



We are now back in the 1850's. Victoria is Queen, Britain really rules the waves. London is now pretty well the largest world port with the miles of docks, quays and creeks on the River Thames all busy. Shipping is the nation's lifeblood and the only way to travel abroad or obtain goods. The English Channel is virtually a marine motorway with a constant stream of shipping arriving from all parts of the Empire and other nations.

The last part of the journey to London has significant problems. Most shipping is still using sail propulsion and the only steamships are paddle-steamers (mainly used for tugs). The southern part of the Channel has some early hazards with the tidal flow and "overfalls" by a central mudbank.... and then the notorious Goodwin Sands have to be negotiated. Even after this there are still the normal hazards of a wide river estuary (the Thames) with winding channels between mudbanks.

To ensure the safety into London, pilots and boatmen had, for many years, offered service to the incoming and outgoing ships. The origin of the Cinque Ports Pilots is uncertain, but by the early years of the 16th century they were a highly organised body, probably descended from the Shipmen's Guilds of the Middle Ages. Cinque Port Pilots were in two groups, Dover and Deal. The organisation responsible was the Fellowship of the Court of Lodemanage of the Cinque Ports, with the authority of the Lord Warden.

Entry to the Fellowship was strictly controlled and the pilots were examined searchingly as to their ability. Under a Decree of 1568 it was ordered:-

"Euery yeere there shalbe iijj of thelder

masteres and x of the younger maisters at the appointment of the auncient maisters shall in some crayor or bote convenient search the channelles between the South Forland and the West end of the Norwe for the atteynement of knowledge and to certify to the companyes of the alteracons of the markes and channells and the auncient masters shall levy vpon euery of theose companyes towards these charges according to there discretions"

Under rules devised in 1550, the pilots were divided into three classes. Later this was reduced to two classes, an "Upper book" and a "Lower book". Pilots of the Upper book were able to take full charge of vessels over 60 tons (big in the late 16th century). By the 19th Century the rules changed and "Upper Book" pilots could take vessels over 14 feet draught. These men were the most senior. It is said that, by observing (and tasting!) a sample of the sea bottom from a greased sounding-lead, they could tell their locality even in a thick fog! A colour chart in Dover Museum shows the "Dover Pilots Progression", a list of seniority and a picture of their individual flags. In the first line are a Henry Pascall and a James Pascall - and also a Thomas Mackie. Pascall pilots date back to the 1560's.

Pilots were usually stationed in a Pilot Cutter situated some miles off Dungeness. If you look at the small copy of the engraving in the "Illustrated London News Sept 19th 1885" you will see a typical Pilot Cutter - this one is the "Vigilant" built in Wivenhoe 1879. It will be very similar to the cutters in 1850 (the "Argus" and the "Countess of Liverpool"). It is interesting to note the high degree of accuracy of the

Cinque Ports. ARTHUR DUKE OF WELLINGTON, LORD WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS, CONSTABLE of DOVER CASTLE, KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, and FIELD MARSIAL OF HER MAJESTY'S FORCES, &c. &c. &c. and ROBERT HENRY JENKINSON, Esquire, LIEUTENANT of the said CASTLE, and DEPUTY WARDEN of the said CINQUE PORTS.

To all Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Bailiffs, Constables, Head-Boroughs, and all other Her Majesty's Officers whom it shall or may concern, greeting.

Whereas there hath been time out of mind, and now is, a SOCIETY or FELLOWSHIP of PILOTS of the TRINITY HOUSE, of *Dover, Deal, and the Isle of Thanet*, who have had the Pilotage and Loodnage of all Ships from the said Places, up the *Rivers Thames and Medway*, which said Society or Fellowship have been confirmed by various Acts of Parliament for regulating the Pilots of *Dover, Deal*, and the *Isle of Thanet*, commonly called CINQUE PORTS PILOTS. And Whereas the said LORD WARDEN and CONSTABLE, or his LIEUTENANT, have always heretofore been empowered to appoint the Pilots or Loodmen of such Society, and to make Bye Laws and Regulations for their better government. And Whereas the powers of the said LORD WARDEN and CONSTABLE, and his LIEUTENANT, have lately been confirmed, and confirmed by an Act of Parliament, made and passed in the Sixth year of the Reign of his late Majesty King GEORGE THE FOURTH, intituled "An Act for the amendment of the Law respecting Pilots and Pilots; and also for the better preservation of Floating Lights, Buoys, and Beacons." And Whereas

has been examined, and found fit and competent and duly skilled to act as a Pilot, for the purpose of conducting Ships and Vessels sailing, navigating, and passing within the limits hereinafter mentioned. And Know or that by virtue of these Presents the said *John Knob* is hereby admitted, appointed and licensed to act as a Pilot, for the purpose of conducting Ships and Vessels sailing, navigating, and passing from or by *Dunwich*, up the *River Thames*, as far as the *White Landing-places at the several Channells, Creeks, and Tows, Quay, and up the River Medway*, as far as the West End of *Stanhate Creek*, and all and every the several Channells, Creeks, and Docks of the said Rivers; and from the South End of the *Beak*, to the Westward as far as the West End of the *Owers*, and into and out of *Ramsgate, Dover, Sandgate, and Margate Harbours*, and also upon the Coasts of *Flanders and Holland*; and so to continue so long as he shall be found capable of well executing the same, and shall duly conform himself to all the Bye Laws, Rules, and Orders, of the COURT of Loodnage of the said CINQUE PORTS, or until this Licence shall be annulled, suspended, or adjudged to be forfeited, by the LORD WARDEN and CONSTABLE of *Dover Castle*, or his LIEUTENANT for the time being. And the said Pilot is to reside as

That are therefore to will and require you not to intert, or in any wise molest or hinder the said Pilot in the execution and discharge of his said Seevier and Duty.

Given at DOVER CASTLE, under my Hand and Seal of Office there, the _____ day of _____ One Thousand Eight Hundred and _____

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAID PILOT.

Age	Years		
Height	Feet	Inches	
Complexion			
Hair			
Marks			

A copy of Thomas Pile Mackie's licence

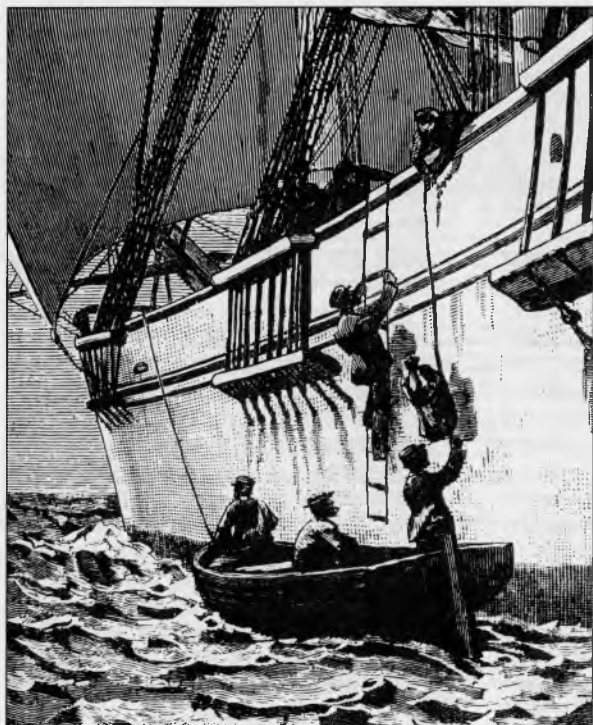
engraving with regard to the setting of the sails on the Cutter. The tiny storm jib is pulled in hard, the next jibsheet is backed the other way and the mainsail is heavily reefed to a small size and with the forward end brailed up. In this condition the Cutter is, in modern terms, in 'neutral', holding head-to-wind and to the seas. The Pilot has to be taken in a small rowing boat to his customer. There are no lifejackets, no 600hp diesels and they had no radio - but it should be noted that although these Cutters had a rough life, their design and sea-keeping qualities were centuries old and well proven. None (I believe) was lost in storms - they had to stay on-station with about ten or so Pilots on board until relieved.

The Pilots were licensed as to their capabilities. I suppose that James's licence was lost with him - but there is reference to the licence of Thomas Pile Mackie. James's wife was Sarah Mackie and it is possible

that Thomas was her brother. The Pilots were a fairly close community, of course.

If you examine Thomas's licence, with its delightful first sentence "Whereas there has been time out of mind, and now is," you will see that it closely defines the duties and areas whereby the Pilot can work. The small additions to the left hand side reads "The said Thomas Pile Mackie was on the eighteenth day of January 1850 examined and found fit and capable and approved and authorised and allowed and entitled to take charge of any ships or vefels of any draft of water" signed M.Pain Registrar.

The description of the Pilot reads: Age 26, Height 5'9" Light complexion, brown hair, scar over left eye. To the right of this, the wording reads: "Be it remembered that on the sixteenth day of October 1843 the said Thomas Pile Mackie was removed to Dover in the Rooms of Edward Forvles (2) superannuated".



The Pilot and his baggage

Let's go now to February 1850. James Pascall would have been ready for his next duties, which would be taking a large ship into the Thames and ensuring its safe arrival at London Docks.

James Oliphant Pascall was born on the 3rd July 1808 to Henry Pascall and Elizabeth. He was baptised at St Mary the Virgin, Dover, on the 24th July 1808; father Henry Pascall was a Cinque Ports Pilot.

In 1833 James married Jane Sarah Mackie, daughter of another pilot (as I have said, they were a close bunch and the second Christian names of many of the family were those of the same calling). In due course, a son, Mackie Pascall was born 4th November 1833 and a daughter, Louisa Jane Pascall, was born on the 25th October 1838.

Returning now to 1850 we have James, age now 42, a fully qualified Pilot and

Freeman of Dover, saying farewell to his wife and children and travelling to the Pilot Cutter for his stint of duty. On the night of the 4th February he was put aboard the ship "Sarah", and welcomed aboard by Captain Bridges. James was to take the "Sarah" past the Goodwin Sands, pick up a tug near Margate and from there to the Docks.

The 'Dover Telegraph', 16th Feb 1850 pp5 col 1/2, subsection "Margate" records events thus: 'Since 11 o'clock on Sunday night another violent gale from the W.S.W. has visited London and its suburbs, and, up to 10 o'clock on Monday night, continued with alarming force. The wind gauge at Lloyds fully illustrated its fury, the pressure on the face attached to the apparatus on the summit of the Royal Exchange being, in the course of Monday evening, no less than from 12 lbs to 13 lbs, sufficient to excite no

ordinary uneasiness for the safety of the shipping. As previously reported, many fatal wrecks happened even in the vicinity of the entrance to the river during the recent hurricane. We have now to add a more calamitous event, viz. the wreck of a fine West Indiaman, and it is feared, the loss of all on board of her. On Tuesday, the "Sarah" (Bridges, master), bound from Jamaica for London, made the Margate-roads, and in the course of the forenoon, was taken in tow by the Trinity steam-tug.

As the day advanced, the gale sprung up with a destructive fury unfortunately too well known. The ship and the tug laboured sorely, and between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when running through the Prince's Channel, the towing hawser snapped asunder, and the ship got adrift. The tug immediately brought up, in the hope that the weather might moderate.

The wind, however, continued to increase until it blew a perfect hurricane, and about midnight the steamer was driven from her anchorage, lost cable and anchor, and was compelled to run for safety. The "Sarah" was then lost sight of, and from the tempestuous weather that prevailed during the following 24 hours, and the fact that nothing has been seen of her, although she was right in the track of vessels trading to and fro from the river, coupled with the circumstances that a quantity of West India produce has been picked up in the vicinity of where she went adrift, as also pieces of wreck apparently of the same class of vessel, there is little doubt that she perished, with all hands. Several casks of rum have been seen floating about, and Mr Cullum, the Master of the General Steam Navigation Company's ship "Soho", reports having passed part of the wreck of a ship; a quantity of cocoa-nuts, and pimento casks, about a dozen miles to the eastward of the North Foreland, and consequently almost in the very place that the "Sarah" is suspected to have been lost. Whether this wreck belonged to the "Sarah" or not, however, it is evident that a large ship was lost in the neighbourhood. At present the number of the crew has not been ascertained, nor whether there were any passengers on board.

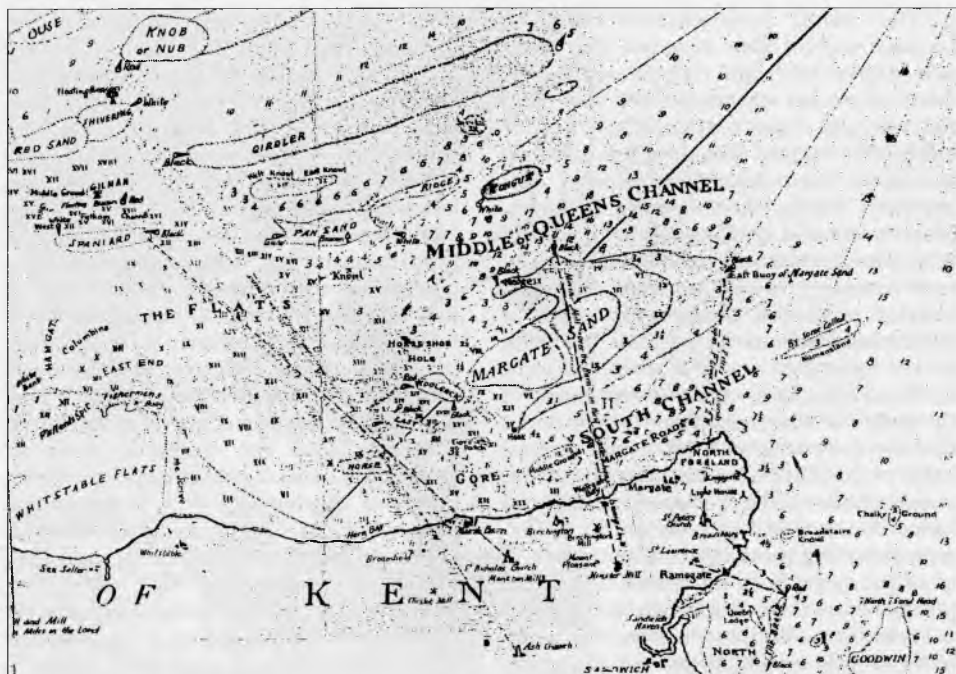
Dover Telegraph 16th February 1850 pp8 col 2: 'Disasters of the last gale: Since Sunday evening we have been visited by another gale from the W.S.W. As previously reported, many fatal wrecks have occurred in the vicinity of the river, and some nearer our own Port, during the hurricane of last week. To the lamentable catalogue, we regret to observe that we have to add the total wreck of a fine West Indiaman, and, it is feared, the loss of all on board, including our respected fellow townsman, Mr James O. Pascall, Cinque Ports Pilot, who was shipped from the Pilot Cutter off Dungeness on Monday night. The ship of which Mr Pascall took charge was named the "Sarah" (Captain Bridges), and bound from Jamaica for London, with a cargo of

rum, pimento, &c. Early on Tuesday the ill-fated vessel made the Margate Roads, and in the course of the forenoon was taken in tow by the Trinity steam tug. The Ship was repeatedly observed from the shore during the morning, from the "Globe" of Tuesday last, we extracted the following particulars:

{n.b. a rewrite of the first item PP} (cont'd) Confirmatory of the apprehensions entertained with respect to the "Sarah", we may also observe, that on Sunday, the "Blue Eyed Maid", fishing smack, of Dover, came into our Harbour with nine puncheons of rum and 40 bags of pimento, which had been picked up at sea between the North Foreland, and the Galloper; that at Ramsgate 2 casks of rum, a bag of pimento, pieces of the bulwark of a vessel of the tonnage of the "Sarah", and a quantity of cocoa-nuts, were washed ashore; and that 91 bags of pimento, and two Chinese umbrellas had been taken into Calais harbour, having been picked up by a French boat at a distance of about 10 miles from Dover.

The schooner "Thora", which arrived in Dover harbour yesterday morning, reports that when about 18 miles from the North Foreland, she passed the hull of a large vessel, copper bottomed, and turned upwards; and that a quantity of casks and spices were floating around the wreck. Little doubt can exist but that this is the hull of the ill-fated ship'

Information from Mrs Barbara Jones, (Archivist, Lloyds Register of Shipping):- According to Richard and Bridget Larn's book "Shipwreck index around the British Isles", the "Sarah" was wrecked on Tongue Sand in the River Thames at location 51.28N 01.16E. She was bound from Jamaica to London carrying rum, bags of pimento and general cargo. The Larn's report states "28th February 1850- towards the end of this week several casks of rum, bags of pimento and other articles were picked at sea off the North Foreland, supposed to be from this barque, a West Indiaman, lost in the late gales on Tongue Sand, she was in tow of a steamtug when



she broke away. She was in charge of a Cinque Port Pilot, James Oliphant Pascall, who was lost with the Captain and crew”.

Although James was in charge of the ship, the probable conditions at the time of the towage failure would have been that the ship was under bare masts. We can but imagine the frantic efforts to raise some sail and bring the ship head to wind before the fatal broaching and capsizing. It would be interesting to find the report of why the tug “sought shelter” and left her tow without taking off the crew. The reports differ in some respects as to what happened when the tow failed.

We can also imagine that sad little household in Dover. It also gets worse, for Jane Sarah herself died two years later (4th September 1852) aged only 45. There were now two orphans, Mackie and Louisa Jane.

In 1853, an aunt of the children, Ann Pile Canney, (nee Mackie) kindly took them to Australia, where they landed at Port Fairy, which is between Melbourne

and Adelaide. I have not yet found out what happened to Louisa, but Mackie married, had eight children, left his wife and died in the wilds of Collie, West Australia in 1920, where they have his place of birth recorded as Yorkshire! Cause of death, senility, age about 92... not a bad guess as he would have been 87. The descendants of Mackie are now widespread in Australia.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

The map will give a general idea of the area off the North East coast of Kent (it is a 1780 map and some channels were re-named later).

Pictures are from the Illustrated London News, September 19th, 1885

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Mackie Licence: “Flash”, Trinity House 1986 Yearbook & Mrs J. Waldron

Pascall data: Jack Pascall (Dover) & Peter Pascall (NZ)