The Mariner's Mirror

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmir20>

QUERIES

J. W. Ostermann , R. Stuart Bruce , L. O'Malley & Basil Lubbock

Published online: 22 Mar 2013.

To cite this article: J. W. Ostermann , R. Stuart Bruce , L. O'Malley & Basil Lubbock (1911) QUERIES, *The Mariner's Mirror*, 1:5, 157-159, DOI: [10.1080/00253359.1911.10654502](https://doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1911.10654502)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1911.10654502>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan,

sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

QUERIES.

86. PHRASES. I have been collecting phrases, figures of speech, and similes coming from the sea. Up to the present I have only about a hundred, but feel sure that there must be very many more, even if their nautical origin has been obscured. Could any member give me the name of a book of reference where I could get some assistance?—J. W. OSTERMANN.

[I know of no book treating exclusively of this subject. It is necessary to use the New English Dictionary, and other standard general dictionaries. Brewer's "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable," and Admiral Smyth's "Sailor's Word Book" are of considerable help occasionally, but need to be used with great caution, especially when they venture on etymologies. See also *THE MARINER'S MIRROR* for February, p. 56.—ED.]

87. THE CAT.—What is the first mention, or description, of the cat of nine tails? Since when has this cat been kept in a bag when off duty? The modern sealed bag dates, I suppose, from the time of the Admiralty order suspending punishment at the gangway; but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the bags are old enough to be connected with the expression "To let the cat out of the bag." If so it would seem that the phrase originally meant to cause trouble. Is any information forthcoming?—COBTEY.

88. SHANTY.—I take it that this is the proper spelling, as it certainly is the orthodox pronunciation. The fashion of spelling the word "chanty" and deriving it from the French *Chanter* is probably fanciful, and would be harmless enough were it not for the fact that it has misled a good many of the younger generation into pronouncing the word with a *tch* sound, which is grotesque. I would be glad to learn with any degree of certainty where the word came from, and when it was first used for a working song afloat. The name, as distinct from the thing, is, I believe, comparatively speaking, modern.—RANZO.

89. AUTHOR WANTED.—Who was the author of this often quoted couplet?

"Behold the fate of sublunary things;
She exports coal that once imported kings."
I know the meaning of the lines, but not who wrote them.—W. S.

90. HATCH BOATS.—For what were the Thames hatch boats used, and what was the cause of their being laid aside? When was the last in use?—TRINKER.

91. TROPHIES ON THE BOWSPRIT.—It is stated in Johnson's "General History of the Pyrates," that when Lieut. Maynard, of H.M.S. *Porpoise*, slew the notorious Edward Teach, *alias* Blackbeard, in 1718, he "caused Blackbeard's head to be severed from his body and hung up at the bowsprit end." Last August there was in Dover Harbour a small Belgian schooner with a shark's tail nailed to her bowsprit end. Obviously the two cases are not quite on all fours; but was (or is) there any sea custom to place significant trophies in this particular position?—W. S.

[A shark's tail at the bowsprit end is still to be seen occasionally. I saw one in the West India Docks a few days ago. It is supposed to help the ship to a fair wind. Yachtsmen have adopted this trophy system, *e.g.*, an English yacht which visits Scotland earns the right to wear a bunch of heather at her bowsprit end when she comes south. So, too, a yacht which has been to Holland may sport a wooden shoe in the same place on her return.—ED.]

92. "NAVAL RECORDS."—I have a book called "Naval Records, or the Chronicles of the Line of Battleships of the Royal Navy . . ." "In two parts," published in 1823 by Simpkin & Marshall. My copy is Part I., and the last ship treated is the *London*, 110. Can you tell me if Part II. ever was published? The book is anonymous, and has an excellent preface concerning the origin of ships' names, but there is no allusion in the preface to any other work except Schomberg. I have never seen W. I. Pocock's book (mentioned at 24, p. 121, of the *MARINER'S MIRROR*) and neither it nor my "Naval Records" is in the Admiralty Library.—C. C. G.

93. LASTS.—The keepers of the State archives of Holland, Sweden, and Denmark have given me particulars regarding certain vessels of the India Companies of these countries wrecked at Shetland, and the officials give the tonnages in "lasts." What relation to the ton did the Dutch, Swedish and Danish lasts of the 17th and 18th centuries bear? The tonnage of one Danish Indiaman, the *Concordia*, wrecked in 1786, is mentioned as "172½ korum. lasters." What was a "korum" last? A Swedish Indiaman, the *Drottningen af Sverige*, lost in 1745, is given as "387 svara läster," *i.e.*, "heavy lasts." Any information with reference to these old tonnages would be of value to me. Mr. Oppenheim ("Administration of the Navy," p. 293) mentions in a footnote that the last varied, but was roughly about two tons.—R. STUART BRUCE.

94. NAVAL PICTURES.—1. Would it be possible for you to ascertain the present whereabouts of a picture which Serres exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1777, representing the *Thésée* sinking while engaged in action by the *Torbay* at Quiberon Bay? Could you also inform me whether there are any engravings of this picture? 2. Are there any pictures or engravings in existence of Keppel's indecisive action with d'Orvilliers, July, 1778, other than a small print in Hervey's *Naval History*?—L. O'MALLEY.

95. GREEN'S "CHALLENGER."—Can anyone tell me if there are any pictures extant of Messrs. R. and H. Green's *Challenger*, built at Blackwall in 1851?—D. W. B.

96. CLUE GARNETS.—What is the earliest mention of clue garnets, and how were they rove in ships earlier than 1600? They are, as far as I know, never shown in pictures of an earlier time than this, as attached to the clues while the sail is set. Pine's *Armada Tapestry* prints show them in distant ships on some plates, but this seems a result of careless copying.—R. M. N.

[The best known pictures of Elizabethan ships are that from the Rawlinson MSS., and the *Back Pinnace*. Neither of these shows clue garnets. The Rawlinson ship probably represents a ship of 1580 or later, and the other belongs to 1586. On the other hand, however, clue-garnets are inventoried as fitted on board the ships in the Armada campaign (v. N.R.S. "Armada Papers," II., 242 *sqq.*), a fact which shows that the pictures cannot be implicitly trusted for these details. In Henry VIII.'s reign clue garnets were certainly not kept on the clues of the sails, nor were they inventoried under that name. Further information is needed before the date of the change can be decided.—ED.]

97. SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.—What was the name of the wife of Sir Francis Drake before her marriage? Did she leave any descendants?—E. DU B.

[Sir Francis Drake married (1) Mary Newman, on July 4th, 1569, at St. Budeaux, Devonshire. She died in January, 1582-3. (2) Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir George Sydenham. She survived him, and afterwards married Sir William Courtenay, of Powderham, Devonshire.

Drake left no issue, and his property went to his youngest, and only surviving, brother, Thomas, in whose lineage the estate still is.

For fuller information consult "The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake," by Lady Elliott-Drake. Published by Smith, Elder & Co., May, 1911.—ED.]

98. THE SEMAPHORE TELEGRAPH.—I do not remember to have seen it stated anywhere at what date the semaphore telegraph was

introduced. Clowes ("The Royal Navy," IV., 186) says, without citing his authority, that the semaphore towers were built in 1795 between London and Deal, with a branch to Sheerness, and between London and Portsmouth. But I seem to remember that these lines were in working order during the previous war, the mechanism probably being more primitive than after 1795. The extension to Plymouth seemingly was not complete till 1806. Can anyone give me precise information or references? The subject is interesting and even important.—G. C.

99. CRESTS OF MEN OF WAR.—Apropos of the discussion about crests on ships' writing paper, I remember about 30 years ago seeing printed underneath the crest of either *Rodney* or *Vanguard* (I forget which) the words, "Heave round Rodney, Vanguard in sight." I wonder if anyone knows the origin of the motto, and which of the two ships it belonged to?—W. S. B.

100. FAIRBURN'S NAVAL OCCURRENCES.—Information required as to when this publication was first issued, how frequently, and for how long, also whether it is correct that it was supplied by the Admiralty to the ships in commission. No copies of it appear to be in the British Museum, but it is mentioned as an authority for statements about actions and engagements in the letters of a naval officer written soon after Trafalgar.—C.

101. A SAILOR'S DANCE.—In the description of a masque by Thomas Campion, in the reign of James I., the following stage direction is given: "At the end of the song appear three skippers in red cappes, with short cassocks and long sloppes, wide at the knee, of white canvas, striped with crimson, with gloves and pomps and red stockins. These twelve to dance a brave and lively dance, shouting and trumpeting after the manner of the sea." I shall be glad to hear of any other instances of sailors' dances of this description in Tudor or Stuart times. Would these skippers—a rank which appeared in the Navy List for the first time in April of this year—be fishermen or deep sea sailors? Can any of our members give me another reference to seamen of the time dressed in this quaint costume, or to the dances of seamen in other masques?—N.

102. ADDRESSES WANTED.—Can anyone send me the addresses of marine photographers in New York, San Francisco (the man I knew disappeared in the earthquake), Sydney, and Melbourne?—BASIL LUBBOCK.

103. ARGOSY.—Is there any trustworthy picture of an Argosy in existence? I only know of one so named, and that is so small as to be useless.—R. M. N.

104. CUTTING A DIDO.—Can anyone tell me the origin of the expression "cutting a dido," used of a ship pitching into a head sea?—T. H. M. J.

105. "CHARLEY MOORE."—From what is the expression "Come now, that ain't Charley Moore" derived?

It was in common use up to quite recently to denote trickery or cheating. A bluejacket would say it to another if he caught him doing any underhand thing.

I am aware that there was, years ago, a public-house in a conspicuous position in Malta Harbour called "Charley Moore, the Fair Thing," but I fancy the name came from the expression, and not the other way round.—T. H. M. J.

106. NAVAL PRINTS.—I would be glad of information concerning two prints in my possession:—

(a) A print of the *Commerce de Marseille*, of 118 guns, flying a white flag at her ensign staff, and another at the mizzen-mast head. The print is dated 1794, and the ship is depicted sailing close-hauled under topsails and courses, with topgallant yards across.

(b) A print of the British man-of-war brig *Frolic*, of 16 guns, rounding to after chasing a slaver ashore on the coast of Brazil. The print is not dated. The *Frolic* carried main topgallant studding sails.—E. H. E.

[(a) The *Commerce de Marseille*, usually described as of 120 guns, was taken by Lord Hood at Toulon in August, 1793. She measured 2,747 tons, or nearly 500 tons larger than the largest contemporary British first-rates. She was much admired for her roomy quarters and large cabins, but was found useless by her captors, chiefly on account of her weak construction. For her subsequent history see the "Nelson Memorial," pp. 234, 235. The Bourbon ensign of pure white came to an end very shortly after the Toulon affair; the French ships at the Glorious First of June fought under the tricolour. See Navy Records Soc. "Logs of the Great Sea Fights," I., 20, for an illustration of the first tricolour ensign.

The white flag at the mizzen was the flag of

Rear-Admiral Count Trogoff, Commander-in-Chief at Toulon, a man "of the soundest principles in the cause of monarchy."

The dimensions of the ship are given in Appx. I to the 1st volume of the *Naval Chronicle*, 1799. A mention of her in the Navy Records Soc.'s "Letters of Lord Barham," II., 328, shows that she had ovens on board to bake bread for her crew.

(b) The *Frolic* of 16 guns was built in 1842. In October, 1853, she commissioned for the Cape of Good Hope Station, to which period the incident probably belongs. A search through the lists of "Prizes, &c., ordered for payment," which are given at the end of each Navy list, would be likely to discover the exact date. The *Frolic* of the '20's was a 6-gun packet brig, and does not answer to the description. The picture is a lithograph by Vernon.—Ed.]

107. FIVE-MASTED SHIPS.—It would be an interesting addition to your note on the names of the masts in German five-masters, if anyone could supply the names of the six masts of the *Great Eastern*, or of the five masts of the *La France*. It was reported at the time of her launch that the masts of the since wrecked seven masted schooner were inconsequently and barbarously named fore, main, mizzen, spanker, jigger, driver, and pusher.—BONAVENTURE.

[The seven-masted schooner referred to was the *Thomas Lawson*, wrecked at the Scillies. That part of the query which refers to the *Great Eastern* was answered in the April number, p. 122.—Ed.]

R. C. A. writes from Sydney, on March 23rd, "There is an interesting six-master here. They call her a schooner, but she seems to me to be a barquentine, for her foremast is square rigged with no gaff sail, but with course and double topsails. The lower mast and topmast are in one piece. The fore-top-gallant mast had carried away, but I suppose it had top-gallant and royal. All six masts are equidistant, and exactly equal in height. She has a short bowsprit with no jib-boom. The masts are called fore, main, mizzen, jigger, pusher, driver. The name of No. 5 mast is new to me."