

THE MERLIN

The British ship *Merlin* of Liverpool, 1030 tons under Captain George BORLASE, with 30 crew and 1 passenger bound from Callao to Queenstown with 1300 tons of guano on board, was abandoned at sea off Cape Horn 44 days out in latitude 52 S and longitude 86 W in a sinking state on 8 June 1861. The Ship had 4ft aft & 3.5ft forward when left with the water increasing & much in the tween decks above the Guano. The crew were taken off in the Barque *Coquimbo* and landed in Stanley 19 June 1861.

The Certificate of Registry of the ship *Merlin* of Liverpool, official number 1848, was sent to the Registrar of the Port of Liverpool 21 June 1861 and the Articles of the ship were sent to the Registrar General of Seamen, London Bridge 23 June 1861.

At the end of June some of the crew were employed in levelling and laying out paths in Stanley Cemetery.

Four of the crew were sent to the United Kingdom on board the *Coquimbo*, leaving Stanley 25 June 1861:

Joseph EADSON,
John A DOYLE,
John ROBERTS and
Lawrence LAWLESS.

Seventeen of the distressed British seamen were given passage to England on board HMS *Niger*, leaving Stanley 1 July 1861.

Sixteen crew members were listed as:

William HARVEY, 21;
Thomas MURPHY, 40;
Samuel MARTIN, 35;
Thomas BURGIN, 50;
Thomas COOK, 31;
Peter LAWLESS, 42;
Francis PHILLIPS, 29;
Elias JONES, 24;
Manuel BEZES, 35;
William EVANS, 25;
Phillip POWELL, 29;
Charles MILLER, 23;
William GRANT, 26;
William GREEN, 33;
Charles C CROWLAND, 18;
Charles BLYTH, 30;

Also listed was Andrew ADAMS, a distressed seaman, who had been sent home in the *Merlin* by the British Consul in Callao.

There does not appear to any record of the remaining 10 crew and they may have been also taken on HMS *Niger*.

On 16 July 1861 a bill for £150-17-1 was drawn on the Board of Trade for the relief of the distressed British seaman of the *Merlin* landed by the Barque *Coquimbo*. [D10]

Captain George BORLASE, son of John BORLASE of Belfast, was married to Matilda BANNON 26 May 1855 [Liverpool Mail] He was captain of the *Merlin* from at least November 1856. By 1862 Captain George BORLASE was Captain of the Irish emigrant ship *Erin go Bragh* sailing

from Cork to Moreton Bay. Also on board was his wife, son and daughter. On 17 September 1862 the *Erin go Bragh* arrived in Brisbane, Australia on a voyage to Callao via Sydney. [Courier, 18 September 1962 pg 2]

In 1865 Captain George BORLASE was commander of the ship *Melmerby*, 3000 tons. "*The Melmerby the fifty-sixth vessel that has sailed on the land-order system of emigration, under the immediate direction of the Queensland Government. She contains 520 souls, divided into paying, assisted, and free passages, and consisting of 221 members of families, 250 single men, and forty-nine single females*". [London Illustrated News 27 May 1865, pg 510]

Jane Cameron National Archives