

## PLYM

On October 1903 the directors of the Falkland Islands Co Limited decided to replace the *Sissie* as after over 20 years' service in Stanley it was not viable to replace her boiler for the second time. They purchased the *Plym* in 1903. The *Plym* was 5 foot longer and had nearly three foot more beam than the *Sissie*. The *Plym* was entered in the books at a value of £1505-15-10. [FIC/ZD1; 147]

The *Plym*, official number 119331, was built in Plymouth, England in 1903 by Willoughby Brothers Ltd, Plymouth and registered as 10/1903 in Plymouth. The *Plym* was described as a new steel boat and was a steam tug, screw propelled, with one deck and one mast, a round stern and clincher build. She had a length of 50' 7/10<sup>th</sup>, main breadth to outside of plank of 10' 5.5/10<sup>th</sup>, depth of hold of 5' 1/10<sup>th</sup> hold and a gross tonnage of 15.49 with a registered tonnage of 3.22. The *Plym* had one set of inverted compound surface condensing engines, and a new steel boiler with a working pressure of 125 lbs, both made by Willoughby Brothers Ltd. She had one 7" cylinder and one 14" cylinder, 12" in stroke and could make 8 knots. The engines were second hand but probably equal to new. The *Plym* was decked over with cabins fore and aft.

The *Plym* was towed around to Liverpool by a coaster and arrived at Morpeth Dock 19 December 1903. The PSNC agreed to take her on board the *Inca* as deck cargo as she stood without removing any of the machinery. The Falkland Islands Co Ltd paid for some extras including a fresh water tank for feeding the boiler and she had surface condensing engines as the use of salt water was strictly prohibited. The *Inca* arrived in Stanley 13 February 1904. [FIC/C4; 1903-108, par 20; 126, par 11; SHI/RES/1; SHI/REG/1]

The transfer of the *Plym* was registered in the Falkland Islands 21 June 1905 by the Falkland Islands Company Ltd who owned all 64 shares. [SHI/RES/1: FIC/EG/5#7; 5#8]

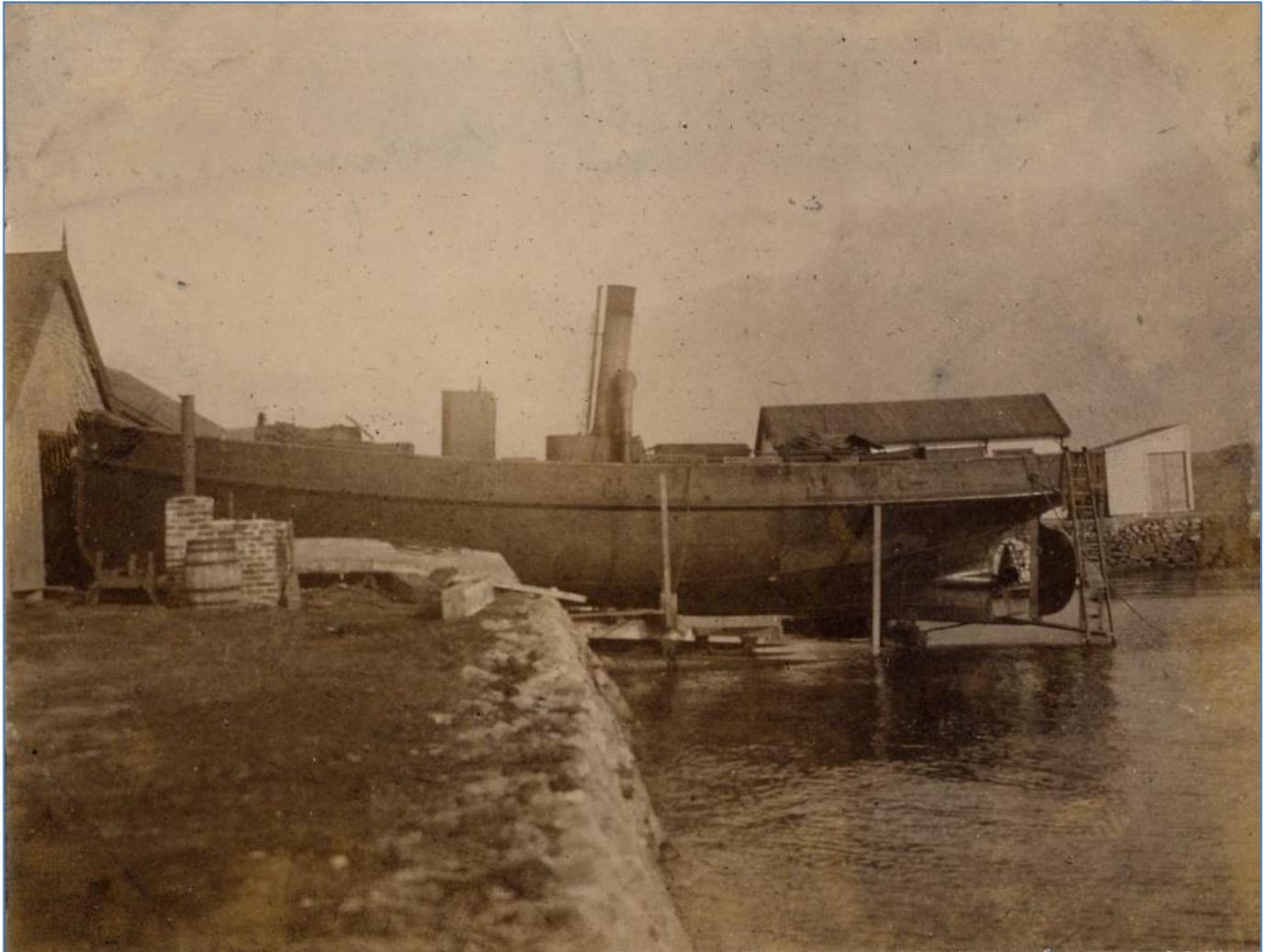
The *Chance* departed for Rincon Grande 10 January 1905 but her rudder broke down off the tussac island in Port William and the *Plym* towed her into Stanley Harbour. [FIM Jan 1905, pg 8]

In October 1907 the *Plym* broke down for the first time since her arrival. The guide rod of the high pressure slide valve jammed and the eccentric rods were bent. The rods were straightened and replaced within few days. [FIC/D11: 567 par 21]

The Falkland Islands Co Ltd had the *Plym* beached periodically but were unable to properly see her bottom as she had no keel and sat flat on the shell plates. In December 1910 there was an abnormally high tide (so high that it flooded the *Egeria*) so they took the opportunity to get the launch up on a set of rough wooden sleepers leaving her there for a whole tide (two weeks) to have a thorough examination. By 27 December 1910 they were able to report that one of the bottom planks was corroded right through. By 23 January 1911 they had taken out the engines and boiler and hauled her right up and turned her onto her bilge. The hull was reported as so bad that eight new plates needed to be put on; the four plates that constituted the keel and the next two on either side of the centre. By 20 February 1911 McNicoll had cut all 8 plates and they were punched ready for riveting. The engineer, Baseley, was making entirely new eccentric rods, the boiler as being thoroughly overhauled and they were waiting for the decision on the circulating pump for the condenser. On 18 April 1911 it was reported that the *Plym* was refloated and was perfectly tight but it would take another month to get the repairs to the machinery completed, the boiler overhauled and all refitted in the boat. By 7 March 1911 the repairs to the *Plym* were completed and she was once again under steam, running smoothly with greater speed and less coal consumption. The general service pump delivered 1200 gallons of water per hour which made the *Plym* a useful auxiliary to the *Samson* in case of fire and also meant that

she could deliver fresh water to ships. [FIC/D12: 65, par 572, par 6; 80, par 21; 93, par 12; 112, par 10; 116, par 5; 145, par 20; 152, par 21; 160, par 14]

The 3,336 ton PSNC ship *Oravia* struck the Billy Rock on the night of 12 November 1912. The Falkland Islands Co Ltd sent out the *Samson* and the *Plym* to aid the stricken ship. The crew who worked the *Plym* during the rescue were H JONES, in charge, J EVANS, engineer, and A NILSSON, Joe LANNING, W A HARDING, W A THOMPSON, L V OSWALD, V A H BIGGS (*carpenter*) and James McNICOLL (*foreman blacksmith*). [FIC/D12: 401, par 16] There is an account of the wreck of the *Oravia* and the work of the *Samson* and the *Plym* by Joe Lanning in the FI Monthly Review of 1 July 1968 and in the Penguin News of April 1980.



***Plym* on the Government slip – FIC Collection, JCNA**

On 8 September 1917 James Houston reported to London Office that the Governor had put the Government slip at the disposal of the Falkland Islands Co Ltd so that they could examine, clean and, if necessary, repair the bottom of the *Plym*. While of the slip she was thoroughly scraped and painted. Mills gave a report on the boiler, engines etc of the *Plym*. [FIC/D13; 221, par 8]

In March 1918 the launch *Plym* was hired out at £3 a day to the ss *Ooma* which was in Stanley with coal for the Naval Wireless Station. [FIC/D13; 287, par 17]

In January 1920 Peters came in from Goose Green to make a thorough inspection of the *Plym*'s boiler which appeared to be in a very bad condition. It turned out that apart from the tubes the boiler was in a reasonably good condition. New tubes were ordered. A new funnel and a new

smoke box were being fitted to the *Plym* and she was undergoing a thorough overhaul and repair. In May 1920 McNicoll reported on the hull of the *Plym*. All the keel plates were badly pitted and the after part of the keel plate was completely eaten away by corrosion. Her engines and upper works were in a good condition and McNicoll considered that she would run without danger for another two years. Peters came into Stanley December 1920 and was re-tubing the boiler of the *Plym*. He had found the back tube plate very badly pitted in places, at one spot being only one-half the original thickness of the plate. The pressure must be reduced from 120 lbs to 90 lbs. [FIC/D13; 509, par 15; 539, par 6; 541, par 14; 598, par 3]

In February 1921 the Colonial Manager advised London Office that due to the precarious condition of the *Samson's* boiler and the need to scrap her as a tug and turn her into a lighter and due to something more powerful than the *Plym* being necessary for moving hulks and lighters about, to cut expenses replacing both vessels with one good wooden tug not less than half the size of the *Samson*. By November 1921 he advised that the replacement of the *Plym* with a larger and more powerful launch could not be delayed any longer. The *Kelp* was sent as a replacement and was registered in Stanley 16 May 1922. [FIC/D13; 618, par 26; 675, par 10; 733, par 15; 873, par 8]



***Plym* in Stanley Harbour – John Smith Collection, JCNA**

In February 1926 the Board of Directors gave sanction to disposing of the *Plym* at the best obtainable offer. In 1926 tenders were invited for the purchase of the *Plym*. By 28 September 1926 the best offer received and accepted was £20. [FIC/C9; 1264, par 4; FIC/D14; 388, par 4; 450, par 11; FIC/ZD1; 147]

The registry of the *Plym* was cancelled 16 February 1929 as she was converted into a lighter. [SHI/RES/1]

On Easter Monday, 2 April 1945, Stanley experienced a severe storm and two lighters and a launch were severed from their moorings and blown down the harbour. One of the lighters sank. [FIWN 5 Apr 1945] The 95 ton *Afterglow* beached herself opposite the entrance to the Narrows, the *Samson* fetched up on the north side of the harbour and the *Plym* was beached at the north end of Whalebone Cove (*according to local oral history these were the three vessels*).



*Plym* 1994 – John Smith Collection, JCNA



*Plym* in Whalebone Cove January 2019 – JCNA