

Basic Detail Report

ANMS1351[027]

Title

Investigation into the sinking of the motor ship GUERNSEY COAST, and loss of one life on the sheamship CATCHER after a collision

Date

1965

Medium

Paper

Dimensions

Overall: 331 x 217 mm

Name

Court report

History

Burnham Walker Dun 1905-1992 began his apprenticeship with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company in 1921 when he was just short of his 16th birthday. After four years in the coastal ships of AUSN he gained his Second Mate's certificate in Sydney and joined the Eastern & Australian Steamship Company (E&A) as Fourth Officer on the TANDA. He served 43 years with this Company sailing to ports between Australia and eastern Asia, retiring in 1967. He gained his Master's Certificate in 1929, at the age of 24. In 1942, when he was Chief Officer on the NANKIN, the ship was captured by the German raider THOR. He spent the rest of the war with the surviving crew labouring in Japanese POW camps. He returned to Australia in poor health and spent years trying to get compensation. Although he was an Australian resident employed by an Australian company (managing agents Macdonald Hamilton) the ship was British owned and registered, and he obtained only limited compensation. He went back to sea with E&A in 1946, had his first permanent command in 1947 on the second NANKIN, and served in the company's ships EASTERN, NELLORE, ARAFURA and ARAMAC until he retired. During this time he carried cargo regularly to Japan, where he established friendly relationships with his former captors. During his career he made a number of rescues at sea and survived several severe typhoons. On retirement, he became a Nautical Assessor and took part in marine Courts of Enquiry, including the enquiry into the collapse of the Tasman Bridge, caused by the cargo ship LAKE ILLAWARRA striking one of the bridge's piers. E & A Line actually consisted of four successive companies bearing the same name, Eastern and Australian Steam Ship Company, between 1873 and the early 1980s. It was established to serve routes between Australasia and 'Far Eastern' ports - Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan, and was originally named Eastern & Australian Mail Steam Company Limited. It only ever had a small fleet of ships but those it had, such as the NELLORE and the NANKIN, were well known. Ownership of E&A Line was involved in other companies in the 20th century, notably the AUSN Company, and from 1946 P&O. Through its history E & A Lines carried cargo and

passengers, and was involved in trooping and supply in World War I. In World War II its entire fleet of three of its ships was lost. In the post-war period it operated cargo-passenger ships until 1975 when passenger service was given up and the ships were progressively sold, though in 1983 it continued to staff and operate AJCL containerships. The Eastern & Australian Steamship Company