

gleaming galley, shop, surgery and, in those days, excellent crew quarters. Four-berth and three-berth cabins; what a change from the old eight-and-ten-berth cabins to which I had been used. To top it all, a Pig and Whistle and a crew mess hall. I was certainly going to like this ship.

Our work in Belfast included carrying aboard bedding and linen, last-minute articles of furniture, stores, and general cleaning. This went on for about fourteen days, then some Deck and Engine Room staff came over and additional Catering Department staff, stewards, cooks, etc. Feeding and living aboard commenced.

The day came when we were to sail on the trial run. A crowd of Union-Castle officials, Harland's engineers, builders and designers came aboard. The ropes were cast off, engines revved up and we were away for the trials off the Scottish coast. Everything passed with flying colours and we sailed for Southampton to pick up the rest of our crew, a full complement of passengers and leave on an inaugural cruise under the command of Captain A. G. V. Patey.

With passengers boarding, the ship really began to come alive. There was activity everywhere; the smell of cooking; white-coated waiters dashing to and fro; the sound of the sea as we sailed down Southampton Water bound for the sunshine ports of Lisbon, Casablanca, Las Palmas, Malaga and Cadiz. The most memorable event on the cruise was the arrival at Malaga. Just about all the population had turned out on the quayside to see the docking of the new ship, dressed over-all. The Pig and Whistle opened for the first time during the cruise and proved to be very popular with all the crew. All too soon we were back in the cold blustery English climate; we arrived in London to discharge our Passengers and prepare for the Maiden Voyage round Africa.

Gibraltar, Marseilles, Genoa, Port Said, Suez, Port Sudan, Aden, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Beira, Lourenço Marques, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, St. Helena, Ascension Island, Las Palmas—these ports formed the regular East African service on the Maiden Voyage and on many more voyages to come.

The ship was full. At every port cocktail parties were given to people in shipping and business circles. This trip was my first through the Red Sea and the heat did take a bit of getting used to. I shall remember always that early, sunny morning when we sailed up the creek to Mombasa. To me this is the place that I shall miss more than any other. I shall miss also the friendly, well-spoken people of St. Helena.

To recall all the voyages of the *Kenya Castle* would fill many pages and I can tell you only about some of the things that to me are the most interesting.

Tom Ricketts, Les Bascombe, myself and others banded together and decided to form a Social and Athletic Club. This was a great success. For the nominal fee of 5s. each voyage members were allowed to take part in all the organised events. These included a great variety of tournaments, for which excellent prizes were given, socials and dances in the mess hall, beach outings on the coast, dances in Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, a very popular hobbies competition and the crew concerts. I am sure Mr. Bernard Cayzer will remember with pleasure the voyage he made on the ship and the concert which he attended.

I presented a piano to The Missions to Seamen, Dar es Salaam. £5 was given to any club member who had the misfortune to be paid off sick at any port of call. Mr. A. Greenslade, ex First Passenger Steward, worked hard for a number of years to make the club a success and the Company always provided any gear required. *Kenya Castle* was, I believe, the first Union-Castle ship to give crew film shows.

One of the most interesting voyages was in 1956. At the start of the Suez Crisis we were held up at Port Said for a considerable time and the local population were not at all friendly. We were on one of the last convoys to go through the canal before it was blocked. A few hours after we left a Royal Navy ship was sighted. This proved to be H.M.S. *Kenya*. She came alongside and travelled with us for an hour or so. Her Royal Marine Band came out on deck and played a very entertaining programme of music for the benefit of our passengers and crew. Just before she pulled away a line was rigged from *Kenya Castle* to the naval vessel and our Captain had a case of beer sent across for the Band.

On arrival in Mombasa we tied up behind the Royal Yacht *Britannia* which was waiting to take the Duke of Edinburgh to the Olympic Games. When we reached Dar es Salaam we were one of the first ships to tie up at the new deep-water quay, which had been opened a day or so previously by Princess Margaret. This voyage was the last round Africa until the canal was opened again. We did the voyage out by the Cape to Mombasa, then home by the same route.

The amalgamation of Clan Line and Union-Castle brought a few sweeping changes to the East Coast Route. The *Bloemfontein Castle*, *Durban Castle* and *Warwick Castle* were taken off the service and *Rhodesia*, *Braemar* and *Kenya Castles* were put in for major refits at Belfast.

I rejoined *Kenya Castle* in London after the refit. The Round Africa Service was then suspended and the terminal port became Durban. Naples was included in the itinerary on the homeward voyage instead of Genoa.

Changes on the East African coast were rapid about this time. Tanganyika gained its independence, as did Kenya. There was a revolt in Zanzibar, which joined up with Tanganyika to become Tanzania. More recently the Rhodesia crisis affected the run, as Beira, with cargo from Rhodesia, was always a major port of call. These events, and the falling passenger trade have, I believe, forced British & Commonwealth to withdraw the East Africa Passenger Service.

*Kenya Castle* had her moments of excitement and drama: the wreckage of a plane was pulled out of the sea on her anchor at St. Helena; a minor collision was sustained with a cargo boat leaving Las Palmas; there was a murder on board; she ran through a terrible storm last Christmas and sandwiches were all we were able to serve on Christmas Day. Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna travelled on the *Kenya* when they went out to East Africa to make *Born Free*, a film which has since been shown on board.

Yes, I think the ship has seen about everything during her lifetime. What lies in store for her now?