

the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley where it attracted a lot of interest from the visitors. Alongside was a notice giving an account of the remarkable voyage the boat had made. The present location of this lifeboat is unknown but if it is still in existence perhaps the Colonial Office could give some information as I think they were responsible for the boat's getting to Wembley.

The *Glan Colquhoun* eventually arrived at Calcutta four months overdue. The cyclone was only one of many incidents that happened on the voyage out from the UK. The arrival of the *Colquhoun* was eagerly awaited as Calcutta had been without whisky for several months. In our cargo we did have a small consignment which could only relieve the situation a little. The shortage of Scotch in Calcutta continued for quite four years.

I would like to take this opportunity of sending greetings to my shipmates on the *Glan Colquhoun* on that memorable voyage, and of wishing CLANSMAN continued success.

ARTHUR J. HOGG,
100 Henderland Road,
Bearsden,
Glasgow.

Footnote: Continued inquiries by CLANSMAN have traced no significant relic of the Rodrigues boat, which ended its days on the South Coast. Nor have we been able to trace the name of the vessel sunk while returning the other boat to Mauritius. Anyone know about the Norwegian vessel mentioned by Capt. Hogg?

Rescue of three from crippled trimaran

This letter was written by Enid Wilkinson, wife of second engineer G. M. Wilkinson, describing the rescue of three men from the trimaran *Foam Light* by B&C's *Hector Heron* off the Australian coast.

Sir,

After leaving Sydney on May 24, heading for Brisbane, the *Hector Heron* picked up an SOS Mayday call to search for three men who were in trouble after running into gales near Coffs Harbour, Western Australia, while heading for a six months holiday on the Great Barrier Reef.

At about 9 a.m. the chief engineer saw a flare and informed the bridge, who immediately turned and started to circle the crippled trimaran *Foam Light*, which had the mast and one hull broken. This caused great excitement aboard, with everyone available rushing for cameras. By this time a large air-sea rescue plane had joined in the action.

As we got nearer two men were visible in the trimaran and another in a rubber dinghy.

After two attempts at getting a line across, our crew finally succeeded in getting two men aboard *Hector Heron*. But the third man was exhausted and our second officer had to go down into the dinghy to help him aboard. Quite a few saw the funny side of it, as when the second officer was swimming toward the dinghy, secured to a life line,



■ Last sight of the badly damaged trimaran *Foam Light*, from which three men were rescued by the crew of the *Hector Heron*, off South Solitary Island on May 24. Picture: Enid Wilkinson.

the *Hector Heron* rose up on the swell and left the poor fellow swimming in mid air.

Every effort was made to save the men's dinghy and other possessions but unfortunately it was washed away in the swell.

By evening the rescued looked much better after having a hot shower, a change of clothing and a few rums.

When we got into Brisbane the television cameras and reporters were waiting, so in the evening everyone crowded into the bar to see the *Hector Heron* on television and re-live the day's events.

ENID WILKINSON,
15 Flowers Close,
Hamble, Hants.

Footnote: The search and rescue took place on May 25 in poor weather with winds of Force 5 to 6 and heavy rain, as Capt. C. R. Kelso stated in his report when *Hector Heron* reached Townsville. G. Chadwick was the second officer who gamely went into the sea to assist the exhausted man.

CLANSMAN thanks Capt. Kelso and others who provided information about the rescue. We felt readers might like the novelty of a report from Mrs. Wilkinson, who was sailing with her husband on Voyage 91.

How Currie entered the Cape service

Sir,

This year of 1972 is a particularly notable one for the Union-Castle part of the B&C group, for it marks the centenary of the entry of the Donald Currie or Castle Line into the South African service.

Early in 1872 a Mr. Payne chartered two vessels, the *Island* and the *Gothland* from Donald Currie, who had vessels running from the UK to India and to the northwest continent, with the intention of commencing a regular fortnightly service to the Cape. After these two had sailed and before a third ship could be despatched, Payne informed Currie that he could not pay for the vessels and suggested that Currie himself take over the responsibility for them and shoulder the risks of the venture.

Currie agreed to do so—he hardly had any alternative—and being thus pushed unexpectedly into the trade, decided to send further ships out and to start a regular service. He chartered several vessels and, in due course, gradually switched from the Indian to the South African trade.

The first ship with a Castle name to reach the Cape was the *Walmer Castle*, which arrived in Table Bay on October 4 1872. Soon after, in 1873, the *Windsor Castle* lowered the record for the journey between UK and the Cape to 23 days. Altogether, the Castle Line provided the Cape with an exceedingly good and well-run service. The first Castle ship built specially for the South African trade was the *Dunrobin Castle* in 1876, and in the same year a new mail contract provided for the Castle Line to share the carrying of the mails with the Union Line, each on a fortnightly basis, thus providing for the first time a weekly mail service.

The story of the Union and Castle Lines is a fascinating one. It tells of small beginnings by the Union Line in the 1850's, the great rivalry between the two competing lines up to their amalgamation into the Union-Castle Line in 1900 and the unequalled service provided since then. The full story is too big and involved to be told here.

The present mail service is, I think, the only regular fixed timetable long-distance service of its kind in the world, all other comparable scheduled services being on short-distance routes.

R. BRIAN LEATHAM,
20 Keurboom Road,
Newlands, Cape Town.

Thanks for gifts

A letter of thanks and appreciation has been received from R. W. C. Bainbridge of 21 Annot Way, Higher Bebbington, Wirral, Cheshire (formerly resident superintendent engineer, Liverpool) for retirement gifts and greetings received from shore and sea staff.