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EARLY AUSTRALIAN STEAMERS.



A paper prepared by

A. B. PORTUS, Assoc. Memb. Inst. C.E.,

Late Superintending Engineer of Dredges,
Public Works Dept. of N.S.W.

And Read before the Australian Historical Society, at the
Royal Society's Rooms, 30th June, 1904.



SYDNEY:
THE BUILDER PRINTING WORKS, 527 KENT STREET.

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Early Australian Steamers.

PERIOD 1831-1856.

Commenting upon British Steam Navigation, the *London Engineer*, in a recent issue, says: "Considering the great interest of the subject, it is remarkable how little has been got together concerning the early steamboats and their work. Most accounts of them are very meagre, and not at all easy to find." Similarly, if a comparison be permissible between nation and colony, our early steamer records are scant, somewhat unreliable, and difficult of access. In illustration of this, a question was asked by a Victorian correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald*—Mr J. C. Carey—in September, 1896, as to the first Australian steamer. The authority of Heaton's Dictionary of Dates, correct as far as it goes, was doubted; and about a dozen letters from old Australians and old Colonists were written to disprove a statement, taken from the *Weekly Register* of 1843, wherein the credit of introducing Steam Navigation to Australia was given to Dr. Thomson, M.L.A., who, it was stated, had three years priority of claim over the pioneers of 1831—the owners of the *Surprise*, *Sophia Jane*, and *William the Fourth*. In that correspondence I took part; but, although having taken for nearly 60 years a lively interest in Colonial steaming, I, in common with the other correspondents, was quite unable to name any steamer with which Dr. Thomson was connected at the inception of Australian Steam Navigation. During some leisure evenings recently, I have augmented my steamer notes, and, having received some interesting details of early Van Dieman's Land steamers from Mr. Robt. Rex, of Hobart, who had gathered the earlier information from Mr. John Lucas, of that city, the compilation of the following notes of the vessels of long ago has been undertaken, and among them will be found, in its proper place and date, a description of the mysterious steamer of the 1843 *Weekly Register*, built by Dr. Thomson, and referred to by Mr. Carey.

The condition of Australia, as far as internal and coastal communications were concerned, at the advent of steam navigation, claims a passing notice. For a young colony, the former was by no means unsatisfactory. Employment had to be found for the

“ . . . True patriots, who, 'twas understood,
Had left their country for their country's good.”

And the early Governors, notably Macquarie and Darling, had, with prudent foresight, directed that main lines of road should be surveyed and formed, in a substantial manner, by such of the prisoners as were not employed in the clearing gangs, or had not been assigned to the free settlers. But before the advent of the steamboat it was a weary journey overland, from Sydney to Maitland and Newcastle, especially so before the completion of the road via Wiseman's Ferry in 1831. Dr. Lang, in the third edition of his History of New South Wales, published in 1840, gives an interesting narrative of a horseback trip made by him in 1827 from Sydney to his brother's estate on the Patterson River, the distance he computed at 130 miles, the time occupied was three days. “Previous to the introduction of Steam Navigation,” writes the Doctor, “the uncertainty and danger of the existing mode of conveyance by water between Sydney and Hunter's River induced the majority of those who either resided in, or occasionally visited, the latter district, to travel by land. Another of the early writers, referring to the sailing vessels carrying on coastal trade, says: “Frail indeed were these tiny skiffs for the billows they had to plough, and the tempests they had to brave; unskilfully built, ill-equipped, badly managed, they went forth from our harbour under fearful hazards of never being heard of more, or heard of only as wrecked upon the strand.”

Subjected to dangers and difficulties of travel, such as these, we can readily understand the enthusiasm of the thousands of people who came to see the *Sophia Jane* after her arrival at Sydney on the 13th May, 1831, and the delight of the newspaper reporter at Sydney who, describing the steamer's first harbour trial, wrote on the 18th of the succeeding month: “Yesterday was a proud day for Australia—a day that ought to be placed high in the calendar of her improvements, a day to which her sons and daughters, if alive to the true interests of their country, will in future years look back with exaltation.”

From 1828 until 1831 the colony had been passing through an era of severe mercantile depression, caused by a lengthened

drought; but a copious rainfall altered the whole face of the country, and the stimulating influence of the arrival of the first steamer appears to have ushered in the dawn of a brighter day for the people of New South Wales.

Although coastal Steam Navigation was inaugurated by the *Sophia Jane* and the *William the Fourth*, accuracy in detailing the rise and progress of steam in Australian waters perhaps demands, first, a description of the small river steam packet, *Surprise*, built at Neutral Bay, Sydney, and launched six weeks before the *Sophia Jane* arrived from England. The *Australian* newspaper of April 1st, 1831, thus describes the launch of the *Surprise*: "Yesterday the first steam vessel that ever appeared in this country was launched (amidst colours flying, and the acclamations of some hundreds of spectators in boats whom the novelty of the scene drew to the spot) from Mr. Millard's the builder's shipyard in Neutral Harbour, North Shore, at the top of high water; and soon she floated gracefully in her native element. This specimen of naval architecture does infinite credit to Mr. Millard; she is a beautiful model, and appears to be well constructed for a clipper for light draft of water. She measures nearly 400 tons (probably 40 is meant), and will carry a 10-horse power high pressure engine. Her fastenings are copper, and her rudder is peculiarly fitted so as to work in a groove, and with pintles standing out from the stern-post. She is to ply with goods and passengers, and we wish the owners, Messrs. Smith Brothers every success which their enterprise deserves. In about four weeks the *Surprise*, as she is christened, will be ready to start in the trade." The vessel's length in another paper is given as 80 feet. The *Sydney Gazette* of June 2nd, 1831, describes at considerable length the first trip of the *Surprise*. Her speed is given as $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour; the time from Sydney Cove to Ball's Head was twenty minutes. The issue of June 4th, in a longer account, describes a trip to Parramatta, and states that she struck at Red Point. She left on her return trip to Sydney the next day at 1 p.m., and reached Sydney at 4.30. It is stated that the vessel was 18 inches too high, and rolled uncomfortably. The fares were $2/6$ and $2/-$. The *Surprise* ran from July, 1831, until the end of the year, to Parramatta, and on excursions in Sydney Harbour, and early in 1832 was sent under canvas to Hobart, at which port she arrived on 1st February, 1832. I am indebted to Mr. R. Rex for the following particulars of her movements at Hobart Town:—"The *Surprise* steamer sailed from Sydney to Hobart Town, then was employed as a steamer

between Hobart Town and Kangaroo Point for a few years; then they took the engines out of her, sold her to Mr. George Watson, a merchant. He had her cut down, rebuilt up, and made into a topsail schooner. She ran for him up and down the channel (D'Entrecasteaux) for a time, and Mr. D. Sargeant (now living here) bought her, and had her in the Melbourne trade at the beginning of the diggings time; then went lightering with her over in Melbourne, and afterwards sold her. Mr. Watson changed her name to the *Anna Jane*, after the names of his two nieces, Mrs. W. Rout and Mrs. Cannaway. Her boiler was used in Gibson's mill on the wharf, in this city; now the boiler is up the country at one of the mines."

THE "SOPHIA JANE."

Although, as stated before, the *Surprise* was launched in March, 1831, the *Sophia Jane*, which steamer arrived from England on the 15th May of the same year, was the first steamer to turn a paddle-wheel in Sydney Harbour. The *Sydney Gazette* of May 17th, 1831, thus chronicles her arrival:—

ARRIVALS.

"From London, Pernambuco, and the Cape, having left the former port on the 16th December, the steam packet, *Sophia Jane*, Captain Biddulph. Passengers:—Mrs. Biddulph and family."

In the news columns, under the heading "First Steamer in New South Wales," the *Gazette* says:—"On Saturday last the inhabitants of Sydney had the extreme gratification of seeing for the first time a steam vessel floating in their harbour, the *Sophia Jane* having arrived from England during the night. This being the commencement of steam navigation in Australia, we shall enter into as many particulars as we have been able to collect, for most of which we are indebted to the *South African*. The name of the vessel is the *Sophia Jane*. She is commanded by Lieutenant Edward Biddulph, R.N., who is, we believe, part owner. She was built in 1826 by Barnes and Miller, the pupils of the celebrated Watt, the only ones who have carried on his work for themselves. The whole length of the deck unimpeded (as all vessels of this kind are) is 126 feet; her breadth 20 feet; her burthen 256 tons; her power 50-horse. In smooth water she will travel eight miles an hour. She draws only 6 feet of water, and could easily be made to draw only 5. She was originally constructed for the

almost exclusive accommodation of passengers, and the greater portion of the room is adapted for their service. Her principal employment, hitherto, has been in the carrying of passengers between England and France, and to various parts of the British Islands. No expense has been spared for the comfortable accommodation of her passengers, and her apartments are of the finest description. She has three separate cabins—one for gentlemen, one for ladies, and another for steerage passengers. In the gentlemen's cabin 16 beds can be made up, in the ladies' 11., and in the steerage 20, and in cases of emergency extra beds can be prepared, making in all 54. Being intended in the first instance for Calcutta, where wood is the cheapest fuel, she is as well adapted for its consumption as for coal. She originally cost £8000, and her present value is estimated at £7500. She has brought out an experienced engineer, and a duplicate set of all the necessary apparatus. She was ultimately fitted out expressly for Sydney as a private speculation. On her passage she touched at Pernambuco, and at the Cape. At the latter place they were extremely desirous of purchasing her to ply between Algoa Bay and Table Bay. A public meeting was held in the Commercial Exchange for the purpose of forming a Joint Stock Navigation Company, but the attempt failed, and she prosecuted her original course. At present the arrangements are too immature to enable us to say how she will be employed, but in all probability she will form a regular packet for the conveyance of both goods and passengers between Sydney and Newcastle. Most certainly do we wish her every success, and congratulate our fellow-colonists on so valuable an acquisition to their pleasure and advantages." In the *Sydney Gazette* of May 21st, 1831, the *Sophia Jane* is thus again referred to:— "We have derived from the most authentic sources the following particulars:—She is 250 tons, builders measurement, and 150 tons register, four years old, but ran only some two years, chiefly in the British and St. George's Channels. The engine is of the most approved construction, and she was esteemed once of the fastest vessels ever built. (Note. Sir William White, in his recent 1899 address as President of the British Association, speaking of the speeds at sea in 1840, as compared with those of 1899, says: "Speeds have been increased from $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $22\frac{1}{2}$ knots per hour," and as the *Sophia Jane's* time running the 60 knots from Newcastle to Sydney was seven and two-thirds hours, equal to nearly 8 knots per hour in 1831, it may fairly be credited that she was one of England's fastest *sea-going* steamers, as, according to the above quotation, the maximum speed in 1840—five years afterwards

—was only 8½.) Continuing, the *Gazette's* description:—"She has," says that paper, "frequently towed ships of the largest class, the last time she was thus engaged was tugging the *General Kydd* from Gravesend to the Downs. Should the *Sophia Jane*, we are told, meet with the encouragement her spirited owners expect, they will send out another vessel of nearly 500 tons, with an engine of 100-horse power, to ply between Sydney and Van Dieman's Land."

On June 12th, 1831, the *Sophia Jane* towed the *Lady Harwood* out of port in a very imposing manner, several vessels saluting her. In an account of a trial trip to Middle Harbour in June 1831, the time taken from the Heads to Fort Macquarie is given as 35 minutes 42 seconds; the distance is stated as fully five miles. On her first trip to the Hunter, June 13th, 1831, she left Sydney at 13 minutes past 7, and arrived at Newcastle at 13 minutes past 3, being detained by towing the *Emma*. Three hours and thirty minutes is given as the time from Newcastle to the Green Hills (now Morpeth), but her speed was slackened at Limeburners' (the lower flats). Next day she was three hours from Green Hills to Newcastle, and 7 hours 40 minutes from there to Sydney. This rate of speed was fairly well maintained for many years, for in February, 1840, we read of her leaving Newcastle at 1.30 p.m., arriving at Grose's Wharf, near Bathurst-street, at 9.30 p.m. The lifetime of the return flue type of boilers (and all steamers then had such boilers) in the early days was from three to seven years. Two new ones in September, 1832, were imported for the *Sophia Jane*. The engines of the period were of the side lever jet condensing type, and were almost universally used for 20 years after our early steamers were built. Some day, perhaps, when relics of early Australian steamers are being sought for, the engine of our pioneer steamer now being described, will be dug out from the beach near the North Head of the Clarence River, where part of it was uncovered after a storm a few years ago. The steamer *Phoenix* was built in 1846 to receive the *Sophia Jane's* engines, when the old steamer was broken up. The former vessel was lost, as will be described later on, south of the South Head of the Clarence, and, after rehabilitation, finally was lost at the North Head of the same river in 1850, over 50 years ago. Details of the machinery of steamers are not given in the old newspapers, but from a notice appearing in 1836, describing the engineering workshop of that most capable and energetic engineer, Mr. John Struth, we find that in that year he bored out the 40-inch diameter cylinder of the *Sophia Jane*, at the rate of 300 square inches per hour."

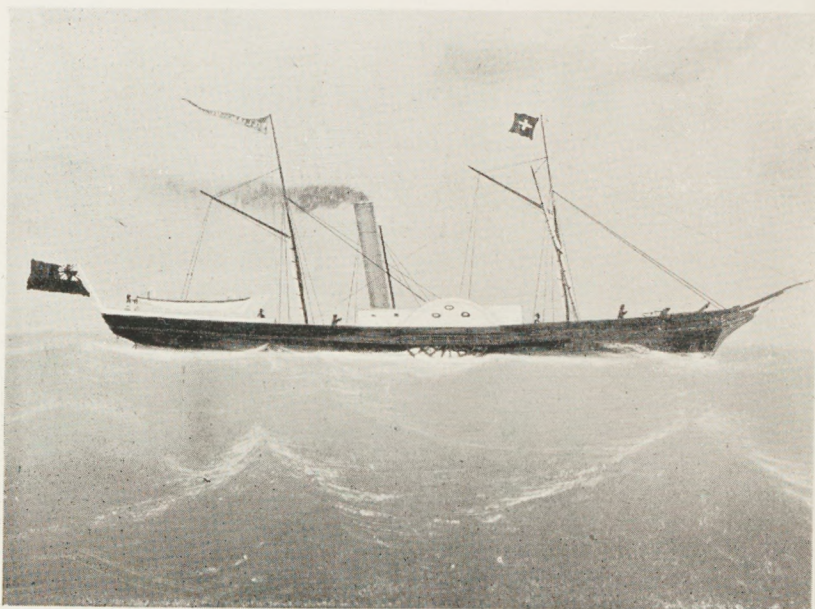
How the *Sophia Jane* was employed during her 14 years coastal career (1831 to 1845), and how she changed hands, will be told as this narrative proceeds.

THE "WILLIAM THE FOURTH."

From an Australian's point of view more interest centres, perhaps, in the story of the *William the Fourth* than in that of almost any other early Colonial steamer. She was not a fast vessel. Our merchants of the time could ill-afford to withdraw from their trading capital stock money sufficient to buy very powerful engines, but she was built in the colony at the (at that time) almost *terra incognita*, Clarence Town, and she was well built, as evidenced by her having been found strong enough to be sent to China to trade, after buffeting for 30 years with boisterous billows on the coast of New South Wales. Before there was any intimation of a steamer coming from England, a Sydney merchant, Mr. Joseph Hickey Grose, conceived the idea of having a steam vessel adapted for coastal work, built in the colony; and, meeting with two enterprising Scotch shipbuilders, Messrs. Marshall and Lowe, who had not long before arrived from the West Coast of South America, he gave effect to his resolve—the Williams Rivers being chosen as the most suitable locality for building the steamer. Large quantities of growing timber, adapted for ship-building purposes, were found at the head of the navigation, and for years afterwards steamers and sailing vessels continued to be built and launched by Mr Lowe at Deptford, Clarence Town, on the ways laid down for the *William the Fourth*.

Mr. Grose's steamer was launched by Messrs. Marshall and Lowe on October 22nd, 1831, and arrived in Sydney on the 23rd of the following month. Her length from stem to stern was 80 feet; beam, 15 feet amidships, and 13 feet aft; 20 feet over the sponsons; height from keel to flush deck, 7 feet; height of after cabin, 6 feet 6 inches. Length of ladies' cabin, 12 feet; of gentlemen's cabin, 16 feet. Outside planking of flooded gum, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick; ceiling, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch; deck planking, native pine, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick; two masts, schooner rig. Her engine, of the jet condensing type, was fitted in the vessel by Mr Alex Lyle Pattison, millwright and engineer of the "Phoenix" Foundry, Sydney. Mr. Pattison (who was drowned by the capsizing of a boat at Kiama in 1838) came to the colony in 1827, to erect Mr. Robert Cooper's engine at Blackwattle Swamp. He took a leading part in connection with early steamers, and was one of the committee of the Australian Steam Conveyance Company, formed to build the Parramatta steamer *Australia* in 1834.

EVOLUTION OF THE COASTAL STEAMER—1831-1885.

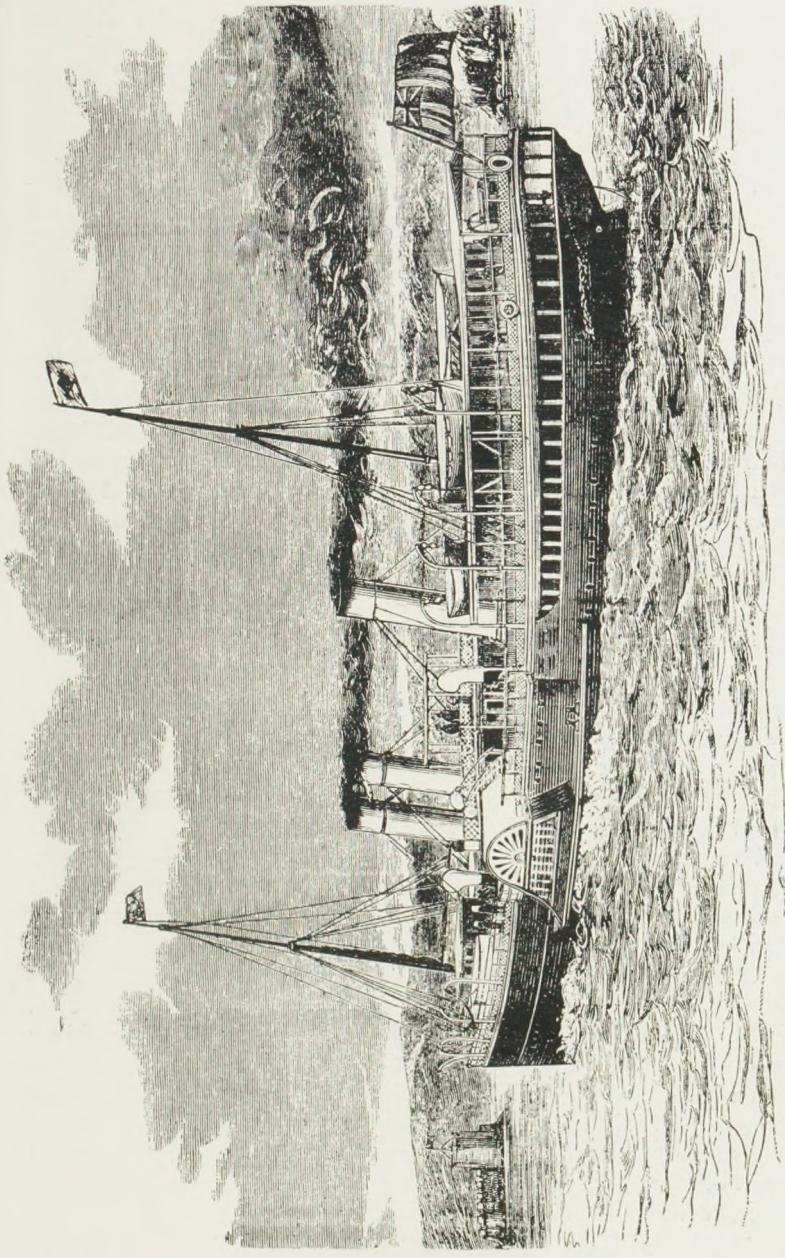


THE "WILLIAM THE FOURTH."
(1831).



THE "MORPETH."
(1862).

EVOLUTION OF THE COASTAL STEAMER -- 1831-1885.



THE "NEWCASTLE" (1885).

The *Herald* of September, 1831, writing of the *William the Fourth's* machinery, states that "it has been much improved by Mr Pattison of the Phœnix Foundry."

The first trip of the steamer is thus referred to by the *Sydney Gazette* of 21st February, 1832:—

"That beautiful specimen of colonial enterprise, the *William the Fourth*, made her maiden trip to the Hunter last week. She left Barker's Wharf at 7.30 in the evening, cleared the Heads in 44 minutes, and made Newcastle at 6 the following morning." This is the advertisement notifying her trips:—"The *William the Fourth* leaves Sydney every Monday evening at 7; will receive and discharge goods at the store of Mr. Walker on Mrs. Close's land, Green Hills. Fares to Green Hills: Cabin, 25/-; to Newcastle, 20/-; steerage to Newcastle, 12/6; Green Hills, 15/-." The advertisement is signed by the Captain, J. Taggart.

The store of Mr. Walker, known in 1848 as Skinner's (at Morpeth), and afterwards as Campbell's, is a substantial building, still in use. Shortly after the *William the Fourth* started running, her owner, Mr. Grose, built a stone store for his steamers. This building exists still, and was long used as a soap and candle manufactory.

Captain Taggart was well known to old colonists as the pioneer skipper of the Hunter. Before the advent of steam navigation the people of Newcastle and the Hunter, travelling to Sydney, put themselves under his care in the cutter *Lord Liverpool*, which, with the A.A. Company's cutter *Lambton*, traded with passengers and cargo, previous to 1831, between the two ports. Mr. Surgeon Cunningham writes thus in his book on New South Wales, published in 1828: "A fine little cutter packet named the *Lord Liverpool* sails weekly between Sydney and Newcastle (in distance 73 miles); 12 hours' easy sail; cabin fare (including provisions, wines, and spirits), £1/6/-, and the accommodation is excellent, the vessel having been formerly a pleasure yacht in India." Captain Taggart subsequently commanded the steamers *Sophia Jane*, *Maitland*, *James Watt*, *Victoria*, and *Phœnix*, on the Hunter River trade. The *William the Fourth* from 1832 until 1835 was almost exclusively employed in the Hunter River trade, the exceptional trips being a few made to the Hawkesbury. During 1835 she was withdrawn from the Hunter, and sent to run between Sydney and Port Macquarie, with Captain William Parsons in charge.

The subsequent history of this little colonial steamer will be told later. It should have been stated that the engine of

the vessel was from the factory of Fawcett and Co., the well-known engine-builders of Liverpool.

THE "GOVERNOR ARTHUR" (1832).

Although it was intended that in these records of early steamers, descriptions of the vessels connected with the continent of Australia only should be given, it will be necessary to refer to Dr. Thomon's steamer, as it was stated by the *Sydney Weekly Register* of 1843 to be the pioneer vessel of Australia. The *Governor Arthur*, the vessel referred to, owned by Dr. Thomson, afterwards M.L.A. for Port Phillip, "was," says Mr. Lucas, of Hobart, "designed and framed in England. She was imported by Dr. Thomson, and put together during 1832 at Hobart Town." The Hobart Town *Express* of July 12th, 1832, describes her as a beautiful new steamer (belonging to Mr. Thomson), and on October 11th of the same year a trial trip with a party on board is referred to; when the run from Hobart Town to Kangaroo Point was made, it is said, in 12 minutes. "The *Governor Arthur*," Mr. Lucas says, "was employed at Hobart Town for several years, and was sold and went to Melbourne." She was sent afterwards to New Zealand as a schooner, and was broken up at Otago.

It will therefore be seen that the *Sophia Jane*, *Surprise*, and *William the Fourth* were undoubtedly antecedent to the steamer referred to by Mr. J. J. Carey, in his letter to the *S.M. Herald* of September, 1896.

THE "TAMAR" (1834).

The "*Billy*," as the *William the Fourth* was familiarly called, gave place to the third Hunter River steamer, the *Tamar*, and as the career of that vessel was a varied and successful one of 40 years, it merits a lengthy notice. Built at Greenock for several gentlemen on the Tamar River, the *Tamar* steamer ultimately fell into the hands of Messrs. D. and J. Bryan, who, being unable to find remunerative work for her from the Van Diemen's Land Government, brought her to Sydney, at which port she arrived on the 5th December, 1834. Her original length was 99 feet, with 20 feet beam. Her engine, by Napier, of Glasgow, of 60-horse power, was, like the *Sophia Jane's*, of the side lever jet condensing type, and her speed was slightly in excess of that of the steamer just named. Under some circumstances, it was not so, and for several years exciting trials of speed took place between

the vessels. On Monday, 8th December, 1834, we are told the *Tamar* made her first trip to Newcastle, starting from the Liverpool wharf, near the King's wharf in Sydney Cove, where the Harbour Board's office now stands, in company with the *Sophia Jane*. The *Tamar* led going down the Harbour. On the 24th December, 1834, John Thomas Wilson, whose career as a merchant and shipowner is historically notorious in New South Wales, became her owner, and she was advertised as a regular trader, twice a week—leaving Street's Wharf every Monday and Thursday at 7 p.m., and Walker's Stores, Green Hills (Morpeth) at 8 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays. During a south-east gale on the 12th January, 1835, the *Sophia Jane* and the *Tamar* collided at sea, owing to the tiller ropes of the first-named vessel carrying away. A lawsuit resulted, the case (*Wilson v. Grose*) being tried in the Supreme Court. A verdict was given for the defendant, for whom Mr. W. C. Wentworth was counsel. For three years, (with the exception of six months in 1836, when the *Ceres* ran) steam communication to the Hunter was carried on exclusively by the *Tamar* and *Sophia Jane*, with Captain Mulhall, after 1836, in charge of the former vessel, and Captain Taggart for some time in command of the latter. In 1836 Mr. John Russell, of Sydney, the celebrated shipbuilder and rival of Mr. Lowe, of Clarence Town, cut the *Tamar*, and lengthened her 30 feet. The *Tamar* changed hands in 1839, having been sold by direction of the Supreme Court in consequence of the absconding from the colony of her owner, John Thomas Wilson, who had just previously bought the *Sophia Jane*. The purchasers of the *Tamar* were the directors of the General Steam Navigation Company, formed in 1839, and, after a cessation of running, communication to the Hunter was resumed by the *Tamar* until 1841, when, owing to the starting of the imported iron steamers, *Rose* and *Thistle*, she was withdrawn from the trade, and was in 1842 bought by the H. R. S. N. Co. (afterwards the A. S. N. Co.) to carry on trade to the Northern ports, Clarence River and Moreton Bay. From 1850 to 1855 the *Tamar*, under the A. S. N. Co.'s flag, was again a passenger steamer on the Hunter. In 1863 she was bought, to be used as a tug, by Messrs. J. & A. Brown, of Newcastle, and for ten years rendered excellent service in that capacity to the advantage of ship owners, the port of Newcastle, and the Messrs. Brown. In 1873 she sprang a leak at sea, and was beached by Capt. T. Hunter at Cabbage Tree Beach, near where the steamer *Ceres* was wrecked, 37 years previously. The *Tamar's* boiler was floated, towed to Newcastle, and put to work at the New Lambton Coal Mines.

THE "AUSTRALIA."

Although the horse boat *Experiment*, referred to afterwards, was built in 1832, this, being a record of *steamers*, priority of notice is given to the *Australia*; the *Experiment* not having started as a steamer until 1835. The paddle steamer *Australia*, for the Parramatta trade, was built at the Williams River by Mr. John Russell. A meeting was held at the Court House, Sydney, on 13th April, 1833. Mr. George Bunn, merchant, in the chair, when it was resolved:—

- (1) That the Australian Steam Conveyance Co. be formed.
- (2) That the first undertaking of the Company be to establish a steam packet of 12 horse power between Sydney and Parramatta, total cost estimated £2,000, in 400 shares of £5 each. On the preliminary Board of Directors (22) were Mr. Bunn, Rev. R. Mansfield (of the *Sydney Herald*), J. T. Wilson, William Lowe (builder of *William the Fourth*), John Struth (engineer), William Orr (engineer), S. Dove (engineer), A. L. Pattison (engineer), and Francis Mitchell (merchant). The *Australia* was so named at the request of the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke; it was at first intended that she should be called *Olivia*. Captain John Morris was first in charge. In February, 1836, a dividend of 38 per cent. was declared, and in July of the same year it was announced that the *Australia* was sold to Mr. John T. Wilson for £2,250, the Company having no funds to meet an adverse court verdict. There were outstanding debts amounting to £1,000. Commenting on this, some years afterwards, the *Sydney Herald* writes:—"The A.S.C. Co. built a neat little packet, the *Australia*, of 18-horse-power, which managed to fall into the hands of the Philistines, for that immortal hero of auctioneering, Mr. J. T. Wilson, became its *factotum*, and as a consistent result its ruin. He involved the Company in litigation, and it came to an untimely end." From 1835 until 1842, the trade between Sydney and Parramatta was chiefly carried on by the *Australia*, *Experiment*, and *Rapid*, but the fast iron paddle steamer *Emu*, having been put on the line in 1842, and the *Comet* in 1843, the *Australia* was withdrawn, and for a short time plied between Sydney, Balmain, Five Dock, and Garry Owen (now Callan Park), under the direction of Mr. George Coke, the engineer. Ultimately, in 1846, the *Australia* was sold to Mr. R. Anderson, and converted by him into a schooner for the Brisbane water trade. During the earlier period of steam navigation, and up to 1860, the Parramatta steamers plied up to the town of Parramatta. That the head of navigation is now lower down, near Newington, has been attributed to the shoaling of the river, but this

is not the reason. The *Australia*, and later the *Emu* and the *Comet* were paddle steamers of very light draft, the former 3½ft. loaded, the latter 2½ft., whereas that of the screw steamers now employed ranges from 7ft. to 8½ft., and the old-time paddle boats started to suit the tide.

THE "EXPERIMENT"

(1835).

The novelty of seeing a passenger boat propelled by horses has caused the *Experiment* to be more distinctly remembered by some very old colonists, than any other river packet of the thirties.

Built, as the *William the Fourth* was, on the Williams River, the *Experiment* was somewhat shorter, and of much less beam than that vessel, and had two very narrow escapes from wreck while being brought from Newcastle to Sydney. Her first trip to Parramatta was made on the 5th October, 1832. Some difficulty was experienced in getting the horses to work, but they were quiet before reaching Parramatta, and made the vessel move through the water at the rate of 6 miles per hour. Next day the return trip to Sydney was made, and the distance from Parramatta to the Market Wharf was made in three hours. The mode of conveyance was not much in favour with passengers, for, notwithstanding the resolve to put additional power in her, Mr. Singleton, after two months' trial, advertised his novel craft for sale, by 70 shares of £10 each; being, states Mr. Singleton, a *bona fide* loss to the proprietor of £800. The boat is described as carvel built, and only, says Mr. Singleton, requiring a steam engine of 12 horse power. Subsequently Mr. Edey Manning bought the *Experiment* for £400, discarded the horse gear, had a 12 horse power engine built for her by Mr. Biddulph, and on the 9th of April, 1835, started running from J. T. Wilson's wharf, in conjunction with the *Australia* to Parramatta. It is written of the *Experiment*, in 1841 (July), that "she has been running for five years, only stopping for two days together." The tonnage of the little vessel is given as 37 tons, length over-all 80 feet, beam 12½ feet, draught 2 feet, stores 20 tons of cargo. Faster boats than the *Experiment* were placed on the Parramatta trade after 1842, and the little craft was variously employed in Sydney Harbour until 1846, when she was sent to Moreton Bay to run between Ipswich and Brisbane, making her first trip on the 29th June of that year, and being the first river steamer to ply in the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers. In 1848 she foundered at Brisbane

Wharf, but was lifted, and in 1849 Mr. Winship built a new steamer, the *Hawk*, to receive her engine. Later on, the *Swallow* river steamer was built, and ran as well as the *Hawk*.

THE "CERES."

Simultaneously with the formation of the Australian Steam Conveyance Co., another company was formed for establishing additional steam communication with the Hunter, in opposition to the *Sophia Jane* and *William the Fourth*. In April, 1833, a meeting for this purpose was held at the office of Mr. A. B. Spark. It was proposed by Mr. Thomas Walker (Concord), and seconded by Mr. R. C. Pritchett, "That an Association be formed to build in the Colony of New South Wales a steamer of 200 tons, and to order from Great Britain two engines of 40-horse power each." A committee, consisting of the following colonists, was formed:—Richard Jones, A. B. Spark, G. Bunn (merchants), Capt. Church, Robert Scott (Glendon), Wakefield Simpson, Capt. Collins. The estimated cost of the two engines by makers of established reputation, fitted into a vessel, was £4,000. Mr. Lowe, the builder of the *William the Fourth*, tendered to build a steamer of 250 tons, all complete, for £3,300, anchors, blocks, rigging, £350; other extras, £500. Total, £8,150. There were to be 400 shares of £25 each. The secretary and collector was Mr. Thomas Smith.

The result of this preliminary work was the Hunter River Packet Association. An order was sent to one of the principal engineering firms in Scotland, Messrs. Scott & Sinclair, of Greenock, for the two engines of 80 horse power collectively, and a contract entered into with Marshall & Lowe for building the steamer at their building yard on the William River. Early in 1836, the machinery arrived in the Colony by the *Mary Sharp*, and the vessel was ready to receive it. Every one was proud of the *Ceres*, the name given, appropriately, to the steamer intended to ply to the rich agricultural districts of the Hunter, Williams, and Paterson Rivers. The newspapers of 1835 describe her as being 134 feet long, and 38 feet wide, the deck as most spacious, and ballroom like, almost, it is said, like the deck of a 50-ton gun ship, or the old 74. The boxes which enclose the wheels, we are told, "do not put out at the sides like those of the other steam vessels, but are enclosed by, and form part of, the decks." Six enclosed cabins were provided for families, and in the great cabin, as the gentlemen's saloon is called, 20 sleeping berths were fitted. In the ladies' cabin there were

12 berths, while in the steerage forward 20 passengers could be accommodated. The first-class cabins are described as being fitted up in an elegant style. Owing to the sponson system carried out in the vessel's construction, considerable space was at disposal for the conveyance of horses, cattle, and sheep. The draft of water with 150 tons of dead weight on board was only 7 feet.

As with the *William the Fourth* the builder used flooded gum extensively in the hull of the *Ceres*; some ironbark was fitted where desirable, and the decks were of Norway pine. The cost of the steamer was favourably commented upon at the time, a comparison being made between British and Colonial built vessels. The cost of the *Ceres* is given at £10 per ton; while in England a vessel built of similar material could not, we are told, be constructed for less than £15 per ton. The life-time of a vessel built of Australian flooded gum was at the time estimated at 20 years. How very far short of the endurance of this excellent timber this forecast was can be judged by the fact that the oldest steamer now in service in Australia was built of flooded gum, near Raymond Terrace, on the Hunter River, 60 years ago. I refer to the *Kangaroo*, now running on the Yarra. The *Ceres* had a trial trip round the harbour on Sunday, 21st February, 1836. Her rate of travelling is not given, but it is written of her that "from the speed she went, in smooth water, she bids fair to be a clipper." Her first trip to Newcastle was made in good style, and she "headed a smart breeze in a manner that proves she will be an excellent seaboat." She started from Fotheringham's Wharf, at the foot of King-street, and she was commanded by Captain Livingstone.

WRECK OF THE "CERES."

Six months after the *Ceres* started running, she was wrecked during comparatively fine weather between Bird Island and Broken Bay. She left Newcastle for Sydney on Monday afternoon, 29th August, 1836. On the evening of the following day, a cable box and bucket, identified as belonging to her, were washed on shore on the beach south of Newcastle. The *Sophia Jane*, on her voyage to Sydney, when passing Bird Island, met a quantity of floating wreckage, including a cabin skylight, which persons on board recognised as belonging to the *Ceres*. The first direct news of the wreck was brought to Sydney by two passengers who had travelled to Brisbane Water, and were brought from there by the *Governor Bourke*. This is their narrative:—"On Monday

evening the *Ceres* was proceeding towards Sydney, a heavy sea on, when she struck on a perpendicular rock called Bullee Noglen, with deep water all round, situated between Bird Island and Bungaree Norah. She stove in her bows. The vessel receded a considerable distance from the shock. The captain gave directions to clap on all the power, and run her on shore. The water, however, rushing in, extinguished the fires, the passengers and crew betook themselves to the boat, which would not contain a quarter of them, there being about 50 persons. The vessel was not above a quarter of a mile from the shore, and it being a beach, the boat soon landed a portion, and at four trips took the whole. The last boat's crew were obliged to climb the rigging, as the vessel was fast settling, and some were compelled to swim for the shore, and were picked up by the boat. Fortunately the whole were safely landed. About 60 sheep were on board, which, with one exception, swam ashore. There were also five pigs and one cow saved. Two cows were lost. The passengers, with the exception of the two, who came by the *Governor Bourke*, made for Newcastle. The crew, we are informed, remained at Tuggerah Beach. The vessel is a total wreck; her masts only are visible above water. The night was pitchy dark, and a heavy sea was running, but the rock is well known. Among the passengers, we understand, were Captain Livingstone, Mr. Perry, Captain Anlaby, Mr. Hughes Snodgrass, Mr. Donaldson, etc. In the *Monitor* of September 10, 1836, Captain Livingstone, at considerable length, gives his version of the wreck. He states that Captain Martin was in charge, but at the request of the passengers after the vessel struck, he took charge and steered for Little Bay. Near Black Point the vessel sank in four fathoms of water. Captain Martin, in a long letter to the *Sydney Gazette*, of 22nd September, 1836, contended that he was not in charge, and that Captain Livingstone had given the course steered. Courts of Marine Enquiry were unknown 70 years ago, and, as happily no lives were lost, no inquest was held, and the shareholders had to be satisfied with discussing among themselves who was to blame for the loss of their £10,000.

The only report of the speed of the wrecked steamer is given in the *Sydney Gazette* of 30th June, 1836. A short paragraph states:—"The *Ceres*, Captain Livingstone, was not above 6½ hours from Newcastle Wharf to Sydney Cove." The cause of the wreck was apparently the ill-arranged transfer of command on the trip from Captain Livingstone to Captain Martin.

How the machinery of the *Ceres* was recovered by Mr.

John Korff, and a steamer built by him at Raymond Terrace, will be told later on, under the heading of the *Victoria*.

On the 16th September, 1836, K. S. Smith, Secretary of the H.R.S.P. Association, announced that the affairs of the Association would be wound up with as little delay as possible. Shortly before the wreck of the *Ceres* the owners had determined to build a second steamer, but no action was taken. Subsequently, it was attempted to form another company, but no combined effort of capitalists met with any success until July, 1839, when the H.R.S.N. Company was originated by Mr. John Eales, of Hunter River.

THE "JAMES WATT."

Six years had elapsed since the first steamer—direct from England—arrived in Sydney. The *Tamar*, in 1834, had reached Sydney from Tasmania, but the *James Watt*, which arrived on the 18th February, 1837, was the second ocean steamer direct from Britain. Built to trade between Glasgow and Liverpool, her career in the old country had not been at all successful, and certainly she was not a success in New South Wales. Her engines of 80-horse power, of the side lever type, were an exceptionally good job. The cabins of the vessel were most luxurious, being fitted with rosewood and satinwood, but a miscalculation had been made as to her draught, which materially affected her speed; and, although tried as a trader from Sydney to almost every port in New South Wales and Tasmania, she was, from the very start, as in the old country, doomed to failure. Her owners were Messrs. Grose and Street, of Sydney. During 1839-1840 she was laid up at anchor in Johnstone's Bay, and finally, in 1842, was sold to the H.R.S.N. Company. Subsequently, she traded at intervals to the Clarence River and Moreton Bay. In 1847 she was broken up, and the steamer *Eagle*, built by Mr. Chowne, received her engines.

In April, 1837, the *James Watt* (John Taggart, master) is advertised for Hobart Town. Rates to there:—Cabin, £10; fore cabin, £7; deck, £5. To Twofold Bay rates were:—Cabin, £5; forecabin, £3/10/-; deck, £2/10/-. These rates include victuals. First trip, May 4th, 1837. In July, 1837, the *James Watt* anchored in Hobson's Bay, being the pioneer steam vessel at Port Philip, as she also was at Brisbane.

THE "KING WILLIAM THE FOURTH."

Two steamers named after England's sailor King belonged to the early New South Wales steam fleet. One, the first Australian-built sea-going steamer, before referred to in these

records (page 13), as the *William the Fourth*, and the other named *King William the Fourth*. The latter built in London about 1831, left there in charge of Captain Stamp on the 22nd September, 1837, and arrived in Sydney on the 20th January, 1838. The engines were manufactured by Boulton and Watt, of Birmingham, and were 35-horse power each. The vessel was long and narrow (140 x 18 feet). She was built for river trade, and it is stated that the Committee of Lloyds refused to grant her any character as a sea-going vessel. Her draft was 5 feet. Her speed was just under eight knots, a quick trip made by her being quoted as taking twelve hours on the journey from Morpeth to Sydney, including stoppages. Her career on the New South Wales coast was but a short one, only dating from January, 1838, to the middle of 1839. At that time the Hunter River trade was well supplied with steamboats, time tables of the periods showing that on Mondays the *Tamar* and *Sophia Jane* left Sydney for Morpeth at 8 p.m.; on Tuesday, at the same hour, the *King William the Fourth* was despatched; and at the same time on Wednesday the *Maitland* was the passenger steamer for Morpeth; while on each succeeding evening of the week (the same steamers made their bi-weekly trips) this programme was repeated. An interesting historical incident was an exploratory trip made by enterprising Sydney merchants in the *King William the Fourth* in April-May, 1839, to the Clarence; this steamer being the first to enter the river. She returned from this trip on 18th June. The *King William* was lost on the Newcastle oyster bank. Captain Prescott was in charge at the time. The wreck occurred in July, 1839, and in 1840 Mr. Gross commissioned Mr. Chowne, of Pymont, to build the steamer *Sovereign*, using the recovered engines of the *King William*. In 1837 Mr. J. Russell built a very small harbour steamer called the *Firefly*, referred to by the *Herald* of 1838 as one of ten steamers then running in the colony

THE "RAPID."

A small iron steamer, called the *Rapid*, brought from England in frame, in 1837, for Mr. John Lord for the Parramatta River trade, was not a success, and had but a short career. She was double-ended, was of 20-horse power, and at first had a copper boiler. Her trip to Parramatta occupied $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour. In Mr. Chowne's notebook it is stated that the *Rapid* went to decay at Glebe Point. Ferryman Suggett lived in her as a house for many years. May 31st, 1841, Mr. Chowne tendered to pull her up on a slip, keep her there for a month, and execute general repairs to hull, sponsons, bunkers, etc., for £75.

THE "MAITLAND."

The second ocean steamer built in New South Wales was the *Maitland*—the hull by Mr. John Russell, of Pyrmont; the engines by Mr. William Bourne, of Sydney. The owner was Mr. Edye Manning. As the name indicates, she was intended for the Hunter River trade. Her length was 111 feet. A few years later she was lengthened, and in 1841 her original engines were replaced by a single side lever condensing engine of 60-horse power. She made alternate trips to Morpeth and Wollongong, and later on was withdrawn from the Hunter trade, and sent to Brisbane Water. Until 1842 she ran to that port and to Wollongong, when a Port Macquarie syndicate purchased her. For six years she traded to the Hastings, and occasionally to one of the southern ports, when she was purchased by the H.R.S.N. Company for the Morpeth trade. After the gold discovery in 1851 a Melbourne firm bought the *Maitland*, and employed her in Hobson's Bay for many years as a tug. She sank in Saltwater River. She was lifted, and her name changed to the *Sampson*. In the sixties, after the New Zealand goldfields were developed, she was sent to that colony. She went ashore at Hokitiki, and became a total wreck. She was of 103 tons register. In 1841 a steamer named the *Gypsy* was built for Launceston, and the engines taken out of the *Maitland* were fitted in her.

THE "BETSY."

A very small paddle-steamer, about 30 feet long, was, in 1840, built in Sydney, bought by Mr. John Portus, of Morpeth, and was brought up on the deck of the *Victoria*. She was afterwards sold to Mr. Alford, of Paterson River.

THE "VICTORIA" (1840).

Whether from the circumstances of the vessel bearing the name of Britain's young Queen, who had not long ascended the throne, or whether from the fact that she was the finest specimen of naval architecture that had ever been seen in Australia, the colonists of the period took more interest in the *Victoria's* career than in that of any previous vessel. The story of the *Ceres*, and her unfortunate wreck, just after she was built, has already been told. How she was practically rehabilitated in the steamer now under notice, deserves a chapter in the history of early Australian steam navigation. It will be remembered that the *Ceres* was totally lost off

Bungaree Norah. Valuable machinery, such as hers, could not, in those days, have been made in the colony, and it was not to be wondered at that a vigorous effort was undertaken for its recovery. It is seldom nowadays, with our modern appliances, that wreck-lifting in almost the open sea is undertaken, and no small credit is due to the late Mr. Edye Manning for originating, and to Mr. John Korff for carrying to a successful issue, the lifting at sea of engines and boilers of 80-horse power. Mr. Korff had considerable experience as a naval architect in the old country, and after long and persistent efforts not only recovered the *Ceres* machinery and boilers, but lifted the hull of the vessel, and during the stay on the beach built from the wreck a cutter of 61 tons burden, long known as one of the smartest traders on the Australian coast. In the *Rover's Bride*, the name of the vessel, Mr. Korff placed as cargo the recovered engines of the *Ceres*. The boilers were lifted by him, and, making them water-tight, he set sail for Sydney with them in tow. Unfortunately, a gale of wind was met with when nearing Sydney Heads, and the boilers, breaking adrift, floated away to sea. A steamer was chartered to go in pursuit, but they were never recovered. The *Rover's Bride* (without the boilers, but with the engines and all the machinery) arrived in Sydney on 31st August, 1838.

Mr. Korff selected Raymond Terrace, on the Hunter River, as a site on which to build the new steamer, to be fitted with the recovered engines. The Hunter River, 60 years ago, instead of being fringed, as its banks are now, with well cleared farms, was lined with fine hardwood trees of a quality now almost extinct, known as flooded gum. Of this material the new steamer was largely built, the ways being laid at the place pointed out by the old inhabitants (who recollect the *Victoria*) as Dockyard Reach, where Mr. Korff subsequently also built the steamer *Kangaroo*. The *Sydney Herald* of January 10th, 1840, just before the the new stemaer was launched, writes of her thus:—“The *Victoria* is a splendid-looking vessel, and competent judges say there is no doubt of her being a swift boat. Her length is 157 feet; width between the paddle-boxes, 24 feet; her measurement, 270 tons. She has two water-tight bulk-heads carried from keel to deck. The accommodation in the main cabin is very good—33 berths. The ladies' cabin contains 12 berths, and a small family cabin 6 berths. The quarter-deck is raised 20 inches.” Another report states: “Her draught, with all machinery and 75 tons of cargo, is only 6 feet 6 inches, and that Mr. Korff, the builder, is con-

fident that she will run 13 miles per hour." (This expectation was nearly realised.) "The whole of the timbers in the square body are solid, and caulked inside and out before the planks, which are of immense length, were put on. The sister keelsons running side by side in one length. The *Victoria's* engines are those that were in the *Ceres*, so mysteriously wrecked about three years ago off Cabbage Tree Point. Mr. Korff was laughed at when he commenced to recover them, but by ingenuity and perseverance he succeeded, and built from the wreck, the handsome cutter, *The Rover's Bride*. Mr. Korff is no novice, having built several vessels now running in England. The one he has built is a credit to his talent as a naval architect." The *Victoria* was rigged as a three-masted schooner. She carried three square sails on the foremast, and two fore and aft sails on each of the other masts. Before her boilers and engines were put on board, she sailed from Newcastle to Sydney, carrying 400 bales of wool, 600 bushels of wheat, 28 tons of hardwood, and 10 tons of sundries on a draught of 5 feet 7 inches. Of her first trip to the Hunter, May 20th, 1840, the *Herald* says the *Victoria* proved herself a very fast boat.

John Taggart, the pioneer skipper of the Hunter, who had been in the *Lord Liverpool*, *William the Fourth*, *James Watt*, *Maitland*, and *Sophia Jane*, was the *Victoria's* captain.

THE "CLONMELL."

On the 5th October, 1840, the largest steamer that had been sent to Australia, arrived in Sydney. This was the *Clonmell*, of 598 tons burthen, built at Birkenhead in 1836, and had been only 15 months at work; 156 feet in length, 27 feet beam, with engines of 220-horse power, by Forrester, of Liverpool. She was in charge of Lieutenant Tolly, and had made a 4½ months' passage from England. She had been employed in the London, Waterford, and Liverpool trade, had splendid accommodation in her cabin for 36 passengers, was reputed to have a 10-knot speed, and had cost £33,000. She was intended for the southern trade, but in December, 1840, before starting on her first trip, was sent out to Broken Bay to meet the *Victoria*, and thus test her speed against the fastest boat in the colony. Many heavy bets were made. The *Victoria* came in an easy winner. On the 3rd January, 1841, the *Clonmell* was lost at Corner Inlet, and public attention was attracted to that then uninhabited part of the coast as a place suitable for settlement. Subsequently, Gipps Land, named after the then Governor, developed rapidly.

THE "ROSE," "THISTLE," AND "SHAMROCK."

The wreck of the *Ceres* in 1836 so disheartened small capitalists, that it was not until 1839 that any effort was made to organise another steam packet association. The steamers trading to the Hunter from 1836 to 1839 were owned by private individuals—the *Sophia Jane* was the property of Mr. J. H. Grose, the *Maitland's* owner was Mr. Edey Manning, and Mr. John Wilson owned the *Tamar*.

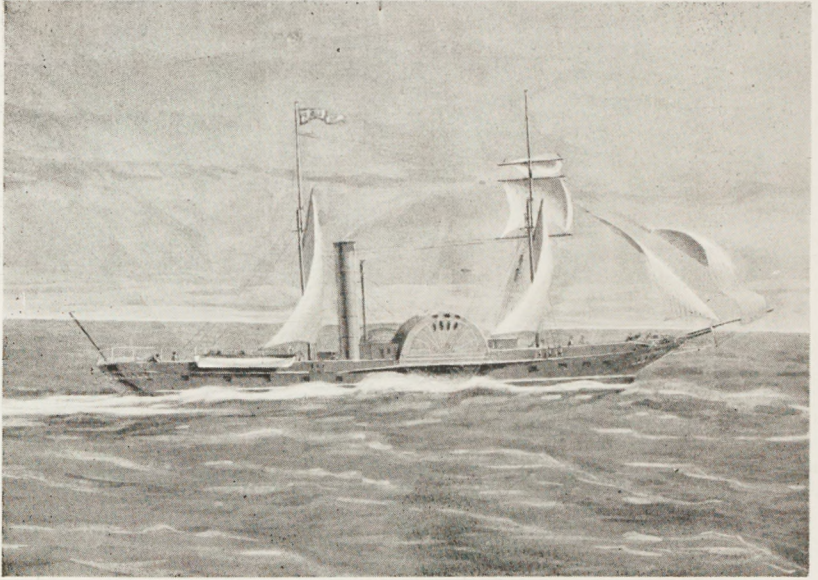
The *Maitland* was bought by a company to run to Brisbane Water and Wollongong, and Mr. Grose sold the *Sophia Jane* for £6000 in July, 1839, to the owner of the *Tamar*. Both Sydney and Hunter River shippers were becoming dissatisfied with the steam service, and in the *Herald* of July 31st, 1839, Mr. John Eales, of Hunter River, inserted the following advertisement:—

The H R. Steam Navigation Company.

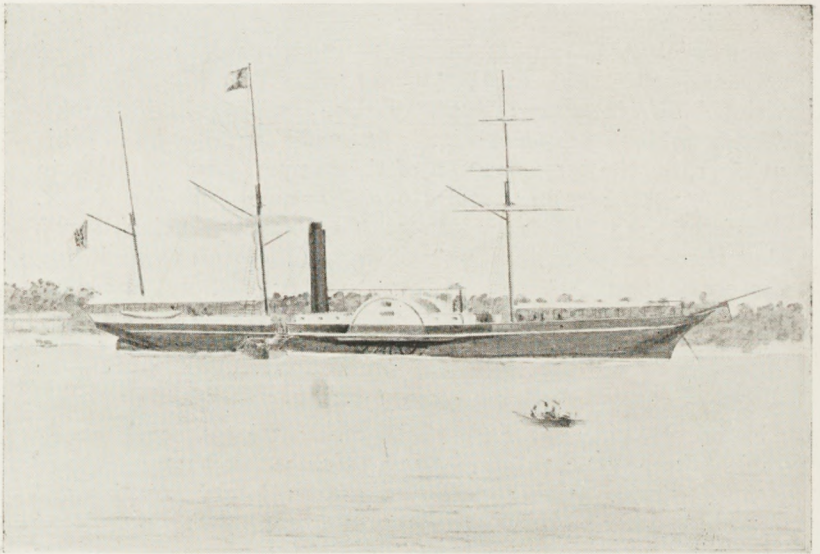
"A meeting will be held at the Royal Hotel to-morrow, 1st August, to take into consideration a proposition for establishing a Steam Navigation Company between Sydney and the Hunter River, with the view of obviating the great inconvenience and expense incurred from the present line of conveyance. It is requested that those gentlemen who feel interested in promoting this object will give their attendance.

"J. EALES."

The result of the meeting was the formation of the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company, with a capital of £40,000, subscribed in 2000 shares of £20 each. The provisional directors were Messrs. Eales, Hosking, Lord, Drake, Abercrombie, Steel, Capel, R. Scott, and Ward Stephens. This number, on the incorporation of the company, was reduced to six. At the meeting, Mr. Edey Manning and Mr. A. B. Spark opposed the formation of the company, pointing out that there was then bulding a steamer (*Victoria*) to be immediately laid on between Sydney and the Hunter, and that they intended to build another immediately after. Mr. Grose also opposed the establishment of the company, stating that he also had a vessel on the stocks (*Sovereign*), and intended building another. He intended to proceed to England immediately, and, if anything definite was come to, would gladly undertake any agency. The newly-formed company resolved not to entertain either offer, and decided to send to England for three iron steamers, to be of light draught, and of the greatest attainable speed. The order for two of them—the *Rose* and *Thistle*—was placed with Messrs. Fairbairn and Co. The



THE "ROSE."



THE "SHAMROCK."

engines were made at the firm's works in Manchester, and the vessels were built at Millwall, at the spot where the *Great Eastern* was subsequently laid down. The dimensions of the *Rose* and *Thistle* were: Length, 150 feet, with 20 feet beam, and the draught was 6 feet 6 inches. The engines were jet-condensing side levers; the cylinders 40 inches diameter, with 42-inch stroke. The speed, on the Thames, was twelve statute miles per hour, a rate, at that time, only exceeded by the London river steamers plying to Gravesend. The third steamer (*Shamrock*) arrived in Sydney on the 18th October, 1841. She was built by Mr. Paterson, of Bristol, who subsequently built the *Great Britain*. The *Shamrock's* engines were made by Bush and Beddoes, also of Bristol. She was of the same length and power as the other two vessels, but of two feet greater beam. She was somewhat slower than the *Rose*, but was a very fine sea boat, and was for nearly twenty years the favourite steamer in the Sydney, Melbourne, and Launceston trade, under the command of Captain George Gilmore, who came to the colony with her. The *Shamrock* had a square-stern, was rigged as a three-masted schooner, and had a raised quarter-deck. The other two steamers had flush decks, round or partially elliptic sterns, and two masts.

There was much excitement in commercial and nautical circles when the *Rose*, in command of Captain Stewart, arrived in Sydney on 6th April, 1841, 158 days from London. The *Victoria*, built on the Hunter, had started running to Morpeth in May of the preceding year, and her speed was equal to that of the best coasting steamers in England. Each steamer had its enthusiastic partisans. Currency and Sterling were the recognised designations respectively of the Colonial and British born. In the betting, which was as considerable as at a horse race, the "Currencies" backed the *Victoria*, the "Sterlings" the *Rose*. As much as £100 was reported as offered on the one steamer against the other. On the 12th April, at a trial trip in Sydney, the *Rose* covered a distance of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles in 36 minutes. On the 16th April, the return trip from Newcastle was made by the *Victoria* in 8 hours; the *Rose's* time was 8 hours 50 minutes. The *Herald* of 21st April, 1841, referring to the second competing trip, says:—"The *Victoria* arrived in Sydney at 10 minutes past 6 yesterday; the *Rose* afterwards. Leaving Newcastle, the *Victoria* was two miles ahead, and kept so for several miles, when a north-easter sprang up, and she set square sails; the *Rose* had none. The *Victoria* gradually gained three miles. The *Rose* wants slipping, and it is expected that she will make the passage in an hour less than the *Victoria*. If she does, she must run fast."

In the 4th May issue, the *Herald* says the *Victoria* continues to beat the *Rose*. She arrived 50 minutes ahead. On May 6th we read:—"The *Rose* arrived before the *Victoria*. The *Rose* was at Miller's Point as the *Victoria* rounded Bradley's Head. The *Rose* left 15 minutes before her, and the *Victoria* had a heavy cargo and 19 horses on deck." May 18th.—*Rose* and *Victoria* even; ran dead heat. The *Victoria's* triumph was but a short-lived one. The H.R. Company's second steamer, *Thistle*, whose passage from England occupied 130 days, arrived in Sydney on 22nd April, and profiting by the result of the racing, the engineers increased the pressure on her boilers by three pounds per square inch; and, taking three weeks to overhaul the machinery, started the *Thistle* at the end of May, making a record passage of 6 hours 20 minutes, beating the *Victoria* easily. The *Rose* was then overhauled, and became in speed the rival of the *Thistle*. They were twin steamers, and, under like conditions, there was practically no difference in their speed. The *Victoria* struggled hopelessly in opposition for several months, and was finally withdrawn from the Hunter River trade. She made several trips afterwards to Moreton Bay, but the trade had not sufficiently developed to warrant the employment of a steamer of her class being continuously employed, and in July, 1842, she was sent to the East for sale. A year afterwards she was heard of at Singapore as making a trip to Penang.

THE "SOVEREIGN."

During the year 1842 the H.R.S.N. Company bought from Mr. Grose the steamers *James Watt* and *Sovereign* for £12,000. The first-named vessel has already been described; the last has been referred to in connection with the *King William the Fourth*, which steamer, it will be remembered, was wrecked on the Oyster Bank, Newcastle, 1839. Built by Messrs. Chowne and Thompson, for the *King William's* engines, the *Sovereign* was 122 feet long, 18 feet beam, and 214 tons, builder's measurement. The *Herald* of January, 1841, stated that "the *Sovereign* sits prettily on the water, but the speed, on the trial, was not satisfactory, owing to Manilla rope being used for packing the pistons." One hour was taken to run from Grose's Wharf (at the head of Darling Harbour) to the North Head, the revolutions being only 24 instead of 30. Afterwards her speed improved, but it never exceeded eight knots. The *Sovereign* first ran to Morpeth. Her light draught—5 feet 6 inches—rendered her suitable for the shallow navigation of the Hunter; but, as she had to com-

pete with the *Victoria*, and, three months after starting, with the *Rose* also, she was quickly withdrawn from the Morpeth trade, and, until bought by the H.R.S.N. Company in 1842, ran to Windsor, Port Macquarie, the Manning, and Moreton Bay. After passing over to the H.R.S.N. Company, the *Sovereign*, with the exception of occasional trips to the Hunter, ran to northern ports. On the 17th March, 1847, she foundered when coming out of the South passage, Moreton Bay, while in command of Captain Cape. No fewer than 44 lives were lost, many of those drowned being old colonists. A profound sensation throughout the colony was caused by the disaster, and the sad event gave rise to a long and angry altercation in the newspapers (see appendix). The value of the *Sovereign* and the cargo was estimated at £20,000. More than 50 years have passed since the *Sovereign* was lost, and the prejudice against the South, or Rous, Channel, is still so pronounced that, although 40 miles is saved by using it as a passage route to Brisbane, it has never been improved, and has practically been unused, Captain South, while in the *Keilawarra*, nearly 20 years ago, being the only navigator who cared about risking the bar.

THE "KANGAROO."

While Chowne and Thompson, in 1840, were building the *Sovereign*, Mr. Korff, who, during the preceding year, had been so successful with the *Victoria*, laid down, at Raymond Terrace, the keel of a smaller steamer, the *Kangaroo*. Built of Hunter River hardwood, this steamer holds the record as Australia's oldest steamer. She is now running on the Yarra, and has seen 60 years of service. In the *Australian Shipping Register* of 1879, her length is given as 88 feet, beam 13 feet,



STRUTH'S WORKS

and depth 7 feet. In the original description, the overall length was greater, doubtless owing to her originally having a cutwater bow. Her engines, jet condensing type, were collectively of 50-horse power, and were made by Mr. John Struth, of Sydney. Originally intended for the Parramatta River trade, she ran to Parramatta for some time, until she had to give way to the *Emu* and *Comet*. Being a good sea boat, much coastal work was performed by her. She was sold to a Van Dieman's Land firm. She ran to Illawarra in 1846, and subsequently became a Melbourne river boat.

THE "APHRASIA."

After building the pioneer steamer *William the Fourth* in 1831, and the *Ceres* in 1835, Mr. Lowe, of Clarence Town, chiefly devoted his attention to sailing vessels, until 1840, when an order was placed with him by a Port Philip Company for a passenger steamer to ply between Melbourne and Geelong. The dimensions of the vessel were: Length, overall, 110 feet; beam, 17 feet; and the builder's measurement, 130 tons. The engine, side lever condensing, was made by Mr. George Coke, Bathurst-street, Sydney. The cabins were fitted up by Mr. Challis, who had performed similar work for the *Victoria*, *Sovereign*, and *Kangaroo*. The newspapers of the period record test trips between the last-named steamer and the *Aphrasia*, with no great difference in speed, but somewhat in favour of the Port Phillip craft. The distance from Dawes Point to Sydney Heads was covered in 37 minutes by the *Aphrasia*. For 26 years the little vessel did good work in Hobson's Bay and on the Yarra, and found a grave at last on the New River in New Zealand, whither she had been sent after the outbreak of the goldfields in that colony. In 1841 a small steamer the *Fairie Queen*, owned by Mr. W. Manton, ran at Melbourne.

THE "CORSAIR."

During 1841, Captain Fox, of the H.E.I. Company service, brought the *Corsair* to Sydney via Adelaide. The dimensions of the hull were 157 feet by 24 feet; the draught of water $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The *Corsair* was well arranged for carrying stock, but although many efforts were made to carry on a trade with the southern colonies, failure followed in every case. The horse-power was 150, obtained by two engines of 75-horse power. During 1844, she was advertised as a tug in the Sydney newspapers. Finally, in December, 1845, the *Corsair*,

rigged as a three-masted schooner, was sent to Hong Kong, at which port she arrived on the 28th January, 1846, after a passage of 51 days.

When Australia has developed into a nation of sufficient importance to justify a detailed history being written of the early colonists, material for an interesting chapter will be found in narrating the history of the three brothers, Benjamin, Archibald, and Mark Boyd.

BOYD'S STEAMERS, "SEAHORSE," "JUNO," AND "CORNUBIA."

Ben. Boyd came to Australia in 1841 to represent the Royal Bank of Australia, and to establish extensive settlements at Monaro, Riverina, and Northern New South Wales. At Twofold Bay he settled at Boyd Town, forming a whaling station, and building a lighthouse, which the Government refused to use. He brought islanders from the New Hebrides to be employed as shepherds. An extensive cattle trade was organised, and the steamers *Seahorse*, of 209 tons, 250-horse power, 156 feet by 22 feet 8 inches, and 12 feet 9 inches deep; the *Juno*, of 252 tons, 200-horse power, 159 feet long by 22 feet 9 inches beam, 16 feet deep; and *Cornubia*, a smaller boat, were imported. The enterprise was a spirited one, but the time for inaugurating the gigantic project was most inopportune. The year 1839 was one of famine prices, 1840 was one of speculative mania, the inevitable time of collapse came in 1841, and in 1842 the colony was in a condition of almost universal insolvency.

The career of the Boyd steamers could, under such circumstances, be scarcely anything else than one of failure. The *Seahorse* arrived in Hobart, from London, in August, 1841, and ran for a considerable time to Van Dieman's Land and Port Phillip during 1841 and 1842. She struck on a rock in the Tamar, and was afterwards laid up in Sydney, the *Shamrock* taking her place.

The *Cornubia* was a small paddle-steamer, and ran for some time—1845-1847—to the Hunter River, in opposition to the H.R.S.N. Company. Afterwards the Government chartered her, and Colonel Barney was sent to form a settlement in North Australia at Gladstone. Finally, the *Cornubia* was sent up to Hong Kong under sail. P. N. Russell and Co. bought the engines.

The *Juno* (P.S.) was built at Greenock for the St. George Company. The engines were made by Caird, of Greenock. The cost of the vessel was £30,000. No coastal work was

performed by the *Juno* beyond a trial trip. After being in Sydney for some years she was sold, and sent to Manilla. The *Seahorse*, grounded while on a trip to Van Dieman's Land, was bought by Mr. Thacker for £850, and became a wharf hulk at the Patent Slip, Darling Harbour. Benjamin Boyd, who carried on most extensive pastoral and whaling operations in the Monaro District and at Twofold Bay, where he established Boyd Town as a rendezvous for his whaling ships, was unfortunate in all his speculation, and during 1850 arranged to withdraw from the company with which he had been associated, receiving as his share three of his whalers, some land at Twofold Bay, and his yacht *Wanderer*. He set sail for the then newly-discovered diggings at California, his crew consisting largely of aboriginal natives. Not succeeding in this venture, he set sail again for Australia, and called at the island of Guadalcanar, one of the Solomon group. Going on shore with a black boy to shoot game, he was, it was said, murdered by the natives. Although expeditions were sent from Sydney to ascertain his whereabouts, he never was afterwards heard of. His partner and friend, Mr. Joseph Phelps Robinson, who was manager of the Royal Bank on Church Hill, was a member of the New South Wales Legislature for Port Philip, and was considered one of the ablest men in the Parliament of 1843.

THE "EMU."

In the notes of the first Parramatta steamer, *Australia*, it was stated that the steam traffic of the river was from 1833 to 1842 carried on by the *Experiment* and the *Australia*. In 1840, Mr. Edye Manning placed an order with the celebrated London shipbuilders, Ditchburn and Mare, for a fast, light draught, iron paddle steamer, specially for the Parramatta River trade, and during 1841 the vessel, afterwards named the *Emu*, was sent out in plates in the ship *Standerings*, and was put together by Mr. Struth, and launched at Struth's Wharf, January, 1842. The length of the hull was 94 feet, the beam 14 feet, with a depth of 6 feet, tonnage 65 tons. The load draught was only $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, enabling the vessel, as explained in the notice of the *Australia*, to proceed much nearer to the town of Parramatta than the screw steamers now in the trade can venture, the draught of the latter being from 6 to 8 feet. The engine of the *Emu* was jet condensing of 30-horse power; cylinder, 32 inches diameter; stroke, 34 inches; wheels, 12 feet in diameter. The *Emu*, both as regards speed and adaptability for the trade, was, for 20 years,

a thorough success, and when, 12 years afterwards, Mr. Manning found it necessary to augment his river boats, he made no material alteration, beyond substituting an oscillating for a side lever engine, when ordering the sister steamers, *Pelican* and *Black Swan*.

THE "COMET."

The veteran (colonial) steamer builder of Clarence Town, Mr. Lowe, seeing an opening on the Parramatta River for a second fast steamer to run with the *Emu*, laid down the *Comet*, a vessel somewhat larger than the iron boat, having one foot more beam. She was built at Clarence Town, and brought by the *James Watt* to Sydney. Hull, 99 x 15 x 6½ feet. The *Emu's* engine was 30-horse power; the *Comet's*, built by Mr. G. Coke, of Bathurst-street, Sydney, was 35-horse power. It made 26 revolutions, driving 14 feet wheels. Mr. Lowe had named his new steamer the *Harriett*, but the appearance of the great comet of 1843 (the largest and most brilliant of the 19th century, the tail extending over a distance of more than 60 degrees), induced him to change the vessel's name. Like the *Emu*, the *Comet*, owing to her light draught (2 feet 8 inches light; 3½ feet loaded), could run to the town. Mr. Lowe put Captain Livingstone, the late master of the *Ceres*, on board of his new steamer, which started running in July, 1843, but the rival vessels ultimately ran under a common ownership. With the exception of a short-lived opposition by Messrs. J. and W. Byrnes's small steamer *Native*, the Parramatta work was carried on until 1852 by the *Emu* and *Comet*, when the latter vessel was bought by Melbourne owners to meet the greatly increased traffic which had sprung up at Port Philip after the gold discovery of 1851. Similarly, after the New Zealand gold rush, a demand arose in that colony for small steamers, and the *Comet* was sent across, but never reached her destination, having been lost at sea on her journey.

During 1846 the steamer *Monarch* arrived at Hobart Town from the Clyde. She was 126 feet long, 16 feet beam, 7 feet 7 inches deep, and had engines of 70-horse power. She has been running for 56 years.

FERRY STEAMERS.

In March, 1841, there was built by Mr. Buddivant, for the North Shore Ferry Co., a wooden steam punt named *Princess*. A 20 horse power engine was imported for the

vessel; but it was a considerable time afterwards—August, 1842—that operations were commenced. Mr. Ralph Mansfield, the well-known secretary of the Gas Company, and the editor of the *Sydney Herald*, was secretary for the Ferry Company, which was intended for both vehicular and passenger traffic. The secretary of the Sydney Ferry Company in March, 1842, notifies that the *Princess* plies from dawn to dusk from Windmill-street to North Shore. Fare:—Passengers 3d., four-wheeled vehicles 2/6. On 11th June, 1844, after running 15 months, the hull of the *Princess* was sold for £60. The *Princess* engine was built under the supervision of Col. Barney, C.E., and cost £1800. The hull cost £1300. The speculation was an unfortunate one. The engine was taken out of the *Princess*, and sold for £275 to Mr. John Smith, of Newcastle, who used it in 1844 to drive a steam flour-mill in East Maitland.

The first regular passenger ferry boat to ply to the North Shore was the *Ferry Queen*. She was built by Chowne for two engineers, Messrs. Thomas and Joseph Gerard, who were, for many years, the only steam proprietors on the line. Mr. Thomas Gerard was an energetic and skilful workman. He had attained considerable reputation as engineer of the steamer *Victoria*, the colonial-built vessel before described as competing for some time successfully with the more powerful imported steamer *Rose*, on the Hunter River line. The Messrs. Gerard continued to build ferry steamers for some years. The *Brothers*, of 12 tons, built in 1847; the *Agenoria*, which, after the discovery of gold in 1851, was bought by Melbourne owners for £1000, and steamed to Port Philip. At that time all the ferry steamers were paddle boats. The first screw steamer to arrive in Australia was the *Keira* (built for Wollongong), which arrived in 1850, described afterwards.

During the depressed financial period of the early forties—1842-1845—few steamers were built, and scarcely any imported. In the *Herald* of April 20th, 1843, it is stated that there were no less than ten steamers unemployed in Sydney Harbour, viz.:—*James Watt*, *Tamar*, *Seahorse*, *Juno*, *Corsair*, *Cornubia*, *Australia*, *Experiment*, *Rapid*, and *Comet*. The last-named vessel, however, could only have been idle for a short time. She had only just been built, and was about commencing a successful career on the Parramatta River. Of the others, the *James Watt*, before referred to, ran occasionally north and south, and her engines were used in the new steamer *Eagle*. The *Tamar* was not long idle, the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company using her for the Northern River trade. The *Seahorse* became a wharf hulk

near the Patent Slip (Fotheringham), in Sussex-street; the *Junò* was sent to the China Sea; the *Corsair* to Hong Kong, after a short trial at towing in Sydney Harbour. The *Cornubia*, fitted as a schooner, also was sent to the East; the *Australia* (Parramatta pioneer) was, in 1846, converted to a schooner for Brisbane Water; the *Experiment*, in 1846, became the pioneer steamer between Brisbane and Ipswich.

THE "NATIVE."

In 1844, the Parramatta River trade was being carried on by the fast steamers *Emu* and *Comet*, a description of which two fine vessels has just been given; but in that year the Messrs. Byrnes, of Parramatta, determined to share the trade with the Sydney-owned vessels, and had the steamer *Native* built by Mr. Chowne, of Pyrmont. The new vessel was 60 feet long, of very light draught, and was propelled by a 12-horse power steeple engine, made by P. N. Russell, of Sydney. Engines of this type were much in vogue with the colonial engine builders of the period. They were cheaply made, occupied little space, and steam of about 45 pressure was supplied by a return flue cylindrical shell boiler. The engines were non-condensing, the furnace and return flue of the boiler were heart-shaped, sometimes not stayed, and as salt water was used scale accumulated, notwithstanding frequent blowing-off. After some months' competition with the *Emu* and *Comet*, the *Native* was withdrawn, and subsequently became the property of the owner of the rival steamers, Mr. Edey Manning, being used as an occasional steamer. In 1850, much excitement was caused by the explosion, attended with loss of life, of the little steamer's boiler. At the Coroner's inquest many expert witnesses were examined as to the cause of the explosion. The question of whether furnaces should be stayed or not was discussed. The evidence, as given in the *Herald* of October, 1850, is interesting, as showing the opinions held by the engineers on the strength of boilers half a century ago, and before Fairbairn had conducted his experiments on that subject.

The writer's father, some time afterwards, bought the steamer, had the flues properly stayed, and the boiler was worked with safety, care being taken to prevent the accumulation of scale, salt water being used. It is worthy of note that it was the explosion just referred to that induced the Government to pass in the Legislative Council the Steam Navigation Act of 1850, compelling owners of passenger steamers to have periodical surveys of boilers and engines,

the late Mr. E. O. Moriarty being the first engine surveyor of the first Steam Navigation Board. The engine of the *Native*, renamed the *Maid of the Mill*, was, in 1867, put in a small steamer called the *Pioneer*, built for Northern Queensland.

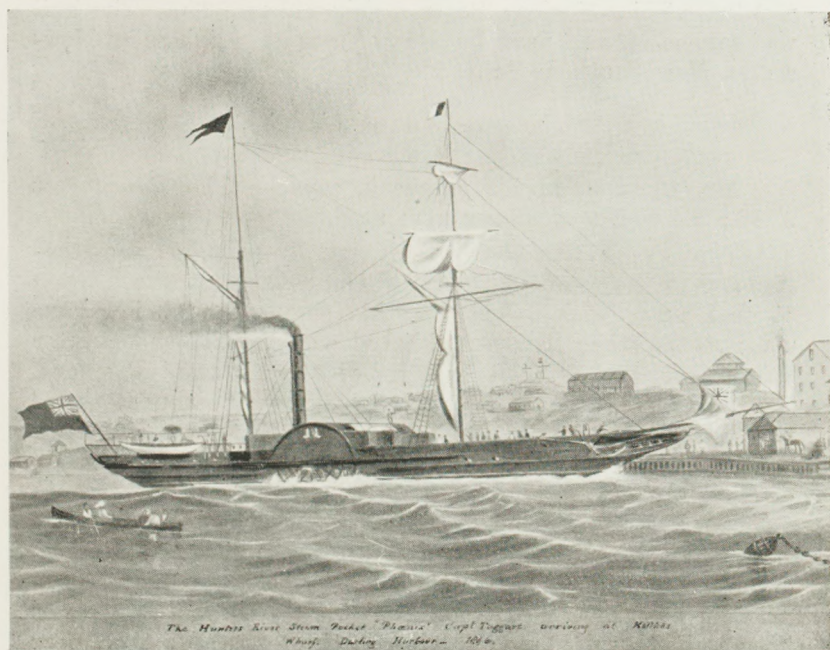
THE "WATERMAN."

Steam ferry traffic between Sydney and Balmain was carried on by the Balmain Ferry Company's steamer *Waterman*. Length, 50 feet; 8-horse power. Mr. Selge says that in 1855 the Balmain Company's ferry boat, *Waterman*, was the principal Balmain boat running to the bay near St. Mary's Church, now occupied by the Jubilee Dock. The *Waterman* was built by Robertson for Mr. Perdriau for £175 by agreement. In March, 1846, this steamer was sold by auction, and bought by Messrs. Entwisle and Maclaran for £300, but previous to this Messrs. E. and M. had the *Gipsy Queen* built for them by Mr. Chowne, to ply between Sydney and Johnson's Bay Ferry Wharf, at the rear of St. Patrick's Hotel, Balmain. The *Gipsy Queen's* engine was of the steeple type, similar to that of the *Native*. The boiler was made by Messrs. Rodgers, Buller, and McVeigh, of Sydney.

THE "SOPHIA JANE" AND "PHENIX."

The pioneer steamer *Sophia Jane*, from the time of her arrival—1831 up to 1841—was essentially a Hunter River steamer, owned first by Mr. Grose (who purchased her from her importers), and who, in 1839, sold her to John Thomas Wilson, who absconded shortly afterwards. The *Sophia Jane*, with the *Tamar*, being sold by order of the Supreme Court, were bought by the General Steam Navigation Company. When, in 1841, the iron steamers *Rose* and *Thistle* were placed on the Hunter River trade, the *Sophia Jane* was sent to ply to Wollongong and other southern ports. In 1844-5 she again appeared on the Hunter, running under the command of Captain Stericker, at low fares, in opposition to the iron steamers of the Hunter River Company. At this time she had passed into the hands of Mr. Edye Manning, and, although not an old vessel (having been built in 1826), her owner determined to break her up, and build a new vessel to receive her engines. The order was given to Mr. Chowne, who, six years before, had built the *Sovereign*, to take the machinery of the *King William the Fourth*, recovered after that vessel's wreck on the Oyster Bank, Newcastle. Mr. Manning's new

steamer rising, mythologically speaking, from the ashes of the *Sophia Jane*, was appropriately named after the fabled bird of antiquity, *Phœnix*. Mr. Chowne, in his notebook—for which I am indebted to Mr. Norman Selfe—says:—"Dimensions of steamer *Phœnix*: 118 feet, 129 feet on deck; breadth, outside, 19 feet 6 inches, inside 17 feet 10 inches; depth of hold, from top of skin, 8 feet 10 inches; depth of ship, 9 feet 7 inches; tonnage, 212. Price, £15 8s. per ton, or £3500. Began August, 1845; launched 24th June, 1846." The draught, light, was 5½ feet. The *Sophia Jane*, it will be remembered, was 125 feet in length, and of 20 feet beam. The finer lines resulted in a slight increase in speed of the new vessel over the old. The *Phœnix's* time from the Sow and Pigs to Kellick's Wharf was 37 minutes. Kellick's was practically the Illawarra Company's Wharf, and from it both the southern steamers and the Parramatta boats ran. The illustration given, is from a painting made in 1846, and is interesting, as it shows the class of steamer 55 years ago, the wharves between Erskine and Margaret street, and the few buildings that were at that time in existence between the Observatory and Darling Harbour.



The Hunter River Steam Vessel "Phœnix" Capt. Teggart, working at Kellick's Wharf, Darling Harbour—1846.

THE "PHŒNIX," BUILT IN 1846 FOR ENGINES OF
"SOPHIA JANE."

The engine of the *Sophia Jane*, as before stated, was of 50-horse power, and was made by Barnes and Miller, of London (pupils of James Watt). Boilers in the early days, even although carrying 5 or 6 pounds pressure, were short-lived, and a new one was made for the *Phoenix* by Mr. John Struth, who also fitted the machinery in the new vessel. The *Sophia Jane* had, during her last days, been running to the Hunter, in opposition to the Hunter River Company, who, finding that Mr. Manning was having the *Phoenix* built to continue the contest, gave an order to Mr. Chowne to build a fast river steamer, the *Raven*, to share the Parramatta trade with their opponent. The *Phoenix* started running to the Hunter in October, 1846, but the competition did not last long. A mutual arrangement by the rival owners was made, whereby the monopoly of the Hunter trade remained with the Hunter River Company's steamers *Rose* and *Thistle*, and the Parramatta traffic with Mr. Manning's vessels, *Emu* and *Comet*. The *Phoenix* went to the Clarence, and the *Raven* which proved to be a fast boat, was bought by Mr. Coutts for the Brisbane and Ipswich trade, never having ran in Sydney. Although a fast steamer, the *Raven* was not very successful at Moreton Bay, and, returning to Sydney, she was wrecked at the Macleay River in November, 1850. The hull was recovered, and used for many years as a lighter at Newcastle, New South Wales.

THE "RAVEN."

Mr. Chowne, in his notebook, says:—"The *Raven* cost £900; 254 sheets of copper were used."

The *Raven* was the first diagonally-built steamer constructed in the colony. Her length was 86 feet on keel, beam 15 feet, and depth 6 feet, and her engines and boiler were made at the then newly-established workshop of the Hunter River Company, at what was called the "Island," Pymont, the site of the future shop and extensive engineering works of the Hunter River Company's successors, the Australasian Steam Navigation Company. The first engineering manager of the works was Mr. John Fyfe, who came to the colony in 1841 as engineer of the company's pioneer iron steamer, the *Rose*. As Mr. Fyfe occupied a leading position in the engineering annals of this country, a brief reference may appropriately be made to his early training in Scotland. He was born at Rutherglen, says a writer in the *Australian Star*, near Glasgow, in 1803, served his apprenticeship at the engineering and millwright establishment of Claud Girdwood and

Co., of Glasgow. He had charge, in 1839, of the machinery of the first screw steamer, the *Archimides*, designed by Winhurst, of London. Subsequently, he worked at Fairbairn's Millwall Engineering Works, where the steamer *Rose* was built, and he was selected as her engineer, arriving in Sydney in April, 1841. In September, 1845, he was appointed Superintending Engineer of the Pymont engine works of the company. His first work was designing and building the engines of the steamer *Raven*; his next, erecting and altering the engines of the *James Watt*, and making a new boiler, the first multi-tubular one built in the colony. The *Eagle*, referred to later on, was built for this machinery. Mr. Fyfe continued in charge of the works for eight years, when he started business at an engine factory of his own in Pymont. Mr. Fyfe was chosen as the first President of the Engineering Association of New South Wales.

THE "EAGLE."

The launch of the steamer *Eagle*, built by Mr. Chowne for the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company, for the Moreton Bay trade, is thus described in the *Herald* of August 24th, 1848:—"There is no portion of the industrial pursuits of the colony which has made more satisfactory progress than ship building. Vessels of considerable burthen and admirably adapted for the trades for which they are designed, have been launched, not only in Sydney, but at the Hunter, Williams, Macleay, Clarence, and Richmond Rivers.

"Scarcely a week passes in which our columns do not record the arrival of a new vessel to be added to an already large fleet of colonial shipping. Among the vessels thus built have been several steamers. The first was the little *Surprise*, built for Mr. H. J. Smith, and since then there have been the *Australia*, *Comet*, *Kangaroo*, and *Raven*, river boats; and the *William the Fourth*, *Ceres*, *Victoria*, *Sovereign*, and *Phoenix*, sea-going vessels. (To this list might have been added the *Maitland*, *Experiment*, and *Aphrasia*.) We have now the pleasure of adding another to the list. Yesterday was the day fixed for the launch of the new steamer built by Mr. Chowne for the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company, the largest steamer yet built in the colony." It is further stated that 2000 persons assembled on the occasion, and that the name *Eagle* was given by the then Colonial Secretary, Mr. E. Deas Thomson. The dimensions were: Length overall, 169 feet 6 inches; length on keel, 141 feet; beam, 20 feet 6 inches between the paddle boxes; over boxes, 37 feet 6 inches; ton-

nage, builder's measurement, 310 tons, and 170 exclusive of engine-room. The depth of hold was 10 feet 2 inches. The engines (2) were jet condensing, and of 40-horse power each. The cylinders were 41 inches in diameter, the length of stroke was 42 inches, the paddle wheels were 16 feet 8 inches in diameter. Although a good safe, sea-going boat, the *Eagle* was not fast. The *Victoria*, built on the Hunter River eight years before her, with engines of similar power and hull of almost the same length and beam, was quite a mile an hour faster. For six years the *Eagle* was the Moreton Bay steamer, and on the arrival of the *Boomerang*, a fast iron vessel, she was withdrawn from the trade, ran for a short time south, and, after being tried as a tug in Sydney Harbour, was converted into a screw steamer, a pair of 25-horse power oscillatory engines from the (wooden) *City of Melbourne* being fitted into her. In her altered state, although having but little power, she was fairly successful, having for many years performed excellent work, much of it of a pioneering character in developing the coasting trade of Northern Queensland. About 25 years ago, the *Eagle* was bought by the late Captain William Summerbell for a collier, and she is now a coal hulk in Sydney Harbour. Mr. Chowne, in his notebook, says:—
"Signed agreement with Hunter River Navigation Company on 1st May, 1847. Price, £17 5s. per ton, or for 307 tons, £5300. Settled for building 27th July, 1849; started for Moreton Bay, first trip, 27th July, 1849, 18 minutes past 8. 303 tons. Length of keel for tonnage, 147 feet 9 inches."

Taking up the history of the *Phoenix* (for connected as it is with the gold discovery, it is worth telling at some length), she was last referred to as being sent by Mr. Manning to trade to the Clarence River in 1846. Running at an average speed of about eight knots, the little vessel met the requirements of the Clarence River inhabitants satisfactorily for more than three years. She was commanded by Captain Wiseman, and her return cargoes consisted largely of wool, tallow, timber, agricultural settlement not having at that time made much progress. Early in 1850 she met with a serious disaster, resulting in her abandonment. On the 27th February, 1850, she left Grafton for Sydney, but owing to the heavy southerly weather remained behind the bar until the morning of the 3rd March. At 11 a.m. she crossed out for Sydney, but shortly afterwards a furious southerly gale came up, and, losing steerage way, she fell off with her head on shore, drifting rapidly to a low rocky point not far south from the South Head of the Clarence. The mainsail was set, and the port anchor let go, but the cable soon parted. The starboard

anchor chain met with a similar result, but fortunately the vessel drifted into a small sandy bay, just clear of the reef, and she was quickly thrown high and dry. All hands were saved, and brought to Sydney by a passing vessel, the *Eagle*.

The *Phoenix* was not insured. Her owners were Mr. Edye Manning and his brother Mr. W. M. Manning, afterwards Sir William. Her value was estimated variously from £6000 to £10,000. Probably £6000 would fairly represent it. The wreck was submitted to auction, but apparently was not sold, for the owners started vigorously to work, had the machinery taken overland, launched the hull, brought it to Sydney, and succeeded in so rehabilitating the *Phoenix* that she was able to resume running to the Clarence in the following year. A trial trip, Captain Benaud in command, is reported as taking place in Sydney Harbour in 1851:—"Unmerciful disaster followed fast, and followed faster" in the case of the *Phoenix*, for she had only been running again six months, when, Captain Benaud in charge, she struck the Clarence Bar, when entering on the 14th April, 1852, and was swept over on to the north beach a total wreck, and was embedded in the sand." Thirty-two years afterwards, the engine was seen, having become uncovered after a heavy south-east gale. An interesting train of circumstances, to which the first stranding of the *Phoenix* gave rise, was the formation of the first Clarence and Richmond River Company.

THE STORY OF THE STEAMER "CLARENCE."

When Captain Wiseman returned to Sydney after the *Phoenix* went on the beach, a number of Clarence River squatters and some Sydney merchants, formed a provisional committee, and resolved to depute Captain Wiseman to go to England, with the object of getting a powerful iron steamer built for the Grafton trade. This was in the year before the gold discovery. During 1851 Captain Wiseman, after visiting the various ship-building establishments, and obtaining prices, decided to accept the tender of Mr. John Laird, of Birkenhead, for the new steamer, the engines to be built by Faucett, Preston, and Co., of Liverpool.

For ten years no order had been sent to England for ocean paddle steamers. The *Rose*, *Thistle*, and *Shamrock* had been imported in 1841, and the colonists were proud of their performances. The two former had a speed of over 12 miles an hour. Their owners had sent for two more vessels about the same time that Captain Wiseman left for his new vessel, and it was confidently predicted that the steamers of 1841

would, notwithstanding the improvements of a decade, be able to hold the "pride of place," and they did so. The *Clarence*, though a strong and excellent vessel, did not, in speed, come up to the *Rose* or *Thistle*.

But gold had been discovered. The steam fleet of the colony was utterly inadequate to meet the trade between Melbourne and Sydney, and the owners of the *Clarence*, finding they had in their vessel, as was quoted when she was sold, "the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dream of avarice," ignored the northern trade, and, after testing the *Clarence*, as she was called, for a month on the Hunter, advertised her for sale by auction in Sydney, with the result that she was bought to trade between Melbourne and Launceston, for £29,950. She had cost, delivered in Sydney, £12,997, a profit on the venture of £17,000 having been made. No such profit has, perhaps, ever before or since been made on a vessel 152 feet long, and 23 feet beam, with a speed of but little more than 10 knots. But the *Clarence*, it must be admitted, was a good substantial vessel, an excellent sea boat, and had as her builder one of the foremost shipbuilders in Britain. The engines were of the old side lever jet condensing type; the wheels had not feathering floats. The only innovations were tubular boilers, a donkey engine, and steam winches for discharging cargo. Meanwhile, the *Clarence*, having gone south, Captain Wiseman was despatched to England to have another steamer built.

THE "KEIRA."

Before the year 1850, the steam trade to the South Coast was irregular and uncertain. At one time Jervis Bay promised to be a profitable port to ply to, the *Sophia Jane* occasionally making trips there, and Wollongong, as far back as 1839, was visited by the *William the Fourth* and the *Maitland*, these vessels making also occasional trips to Gosford (Brisbane Water). The *Kangaroo* had for a time run to Wollongong. When, in 1857, it was announced that the first iron screw steamer that had been built for Australia was launched by Mr. Toward, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, for Mr. Henry Gilbert Smith, and that her name was the *Keira*, it looked as if the people of the southern ports were likely to have a steamer at last upon whose service they could rely, the name given being taken as indicating that the new vessel would be employed permanently in the Wollongong trade. The *Keira* arrived in Sydney on January 5th, 1852. She had left Southampton on the 12th August, 1851. The overall length

was 102 feet, with 20 feet 5 inches beam, and 10 feet 5 inches depth. The gross tonnage was 169; the engine-room space was 55 6-10 tons. Nearly all the early screw steamers had multiplying gear, and so had the *Keira*. The engines, by Robert Stephenson and Son, were well finished, and were among the first of the firm's marine jobs, locomotive machinery being the speciality of Messrs. Stephenson. The diameter of the cylinders was 29½ inches; the length of the stroke 30 inches. The cabin was luxuriously fitted up, mahogany, marble, and gilding below, and the newest type of skylights with stained-glass windows above. The vessel's speed was good. Experiments with Sir Thomas Mitchell's boomerang propeller were made, and, although the results were equal to those obtained with the ordinary screw, the Mitchell propeller was taken off, because it could not be made of sufficient strength if the inventor's lines were adhered to. The jubiliations of the South Coast inhabitants were not of long duration. The owners of the *Clarence* had made a profitable investment by selling their steamer for the southern trade, and Mr. Smith followed their example, the *Keira* being sold to a Mr. Cowie to trade between Melbourne and Geelong. The purchase money was £10,500.

THE "YARRA-YARRA" AND "WARATAH."

In the year 1850, the Port Phillip and Moreton Bay trades carried on by the *Shamrock* to Melbourne, and the *Eagle* to Brisbane, had slowly expanded, and the directors of the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company felt warranted in ordering an additional steamer from Britain for each port. Doubtful, however, as to full employment being found for the two old, and the two new, steamers at the southern and northern ports, they directed Captain McKellar, who was commissioned to proceed to England, to stipulate that the vessels should be suitable also for the Hunter River trade. The *Victoria*, 155 feet in length, had been the longest steamer employed on the Hunter, and 165 feet was given as the limit for going round the Devil's Elbow, between Morpeth and Raymond Terrace. By this reservation both the *Yarra Yarra* and the *Waratah* were neither satisfactory for the Hunter nor for the long sea trips south and north. Fifty years have passed since, and without any dredging or alteration to the approaches to the Devil's Elbow, the paddle steamers, *Namoi*, 250 feet in length and of 1200 tons, constantly passes the once dreaded bend in the river, and the *Newcastle*, of 265 feet, has negotiated it. Both the *Yarra* and *Waratah* were built by

Caird and Co., of Greenock. The former vessel was 165 feet in length, 26 feet 4 inches beam, 120-horse power, and had a draught of 8 feet; the latter 165 x 26 feet, 200-horse power, having cylinder 54 inches diameter, with 8 feet draught also. The *Yarra* arrived in Sydney 5th April, 1852; the *Waratah* 10 days before her. Excepting that both steamers had multi-tubular boilers (brass tubes), there was no striking difference between the engines and those of the pioneer iron steamers of the company imported in 1841. Feathering paddle-wheels and oscillating cylinders had not then come into general use, nor had the link motion for slide valves. The latter, especially in the larger vessels, were heavy to work, part of the starting equipment being blocks and tackle on the starting lever, with firemen assisting the engineer. The paddle-wheels of the ordinary type were of large diameter, 22 feet. The *Rose* and *Thistle* had flush decks; the later vessels had poop decks 2 feet 9 inches, which made the saloons very commodious. The upholstery was very fine, but the speed of the steamers, owing to the proportion of the hulls, for reasons just explained, was disappointing, being about 10 knots per hour. But the vessels were welcomed by the travelling public. The trade between Sydney and Melbourne, owing to the rich gold yields of Ballarat, Mount Alexander, and Bendigo, was enormous, sailing and steam vessels being alike crowded on deck and below with vehicles and passengers. Numerous steamers commenced to arrive from California and Britain for sale, and if not sold, were started to run with passengers and cargo between Sydney and Port Phillip. One of the earliest of these from San Francisco was the

“CONSIDER” (Iron Steamer),

of 350 tons, and 60-horse power. She had been built for the Hamburg trade at Newcastle-on-Tyne, with engines by Marshall in 1847, and no satisfactory price having been bid at auction in Sydney, she was advertised for passengers to Melbourne in March, 1852. Six months after that she was wrecked off Port Phillip Heads. A few months after another steamer which had been sent from America for sale, the *Monumental City*, was wrecked (May, 1853) off Gabo Island. Thirty lives were lost. Late in 1852 there arrived in Melbourne the steamer *Rajah Wallie*, 180 feet x 26 x 18 feet, with engines of 240-horse power; draught, 14 feet; speed, 11 knots.

THE "BALLARAT."

The Hunter River Company, when sending for their new iron steamers, ordered a small iron cargo steamer, in which the engine of the wrecked steamer *Raven* was to be fitted. It was brought out in pieces in the hold of the *Yarra Yarra*. The hull, 108 feet x 16½, was quickly put together in Sydney, and the machinery put on board, and as steamers were urgently required in Victoria, the new boat which was named the *Ballarat*, was sent to Melbourne. For some years, owing to her light draught, she was usefully employed on the Yarra, but, being slow, was withdrawn, when faster steamers competed for the carrying trade, and sailed to the Hunter River to lighter hay for the company's Sydney steamers employed on that river.

It was during 1851 that the directors of the Hunter River Steam Company, to meet the fast growing southern and northern trades, resolved to take a bold stroke in extending operations by increasing the capital to £350,000, for the purchase of suitable steamers. It was determined to abandon the original name of the company for a more representative one, and the designation of Australasian Steam Navigation Company was chosen. The re-modelled company started under very favourable auspices. It is true that some complaints were made owing to the neglect of some of their trades, but the conditions in which the directors were placed were without parallel, owing to the gold discovery. They had deserved well of the colonists. Their first steamers were fast and reliable, and they spared no expense to uphold them in good sea-going condition. Although a local company, they had done their best with the limited means at command to maintain communication with Moreton Bay and the Clarence River on the north, and Melbourne and Launceston on the south (the *Eagle*, *Tamar*, and *Shamrock* being so employed), while their original trade, the Hunter, was served by the *Rose*, *Thistle*, and *Maitland*. The *Thistle* had made an occasional trip both north and south, and held the record in speed between Sydney and Melbourne—48 hours—and Moreton Bay to Sydney Wharf in January, 1845—46 hours—until 1854. After the Australasian Steam Navigation Company was legally in existence, the directors sent their manager, Mr. James Paterson, to England, to have six first-class iron steamers built, and to send out the necessary material for a patent slip and engineering tools for their Pymont establishment. The vessels at that time ordered were the fast paddle steamer *Telegraph*, screw steamers *Wonga Wonga*, and *City*

of *Sydney* for the Melbourne trade, the screw steamer *Boomerang* for Brisbane, the paddle steamer *Brisbane* for the same port, and the fast paddle boat *Illalong* for the Hunter River. A small steamer, the *Samson*, was also ordered. Particulars of these vessels, their speeds, and the names of the builders, will be given when the period 1854 is being dealt with.

During 1851 the largest steamer that had been built at Port Phillip was launched and named the *City of Melbourne*. Her length was 135 feet, beam 20 feet, and draught only 5 feet. Built of wood, she had a pair of well-finished oscillating engines of 25-horse power by Penn, of London. With so little power, she could only be regarded as an auxiliary screw steamer, but it is worth noting that she was the first screw steamer built in the colonies (the *Keira* of 1852 was imported), and the oscillating engines of the *City of Melbourne* were the first of the type used in Australasia. It was said of the *William the Fourth* by her captain that she had not enough power to get into danger, but this could not be claimed for the *City of Melbourne*. ...She went on shore at King's Island, August, 1852, was floated, and was sold afterwards for £6850. Her speed was 7 knots. She ran occasionally to the Hunter, having been bought by the A.S.N. Company, again went on shore at the Oyster Bank, Newcastle, had her fine little engines taken out and put in the altered paddle-steamer *Eagle*. The *City of Melbourne* subsequently, as a sailing vessel, traded north, having been bought by Captain Maclean, for many years a member of the N.S.W. Marine Board.

THE "PHÆBE."

It was in the year 1851 that the *Phæbe*, the oldest iron steamer now afloat in Australia, was built; and, although she did not come to the colonies as one of the Panama Company's steamers, the date of building is deserving of notice in any record of steam navigation in Australia. The *Phæbe*, now the property of Messrs. J. and A. Brown, of Newcastle, was built to run between Southampton and Capetown. Her first trip occupied 21 days 16 hours. Subsequently she was engaged as a blockade runner, and, as stated, became the property of the Panama Mail Company.

Just before gold was found in Australia, some correspondence took place in the *Times* respecting the subject of sending steamers to the colony for sale, and one of the letters is here given with the object of showing how unprofitable steam property was in Australia from 1841 to 1851.

The diggings upset all calculations, but at the time it was written, the "Sydney Merchant's" strictures were quite justifiable.

Letter to the "Times."

Sir,—I feel confident you would not willingly mislead the English public, even in colonial matters.

In your city article of May 23rd (the month gold was first announced as being discovered at Bathurst, N.S.W.), I observe you have given publicity to a letter from some party in Sydney, dated January 4th, 1851, which, if not explained, might lead the owners of steam boats in this country to send a fleet of them to that colony, to the injury of existing interests there, and to certain loss to the parties sending them.

In 1842 the Hunter River Company paid a dividend of 8 per cent., and for several years previously did not average 6 per cent. In 1850 they certainly paid 10 besides putting up a sum for insurance, but it must be remembered that colonial interest is 8 to 10 per cent. It is true that shares of the new company have lately been selling at par, also that for some time they were not worth in the Sydney market more than £5 for £13 paid-up. The cause of this was the very thing the writer of the letter of the 4th January recommended, viz., the introduction of a quantity of steamers into the colony. Perhaps your correspondent is not aware of the frightful loss sustained by the owner of the steamers *Juno* and *Seahorse*. The Royal Bank of Australia could give him some useful information on this point. Your correspondent does not tell you that the shares of this company, which were for years selling at £5 per share, originally cost £13, and I warn parties from being misled by such statements as you have published. For the information of your correspondent, I beg to add that the Hunter River Company are at present building three iron steamers (*Yarra Yarra*, *Waratah*, and *Ballarat*) on the Clyde, to send there in September next.

Yours most respectfully,

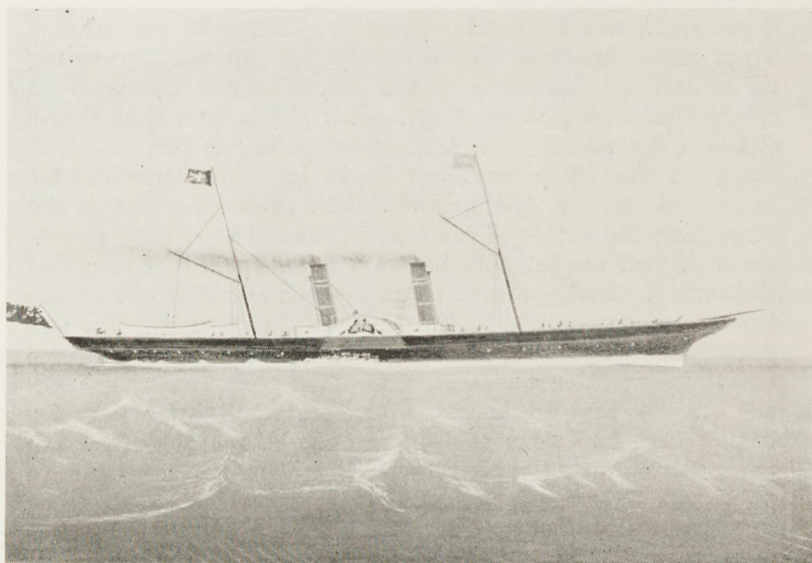
"A SYDNEY MERCHANT."

THE H. R. NEW STEAM NAVIGATION CO.

In chronological order, the formation of the Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company should be noticed. The shippers on the Hunter felt aggrieved at the scant attention paid them after the gold discovery by the new A.S.N. Company. The *Maitland* had been sold to a Melbourne firm; the *Rose* and *Thistle* were not equal to the trade, which, owing



to the gold discovery, had increased very considerably. Public meetings were held in the Hunter River district, and as money was plentiful, it was resolved to organise a purely local steam company, with the designation of the Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company, and a capital of £40,000. The company followed very closely the lines of the old Hunter River Company, formed 12 years before. The old company had imported the three iron paddle-steamers, *Rose*, *Thistle*, and *Shamrock*. These vessels had been conspicuously successful. The new company determined to import three slightly larger, and of less draught. The capital having been subscribed, the directors, consisting of Messrs. B. Russell, John Portus, James Dickson, Peter Green, Andrew Lang, and



THE "HUNTER."

Edward Ogg, entrusted Messrs. W. Walker and Co., who had acted in a similar capacity for the old company, to import their vessels. Mr. John Dudgeon, of London, was chosen as the consulting engineer. The steamers were the *Hunter*, *Williams* and *Paterson*. Mr. Chowne says the cost of the *Hunter* P.S. was £14,326, and the *Paterson* £14,699. They were built by Macnab and Clark, of Greenock. The first steamer, the *Hunter*, 150 long, 20 feet beam, and of 6 feet draught, attained a speed of 15 statute miles per hour. The engines were of 120-horse power; the cylinders were 42 inches in diameter; the stroke was 3 feet 6 inches; the wheels were

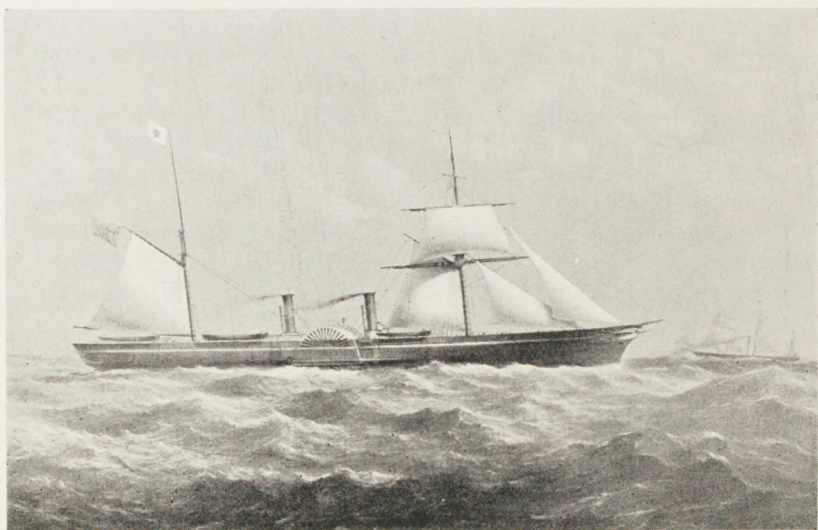
of the feathering type. The other two steamers, the *Williams* and *Paterson*, had 2 feet 6 inches more beam, but were in other respects identical with the *Hunter*. While the H.R. New Company's steamers were being built, the Australasian Steam Navigation Company had not been idle. The six vessels before mentioned as having been ordered through their manager, Mr. J. Paterson, had been built on the Clyde, and their fast paddle-steamer, the *Illalong*, intended for the Hunter River trade, had arrived in the colony some months before the *Hunter*. ...The Australasian Steam Navigation Company had also purchased, for £20,000, the steamer *Collaroy*, ordered by Messrs. Thacker and Co., as a speculation after the *Clarence* had been so successfully sold in 1852. The *Collaroy* was one of the first vessels arriving fitted with feathering floats, and oscillating cylinders, and, although not the fastest, was for 25 years the favourite steamer on the Hunter River line. She was 156 feet in length, of 23 feet beam, and of 120-horse power. Her builder was Laird, of Birkenhead. The *Illalong* (native name for Morpeth) was about 10 feet longer than the *Hunter*, was of the same beam, and the engines were of the same power. When the *Hunter* arrived, the struggle for pride of place commenced in earnest between the *Illalong* and the *Hunter*, recalling to memory the racing 14 years before between the *Victoria* and the *Rose* over the same course. Sometimse the *Hunter* was the victor, less frequently the *Illalong*. The H.R.N.S.N. Company's two cargo steamers, as they were called, were, as far as speed was concerned, very little behind the *Hunter* and the *Illalong*, certainly not half a knot per hour; the *Collaroy* was of the same speed as the *Williams* and *Paterson*. For about 18 months both companies were losing money, and at last an understanding was arrived at by arranging that the steamers, instead of leaving Morpeth together in the morning, should start at 7 a.m. and 2 p.m., and at Sydney the departures were 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. The vessels of each company ran these hours month about. The arrangement was a most equitable one. The public appreciated the convenience, and it existed, with distinct benefit to both companies, for many years. The *Hunter*, on 7th April, 1855, ran from Bradley's Head to Pinchgut (one nautical mile) in 4 minutes 45 seconds.

THE SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE COMPANY.

See Appendix B, page 63.

During the year 1853-4, steamers from England and elsewhere flocked to Sydney, chiefly for sale, and some wealthy Sydney merchants, foremost among them Messrs. G. A. Lloyd,

R. M. Robey, Fairfax, and Tuting, determined to form a Company to be called the Sydney and Melbourne Steam Packet Company, to share with the A.S.N. Company the trade between Sydney and Melbourne. The steamers purchased were the *Hellespont*, *London*, and *New Orleans*. The last-named was a large American paddle-steamer. Her name was changed to *Governor General*. The *Hellespont* was a pretty little iron screw steamer sent out for sale by the General Screw Steam Company. Her companion ship, the *Propontis*, was employed in the Cape of Good Hope trade, where the *Hellespont* also had for a short time been employed. These vessels were about 180 feet in length, 23 feet beam, and of about 80 nominal horse-power, with a speed under sail and canvas of



THE "PACIFIC,"

Built 1854 for the Sydney and Melbourne Coy., by J. Scott Russell, London
(Speed 14 knots.)

about 11 knots. The *London* was a wooden paddle-steamer 183 feet in length and of 28 feet beam, with powerful side lever engines. She was formerly employed between London and Scotland, had excellent accommodation, and a speed of about 10 knots. The three steamers were well patronised, and so satisfied was the company with their prospects that they had ordered from Scott Russell, of London, an iron paddle-steamer, to be luxuriantly fitted, and to have a speed of 14 knots. This fine vessel, having attained that speed, arrived in Sydney early in 1855. She was 260 feet in length, 32 feet

6 inches beam, and had oscillating engines of 500 nominal horse power, driving feathering paddle wheels. Before leaving England the agent for the company was offered £60,000 for her for transport purposes, for the Crimean War, which, at that time was being carried on. The temptation of a ship-full of first-class passengers to Sydney, and a brisk trade between Sydney and Melbourne on her arrival, outweighed the Crimean offer; and the *Pacific* came to Sydney, to the bitter regret of the Australian directorate. The *Telegraph*, the crack steamer of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, had arrived before the *Pacific*, and, although not so large, was unmistakably a faster steamer than the splendid vessel of the Sydney and Melbourne Company. The *Telegraph* was 194 feet long, 23 feet beam, and 13 feet deep. A resolve was made at once by the owners of the *Pacific* to send her back to England for sale. On her trip out she had been crowded with first-class passengers, and when her return was notified the passenger's list, all first-class, was quickly filled by returning colonists at rates from £130 to £110 each. But it was too late. The Crimean War was drawing to a close, and on the arrival of the *Pacific* in London in 1855, no adequate offer could be obtained for her, and, although she was chartered to bring troops home from the war, and was subsequently sent to trade across the Atlantic, the whole speculation was fraught with disaster to the shareholders of the Sydney and Melbourne Company, who, with a diminishing local trade, gradually shortened sail, disposing of their steamers *Governor-General* and *London* to their rivals, the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, who had been entirely successful with the six steamers before referred to as being ordered through their manager, Mr. J. Paterson. Of these, the *City of Sydney*, the *Wonga Wonga*, and *Telegraph* were, on their arrival in 1854, immediately placed on the Sydney and Melbourne trade. The *Boomerang* went to Brisbane, and the *Illalong* to the Hunter.

AUSTRALASIAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY'S PATENT SLIP.

(See Appendix, C, p. 63.)

When Mr. Paterson returned to the colony with his fleet of steamers in 1854, he brought with him, for his company, the necessary machinery for a patent slip, suited for vessels of 1000 tons, and engineering and boiler-making tools, with the object of extending the before-mentioned workshops at Pymont, and putting down a patent slip for the use of the company's steamers. High-class mechanics from the best Clyde workshops came out in the *Wonga Wonga*, and it is no

exaggeration to state that incalculable benefits resulted to the shipping trade of the colony from this well-considered action of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company. For more than a quarter of a century the slip and engineering workshop of the company was accorded a foremost place in Australasia. Work of a high-class character could always be relied upon at the company's works, while the facilities afforded by the slip were availed of very extensively. Perhaps the most conspicuous benefit accruing to the company arose from increasing the value of their steamers by lengthening them at the works. The first experiment of the kind was



THE A.S.N. SLIP AND WORKS, "THE ISLAND," 1871.

"AUCKLAND" on Slip, "YARRA YARRA" alongside Slip.

Moored together, "CITY OF BRISBANE" inside, "PATERSON" outside.

with the *Collaroy*, both carrying capacity and speed being increased. The *Telegraph* was lengthened with like results, and subsequently the *Yarra Yarra*, *Auckland*, *Boomerang*, *Leichhardt*, *Florence Irving*, and many others were similarly dealt with. But it was in the construction of marine boilers that the A.S.N. Company chiefly excelled. For many years the boiler-making establishment of the company was abso-

lutely unequalled in Australasia. Later, Mort's Dock establishment became a rival, but for the decade 1857 to 1867 the Pyrmont works of the company held undisputed sway. Before the introduction of compound engines and high-pressure boilers, the lifetime of marine boilers seldom averaged more than eight years. The working pressure seldom exceeded 30 lbs. per square inch. The boilers were of the rectangular type, with wet uptakes, which had to be renewed about every four years. Surface condensation had not become generally adopted, and the boilers had to be scaled monthly. The workmanship of the A.S.N. Company was always considered better than that of the imported boilers. ⁴ Before the revolution in steam navigation, brought about ~~up~~ the use of steel for boilers of higher pressures, and compound engines, the facilities for repairs and new work enjoyed by the company were a distinct advantage; but subsequently they were just as distinctly disadvantageous. Instead of selling the old type of steamers and having others built on the compound principle, as the P. and O. did, the directors of the A.S.N. Company continued altering their old vessels at their works, at a cost greater than new vessels could have been imported for, the high prices paid to colonial workmen being a serious handicap. Other companies imported up-to-date steamers, and successfully competed with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, and this was one of the many causes which led to the downfall of the company. Other causes will be referred to later on.

The Sydney and Melbourne Company, and the Hunter River N.S.N. Company, have already been referred to. The other New South Wales Companies of the decade, 1851-1861, claim a passing notice, notably, the Clarence and Richmond River, and the South Coast Companies. The story of the Clarence has been told, and Captain Wiseman had been sent to England to have a second *Clarence* built for the Clarence trade. It was not until February, 1855, that this second steamer reached Sydney. She was, in many respects, a duplicate of the *Clarence*, scarcely so fast, but unusually strong. 140 feet long, width 23 feet. Captain Wiseman was essentially conservative. Nearly everything about the *Grafton* (the name of the new steamer) was old-fashioned. Common radial wheels and steeple engines, 40 inches in diameter of cylinder. The vessel arrived at the same time as the Hunter River, N.S.N. Company's steamer, *Hunter*, and was quite two knots an hour slower than either the *Hunter* or the *Illalong*.

When the *Keira*, in 1852, was sold to a Melbourne firm, a small iron paddle-steamer, the *Illawarra*, was built in Britain for the Wollongong trade. She continued running to Wollongong and other southern parts for some years, when she was sent for sale to China.

In 1854, the small iron paddle-steamer *Kiama*, built for a local company, arrived, and ran to Kiama. Captain Charles, the veteran navigator, and legislator, brought the vessel out, and ran her before he was elected member for the district. This little steamer, now 50 years old, is still afloat in Sydney Harbour.

Between the years 1851 and 1855 a large number of steamers came to Sydney for sale, and ran for short periods on the coast. Nearly all of them had seen service in England or elsewhere. A still larger number came to Melbourne. Among the former were the *William Miskin*, *Corio*, *Iron Prince*, *Ann*, *Sir John Harvey*, *Cleopatra*, *William Denny*, *Washington*, *Norah Creina*, *Fettercairn*, *Manchester*, *City of Norfolk*, *Pirate*, and *Unicorn*. The *Cleopatra* was brought out by Captain Francis Cadell, the pioneer of Upper Murray River navigation. His first river steamer (paddle), the *Lady Augusta*, was built in Sydney, and engined by P. N. Russell and Co., who made the engines for the *Huntress*, built on the Manning River. During this period Mr. William Marshall had two paddle-steamers built in Sydney, and engined by Young and Mather—the *Star* and *Planet*. Both of them went to the Yarra. Melbourne was the centre of attraction in the early fifties for steamers sent from Britain for sale. The Geelong-Melbourne trade was especially suited for such of the river Clyde steamers of the tourist type as had been replaced by faster excursion vessels. Among those that came to Port Phillip before 1855 were the *Citizen*, *Beadalbane*, and *Duncan Hoyle*, *Victoria*, *Barwon*, *Wonga* (small steamer), *Rajah Wallie*, *West Wind* (wrecked), *Monumental City* (wrecked), *Fenella*, *Geelong*, *Havilah*, *Lioness*, *North Star*, *Phoenix* (from Cape Town), and the *Queen*.

The steamer trade from Victoria and New South Wales to Tasmania has been referred to as being carried on by the *Shamrock*, *Yarra Yarra*, and *Waratah* of the A.S.N. Company, and by the *Clarence*.

The steamer *Tasmania* was built before 1854 for the Tasmanian Company, and, during 1854, a very fast screw steamer, the *City of Hobart*, built on the Clyde for Tasmanian owners, arrived. Apart from her speed (13 knots) her most noticeable feature was having the propeller outside the rudder (Beattie's patent).

APPENDIX A.

NARRATIVE OF THE WRECK OF THE "SOVEREIGN,"

As told by Mr. KNIGHT, and the Moreton Bay *Courier*

Amid all the troubles none bore more heavily nor had such a marked effect on the struggling inhabitants than the wreck of the *Sovereign*. The bearers of the news of this sad accident were blacks, who arrived at the Settlement late on the night of the 15th March. The terrible story soon spread, and in a remarkably brief space of time many of the residents were gathered together in anxious groups discussing the probabilities of the affair, and eager for details; for on board the *Sovereign* were many well-known neighbours and friends. In order to satisfy this thirst for news, the *Courier* published an "extraordinary," which contained the account which furnishes the particulars of this narrative. The steamer left Brisbane on the 3rd March, 1847, with a large cargo of wool (forty bales of which were on deck), hides, tallow, and sundries. The saloon passengers were:—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gore, two children and servant; Mr. Henry Dennis, of Darling Downs; Mr. W. Elliott, of the Clarence; Mr. E. Berkeley, of Brisbane; Mr. Joyner, Sydney; Mr. Richard Stubbs, Sydney; two female and sixteen male steerage passengers, with the master (Captain Cape) and a crew of twenty-six—in all fifty-four. On reaching Amity Point a strong southerly gale sprang up, which kept the vessel at her anchorage six days. At the end of this time a start was made, but on getting to the bar it was not deemed wise to proceed; and Captain Cape returned to the anchorage. On the 11th another effort was made, and as the bar did not present a dangerous appearance, it was decided to go on. The passengers, after so long a detention, were glad to get way, and were in high spirits. As she passed over the first roller one is said to have remarked that the "rails" were down, and on going over the second, Mr. Gore chimed in with "Here's a five-barred gate—how nobly she tops it!" How little did the amused passengers think of what was so soon to happen. One more roller had to be met,

but before this was encountered the engineer called to Captain Cape that the framing of the engines and part of the machinery had broken down. Captain Cape could scarcely believe this, but on descending from his post and examining them he found it only too true—the frames were broken close under the plummer-blocks, which were turned upside down. The ill-fated vessel then drifted towards the Northern Spit, and terrible seas broke over her, while suddenly the rudder-chains parted. The sail was set, and the starboard anchor was let go, but this, with some fifty fathoms of chain, was carried away. No time was lost in getting the other one out, but this dragged; and on went the worm-eaten tub nearer the spit, until the rollers broke over her with violence, carrying away bulwarks and causing the wool and billets of wood to move violently about the deck. These moving dangers killed three men, and several others had limbs broken. Captain Cape could see no hope of saving his ship, and told the passengers so. Scarcely had he uttered the words when a tremendous sea swept off the fore cabin companion flush with the deck, and washed away the fore hatches. Tarpaulins were fastened over the hatchways, but these proved as tissue paper to the huge volumes of water that at times swept the decks.

The scene which presented itself at this time was fearful in the extreme. Terrified passengers cried piteously for help where there was none; others plunged into the sea in the agonies of despair; while some sought consolation in prayer. Messrs. Dennis, Berkeley, and Elliott worked at the pumps, which, however, soon choked, and they then assisted in throwing over what cargo remained on deck. While doing this Mr. Stubbs was carried overboard, but managed to get on deck again. He went down to the ladies' cabin, which he found half full of water. Mrs. Gore and her child were lying in one of the berths thoroughly exhausted, water almost constantly pouring over them through one of the deadlights, which had been stove in. Having given the child to the servant, who was standing with the stewardess on the companion ladder—the only safe position—he conducted Mrs. Gore to the same spot, and procured some stimulants from the steward's cabin, which he gave to the ladies. Mr. Gore shortly afterwards came through the skylight, and, with Mr. Stubbs, tried to block the aperture with mattresses, but without success. They then went on deck, and helped there until a piece of wood struck Mr. Stubbs and disabled him. Both then went aft, where an affecting scene took place between Mr. and Mrs. Gore. "Mary, there is no hope for us now;

we shall go to heaven together," were the words addressed by Mr. Gore to his wife. Mrs. Gore seemed perfectly prepared to meet the inevitable fate which awaited her, and with her calmness and Christian-like resignation replied, "We can but die once; Jesus died for us. God keep us."

The vessel was certainly sinking, and recognising this fact, all the women got on deck. The dreadful moment which was to determine the fate of all who still remained on board drew nigh, and each saw in the other's countenance a vivid expression of his own feelings. Mr. Dennis stood near the poop with his head cut open, and bleeding profusely; Mr. Berkeley and Mr. Elliott close by him. Holding on to the shrouds was Captain Cape, while Mr. Stubbs, still retaining his presence of mind, cried out, "Avoid the suction," and then leapt overboard. One wild shriek, a roll of the vessel, and a struggle for life commenced. Many who had been disabled sank to rise no more; others clung desperately to the pieces of the wreckage; while the body of Mrs. Gore was observed by Mr. Stubbs near the vessel, the good lady having doubtless died from fright. Mr. Dennis, who, with Mr. Berkeley, was clinging to a wool bale, cried out, "For God's sake, save the child!" while Mr. Gore piteously appealed to someone to give him his offspring. The appeal was not made in vain, for Mr. Stubbs swam towards it, caught it by the hair, and delivered it to the father. He came near losing his life, however, owing to the child clinging convulsively to him. Mr. Stubbs then struck out and reached a wool bale, when he saw Mrs. Gore's servant, who implored him to have pity on her, and render her assistance. He tried to lash two bales together by means of his belt, but one of the bales sank, and he then left the girl with the other while he endeavoured to find a piece of timber. He reached the breakers on a plank, but observing Mr. Gore and the child inside the skylight he swam towards them, and got inside it. They were almost immediately washed out again, and when he last saw Mr. Gore he had the child in his arms. He then made towards the breakers on the bar, but how he got through them Mr. Stubbs had not the slightest recollection. At any rate, he remembered nothing until he reached the shoal water, a distance of about four miles from the scene of the wreck. He was helped out by a native.

Captain Cape, who was one of the saved, stated that after swimming for some time he fell in with Mr. Berkeley, who was hanging on to a wool bale. While making his way to him he managed to catch hold of a paddle-box, and called to Mr. Berkeley to come to him, which he did, and they

kept company for about an hour and a half. On nearing the surf Captain Cape met three more breakers, and did not recollect anything further until he found himself on a hillock of sand on the beach, where he had been carried by the blacks, who had dragged him through the surf. As soon as he had regained sufficient strength he was conducted by the blacks, to Mr. Stubbs, where he also found the body of Mrs. Gore, and shortly afterwards her eldest child was washed up. A Mr. Richards and Mr. Clemens, who were fishing close by, rendered every assistance in their power; and, aided by a prisoner of the Crown named William Rollings, a servant of the pilot, and the native crew, with great difficulty, succeeded in saving the lives of six persons, who but for their efforts must have perished in the surf. While the injured and exhausted men were being attended to by some of their rescuers, others were covering the bodies of those who had been washed up with sand to prevent the sea birds disfiguring them. Immediately on the receipt of news of the terrible catastrophe reaching the Settlement, a party set out. On reaching the beach it was found that decomposition had already set in, and consequently it was deemed inadvisable to carry the bodies back. It fell to the lot of Captain Wickham to fulfil the last rites, but this gentleman became so overpowered by his feelings that he could not conclude the service, and the sad office had to be undertaken by another person.

Opinions differed as to who was to blame, for while the lack of wisdom on the part of the parsimonious Government of New South Wales in not allowing a survey of the Bay to be made, or sanctioning the removal of the pilot station from Amity Point to the north of Moreton Island was manifest; it was a well-known fact that the *Sovereign* was rotten, and that her engines were old and imperfectly fitted. The practice of storing cargo on deck prevailed, too, and the danger of this proceeding had been demonstrated just before, when the deck cargo of coals of the *Tamar* was washed into the engine-room, and blocked the machinery, and her cargo had to be jettisoned. It was no uncommon thing either to stow cargo in the cabins. But whoever was responsible for the *Sovereign* catastrophe, Captain Cape was made to suffer by the company, who refused to give him another vessel, and on the evidence of one man charged him with neglect. They were, however, badly seconded by the public. It may be mentioned that one of the "passengers" was John M'Quade, who was being escorted to Sydney under sentence for wilful damage in the police cells. He was one of those saved, and on his surrendering himself on his return to the Settlement

he was discharged. A subscription list was established and liberally subscribed to for the benefit of those who suffered monetarily by the catastrophe, and the blacks at Amity Point were each presented with a brass plate bearing the following inscription, which spoke for itself:—"To ———, of Amity Point. Rewarded by the Government for the assistance he afforded, with five of his countrymen, to the survivors of the wreck of the steamer *Sovereign*, by rescuing them from the surf upon Moreton Island, on the 11th March, 1847, upon which melancholy occasion forty-six persons were drowned, and by the aid of the natives ten were saved."

APPENDIX B.

AMERICAN PADDLE STEAMERS.

Three American (wooden) ocean paddle steamers came to Sydney in 1853-54. As the type is obsolete a memo. of their sizes, etc., is here given:—

1. *Golden Age*, length 285 ft., beam 43½ ft.; single beam engine, 85 in. cylinder, 12 ft stroke; wheel 34 ft. 8 in. diameter, 10 ft. wide; boiler pressure, 20 lb., coal consumption 45 tons per day; record trip, Sydney to Melbourne, 44 hours.
2. *New Orleans*, changed to *Governor General*, length 200 ft., beam, 46 ft.; beam engine with 1 cylinder, 54 in. diameter, stroke 11 ft.; paddle wheels 30 ft. diameter, floats 8 ft. x 2 ft. 6 in., 19 revolutions per minute; speed 10½ knots.
3. *General Urbistendo*, changed to *Ben Bolt*, length 134 ft., beam 27 ft., depth 9 ft. 6 in., draft 6 ft.; speed 9 knots.

The last named steamer ran for a short time to the Hunter and was bought by the A.S.N.Co. and used as a river drogher. The *Golden Age* was but a short time in Australia and took passengers to England *via* Panama. The hull of the *Ben Bolt* was used for the outer barrier and dressing rooms of Robinson's Baths, in the Domain, and the engines went to Petrie's Bight Saw Mills in Brisbane. The *Governor General* passed from the Sydney and Melbourne S.P. Co. to the A.S.N. Co., who removed the top or awning deck. She ran to Melbourne for the A.S.N. Co. before being sold away.

APPENDIX C.

THE FIRST PATENT SLIP AND THE FIRST DRY DOCK.

On the 13th September, 1832, the ship *Governor Halkett* brought the first patent slip to the colony, for Captain Fotheringham, and at the same time two new boilers for the *Sophia Jane*. It was intended to put the slip down on the vacant piece of land adjoining Captain Collins wharf at Macquarie Place, as the water at that time flowed up thereto; but as the Government required that site, Captain Fotheringham decided to place it in Darling Harbor, north of King-street, where, for upwards of 40 years, it was in constant use. The present Waterview Dock (Mort's oldest one) was first used in 1855. In the year 1842, Mr. John Eales, the founder of the old Hunter River Company, excavated at Berry Park, on the Hunter, a dry dock in which the early steamers of the Company, viz., the *Rose*, *Thistle* and *Shamrock*, were docked for cleaning, painting and repairing.

APPENDIX D.

CHAPTER 8.

(Extract from Surgeon Cunningham's two years in N. S. W. in 1829.)

“Settled portion of New South Wales north of Sydney, comprising the counties of Northumberland and Durham on Hunter's River; with a general outline of the unsettled portion of interior country toward Liverpool Plains.”

The settlement of Hunter's River, to the right or north of Sydney, is divided at present into the counties of Northumberland and Durham, the first lying between the Hawkesbury and Hunter's rivers (the distance between which is fifty-five miles), and the second, lying to the north beyond Hunter's River, and stretching upwards along its bank; but the limits of neither are yet properly defined.

By land, you proceed either by way of Windsor or Richmond. From Windsor to Patrick's Plains, on Hunter's River, is a distance of seventy miles in a direct line, but nearly of ninety miles when following the convolutions of the road, which is, as yet, but a rugged bridle-path over the mountainous ridge called the Bulgar, quite unfit to take even an empty cart by. Patrick's Plains, again, are twenty miles from Wallis Plains, the head of loaded-boat navigation, and forty miles from the town of Newcastle, at the outlet of Hunter's River on the sea-coast. By the circuitous route of Windsor, therefore, Patrick's Plains are upwards of one hundred and twenty miles from Sydney; but a practicable route for a road has been surveyed direct from Parramatta thither, which will reduce the distance to Sydney upwards of thirty miles, crossing the Hawkesbury low down by a punt. A fine little cutter packet, named the *Lord Liverpool*, sails weekly between Sydney and Newcastle (in distance seventy-three miles), twelve hours' easy sail; cabin fare (including provisions, wine, and spirits), £1 6s., and the accommodaton excellent, the vessel having been formerly a pleasure yacht in India. Several other craft pass backwards and forwards between the two places, also, as irregular traders, all taking good freights, the principal return being coals—Newcastle supplying the Sydney market with that necessary article. Two passage boats ply between Newcastle and Wallis Plains, conveying goods upwards, on freight also, which goods may be there secured

in a safe store appertaining to Messrs. Powditch and Boucher, on payment of a small commission. There is only a bridle-road as yet between Newcastle and Wallis Plains; but a cart-road, which is now in progress, will ere long be completed. The distance by land I have already stated at twenty miles, but on account of the convolutions of the river it amounts by water to nearer seventy. Close to these plains, indeed, there is part of the river so tortuous, that, although the distance between the two points (that is, between Lieutenant Close's wharf and Powditch and Boucher's wharf) be but three miles by land, it is twenty-five miles by water. In freshes, boats can go no higher than Lieutenant Close's, and this being a high-lying dry place, and abounding in fresh water, will doubtless eventually be the situation pitched upon for a town. Carts, therefore, must be sent hither from Newcastle until the road be completed; but from Powditch and Boucher's store, loaded drays may pass up the banks of the river for seventy miles farther at least, crossing to the right bank at Mr. Singleton's ford, head of Patrick's Plains, the country beyond this being too rugged on the left bank to admit of carts proceeding much higher on that side. When the made road from Newcastle to Wallis Plains is finished, an excellent cart-road might, by the employment of a gang of twenty men for a fortnight or so, be completed, upwards, to fully ninety miles' distance from Newcastle; the country being generally so even, so thinly timbered, and clear of brush, that the banks of a few rivulets and gullies only require to be lowered, or bridges thrown across, nature having done the rest. But the road, even as it is, cannot be found much fault with, there being only two or three difficult gullies, which require, in crossing, a partial unloading of the drays.

Newcastle is distant about one hundred and twenty miles from that extensive pastoral country, Liverpool Plains; and after the road from Newcastle to Wallis Plains shall be completed, a stage-coach might be driven that distance (by a cart-road of fourteen miles only near Liverpool Plains) without much inconvenience, so easy of communication is this part of the country.

Liverpool Plains lie immediately beyond the mountain range dividing the eastern and western waters, the range here making a sudden interior or western bend toward the sources of Hunter's River, and thus enabling the latter to collect its waters in a straight westerly line of one hundred and forty miles. Hunter's River thus takes its origin at the base of the dividing range, near Liverpool Plains, to the

north-west of Newcastle; and, assuming a north-east course, is joined by several smaller streams, till reaching Twickenham Meadows, its current runs direct south for about fifteen miles, when joined by the Goulburn from the westward about eighty miles from Newcastle, it bends suddenly due east, and runs onward in this direction, meeting with William's and Pater-son's rivers from the north twenty and fifteen miles above Newcastle, at which place it falls into the sea.

The settlements in this district are formed on Patterson's and Williams's rivers (branches of Hunter's River), to the right as you proceed up, and along the main stream of Hunter's River, to one hundred miles distance from the sea. These settlements are among the most respectable of the colony, the great bulk of the proprietors consisting of military and naval officers, or free emigrants. The alluvial banks of Patterson's and Williams's rivers are heavily timbered, but the forest land behind is open, grassy, and every way suitable for pasture without cutting down a single tree. An estate of one thousand acres here, in a very trifling degree improved, was lately knocked down at public auction, in Sydney, for £580, or 2680dols. ready money.

Newcastle occupies the extremity of a peninsula running into the sea, commencing from the main land in a low swampy neck, which gradually sweels out at the extremity into a rising ground of moderate altitude, over the front of which the town creeps up, the streets running upwards and across its face, and a government windmill occupying the crown, and over- looking the harbour, sea, and the flat land between, and the main. Few, except the government houses, are worthy of much notice, being chiefly small detached cottages of brick or wood, presenting no very imposing appearance; but from the thriving settlements upon the banks above, the attention of our merchants has of late been more particularly directed to Newcastle, and wharves and stores are now in progress, to facilitate and extend its rising commerce. The entrance to the harbour is narrow, but the channel is deep enough for large merchant ships; its crookedness, however, renders it dangerous for any but cutters or schooners to work in and out through it. A high round precipitous island, called Nobby's Island, is situated at the entrance, toward which a low reef extends from the south shore with a breakwater of loose stones upon it, to protect the anchorage from the seas that break over it in the southerly gales. Nobby's Island forming a sure defence against the attacks by sea, whilst a battery on the crown of the hill above the town would command all the low isthmus

and harbour around, Newcastle might very easily be rendered impregnable, should occasion require. It possesses a great advantage over most of the other colonial ports in the quantity of excellent coal wherewith the surrounding country abounds; inasmuch as vessels are always sure of a return cargo. The coal shaft is sunk upon the summit of the hill, and the coal carted down by bullocks; but from the defective nature of the working, and the lazy habits of the incorrigibles who are sentenced to this labour, the produce does not at all correspond with what may be expected when a more efficient system is introduced.



EARLY NEWCASTLE.

Newcastle contains two government houses, a gaol, military and convict barracks, a hospital, two tolerable inns, and an Episcopal church. It is under the jurisdiction of a half-pay military officer, denominated "Commandant," but whose functions merely extend to the superintendence of the government works, and the general police of the town, in his capacity of a colonial magistrate, wherein he is aided by the assistant surgeon of the hospital, who has been recently appointed to the magistracy also, in order that a bench may readily be formed when more heinous offences come on for investigation—the power of a single magistrate being now very limited. Two passage-boats, as I before stated, ply regu-

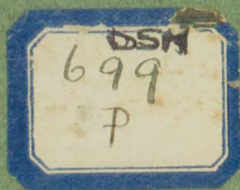
larly between Newcastle and Wallis Plains; but, from the tediousness of the navigation it is customary to despatch only your baggage by them, and to proceed to Wallis Plains by land, a plain beaten path leading thereto, through the woods along the left bank of the river, out of which you cannot easily wander. The country is low and swampy for a considerable distance on this route, consisting at first of a poor washed clay or light sandy soil, covered with stunted brush; but as you proceed, spots of great fertility present themselves, generally well watered, but so thickly timbered and brushy, that very few individuals have as yet been induced to settle upon this line. There is a government house at Wallis Plains, and a guard-house with three soldiers is fixed here too, for receiving and securing prisoners previous to forwarding them to Newcastle gaol.

Wallis Plains are of not great extent, and being originally densely wooded, required great labour in clearing; a disadvantage, however, amply compensated by the amazing fertility of the soil, which is alluvial, and still subject to being covered with water during the high floods. The ready communication by water-carriage to Newcastle likewise, and the regular weekly packet communication again from thence to Sydney, contributes to render land here extremely valuable. The country back from the river consists of rising hills of inferior soil, with fertile flooded vine brushes, watered by lagoons communicating with the river. These lagoons swarm with the most delicious fish; and during the dry summers, when the water is low, the natives wade in, and actually drag out *cart-loads* thereof, including immense eels. A deep rivulet runs through the Plains, over which you cross in a ferry-boat, and proceeding along its banks, towards the main river, past various houses and small farms belonging to poor settlers, you come to Messrs. Powditch and Boucher's store, before-mentioned, where a good supply of all sorts of merchandise is kept.



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