slightest degree affected by the evidence taken by the Board.<sup>19</sup>

The gratuities were then paid. Henry Jones, the master, suggested a more sinister reason for Underhay's refusal to sign. Jones wrote:

The whole of the witnesses called by Dr Underhay were men appointed by himself as Constables, who were dependent upon his giving them a certificate of efficiency & good conduct whether they obtained their gratuity or not; and in each case the certificate was withheld until after the enquiry was over.<sup>20</sup>

The minutes of the enquiry are no longer available, but Kemball's report, dated 27 Oct 1865, is held in the Colonial Secretary's in-letters in the Queensland State Archives.<sup>21</sup> In this he makes it clear that Underhay had unquestionably failed

to substantiate the general charges preferred against the master of the vessel. On the other hand, Kemball could not credit that the ship had been "a pattern of good discipline and morality", or that Captain Jones had taken an active interest in suppressing the irregularities complained of and which were undoubtedly practised (so Kemball concludes) among a certain class of passengers.

The Captain, moreover, had been guilty of showing a certain amount of jealousy of the surgeon's authority, and he did threaten to put Dr Underhay in irons. Furthermore, said Kemball:

I hold the Captain censurable for not having suppressed the series of petty and degrading insults which Dr. Underhay appears to have been subjected to, throughout the voyage — obscene songs in derision of him having also been permitted . . .<sup>22</sup>

Dr Underhay himself comes in for some quite intense criticism in the report. He is described as having had "a haughty bearing against any opposition" and "a morbid sensitiveness exposing him to imaginary offences — and a too stringent notice of his professional dignity".

The findings of the Board were simply that Dr Underhay was a person who was "remarkably unfitted for the position he was placed in". There was no corresponding general condemnation of Henry Jones. Robert Herbert, as Colonial Secretary, decided that Underhay could receive his gratuity, but that he should never again be employed as a surgeon superintendent of an immigrant ship. As for Henry Jones and the first mate, Herbert decided that they should receive only one half of the gratuities to which they would otherwise be entitled. On being told of this decision, Jones was incensed. On 4 Nov 1865 he wrote to the Colonial Secretary, in protest. He remarked:

It may not be out of place to say here that I have already made two voyages to this colony, and am gratified to know that in each case I have won the esteem of my passengers — On my first visit here I was publicly presented with a gold chronometer, at the School of Arts, and this time with a purse of sovereigns.

He went on to say that Dr Underhay had been unable to bring forward any evidence whatever to support the surgeon's charges against him, whereas he (Jones) had several highly respectable witnesses to testify against the doctor. To his credit, Jones also brought to the Colonial Secretary's notice the disservice that was being done to the Chief Mate, whose conduct had never been called into question, yet who was to receive only half his gratuity.

In reply, Herbert refused to re-open the case. On 4 December 1865 Jones wrote again. He respectfully brought to Herbert's attention the fact that the Board had consisted of one member only

And that member from what motive I know not by his manner and remarks evidently determined to substantiate a charge against me. Yet the evidence even under these unfavourable circumstances will be found to convey a very different impression. I am thus bold seeing that owing to this decision several praiseworthy persons to whom a few pounds is a great consideration have been mulcted of their hard earned gratuities and on my own account after exerting myself to the best of my ability and the satisfaction of all my passengers I find myself censured by the Queensland Govt for not co-operating with and maintaining the authority of a Surgeon Superintendent which the same Govt declares to be incompetent.

The Colonial Secretary could hardly fail to see the justice of Jones's cause. Herbert referred the matter to the Executive Council, noting the fact that "Since the former decision, further information has been given that the Master did his best to carry out his duties, & it is recommended that his gratuity be paid [in full]." This decision was approved. Jones earns our further esteem by showing, however, that his real concern was for his

subordinate officers, as well as for himself. On 18 Jan 1866 he wrote to thank the Colonial Secretary for the decision, and asked if his officers, too, could get their full gratuity. He was told that all gratuities should be paid in full.

#### REFERENCES

1. A full passenger list for this voyage of the *Queen of the Colonies* is available at the Commonwealth Archives Office, Cannon Hill, Brisbane. The Queensland State Archives has a copy on microfilm reel RGP 547.
2. See notes which follow the transcript of H. H. C. Hurle's "Remarks". He was basically correct in his impression that Henry Jones, the ship's master, had been exonerated.
3. There is a reference to this threat in A. C. Kemball's report as Chairman of the Immigration Board to the Colonial Secretary. See notes.
4. Presumably in one of the books written by Captain Fred Marryat of *Mr Midshipman Easy* fame.
5. There were seven deaths altogether during the voyage, all of the deceased being children.
6. The fact that this song was sung is confirmed in A. C. Kemball's report referred to elsewhere.
7. Presumably "Pinned a block", which would mean thrusting a pin through a block whereby a sort of block and tackle was rigged up to hoist the girls on to the deck.
8. H. H. C. Hurle, *Reminiscences of colonial life in Queensland*. Bristol, J. Baker & Son, 1914.
9. Q.S.A. LAN/N 109, p. 109.
10. Minutes of an enquiry by the Marine Board of Queensland, held on 30 Apr and 14 May 1863. Q.S.A. MBQ/D 1.
11. *Brisbane Courier* 21 Apr 1863, p. 2, col. 6.
12. *Brisbane Courier* 9 Oct 1865. The newspaper gives the number of cabin passengers as 28, but lists only 27. Oddly enough, the one who is not listed is H. H. C. Hurle.
13. *Brisbane Courier* 9 Oct 1865.
14. *ibid.*
15. Kemball to Col. Sec. 10 Oct 1865, Q.S.A. COL/A 71 In-letter 2658 of 1865.
16. Kemball to Under Secretary 27 Oct 1865. Q.S.A. COL/A 75 In-letter 2867 of 1865 filed with 176 of 1866.
17. Collector of Customs to Col. Sec. 11 Oct 1865. Q.S.A. COL/A 71 In-letter 2662 of 1865 filed with 2699 of 1865.
18. Deputy-Registrar-General to Col. Sec. 12 Oct 1865. Q.S.A. COL/A 71 In-letter 2691 of 1865 filed with 2698 of 1865.
19. Q.S.A. COL/A 73 In-letter 3268 of 1865, and attached letters and minutes thereon.
20. Henry Jones to Col. Sec. 4 Nov 1865. Q.S.A. COL/A 75 In-letter 2938 of 1865 filed with 176 of 1866.
21. In-letter 176 of 1866, *loc. cit.* The rest of these notes are based upon this letter, and attached correspondence.
22. There is a reference in H. H. C. Hurle's "Remarks" to these songs, or one of them.