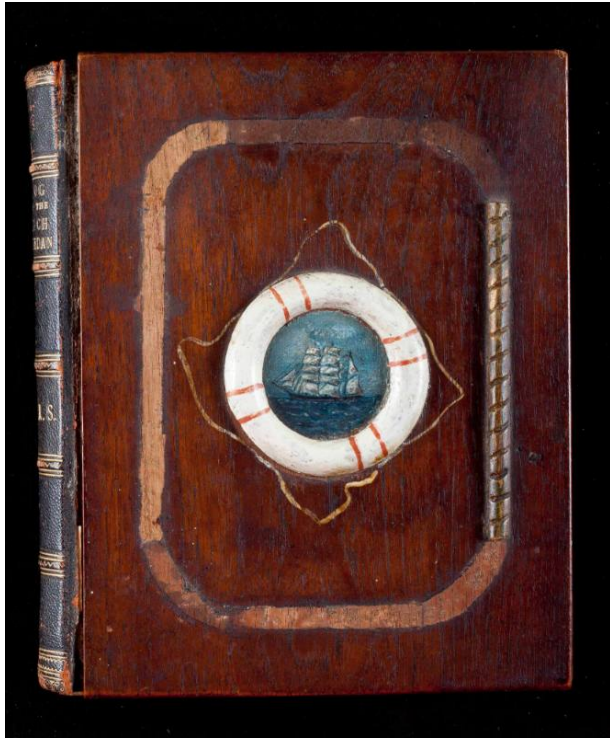


Basic Detail Report



00054262

Title

LOCH BREDAN ship's journal of Chief Officer Robert Robertson Smythe

Date

1902

Primary Maker

Robert Robertson Smythe

Medium

ink on paper, timber cover

Dimensions

Overall: 237 x 200 x 27 mm

Name

Journal

History

The LOCH BREDAN was a steel-hulled three-masted barque of 950 tons, built in 1882 at the shipyard of Dobie & Company at Govan, on the south bank of the River Clyde in Glasgow, Scotland, for owners D & J Sproat and Company of Liverpool who owned and operated a fleet of ships under the name Loch Line, all named after lochs in the southwest of Scotland. (Although based in Liverpool, the well-known Sproat family of shipowners were natives of Kirkcudbright, in Kirkcudbrightshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland.) The LOCH BREDAN was designed as an ocean-going cargo ship and entered the Australia and New Zealand service in 1883, when it sailed from Glasgow for Sydney on its maiden voyage and, after discharging general cargo, proceeded to Lyttelton where it loaded wool and wheat for England. Sydney Morning Herald Monday 31 March reported a fire on LOCH BREDAN at Cowper Wharf Woolloomooloo. A fire had started in the stores in the aft of the ship, it was largely extinguished by Captain Williams and crew with bucket and hose when the metropolitan fire Brigade arrived. The ship had arrived from Tamatave in ballast on 31 January and was wharfside when it caught fire. 'A good save' was reported. In late May 1902 the vessel, loaded with wool and general cargo, was forced to return to port nearly a month after leaving Sydney on its return journey to Liverpool, having run into such severe weather that three lifeboats were smashed and the ship's galley stove in. The Register 26 May 1902 reported that water had found its way into the general cargo. Following repairs LOCH BREDAN left Sydney again on 25 July 1902 under command of Captain Thomas Williams and Chief Officer R Smythe and arrived in Liverpool on 24 November 1902, after a long voyage of 123 days (via Cape Horn), having encountered substantial delay due to severe weather conditions in the South Pacific and Atlantic. This was the voyage recorded in the journal log by the Chief

Officer. It sailed again from Liverpool on 18 February 1903 under command of Captain Thomas Williams, was delayed by unfavourable weather and finally sailed from Holyhead, Wales on 6 March 1903, arriving in Adelaide on 20 June 1903. Again it was a lengthy voyage of 123 days from Liverpool, and there were grave fears for its safety at the time, as the vessel appeared around two weeks overdue. The former Chief Officer and author of the journal, Smythe had signed off after arriving in Liverpool in November 1902, intending to stay ashore for good. The voyage recorded in this journal was to be the LOCH BREDAN's last homebound voyage, as, following its subsequent return to Australia in 1903, the vessel was lost without trace en route from Australia to South Africa sometime in November 1903. All on board were lost including Captain and Mrs Williams and several crew mentioned in Chief Officer Smythe's logbook/journal, which makes this last record all the more poignant. After visiting Sydney, Auckland and Lyttelton LOCH BREDAN sailed again from Adelaide on 1 September 1903 for Liverpool (via South Africa). It was never heard from again and no scrap of wreckage was ever found. The crew on that fatal last voyage consisted of: Thomas Williams (master), J.M.Scott (first mate), G.Howell (second mate), J.A.Gibbons (carpenter), C.L.Williams (sailmaker), W.Williams (cook and steward), A.Gaerkens, H.Skinner, D.Friel, T.Williams, T.T.Gunn, J.L.James, G.Hartfield, L.J.Monaghan, C.Burns, S.Thomas (boy). The captain's wife (Mrs Williams) was also on the articles as stewardess, and their two-year old daughter Betty was with them. Four men: N.M.McKenzie, F.Bucknall, R. Leppar, C.Nelson had joined the vessel at Port Adelaide. The author Robert Robertson Smythe (variously spelt with 'e' on journal but no 'e' on certificates Robert Robertson Smyth (no "e") is listed as was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1873. When he was granted a Certificate of Competency as First Mate of a foreign-going ship on 1 November 1899, he was living at 62 Elderslie Street Glasgow, an address where he he had been living for some years. Documents show that he lost the tin box which held his Certificates, Discharges and Testimonials in Lane Cove, Sydney Harbour in March 1899. He was Cautioned for desertion from the FERNFIELD in January 1901. His career in the merchant marine was as follows: • as apprentice on SUSSEX from September 1888 to May 1893 • as Second mate on ABERFOYLE from August 1893 to October 1894 • as Second mate on KILMALLIE from December 1894 to December 1895 • as First mate on the ORTHES from March 1896 to February 1897 • as First mate on the OAKBANK from Glasgow • as First mate on OAKBANK from May 1897 to June 1898 - from New York to Java • as Third mate in FERNFIELD from New York to Sydney arrived 17 September 1898 • desertion from the FERNFIELD (105704) in Sydney on 21 March 1899 • as Able Seaman (AB) on the SS CUZCO which sailed from Sydney to London from 31 August 1899 to 19 October 1899. • October reported papers lost in Lane Cover River in Glasgow, replacement papers issued. • as Second Mate on the HOUNSLOW which arrived in Sydney on 3 September 1901 from The Bluff • as Chief Officer on LOCH BREDAN which left Sydney on 25 July 1902 and arrived in Liverpool, England on 24 November 1902 via Cape Horn. • RR Smyth signed off after arriving in Liverpool at the conclusion of the LOCH BREDAN voyage