

STEAMBOAT BILL

NUMBER 148

WINTER, 1978



Journal of The Steamship Historical Society of America

STEAMBOAT BILL

Founded in 1940 at Flushing, N.Y. by Jay Allen ©ISSN 0039-0844

STEAMBOAT BILL is issued quarterly as a cooperative effort of the Steamship Historical Society of America, Inc., to promote the activities of marine historians in the field of self-propelled vessels. Material for possible publication is always welcomed, and should be sent to the editor in chief at the address shown below. No remuneration can be made for such material, and no responsibility for it is accepted, although every effort will be made for its safe handling. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Society; the burden for accuracy rests with contributors.

Subscription to STEAMBOAT BILL is by membership in the Steamship Historical Society of America, Inc., with dues starting at ten dollars per year (see inside back cover). Single copies of this issue may be purchased by non-members for \$3.50 Each.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the editor, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in a magazine, newspaper or broadcast.

Peter T. Eisele

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
74 Chatham Street

Chatham, N.J. 07928

George Kelly

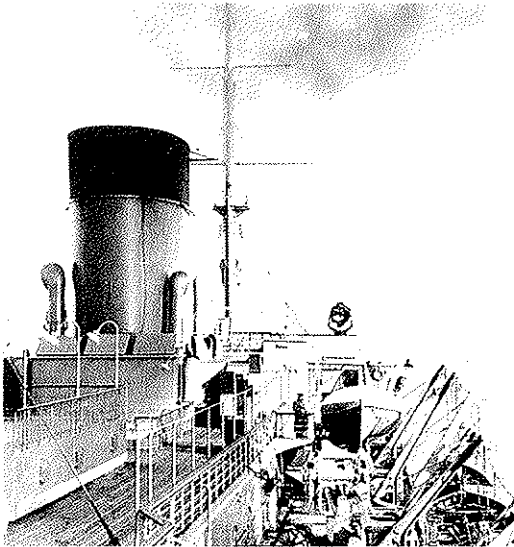
ADVERTISING MANAGER
101 President Road

Westwood, N.J. 07675

Number 148

Winter, 1978

Vol. XXXV, No. 4



COLUMBUS (see p. 203 f.) - S. Ashdown.

PILOT HOUSE

A special salute and a happy New Year to Captain Bill Benson, Capt. John Blank, Frank Clapp, Harry Cotterell, Skip Gillham, Doris Green, Bill Ewen, Jr., Geoffrey Hamer, Edward Hultz, Frank Manwell, Conrad Milster, Jack Shaum, Jerry Sutphin and Bill Tantum.

All the above share in one generally thankless task -- they serve as regional or column editors for this journal. Without their able assistance, there would be no Steamboat Bill.

Each gives unselfishly of his or her time, preparing a regional column faithfully four times each year. Although columns may vary in length, each takes special care in preparation and requires the gathering of both facts and photographs. As limits are placed on what may be submitted, each must go through the painful task of editing out that which can be "lived without". Then comes the agony of waiting for the column to appear and the sometimes annoyance of finding out that the editor-in-chief has either rearranged things or added the very story you planned to feature in your next column.

Thanks to each of you for your continuing good reporting and support.

I am certain that the regional editors in turn would like to thank those faithful correspondents who add so much by sending in news items and photographs. Any attempt to list these loyal contributors here would run the risk of leaving out someone very important to our overall endeavor. Check picture captions and credits at the end of columns and you'll find the names of many who add so much and make all our jobs so much easier.

A special wish for a speedy recovery to our advertising manager George Kelly. George spent some time in "drydock" this fall and will undergo additional "repairs" early in the new year. His efforts in securing advertising are evident and require many hours of his time. Get well soon, George, we need you, as we do everyone else in our crew. - Editor

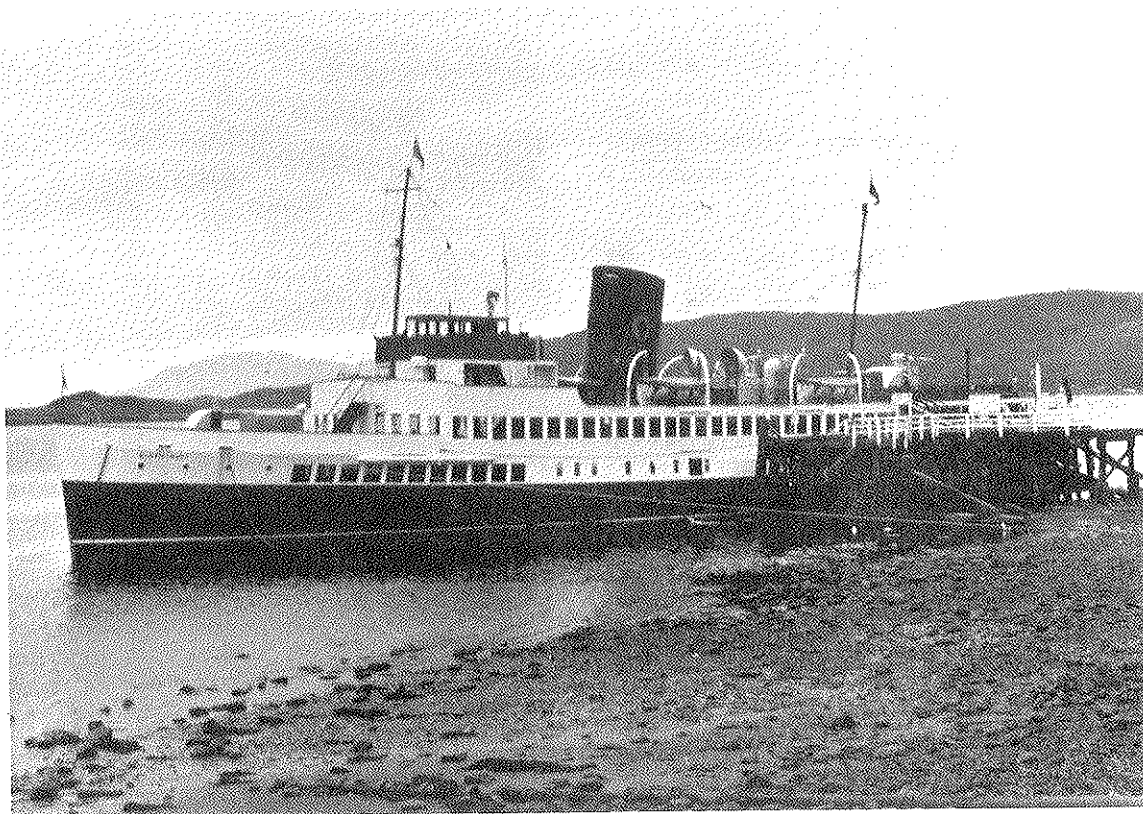
MANIFEST

PILOT HOUSE-----202 FEATURES

- Godspeed, Safe Return, And a Merry Christmas-----203
- Sea Bus-----213
- The "Mountain Climbing" Steamboat DAN RIVER QUEEN-----217
- The Durable Paddlewheel-----219
- A Guide to Cruise Ships-----223
- A Queen on the Clyde-----228
- 1909 Steamboat Picture Album-----231

REGIONAL NEWS

- Overseas, p. 236; High Seas, p. 238; New England & Eastern Canada, p. 241; New York, p. 243; Delaware River, p. 245; Chesapeake Bay & South, p. 245; Florida-Georgia Focus, p. 248; Gulf Coast & Beyond, p. 248; West Coast, p. 249; Inland Rivers, p. 252; Duluth to Niagara, p. 254; Niagara to the Sea, p. 254; 25 Years Ago, p. 257; Chapter Notes, p. 257; Reviews, p. 258.
- HEARD ON THE FANTAIL-----260



A QUEEN ON THE CLYDE

By Shawn J. Dake

For the past forty-five years, an excursion steamer with a very famous name has cruised the waters of the river Clyde in western Scotland. She occupies a spot in history and represents the style of an era, which like so many others in passenger shipping, may soon be coming to an end. The ship is the original QUEEN MARY. While there have been numerous books and articles written about the great Cunard liner of the same name, this small ship too possesses a fascinating history, although most people are probably unaware that she existed at all. But to the people of Glasgow and the other towns along the river Clyde, she is important and affectionately respected in much the same manner as the three larger "Queen" liners which many of them helped to build.

QUEEN MARY began her career in 1933, with her maiden voyage down the Clyde from Glasgow Bridge Wharf. Her owners, Williamson-Buchanan, had intended from the start that she would be their flagship and serve as a consort for the older KING GEORGE V of 1926. The new ship was the peak of Clyde steamer design. She was built by the shipyard of William Denny and Brothers of Dumbarton and launched Mar. 30, 1933. She proved to be an immediate success on the Glasgow run, leaving that port daily at 10 A.M. Schedules would vary depending on the day of week but usually would include calls at Dunoon, Rothesay,

Largs as well as three or four other ports along the river. Passage could be booked for the entire excursion or as a ferry service between any two ports. On weekends she would sail down the firth of Clyde as far as Brodick on the Isle of Arran.

The year 1935, was to bring the most significant event in the ship's long career. The previous fall, the new Cunard-White Star liner, No. 534, had been launched from John Brown's Shipyard at Clydebank. The ship had been named QUEEN MARY. The problem being faced was that both ships were to be of British registry. Cunard chairman, Sir Percy Bates, contacted E.W. MacFarlane of Williamson-Buchanan to request a name change for the smaller steamer. The request was initially denied on the grounds that it would have an adverse effect on passenger business and competition by changing the name of its newest ship, then only two years old. Cunard continued to apply increasing pressure and an agreement was finally reached. On Apr. 10, 1935, Williamson-Buchanan Steamers, Ltd., formally applied to have the name of their ship changed to QUEEN MARY II. She retained that name until May, 1976, when the Roman numerals were finally dropped and she regained her original name. On the forward wall of

QUEEN MARY in photo by author.

the observation lounge is a brass plaque expressing the Cunard Line's thanks for this formality being carried out. Directly above it is another plaque commemorating the return of the original name.

The outbreak of World War II brought an end to the first phase of her career. On Sept. 5, 1939, QUEEN MARY II made her last public sailing out of Glasgow for the duration of the war. She was employed down river as a ferry between Gourrock and Dunoon. Her hull was painted a wartime grey.

In 1943, the ship was purchased by the Caledonian Steam Packet Company. Ownership had been transferred to them briefly in 1935, but she had been returned to her original owners the following year. This time the change would be permanent and the white and black funnels were repainted yellow and black. In mid 1946, she resumed peacetime service on the Glasgow run.

So far, all of the changes discussed have been limited to name and ownership. But in coming years, the ship was to go through several physical changes. The most drastic of these occurred during the winter of 1956-57, when she was being refitted at the shipyard of Barclay, Curle & Company. As originally built the ship had two funnels. These were replaced by a single large modern funnel. This altered her exterior appearance greatly, but surprisingly the new funnel was of excellent proportion to the rest of the ship and did nothing to detract from the original beauty. At the same time a decision was made to convert the ship from coal to oil burning. A new water-tube type boiler was fitted which was about half the size and weight of the old one. Oil storage tanks were installed in the remaining space. QUEEN MARY is powered by three-direct drive-steam turbines, turning her triple screws. Effective S.H.P. is 3,800 to produce a cruising speed of 19.7 knots.

The alterations accomplished in the shipyard increased the gross tonnage to 1,014 tons from the original 870 tons. She became the first Clyde steamer over 1,000 tons. One other major exterior change had happened a few years earlier when an aft mast was added. With a few minor exceptions, this was the profile she would maintain for the remainder of her career.

In 1950, all steamers on the Clyde became one class ships. The passenger capacity of QUEEN MARY II was reduced from her original two class complement of 2,086, to the present 1,820. The arrangement of class structure was rather unusual at the time she was built, with the first class accommodation being placed forward and the equivalent of tourist class positioned aft. The engine room completely cut off access between the bow and stern on the main deck. Even today the only passageway through this deck is the gentlemen's toilet on the starboard side.

QUEEN MARY's overall length is 263.4 feet with a beam of 37 feet. For a ship of her size, she is very well laid out both in the number and quality of her public rooms. The interior is rich in beautiful old wood panelling. From the

outset, she had been designed strictly as a pleasure steamer. Unlike other ships on the river, no space has ever been allocated for cars.

The Upper deck extends almost to the stern. This large open deck provides plenty of space to relax in the fresh air on those rare days when the weather permits. Usually, it is more likely you will find a few people leaning against the funnel absorbing the warmth it gives out. The four lifeboats are arranged along either side of this deck. Three companionways descend to the Promenade deck. This entire deck is glass enclosed except at the stern, providing shelter from the frequent rains that occur in this area. Midship is a small gift shop and the pursers office which doubles as a ticket booth. A large observation lounge is located forward on the Promenade deck. Unfortunately this room has lost much of the atmosphere it must once have had since the overstuffed sofas and chairs have been replaced with row after row of theater style seats. Going down the grand staircase from the lounge one arrives on Main deck outside the dining room. This room features beautiful mahogany panelling throughout with mirrors on the forward wall and large windows on either side. Aft on this deck is the Firth Lounge, probably the most pleasant room on the ship. A variety of drinks are served at the bar at reasonable prices. Just outside the entrance to the Firth Lounge is the officers' quarters. Two more public rooms are located on the Lower deck, one deck below, but they are no longer used unless demand is sufficient. The lovely Queen's Restaurant is forward underneath the present dining room. Aft is the former Tourist class bar. All of the rooms give a feeling of space which is unusual even on ships many times her size.

QUEEN MARY II continued on her normal service daily throughout the 1960's. The only noteworthy event was her collision with the Donaldson Atlantic liner LAURENTIA in 1961. QUEEN MARY II sustained damage to her bows and the dining room had to be repaired due to leaks in the Main deck. The larger ship was not affected at all.

A final change in ownership took place in 1973, when the Caledonian Steam Packet Company merged with David MacBrayne Ltd. The funnel was painted red with a black band at the top and a yellow circle enclosing a lion; the colors of the new Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd. Today this company maintains a virtual monopoly of public transportation in western Scotland. QUEEN MARY is no longer the largest ship on the river, that distinction going to her running mate, and probable successor, the car ferry GLEN SANNOX. That vessel went into service in 1957, and is of 1,107 gross tons.

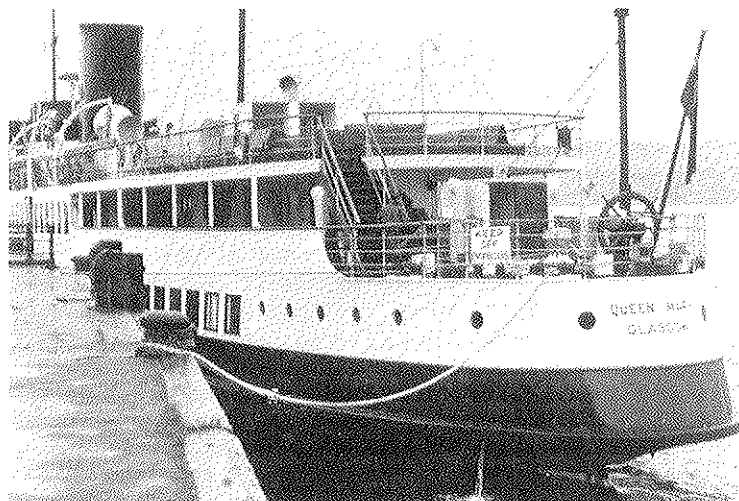
This author feels fortunate to have been able to sail aboard QUEEN MARY last summer. In 1977, she was sailing down river from Gourrock instead of Glasgow. Connections by train were arranged to meet the ship. The railroad runs along the Clyde, past shipyards where the greatest passenger liners of history were built. Today the yards are building tankers, so large that they

have to be assembled in sections. QUEEN MARY has seen many changes and gone through many herself. At the present time her future is uncertain. Her crew was optimistic about service continuing through at least one more season. But she rarely carries more than 200 passengers on any given cruise and from an economic standpoint her future looks dim. QUEEN MARY is the last turbine steamer on the Clyde. It has been said much too often, but her passing will mark the end of an era. Whatever the future holds, it can truly be said that she enjoyed a brilliant career, and holds a place in history and in the hearts and memories of the people along the Clyde, and all those who have sailed in her.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Since this feature was written, QUEEN MARY has been withdrawn from service, her place being taken in 1978 by GLEN SANNOX. Caledonian-MacBrayne's put QUEEN MARY on the market with an asking price of approximately \$100,000. The City of Glasgow has expressed interest in acquiring her for use as a floating museum. One abortive attempt was made by a Glasgow councillor to convert her into a floating "doss-house" for 150 homeless men.

A "Friends of the QUEEN MARY" has been formed and interested readers may write to M.W. Magnay, 16 Hyndland Road, Glasgow, Scotland for further details.



(Left) View of sheltered portion of QUEEN MARY's deck. (Right) Stern view of steamer QUEEN MARY - photos by author.

MONTAUK in East River on June 22, 1909 - Photo by William T. Miller.

