

SOUTHERN CROSS

The *Southern Cross* was a 668 ton British Barque on route from London to Valparaiso. She was captained by Captain A Owen, had a crew of 18 and carried "general cargo". She was 169 days out when she called into Stanley on 22 June 1876. [Shipping Registers]

FIC ARCHIVES DESPATCH BOOKS STANLEY MANAGER TO LONDON OFFICE 1876-1877 & LONDON OFFICE TO STANLEY:

Despatch 220 via the "Black Hawk" from Stanley Manager to London Office and dated 14 August 1876:

"... as the "Southern Cross" is likely to be condemned I ask permission to buy her for a coal hulk if she goes for a moderate price."

(N.B. The Falkland Islands have always utilised hulks for storage and to make jetties – the "Egeria", which was bought as a hulk for £800 in August 1873, is part of the FIC East Jetty and is still used by FIC today for storage of certain items). [FIC Despatch Book Stanley Manager-LO, 1876-1877; Roger Spink, FIC]

Despatch 504 London Office to Stanley dated 8 August 1876:

"12. Your Telegram No 9 Home about the "Southern Cross" being in distress arrived 24 ult., it was despatched from Montevideo on 19 ult. But unfortunately delayed thro' break in cable so that it could not be answered: we informed Messrs Shallcross Higham of Liverpool and Lloyds, the Underwriters now send out Capt Newman to superintend her repairs which are only to be just sufficient to get her Valparaiso, where she can be further repaired if necessary or sold to better advantage if condemned, we are therefore pleased that this will not take place at Stanley to give the port a bad name – Lloyd's have guaranteed £2,000 (Two Thousand Pounds) for the Underwriters and Messrs Shallcross have guaranteed Capt Owen's drafts for any reasonable expenses not recoverable on their policies – these drafts & Capt Newman's are to be a Ten days sight (10 d/s) in consideration of which we have agreed to charge only 5% Commission, but the Accounts had better be made out at 7½ % and the reduction made by us here. Messrs Shallcross thought the Telegram very meagre, their objections seem reasonable as a few words more would have told cost of repairs, detention &c."

Despatch 506 London Office to Stanley dated 23 September 1876:

"15. On the 25th ult. We despatched Telegram No 4 Out respecting the "Southern Cross" for Messrs Shallcross Higham – "Tell Owen surveys received Southern Cross abandoned to Underwriters this modifies Shallcross' letters forward surveys exact conditions estimates repairing value if repaired." – On the 31st ult. we received Telegram No 10 Home – "Diver reports Southern Cross keel broken cannot repair cargo forwarded Albany five hundred pounds fallow ship" – which was immediately communicated to Lloyd's and Messrs Shallcross, we now wait full particulars."

"29. Messrs Taylor & Co were immediately informed of the Albany's arrival. It is a thousand pities you have not sent particulars of the "Southern Cross" as her Owners might have instructed Capt Owen, and Lloyd's would doubtless have communicated with Capt Newman their Agent respecting her. We shall endeavour to move the Anglo Peruvian Bank in our favor."

Despatch 507 London Office to Stanley dated 8 November 1876:

"8. ...Our last Par 15 stated that we could not understand "fallow ship" at end of Telegram Home No 10, which we now learn to be a single word "fellowship" meaning "clerk required at Stanley: it first came to us as "follow ship" which we took to mean that the "Southern Cross" would follow the "Albany", then they altered it to fallow ship; this shows that for telegraphing purposes we must not use compound words that can be divided in transmission."

"17. I was fortunately able to elucidate for Lloyd's your last Telegram about the Southern Cross coming home in ballast with Capt Newman as passenger & that nothing was to be arranged until his arrival."

Despatch 224 via the "Black Hawk" from Stanley Manager to London Office and dated 2 October 1876 (re despatch 504):

"8. Par 12. Captain Newman arrived by mail (*N.B. Most likely on the Black Hawk*) with a diver from Montevideo, who discovered to my intense disgust that the false keel only was broken; when I say disgust I do not mean at the discovery which is a good one, but at the false position the first diver has placed me in by his, to say the least, (?) false report. I questioned him closely as to the possibility of his mistaking the false for the main keel, but he stoutly maintained his report to be true, and I could only then advise Capt Owen to charter the Albany, as a vessel with a broken keel could not possibly leave the harbour. The first diver has been down again, acknowledged his error, and the ship is to go home in ballast; as an act of grace I thought it necessary to waive the Company's charge for the use of the diving dress. Capt Owen goes home this mail (*N.B. Most likely on the Black Hawk*), being very ill, and the mate takes charge, Capt Newman will go in her. I have advanced Capt Owen £100 for travelling expense of his servant and self; I pressed him to take less, but he fears running short. He draws a bill for expenses up to date, and authorises the mate to settle the accounts finally, in consideration of this bill being drawn in anticipation of the settlement I have thought it better to make to 60%. Your telegram of 26 Aug was communicated to him at 10pm on the 16 September, protest and surveys are already forwarded; there is no person here competent to make a reliable estimate for repairs, more especially where a vessel has grounded, for, without a dock or slip, the expense and even possibility of heaving her down are most uncertain."

Despatch 508 London Office to Stanley dated 23 December 1876:

"6. No 224, 8. The mistake about the damage to the keel of the "Southern Cross" is most unfortunate, Messrs Shallcross & Higham have accepted the Bill for 796.4.7 and we wait her arrival for further particulars. Capt Owen died on the board the Pacific Str Britannica, on her passage to Liverpool, five days after leaving Montevideo."

Despatch 225 via the "Sea Witch" from Stanley Manager to London Office and dated 28 October 1876:

"9. The Southern Cross is fitting out and should sail in a weeks time; there has been a Government enquiry into the casualty. I find Capt Owen says that he was advised by me to take the course he did, it was nothing of the sort; in my double position as Agent for Lloyd's and for the ship I had to be careful, and I therefore considered that I went as far as I could in suggesting to Capt Owen whether, in the face of the telegram advising the abandonment, he was justified in continuing expenses on the ship for a day longer. He chose to send the ship home, and I considered that I had said as much as I could. The case is a most curious and complicated one for it appears certain that much of the damage to cargo was caused by the rotten and defective state of the ship and her decks, for which the Underwriters are not responsible."

Attachment to Despatch 225:

"Earnings in 2 years as follows:- Southern Cross 282.10.0"

Despatch 226 via the "Black Hawk" from Stanley Manager to London Office and dated 10 November 1876:

"22. The Southern Cross left for London on 9th Nov, her final accounts and draft are enclosed. I gave Capt Glidell no commissions, but promised him £10 if he got the ship home safely, in lieu; this amounting to less than the usual 5% - £5 I gave him here, and £5 he is to receive from you. I thought this the best arrangement, as, in the event of difficulty about the bills it would be advantageous to have the ship at home."

Despatch 509 London Office to Stanley dated 8 February 1877:

“4. No 226, 22. The “Southern Cross” arrived here on the 8th ult, the Bills on her behalf have been paid, we have not heard anything about her, she did not however come home in ballast for she returned with a considerable portion of Her cargo she loaded here in Jan 76, upwards of 270 tons.”

**FROM FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT MISC LETTERS OUTWARD JUNE 1876-
APRIL 1880 (VOL D18)**

Page 25:

Government Office, Stanley 7 October 1876 To C Newman Esq, Special Agent for Lloyds from George Travis, Acting Colonial Secretary:

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date which I have laid before His Excellency the Governor by whom I am directed to inform you that at your desire, he will grant an inquiry to be made into the circumstances attending the serious casualties to the “Southern Cross” referred to by you.

His Excellency has directed the Police Magistrate and myself to hold the inquiry in question on Tuesday the 10th Instant at 11 o'clock.

Page 36-37:

Government Office Stanley 10 November 1876 To The Assistant Secretary, Marine Department, Board of Trade, London from T F Callaghan, Governor

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit, for the information of the Board of Trade, a report received by me from the Police Magistrate and Mr G Travis JP with regard to an Inquiry held by my direction at the instance of Captain Newman, a Special Agent of Lloyds, into the circumstances attending the serious casualties to the barque “Southern Cross”.

Certified copies of the depositions of the witnesses and of all documents in connection with this Inquiry are herewith forwarded which will place the Board in possession of the circumstances.

It will be observed that reference is made by some of the witnesses to the pillage of a portion of the cargo in this Harbour, of which the Government received no information until at the Inquiry. I directed the Police Magistrate to inquire into the matter subsequently but he has been unable to obtain any clue to it; and a copy of the evidence taken by him is herewith forwarded. It will be seen from it that the present Master of the “Southern Cross” Mr J W Glidell drew the attention of Mr Owen (the late Master) to the subject with a view to informing the Police here, but was told by him “that he thought it better that it should remain until the ship got home and there steps might be taken.” This course is much to be regretted.

It will be observed that reference is made to the bad condition of the life boat, and I thought it my duty to draw the attention of Captain Newman to the subject, and a copy of his letter regarding it is enclosed.

I also have the honour to enclose copies of statements made by certain of the seaman of the “Southern Cross” who complained of the unseaworthiness of that vessel and requested a Board of Trade Survey upon her, together with two affidavits relating to this question made by Captain Newman before the Police Magistrate.

As there are no means of having the vessel docked here, and upon general grounds arising from what seemed to me the inefficiency of the case made by the complainants, I have felt obliged to refuse granting the survey requested.

The “Southern Cross” left the Port for London the 9th instant.

N.B. This is all correspondence found to date (24/07/2006) on the Southern Cross – no trace of the telegrams, etc, referred to has been found.