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A HISTORY OF THE SERVICE AND LOSS OF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT
STEAMER *LLEWELLYN*, 1884-1919

JEFF HOPKINS-WEISE

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This article explores the history and service of the Queensland Government Steamer *Llewellyn* from commencement of this vessel's service in 1885 through to its mysterious disappearance in largely unknown circumstances in 1919. The *Llewellyn* was one of a number of ships utilised by the government throughout this period to carry out the harbours and marine duties for the colony (and later state) of Queensland. The *Llewellyn* is also significant as its history shows how such government vessels (and their crews) played important maritime roles – both regionally and statewide – now largely forgotten as part of Queensland's historical landscape. This article provides insight into aspects of Queensland's maritime history, as well as depicting the events and issues leading up to the *Llewellyn*'s tragic disappearance and its association with the 1919 Seaman's Strike and the impact of the "Spanish" influenza epidemic in the immediate post-World War One period. □ *Llewellyn, shipwreck, history, Queensland.*

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It was publicly announced in August 1998 that the resting-place of the wreck of the Queensland Government Steamer *Llewellyn* had at last been confirmed as discovered.¹ The *Llewellyn* had disappeared in the vicinity of St Bees Island in mysterious circumstances on or about 17 July 1919 whilst on its second food relief voyage from its home port of Rockhampton to Bowen during the great Seaman's Strike of 1919. After some 79 years of speculation, false leads or discoveries, and myth associated with the loss of the vessel or the location of the wreck, the family and descendants of the two passengers and 12 Queensland Marine Department officers and crew finally know where the remains of the vessel are located. (see Fig.1).²

The *Llewellyn* offers great potential for the rediscovery of past lives and experiences, with special resonance for the Rockhampton-Mackay-Bowen region, and must be preserved for future generations. As the mystery, discovery, and now preservation of the *Yongala* wreck site is of importance to Townsville in areas such as tourism and local history, so too could the *Llewellyn* be if properly managed and preserved.³ This wreck site is not only important as the location in which 14 persons lost their lives in tragic circumstances in 1919, but is also where the remains of a vessel with lengthy Queensland government service from 1885 to 1919 now rests. Although the *Llewellyn* was only a small vessel, its history is rich with Queensland experience. During this vessel's service life it played a

valuable role within the Department of Ports and Harbours, later known as the Marine Department, at the ports of Maryborough, Moreton Bay, and finally Rockhampton. The *Llewellyn*'s story provides a window back into Queensland's maritime history and to the many personnel who served aboard over many years of service to Queensland.

To protect the wreck site the Maritime Archaeology Section of the Queensland Museum officially established a protection zone around the wreck of the *Llewellyn* on 1 September 1998.⁴ This provides legal protection for the wreck and a zone covering a 500-metre radius through the enforcement of the Commonwealth's *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*. In 2005, the Queensland Museum completed a Management and Conservation Plan for the *Llewellyn* wreck site to help protect it for future generations (Appendix B).

With continued research and the proper maritime archaeological survey and recovery of artefacts, the family, descendants and the public may be closer to finding answers for the vessel's loss in 1919. This protection is also especially important as it is possible human remains may be found within the wreck of the *Llewellyn*. Therefore the site must be treated with all due care and consideration for those persons lost with the vessel, and sensitivity towards the feelings of their family and descendants who have taken a keen interest in what has been unfolding.

In a paper on the heritage significance of shipwrecks, and the state of the shipwreck resource in Australian waters, Sarah Kenderdine asserted:

An historic shipwreck represents a limited and finite resource. After a shipwreck has occurred, the remains of the vessel cannot be added to, and the shipwreck is vulnerable to destruction from environmental impacts and human interference. Through proper management of maritime archaeological sites, the lives and energies of people in the past have a chance of being rediscovered, preserved and re-told for present and future generations.⁵

This technical paper also noted that the focus of the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* has undergone significant development in response to a wider range of interests since its enactment. Initial concern was with strict heritage values, but this has currently broadened to include commitments to protect the recreational, tourist, educational, and scientific values of wrecks. Kenderdine's paper went on to summarise the overall objectives of the Historic Shipwrecks Program, which are:

- conserve and protect historic shipwreck sites and associated material as a cultural resource for the nation;
- develop a comprehensive register of historic shipwrecks and associated material;
- obtain support of an informed public for historic shipwrecks as a cultural resource; and
- promote commitment by government authorities to the protection and preservation of the historic shipwreck resource.⁶

The wreck of the *Llewellyn* therefore falls very much within the scope of the Historic Shipwrecks Program.

ABBREVIATIONS. JOL, John Oxley Library; JPQ, Journals of the Parliament of Queensland; MTQ, Museum of Tropical Queensland (Queensland Museum); NAA, National Archives of Australia (Brisbane Office); QPP, [Queensland] Parliamentary Papers; QSA, Queensland State Archives; V&P, [Queensland] Votes and Proceedings.

CONSTRUCTION OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN* IN ENGLAND IN 1884, AND ARRIVAL IN QUEENSLAND IN 1885

In a report dated 14 October 1884, the Queensland Department of Ports and Harbours commented upon the expected arrival of the new Maryborough pilot vessel *Llewellyn*. 'The time of the contract for the construction of the pilot steamer for the Heads expired in July last, so that this vessel, as well as that for the pilot service at Maryborough, ought soon to arrive in the Colony.'⁷ The Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* was an iron, single screw steam ship, built in 1884 specifically for the Queensland Government, at Seacombe, Chester, England, by the firm of A. Jack & Co.⁸



FIG. 1. Map showing where the *Llewellyn* sank. (Source, Coleman Doyle, MTQ)

This vessel should not be confused with an earlier vessel also named *Llewellyn* which worked in Queensland waters in 1878-79. This particular vessel was a steam pilot cutter chartered by the Queensland Government for coastal survey work which was carried out in company with the Queensland Government schooner *Pearl* in the Whitsunday Islands region.⁹ In a strange twist of irony, the islands near where the Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* was lost in 1919, known as St Bees and Keswick Islands, were named in 1879 by Staff Commander Bedwell, R.N., who was carrying out survey work in the Whitsundays whilst aboard this steam pilot cutter *Llewellyn*.¹⁰

In 1885 the *Llewellyn* was successfully brought to the colony of Queensland under its own steam (see Fig. 2). The report for the Department of Ports and Harbours dated 13 August 1885, noted the vessel's arrival, but also commented upon certain problems associated with its initial construction and outfit:

The "Llewellyn," the vessel which was built in England for the pilot service at Maryborough, was brought out successfully, but I think at some risk, from the unnecessary amount of top-weight caused by her fittings.

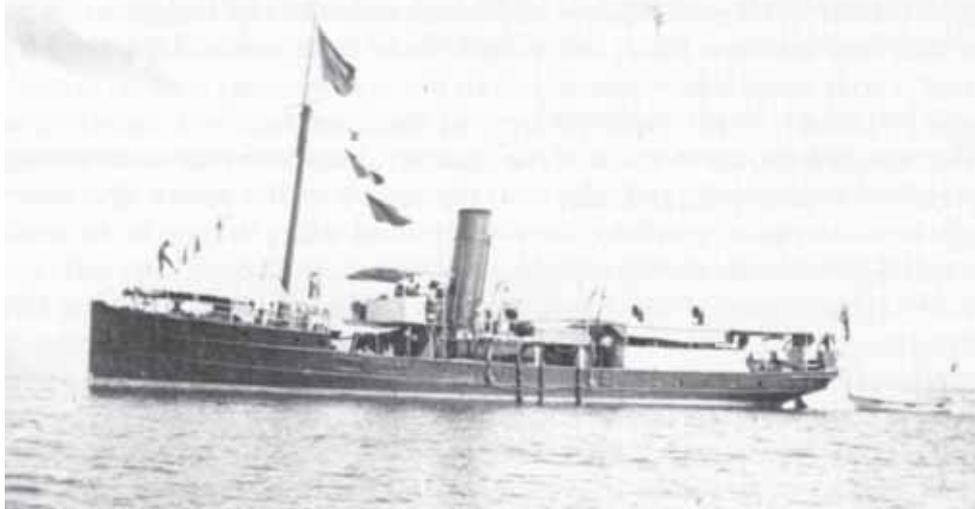


FIG. 2. Q.G.S. *Llewellyn*. (Harbours & Marine: Port & Harbour Development in Queensland from 1824 to 1985. Brisbane, Qld: Queensland Government Department of Harbours & Marine, 1986)

Before leaving England the officers of the Board of Trade insisted upon some of the superfluous top-weight being removed. Had this not been done, she would have never reached Brisbane. After her arrival I had about 6 tons more removed from her, and now, when she has no coal on board, she is very crank. With some 10 tons weight in the afterhold, however, she is, so far as I could see while I was on board her, a capital vessel. She went out over Wide Bay Bar against a heavy sea most satisfactorily, and she had a steady speed of $9\frac{1}{2}$ knots.¹¹

Upon arrival in Brisbane the *Llewellyn* was placed upon the "Register of British Ships" and given its official number according to its registry at the Port of Brisbane. These records provide information on the *Llewellyn*'s original configuration, as well as amendments and the re-issue of certification in later years:

Official Number of Ship: 87.326
 Port Number: 11 of 1885
 Port of Registry: Brisbane, Queensland
 British or Foreign built: British
 Whether a Sailing or Steam Ship; if Steam how propelled: Screw Steamer
 Where Built: Seacombe, Chester
 When Built: 1884
 Number of Decks: One
 Number of Masts: Two
 Rigging: Schooner
 Stern: Elliptic
 Build:
 Gallery: None
 Head: No Figure
 Framework: Iron
 Measurements: -
 Length from the Foremost of the Stem under the Bowspit to the Aft Side of the Head of the Sternport: 112 Feet
 Main Breadth to Outside of Plank: 19 Feet 6.5 Tenths
 Depth in Hold from Tonnage Deck to ceiling at Midships: 9 Feet 2 Tenths

TONNAGE.

Closed-in Spaces above the Tonnage Deck, if any, viz = 118.81
 Poop [& notation added "break"] = 24.04
 Roundhouse = 6.04
 Other enclosed Spaces (if any), naming them [with notation added citing "Forecastle" & another but illegible] = 14.33 [& other space, written in but illegible = .20]
 Gross Tonnage, being Register Tonnage = 160.42
 (Net Tonnage calculation) If a Steamer, deduct Allowances for propelling Power = 131.43 [This was the original figure listed; crossed out at later stage (possibly 1/1/1914), & 94.92 added]
 Register Tonnage, if a Steamer (cited for the *Llewellyn*) = 28.99 [This was the original figure listed; crossed out at later stage (possibly 1/1/1914), & 65.51 added.]
 [...]

REMARKS.

Certificate issued 10 May 1886
 Fresh Certificate issued 6 January 1914 in lieu of Original which has been lost
 Registry Closed 22 October 1919. Vessel totally lost on or about the 17 July 1919. Certificate lost with vessel.¹²

A related source, the 'Appropriation Book for Official Numbers, Port of Brisbane', concurs with records concerning the *Llewellyn* in the Register of British Ships and provides a further record of the *Llewellyn*'s initial registration and allotment of official number in September 1885.¹³

SERVICE OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN* AT THE PORT OF MARYBOROUGH, 1885 – 30 JUNE 1903

The *Llewellyn* commenced service at the Port of Maryborough in 1885.¹⁴ The Queensland Portmaster, Commander G.P. Heath, Royal Navy,

in a report on the Department of Ports and Harbours dated 13 August 1885, noted that he utilised the *Llewellyn* in his inspection of ports and lighthouses in this region. Commander Heath also referred to the role played by the *Llewellyn* as a supply vessel for the lighthouses in this locality:

Having arranged for the “Llewellyn” to meet me at Inskip Point, I first went in her to inspect Double Island Point Lighthouse. [...] When the light was first established, considerable difficulty was found by the lightkeepers in getting their supplies from Inskip Point, a distance of fifteen miles over a sandy beach, which is only practicable at low water; finding, however, by experience, that at spring tides there was no difficulty in going one day with the spring-cart and returning the next with the stores, and having also during the winter months the assistance of the “Llewellyn” in landing the stores on the beach inside the point, there is now no grounds for complaint in the matter of communication.¹⁵

Heath then visited the Mary River and Maryborough, noting inspections at Woody Island, Sandy Cape and Lady Elliot Island. He then transferred from the *Llewellyn* at the Burnett River where the *Pippo* took him northwards to continue his inspections.¹⁶ With the great distances which the *Llewellyn* had to operate in this region it was found that the hours were simply too long for just one ship’s engineer to remain at the engines. As a result it was decided in 1886 to employ an assistant to alleviate this situation.¹⁷

During the 1890s the *Llewellyn*’s primary role at the Port of Wide Bay and Maryborough was the maintenance of the pilot service as well as assisting with the aids to navigation. This work was carried out in conjunction with other vessels such as the *Norman*, *Diana*, the schooner *Ethel*, and the *Ostrea* utilised in connection with the oyster fisheries. During most of this 1890s period the various steamers at this port (including the *Llewellyn*) were reported as being in good order generally, with nothing out of the ordinary apart from minor repairs and general maintenance required.¹⁸ The harbourmaster at Maryborough also made use of the *Llewellyn* once a month to visit and supply the various lighthouse stations located at Double Island Point, Woody Island, Sandy Cape and Lady Elliot Island.¹⁹

In June 1891 the *Llewellyn* ‘was instrumental’ in saving the vessel *Hector* with 80 lives on board, from being wrecked on Breaksea Spit off Fraser Island.²⁰ On 7 June, the *Llewellyn* with Captain Evans in charge, arrived back at the Port of Maryborough from Woody Island.²¹ On 9 June news was received at Maryborough from Sandy Cape that a boat crew from the *Hector* had arrived

with information that this vessel was anchored some 20 miles out having lost both its masts in a gale near Breaksea Spit on Monday 8 June. The *Hector* was a 199 ton labour trade schooner which had 75 Pacific Islanders (“Kanakas”) aboard, bound for Brisbane. The *Llewellyn* was promptly despatched to assist this vessel on 9 June.²² The Maryborough Chronicle on 12 June was able to report:

The disabled labor [*sic*] vessel *Hector* was towed up the river yesterday as far as the Horse Shoe Bend, where she anchored. The 75 islanders on board will have to be passed by the local Health Officer [...], but it is probable that the *Hector* will not come up to Maryborough. The *Lady Musgrave*, from Bundaberg, will tranship the boys [Pacific Islanders] and take them on to Brisbane.²³

Also during 1891 it was noted in the report on the Department of Ports and Harbours, that the *Llewellyn* ‘has been recently surveyed, and, beyond the ordinary outlay, no expenditure is anticipated during the current year.’²⁴

In a report on the Marine Department for 1898-99, the *Llewellyn* was now noted as ‘evidencing signs of age, and has of late received considerable repairs from time to time. She may require a new boiler shortly.’²⁵ In 1900 the *Llewellyn*, though reported as being fully employed, had received considerable repairs during the past year and it was again indicated that a new boiler would be shortly required.²⁶ In the report on the Marine Department for 1900-01, the deteriorating condition of the *Llewellyn*’s boiler pointed to the necessity for action to be taken as soon as possible:

The condition of the pilot vessels at the various ports was fully reviewed in my last report. It was there stated that the pilot steamer “*Advance*,” stationed at Moreton Bay, and the “*Llewellyn*,” at Maryborough, would require new boilers and an extensive overhaul. [...] Plans and specifications for new boilers for these two vessels are prepared, and tenders should at least be called for a new boiler for the “*Llewellyn*” at an early date.²⁷

By August 1902, conflicting reports on the actual condition of the *Llewellyn* had apparently put off immediate plans for major repairs and an overhaul, though it was admitted that a complete survey was required. The Marine Department stated:

The reports respecting the condition of the steamer “*Llewellyn*” at this port, are of such a conflicting nature as to render a thorough survey by the engineer surveyor imperatively necessary. At present she gives every satisfaction, with hull in good condition, and to the credit of Mr. Kidd, engineer, she has during the past year cost less for minor repairs and incidental expenses than in any previous year.²⁸

The delay in seeking the appropriate major repairs for the *Llewellyn* saw the vessel eventually laid up on 30 June 1903.²⁹

Owing to the defective condition of the steamer "Llewellyn's" boiler she is now laid up, her duties being performed by the steam tug "Sea Gull," kindly lent by the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, pending other arrangements being made, and pursuant to which Lady Elliot Island will be attended to by the s.s. "Fitzroy" from Rockhampton.³⁰

Despite the inconvenience that this situation created, the Marine Department was still able to confidently point out that the 'reconstruction consequent on the tug "Sea Gull" replacing the "Llewellyn" at this port results in a saving in wages, coals, and incidental expenses of £500 a year.'³¹

SERVICE OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN* AT THE
PORT OF MORETON BAY,
1904 – 28 NOVEMBER 1914

Following being laid up in 1903 with a defective boiler, the *Llewellyn* was reported as having been 'repaired at considerable expense, and converted into a pilot boat for Moreton Bay.'³² As a pilot vessel employed in Moreton Bay in 1904, the *Llewellyn*'s initial operations were said to have 'proved herself eminently suitable, and as a sea-boat gives every satisfaction.'³³ During this year the *Llewellyn* was also involved in a minor marine accident. On 11 July, the *Llewellyn* grounded at Yellow Patch, Moreton Bay, but the incident resulted in no loss or casualties apart from the master being cautioned for the incident.³⁴

Despite the apparent repairs carried out in 1903, by 1905 the *Llewellyn* was again reported as suffering from the deteriorating state of its machinery. Here the vessel needed 'extensive repairs to boiler and machinery, when, in consideration of the age and condition of the former, it will be a matter for professional survey and consideration whether the condition of the hull is such as to warrant a new boiler.'³⁵ This situation saw steps taken in 1906 to replace the vessel's boiler but this work was unfortunately held up. The report of the Marine Department for the year 1905-06 pointed out the reasons for this situation:

I regret to say that owing to some mistake on the part of the contractors for the new boiler for the pilot steamer "Llewellyn," the completion of that operation will be retarded at least three months, causing a serious inconvenience; the result of which, considering the precarious condition of the present boiler, is hard to anticipate.³⁶

In 1907 the Marine Department was finally able to report that the projected major works had now been carried out.

During the year a new boiler has been supplied to the pilot steamer "Llewellyn," and such portions of the frame and scantlings as were found defective were renewed, with the result that she is now a comparatively new ship, and should with care and timely attention carry out for some years the important duty on which she is employed.³⁷

In this period there were four steamers employed with the pilot service and Marine Department at Moreton Bay (Port of Brisbane). These vessels were the *Llewellyn*, *Champion*, *Laura* and the *Cormorant*. In 1909 these vessels were all reported as being 'in fair condition, being docked and attended to as often as it is consistent with a state of efficiency and repair to hull and machinery.'³⁸ The Marine Department report for the year 1908-09 also strongly recommended that the *Cormorant* now be used for the purpose of relieving the pilot steamer *Llewellyn*.³⁹

The *Queenslander* in 1908 provides a glimpse into the role and service of the Moreton Bay pilots and the pilot steamer *Llewellyn* in a feature article entitled 'A Trip To The Pilot Station: Some Features Of The Service'. This outlined the peculiar life and dangers faced by the pilots (and their families) and the crews employed on the pilot steamers at this Port:

Down the river and out across the Bay to the Pilot Station at Bulwer forms a pleasant marine excursion [...] In early days the voyage was by small sailing craft, but at the present time the steamers *Llewellyn*, *Laura*, and *Champion* are doing most of the port and harbour work, and one or another of these carries down the stores, pilots going to Bulwer, families of pilots, port officials, and occasionally a few other folk on their weekly trips. [...]

At Bulwer is the little pilot settlement on a sandy uninteresting peninsula. Here live five pilots, with their families, three boatmen, and a schoolmaster, forming a small community, all well versed in boating, bay weather, fishing, and shipping matters. [...]

There are seven river pilots, two of whom live in Brisbane and five at Bulwer. [...]

The life of a pilot is one of continuous unrest. Two will go out on the pilot steamer, which lies under Cape Moreton till a vessel is sighted flying the pilot jack at the fore. That is a Union Jack with a white border all round it, and means "want a pilot." At night time a blue light is burnt instead. Out goes a steamer, a boat is lower[ed] on the leeward side of the incoming vessel, and the pilot is pulled over to where a rope ladder is dangling down the high side of the vessel for him to go up by. Sometimes the sea is too rough to lower a pulling boat with safety, and the pilot boat then calls "Follow me" and leads the way into the channel until smoother water is reached, when the pilot goes aboard. It has to be very rough, however, to prevent the lowering of a boat, for the boatmen from much experience get very skilful in handling their craft. Sometimes accidents occur, as they will in all branches of life. On one occasion a huge

wave broke, turning the boat over, not sideways, but end over end. It was night, but the crew managed to get the boat right side up and clambered cautiously into the waterlogged craft, where they half floated and half rested for some hours before they were picked up. Another time a boat was capsized against the side of a vessel, but ropes were quickly thrown out by those on board and the pilot crew clambered up them. The current was so strong at the time that it took the boat right under the ship—down one side and up the other. Then there was an ill-fated pilot who was part aboard a crankily built sailing ship which capsized soon afterwards in a heavy squall and went down with all hands. There was also a pilot who once fell overboard and was taken by sharks. Those are accidents incidental to a maritime life, but are none the less sad and painful for that reason. The south-east gales are those which bring what is known as bad weather. The heavy waves with the whole of the boisterous Tasman Sea in which to gather strength come in with tremendous force when south-easterly or easterly gales are about. Perhaps on days when there are no vessels and a northerly is blowing the pilots may have what they consider an even more unpleasant time. The steamer lying in wait for incoming ships is protected from the S.E. winds, but the northerly, in addition to being depressing blows straight in, causing the pilot steamer to roll like a badly built cradle with an angry woman's foot on the rocker.

[...] Thursday and Friday are usually the busiest days for pilots, as most ships appear to enter the port on those days, but the growth of trade has increased so much of late that they are now usually kept fairly busy all the year round.⁴⁰

In December 1909 the pilot station at Bulwer on the north-west coast of Moreton Island was closed with most staff removed five kilometres south to Cowan Cowan. The Marine Department in 1910 reported that the 'pilots' headquarters are now in town [Cowan Cowan], a sufficient staff being kept on the pilot steamer, which is always on the pilot cruising ground. This change has proved to be more satisfactory to all concerned, and has certainly increased the efficiency of the service.⁴¹ These changes to the pilot service arrangements also effected the *Llewellyn* as it was structurally altered to suit the changed situation with regard to the pilots and their accommodation aboard:

Considerable alterations have been effected to the accommodation of the pilot steamer "*Llewellyn*," in order to the comfort of the pilots, who practically live on board, and although now as comfortable as a steamer of her size can be made, it is evident that a vessel of much larger dimensions and increased power must in the near future be provided for the work she is at present engaged in, for, although staunchly built, she is now over twenty-five years old, and not at all commensurate in size and sea-going qualities for the work of this port.⁴²

By 1910-11, the Marine Department warned that the increasing volume of shipping traffic to and from Moreton Bay was beginning to put the existing pilot service resources under strain. This was also worsened by the addition of periods of bad weather, a situation that was to receive

considerable attention in 1912, especially with regard to the alleged unsuitability of the *Llewellyn* in such conditions. 'The difficulty was at times intensified by the overcarrying of pilots during heavy weather when dangerous to disembark them, an emergency which cannot be provided against.'⁴³

In late June 1912 a period of 'dirty weather' prevailed along the south-east coast of Queensland. The weather became so severe in Moreton Bay that the pilot steamer *Llewellyn* was forced to seek shelter at Bulwer. Reflecting on the loss of the *Llewellyn* in 1919, and the considerable speculation that arose as to the causes of the tragedy, the *Brisbane Courier* on 1 August 1919 recalled events which occurred aboard the vessel during 1912:

On June 23, 1912, the *Llewellyn* narrowly escaped foundering in a heavy sea at Cape Moreton. After transferring the pilot to the Orient liner *Ophir*, the weather became too boisterous for the *Llewellyn* to return that night to the Bay through any channel, and the anchor was let go. At daylight the anchor was lifted, and in the teeth of a north-west gale and heavy sea the *Llewellyn* steamed out to meet two incoming liners. All the time the conditions became worse. Great seas broke over the boat, and from the break of the poop forward the forecabin was full of water, and the galley was washed out. The engineer was practically imprisoned in the engine-room for several hours, as all the stokehold doors, engine-room doors, and the skylights had to be shut down. Had it not been that two men on board succeeded in knocking away one of the closed ports in the ship, and thus made an escape for the water, it was thought that the position of the pilot steamer was becoming dangerous, the vessel was taken out for ten or twelve miles, and, by clever navigation, was put stern on to the sea, and returned to Bulwer through the north-west channel. There were 18 men on the *Llewellyn* at the time, including the ship's crew and boatmen, and six pilots.⁴⁴

This situation in June 1912 left a number of ships such as the Orient liner *Ophir* 'hung up' either awaiting departure, or else, outside Moreton Bay awaiting entry, as the pilots were unable to be transferred to and from the *Llewellyn*.⁴⁵ The *Brisbane Courier* provided a description of the situation with regard to the vessel *Nikko Maru*:

By 8 o'clock yesterday morning the sea had abated sufficiently to admit of Pilot Norman boarding the *Nikko Maru*. Even then the weather was very dirty, [...] It should be explained that Pilot Norman went out on Sunday afternoon in expectation of the arrival of the *Nikko Maru*, and the wind was then blowing hard. Again during Monday, the *Llewellyn* steamed out into the Bay, and it was only after a very trying time, during which seas continually broke over the boat, that it was decided that there would be no hope of boarding the *Nikko Maru* that day, and the steamer was taken back to Bulwer. Captain Yagi had an anxious time on Sunday and Monday, and it was not till between 3 and 4 a.m. yesterday, when quite worn out with fatigue, that he left the bridge to get a little

rest. He was unable to sleep, and did not close his eyes till the pilot was actually on board.⁴⁶

This disruption to shipping as a result of the *Llewellyn*'s inability to venture out during such severe weather was to draw considerable criticism from amongst 'shipping circles' in Brisbane. The *Brisbane Courier* subsequently published these criticisms and concerns directed at the *Llewellyn*:

One mariner, whose opinion is respected throughout Australia, said that the *Llewellyn* was a most unsuitable vessel to be engaged in the pilot service of a port like Brisbane, where heavy weather was experienced at certain periods of the year, and especially at times when shipping was busy. A different type of vessel was required to combat the elements. The well deck of the *Llewellyn* was likely to be filled with water in a rough sea, causing not only anxiety to experienced seamen and engineers, but endangering the lives of the men who manned the ship.

[...] Another mariner said the construction of the *Llewellyn* was not suitable where a ship had sometimes to steam in a head or a beam sea. The well deck would very quickly be filled with water. [...]

'It is scandalous to think,' said another shipping representative, 'that the port of Brisbane has a pilot steamer that cannot put to sea in all weather.'⁴⁷

These safety concerns led to a government decision to limit this vessel's activities during bad weather. The *Brisbane Courier* reported:

Yesterday [...] the State Treasurer (Hon. W.H. Barnes) [...] said instructions had been issued forbidding the *Llewellyn* to venture out to sea at any time to render pilot service at Cape Moreton if it was considered unsafe to do so. Mr. Barnes said that the lives of pilots and crew must be safeguarded in that direction. At the same time immediate steps had been taken in the hope of relieving the position in a way which would be satisfactory to all concerned.

The conclusion is drawn that the Government intends to procure a larger steamer for the work at Cape Moreton. Tenders for the construction of such a vessel were called some time ago, but the matter was not gone on with for certain reasons.⁴⁸

Despite this decision by the government in 1912, the *Llewellyn* continued to serve as a pilot steamer in Moreton Bay until 1914 when the newly constructed pilot steamer *Matthew Flinders* arrived and took up duties at Cape Moreton on 28 November.⁴⁹

During 1914 whilst still at Moreton Bay the *Llewellyn* was again to come to the aid of a stricken vessel, this time the 1,045 ton French vessel *Saint Paul*. On 26 March the *Saint Paul* while endeavouring to enter Moreton Bay at night, struck an unknown rock pinnacle near Smith's Rock, sinking rapidly within a few minutes. The vessel had been approaching for a pilot when this tragedy occurred. Of the 29 persons aboard the *Saint Paul*, 18 lives were lost

as the vessel foundered. The survivors in the water were saved 'by the exertions of the pilot-steamer's boats, which were manned by the pilots and the pilot crew. The accident [...] was apparently due to want of local knowledge on the part of the master, a stranger to the port, and who was lost with the ship.'⁵⁰ The *Brisbane Courier* carried the story of the sinking and noted the role of the *Llewellyn* and the crew and pilots aboard in the rescue of the survivors in the water:

the steamer *Llewellyn* took the survivors on board, ministered to their needs, and cruised in the neighbourhood in search of others who might have managed to keep afloat. Captain Cloherty (the Harbour-master) proceeded to the scene in the *Greyhound* to supervise operations. [...] and the two vessels spent the remainder of the day in searching the water and the adjacent beaches. [...]

The weather was too thick to enable the pilot steamer *Llewellyn* and the *Greyhound* to approach too close to Smith's Rock. The boatmen from the *Llewellyn*, and, in fact every one on the steamer, did splendid rescue work after the *Saint Paul* foundered.⁵¹

Later in 1914, the Q.G.S. *Excelsior*, which had been stationed at Rockhampton, was chartered to the Commonwealth Government in connection with lighthouse construction work required north of Cooktown. Because of these requirements the *Llewellyn* was transferred from Moreton Bay to Rockhampton so as to take the place of the *Excelsior*.⁵²

SERVICE OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN* AT THE PORT OF ROCKHAMPTON, 1915 – 1919

In the first year of operations at the *Llewellyn*'s new home port of Rockhampton, the Marine Department was able to report that the vessel 'is well adapted for work at this port, and has given every satisfaction.'⁵³

The *Llewellyn* was brought back to Brisbane in November 1916 in order to be docked, overhauled, and painted. After completion of this work the vessel returned to Rockhampton in December that same year. The reason for the vessel having to be sent to Brisbane for such maintenance was due to no adequate slip accommodation existing at Rockhampton.⁵⁴ The same situation was reported as occurring during 1918 when the *Llewellyn* was again sent to Brisbane for docking and an annual overhaul. During this Brisbane stay the vessel's boiler and engine are noted as having been officially surveyed and references taken in July 1918. While away in Brisbane the Q.G.S. *John Douglas* replaced the *Llewellyn* at Rockhampton.⁵⁵ Following the completion of all this work the

Llewellyn was able to return to Rockhampton on 20 August 1918.⁵⁶

THE SEAMAN'S STRIKE OF 1919 AND
EVENTS SURROUNDING THE LOSS OF
Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN*

The year 1919 was to be a record year in Australian industrial history with some 6.3 million working days lost as a result of strikes and lockouts across the nation. The central issues for strikers were wages, hours and working conditions, especially within the mining industry, but the other leading combatants were the seamen.⁵⁷ The Seamen's Union was one of the few Australian unions not to make wage claims during the period of the Great War (1914-18), though growing dissatisfaction was evident amongst seamen on a range of issues. The actual strike arose out of the shipowners refusal to concede to the demands made by the seamen in the wake of what was perceived as an unfair award by Mr Justice Higgins in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in December 1918. Other elements compounded this sense of grievance, but it was not until the seamen submitted a log of 25 claims at a conference with the controller of shipping at Melbourne on 14 and 15 April 1919 that matters degenerated.⁵⁸ This conference did not secure any concessions whatsoever for the seamen and on 8 May,

the Controller of Shipping informed the Federated General Secretary of the Seamen that no variation of the existing award could be granted without a Court investigation. The next day men began spontaneously to walk off their ships in the Queensland ports.

For the first 10 days, the strike was confined to Queensland. By 20 May, 16 vessels with 600 or 700 crew members were tied up. The stoppages threatened to become interstate when the Federal Council of the Seamen, meeting on 17 May, decided to instruct all members to give 24 hours notice upon arrival in their home port. The strike spread [...] ⁵⁹

The resultant Seaman's Strike was to become the major dispute experienced in this year of industrial upheaval and conflict. Richard Morris, a historian of these events summarised the impact of this strike:

During 1919, shipping disputes accounted for over 2.7 million working days lost out of a total of 6.3 million. The strike of seamen belonging to the 22,000 strong Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia was responsible for the major part of this total. The length of the stoppage is the shipping industry's record. It lasted from 9 May to 26 August 1919; more than a week longer than the marathon 1890 Maritime Strike.⁶⁰

The impact of this strike was quite profound as it deprived many industries of the raw materials required for production, and was devastating

wherever shipping services were central to economic life. In isolated regions reliant on sea transportation such as north Queensland and Western Australia, coal shortages quickly developed, and food rationing was introduced to combat dwindling food stocks.⁶¹ In isolated Queensland localities such as Thursday Island, Townsville, or Bowen, the quickest form of transport and re-supply to and from Brisbane and other major ports was by coastal steamer. Railway connections in Queensland in this period were either non-existent to such isolated communities, or else only possible by lengthy circuitous routes via inland towns.⁶² Once coastal shipping had ground to a halt as a result of the Seamen's Strike, such communities quickly faced crisis.

Any assessment of the Queensland press of the day will quickly reveal repeated mention of news items devoted to 'The Starving North', 'Food Shortages', 'Appeals For Relief' and 'Food Relief For North Queensland'. For the Queensland Government the crisis was indeed very real, and the numerous pleas from all manner of northern coastal and interior communities brought home the fact that communities were very quickly facing potentially dangerous food shortages or starvation conditions.⁶³ To combat this worsening social and economic situation the Queensland Government attempted to solve matters by chartering vessels from the Commonwealth, which the seamen had agreed to man, but this did not eventuate. The Seamen's Union had offered to assist the Queensland Government with relief ships for the distressed north, but the federal government stood its ground in its battle with the union and refused funds for the charter of such ships.⁶⁴ The Queensland Government therefore took the decision to utilise craft from within its own fleet of Marine Department vessels such as Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* to carry cargoes of foodstuffs and other necessities to beleaguered northern communities.

To compound the effects of this Seaman's Strike gripping Australia, there coincidentally occurred the outbreak of "Spanish" influenza. This epidemic swept through Australia during 1919, especially in the port cities. In Brisbane for instance the first cases of influenza reported were two laundresses at the Kangaroo Point Hospital on 3 and 4 May.⁶⁵ By mid July 1919 the spread of influenza through Queensland, though reported as waning, had had an enormous impact. The Queensland Health Department reported that there had occurred over 29,000 notified cases

throughout the state by this time; by early August this had reached almost 32,000. In north Queensland locations such as Rockhampton, Mackay, Bowen and Townsville, influenza was still rife in July 1919, with fresh cases and deaths reported daily.⁶⁶ In Townsville for instance, the situation was perceived as bordering on militant anarchy, especially following the Meatworkers' Strike riots there on 29 and 30 June. One study has described the situation in Townsville:

The continued shipping strike, the 'flu epidemic and the presence of armed police combined to lend Townsville 'the air of a beleaguered city'. Serious shortages of food, especially flour, milk and butter, alarmed the community, and matters were made worse when retailers increased the prices of other goods by up to 100 per cent. During July [1919], there were angry demonstrations outside bakeries. Although the state government sent its own small steamers to relieve the food shortage, a month later the situation was still bad.⁶⁷

The Seaman's Strike, in combination with the influenza epidemic, reinforced feelings of isolation and fears of imminent disaster in isolated Queensland regions so dependant on shipping, not only for foodstuffs, but also for medical supplies and other necessities. The subsequent mysterious loss of the *Llewellyn* while undertaking relief assistance was therefore an additional blow to the morale of the beleaguered residents of north Queensland during June and July 1919.

FIRST RELIEF VOYAGE OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN* TO MACKAY AND BOWEN. The *Llewellyn* departed Rockhampton for Mackay and Bowen on its first food relief voyage on Friday 4 July 1919. It arrived at Mackay the following day but peculiar circumstances at this port saw the discharge of foodstuffs delayed. The *Daily Mercury* on the 7 July detailed the events surrounding this minor controversy:

The [...] *Llewellyn* arrived about 6 o'clock on Saturday, but contrary to expectation the Mackay cargo was not discharged, instructions being issued to the Harbourmaster not to proceed with the Relief to the anchorage until Monday owing to the expense that would be entailed in discharging after hours. The Harbourmaster banked his fires accordingly, and will proceed at 6 o'clock this morning to the anchorage. He expects to return about 7 o'clock to-night, and the flour, etc., will be distributed to-morrow. Yesterday the Police Magistrate visited the different bakeries to ascertain what supply of flour was available, and discovered that about 18 bags were on hand, and this should just about supply to-day's requirements. Possibly a shortage will occur at some of the bakeries. Country orders were not filled on Saturday owing to the non-arrival of the *Llewellyn*, and this caused a good deal of inconvenience.⁶⁸

Following the discharge of cargo at Mackay the *Llewellyn* departed for Bowen where that

port's allocated foodstuffs were unloaded. It then returned safely to Rockhampton carrying a cargo of fruit.⁶⁹

SECOND RELIEF VOYAGE OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN* TO BOWEN. Within days of the return of the *Llewellyn* to Rockhampton on 11 July the vessel was again being prepared for another voyage to carry further supplies northwards. Pleas continued to be received by northern parliamentarians and government representatives in Brisbane from northern constituents, community leaders and businessmen at centres such as Townsville, Cooktown and Bowen. The *Llewellyn* was to be utilised again to ensure another supply of flour be available for sustaining Bowen's basic needs.⁷⁰

On the morning of 15 July, the government steamer *Relief* had already left Rockhampton with a cargo of foodstuffs for Mackay so as to alleviate continuing shortages there.⁷¹ The *Relief* had been provided for this service following a request from Mr Forgan Smith, M.L.A., to procure an additional boat to ply between Rockhampton and Mackay so that supplies could be made available for outlying districts where food shortages were just as critical.⁷² The following day the *Llewellyn* was readied for departure for Bowen. The *Daily Mercury* on 15 July pointed out what the role of the *Llewellyn* would be on this occasion:

in connection with the food shortage in the North that the steamer *Llewellyn* was now loading at Rockhampton food supplies for Bowen. At the latter port there was an accumulation of fruit, portion of which only the *Otter* had been able to ship, leaving 2000 cases on the wharf. The *Llewellyn* would pick up as much as possible and bring it south.⁷³

The *Llewellyn* departed on the second, and as it turned out – final, relief voyage on 16 July.⁷⁴ From the findings of the commission of inquiry it was established later that on this second voyage the *Llewellyn* carried less cargo than on her first relief voyage, which it completed safely.

Part of the cargo lost on this ill-fated voyage was various mails and the original batch of 1919 Peace Medals destined for the school children of Proserpine (see Fig. 3). Presumably amongst the other mails listed as lost, further school children may have similarly missed out on medals. These medals were being distributed to mark the return of peace following the end of the World War One, and in conjunction with the Peace Day celebrations planned for July. They were being distributed Australia-wide to every school child under 15 years of age, or in the case of children of

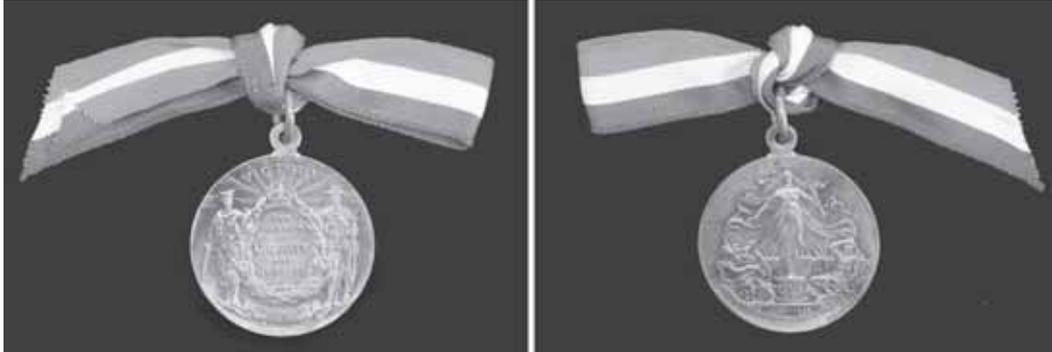


FIG. 3. Peace medal as carried on the *Llewellyn*. (Photo, Jeff Hopkins-Weise, QM)

servicemen who had been on active service, between 15 and 16 years of age and others for those who had not yet attended school.⁷⁵

LOSS OF Q.G.S. LLEWELLYN DURING SECOND RELIEF VOYAGE TO BOWEN. On 21 July 1919 the harbourmaster at Bowen advised the portmaster in Brisbane that the *Llewellyn* had not arrived as scheduled. The Portmaster thereafter instructed Mackay Harbourmaster Captain Robertson, to proceed in the government steamer *Relief* in search of the overdue *Llewellyn*. The *Relief* thus became the first vessel to be thrown into what became an ever-widening and futile search for the *Llewellyn* which had not been heard of since 17 July when it left Cape Capricorn Lighthouse.⁷⁶ The *Brisbane Courier* on 25 July commented upon these initial concerns and the commencement of a search:

Some anxiety has been felt for the safety of the Government steamer *Llewellyn*, which, in conjunction with the steamer *Relief*, has been running with foodstuffs from Rockhampton northwards. The *Llewellyn* left Rockhampton on the night of July 16 with approximately 40 tons of cargo for Bowen, and also some stores for the Cape Capricorn lighthouse. After delivering the stores at the lighthouse she left for Bowen on the morning of July 17, and that was the last seen of her. The distance between Cape Capricorn and Bowen is 296 miles, and the vessel should have completed the voyage in about 37 hours.

Although naturally the department officials are anxious, they are hopeful that the vessel has not met with anything worse than engine trouble. She is fitted with two good boats, and has any amount of foodstuffs on board, so that there should be no cause for great anxiety as to the safety of the crew.⁷⁷

The search for the *Llewellyn* was to extend over a broad section of coastline and islands between Rockhampton and Bowen. It involved police and volunteers (including the active and organisational involvements of Mr H.L. Hartley, M.L.A., and the state member for Rockhampton, Mr F.M.

Forde, M.L.A.), searching shorelines and coasts, plus the participation of numerous government and private vessels. These included the government vessels *Relief*, *Excelsior*, *Otter*, *Florant* and *Woy Woy*, which had been despatched from ports such as Townsville, Bowen, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Brisbane; as well as the small ketch *Keppel*, a privately owned launch from Yeppoon. Other vessels travelling through the area were requested to keep careful watch for any signs of the missing *Llewellyn*.

The contemporary press undertook extensive coverage of all aspects and events associated with the search for the missing *Llewellyn*.⁷⁸ Persons familiar with the operations of the *Llewellyn* were quick to add their own personal observations or experiences:

Mr. A.C.P. Wragge, aged thirty-five years, who is an able seaman, and has had sea experience from the age of thirteen years, possesses a diary or "log" of every voyage made by the *Llewellyn* from the 5th of December, 1915, to early in August, 1916, a period during which he was employed as a deckhand on the steamer. She never went out, he states, with less than from 2 ft. 6 in. to 3 ft. freeboard during that time. His diary or "log" shows that she was a very good seaboat in a head wind or when the wind was abeam, but was rather hard to steer when the wind was fair aft and strong. In such a wind, he states, she became cranky and bucked her nose down into the big waves. "My opinion," said Mr. Wragge, on Monday morning to a representative of this paper, "is that, with the big blow from the south-east on Thursday night and the resulting heavy seas—which would be the worst wind for the vessel—she never got through the rapids between Percy Islands and Iron Island." The rapids referred to are probably the "rippling currents" marked on the chart at the office of the Harbour Boards.⁷⁹

Wragge also contacted the *Capricornian* to inform them that he had offered to assist with the search then taking place, 'to go out in any ship or motor boat to look for my shipmates.'⁸⁰ Another

of the *Capricornian*'s contributors was "S.E.A.", who similarly added opinions as to the possible cause of this loss and to the sea-going characteristics of the *Llewellyn*:

It is a very sad and alarming record of the *Llewellyn*. I have still a forlorn hope that she may have broken down with her engines, but had sufficient power to get into smooth water under one of the many islands on her track which afford shelter from the then prevailing south-easterly blow, and round which there has, up till the present, been no exhaustive search. Failing her being so found, then she has foundered by 'pooping.' She has always borne the reputation of shipping water over her stern. I think there is little doubt of the light seen by the Rock Lily being the *Llewellyn*'s light, and it was blowing very fresh at that time and she was then running where a nasty tidal sea runs, with a south-easterly blow, and, if she got a sea over her stern, another would inevitably follow before she would recover, and she would founder. There would be little, if any, wreckage from her. Her boats would be well secured and go down with her, and she had nothing loose about her decks to float. It does not seem probable that she should have struck anything. She had a clear run. All the rocks and islands in her track are high and precipitous and easily seen, and she was in charge of men well acquainted with the coast they were navigating. There is still room for hope of her being under shelter with a breakdown.⁸¹

The *Capricornian*, a Rockhampton paper, on 9 August highlighted the levels of anxiety being held for the safety of the crew and passengers of the *Llewellyn* at the vessel's home port. It also shows the depth to which this search and all associated issues were being covered in the press.

The Treasury Department has been advised by the master of the steamer *Florant* that wreckage has been discovered on islands near the coast in a northerly direction from Mackay. All the wreckage had apparently been only a short time in the water. A further search is being made.

Mr Bussuten, of St. Bees Island, reports having seen lots of wreckage passing north about the 25th of July, but, owing to the heavy south-easterly seas, he was unable to procure it in boats. He also reports burning-off grass on Keswick Island on the 21st of July. It is probable that the statement of Mr. Bussuten respecting the burning-off of the grass accounts for the flare lights said to have been observed by the steamers *Flinders* and *Rock Lily*.

The steamer *Relief*, which is on her way to Mackay, will, immediately on arrival, be sent to search the St. Bees and Keswick islands and also to Bailey, an island a little distance to the south-east, the assumption being that, if the wreckage is from the *Llewellyn*, she probably struck Bailey Island, which is directly in the track she was traversing.

Shipping men spoken to to-day were inclined to the opinion that the wreckage found at St. Bees and Keswick islands came from the *Llewellyn*. A well-known shipmaster, who sailed in the *Llewellyn* for a number of years and knows the coast thoroughly, expressed a pessimistic view concerning the vessel's fate. In the locality where the *Llewellyn* was last seen, he states, there are abnormal inseting currents and erratic tides, travelling up to four or five knots an hour. With the wind coming from the opposite quarter tremendous cauldrons of seas are encountered. The *Llewellyn*, he thinks, may

have been caught in one of these cauldrons, with the result that the seas might have swept on board her from both sides, and, being highly pooped and heavily laden, she would probably be pushed down head first by the following seas. [...]

The latest news received in Rockhampton regarding the fate of the *Llewellyn* is contained in two telegrams received by Mr. C. Oswald [...] engineer of the Harbour Board's steamer *Hawk*, from his son-in-law Mr. J.C. Macintosh, of [...] Mackay. The first telegram [...] reads: - "Just received wire. No news of the *Llewellyn* up to the present. Relief searched track to Bowen. Will wire as soon as we hear anything. Do not give up hope." The second message [...] was received from the Captain of the *Otter*:] "Seen wreckage picked up close to Mackay. Apparently *Llewellyn*'s hatch [*sic hatch*], portion of deck awning."

[...] According to Mr. J.J. Macaulay, Managing Director of Denham Brothers, (Rockhampton), Limited, who are the local agents for the steamer, the *Otter* left Mackay the previous Tuesday and thoroughly searched the islands between Mackay and Rockhampton without finding any trace of the *Llewellyn*.⁸²

This issue on 9 August also published another letter to the editor by A.C.P. Wragge, in which he commented:

It is quite true what [...] 'S.E.A.' says about the *Llewellyn* shipping seas over her stern or what is known to sailors as pooping. I have seen myself when running before a gale of wind from Lady Elliot's Island on a west-north-westerly course, and the wind two points abaft the beam, taking seas over her stern. From the waist aft was the worst place in the ship when running before a strong breeze. If the ship had foundered which I hope she has not, and they had a chance to get to one of the boats, it would take them fifteen minutes to get the lashing off the lifeboat and launched the way they are lashed when going outside. The only thing I think would be picked up belonging to the ship would be the forms on the bridge, or the cork fenders.⁸³

Further columns in this issue of the *Capricornian* carried news of later events and the continuing search, and now directed attention to the growing evidence that the *Llewellyn* had indeed been lost, and hopes for survivors similarly grew more despondent.

MACKAY, August 2.

The *Florant* [...] arrived here to-day. The master stated that according to the wreckage found there is no doubt that the *Llewellyn* is lost.

St. Bees Island is strewn with wreckage, which includes the *Llewellyn*'s sun-deck gear, boat, fittings, and a lady's night dress marked "R. Gordon." One lifebelt with portion of Lady's hair, jammed in a knot of tape, was also found. The passengers by the *Llewellyn* included Miss Rene Gordon.

There seems little doubt that the *Llewellyn* went down a few miles from St. Bees. The wreckage points to the fact that the *Llewellyn* has been completely broken up. A search of the various islands in the vicinity is being continued in the hope that survivors might be found, though the prospects are not by any means bright.

Later.

The female's night attire marked "R. Gordon," which was picked up on St. Bees, together with the lifebelt, was blood

stained. It is surmised that the lifebelt had been tied on Miss Gordon, as the knot tied on the back of the lifebelt had hair five or six inches long intermixed with it. It had evidently been tied on in a hurry and at night.

Another piece of property picked up was an imitation small lifebuoy used in framing photographs, marked "S.S. Burwah." This has been recognised by Mr. George Rendall, the lighthouse-keeper at Flat-top, as having been in Captain Holloway's cabin when the *Llewellyn* last called here.

Asked to explain how the lifebelt became detached from the person who wore it, one of the *Florant's* crew stated that one whole section of the belt was torn away, evidently by the body being washed up on the rocks by a big wave and torn off as the wave subsided.

The Government steamer *Relief* is continuing the search.⁸⁴

Throughout this issue of the *Capricornian* the feelings for concern for the welfare of the passengers and crew, quickly gave way to acceptance that they had been lost with the vessel. The continuing search failed to find any real traces of survivors or bodies:

Brisbane, August 4.

Advices received by the Marine Department to-day indicate beyond a doubt that the Government steamer *Llewellyn* has foundered and broken up.

In the course of the day a telegram was received from Captain Robinson, of the steamer *Relief*, which arrived at Flat-top Island to-day, stating that no trace of survivors had been found in the search, but more wreckage had been discovered. The *Relief* has been ordered to resume the search from St. Bees as far north as Dent Island.

The steamer *Excelsior*, which is due at Flat-top Island to-night, will, after coaling, proceed as far south as Rockhampton, searching the islands on which survivors or wreckage might have been cast ashore. [...]

A report of the search for several days made by the Yeppoon party in Mr. Barton's motor launch was received [...] Constable O'Toole is quite satisfied that the party missed no recent wreckage between Yeppoon and Dove Point.⁸⁵

Another letter to editor from "S.E.A.", shed light on how the *Llewellyn* could have survived the rough seas in the region in question, therefore making the vessel's loss all the more tragic:

Some forty-six years ago a fine steamship named the *Singapore*, carrying English mail, was on a voyage down the coast, and the captain was demonstrating to his lady passengers how close the ship could safely pass the bold water islands on his track. When passing the north-western end of Keswick Island she struck a sunken rock and became a total wreck. There was no loss of life. From the wreckage found on St. Bees it is presumable that the *Llewellyn* nearly reached that island, and the pity of it is when the fact is considered that a good harbour under all winds lies between St. Bees and Keswick Islands, where she would have been safe from any wind that blows, and another good roadstead lies immediately on the northern side of the same island safe with all southerly winds. I have taken many a hard blow out at both places as well as under Brampton and Carlise islands, ten miles further to the northward. In the old days these islands were named L

and M islands respectively. If the *Llewellyn* could only have hung on such a short distance all would have been well.⁸⁶

The *Capricornian* also noted that as the realisation of the loss of so many persons from the Rockhampton community began to sink in, Mayor T.W. Kingel, was called upon to visit and console the grieving families. The loss of the *Llewellyn* had indeed hurt Rockhampton, and the loss of the 12 officers and crew and two passengers was to be felt by many families, friends and others from the local community. On 6 August, Mayor Kingel visited the relatives of the missing passengers and crew of the *Llewellyn* to express the sympathies of the Rockhampton City Council and personally conveyed to them the contents of a telegram from the premier:

I have learned with the deepest regret of the finding of wreckage from the [...] *Llewellyn*. I trust, however, that the search for survivors will meet with success. Please convey to the relatives of the missing passengers and crew an expression of profound sympathy from self and Government of Queensland.⁸⁷

Despite the pessimism at finding any survivors or the vessel, the government steamers *Relief* and *Excelsior* continued searches in and around St Bees Island where so much of the confirmed *Llewellyn* wreckage had been discovered, as well as the nearby coast of the mainland into early August.⁸⁸

The master of the government steamer *Otter* in 1919, Captain Junner, later recounted the loss of the *Llewellyn* and the state of the weather at that time:

When the coastal services were tied up by the bitter maritime struggle of 1919 this little ship [*Otter*] conveyed flour and other staple food supplies from Rockhampton to Mackay, Bowen, and Townsville.

She was only two hours behind the other Government steamer *Llewellyn* when that little vessel went to her doom one particularly stormy night. Not liking the weather conditions which they were experiencing Captain Junner edged the *Otter* gradually away from her course, keeping the sea as well as he could behind him until he was able to shelter under the lee of Great Keppel Island. That was, he even now considers, a narrow escape for his ship and all on board.⁸⁹

The *Brisbane Courier* then forlornly announced the wind-down of search efforts, as well as indicating steps taken towards having an inquiry into the vessel's loss and associated Rockhampton local news:

The Treasury Department has finally abandoned all hope for the missing *Llewellyn*, and the boats that were searching for her have returned to their ports. [...]

The Treasurer is taking steps to have an inquiry held at an early date into the loss [...] It will probably take place at Rockhampton, which was the *Llewellyn's* home port, and

where most of the persons concerned in her loss live or lived.

The Rockhampton *Capricornian* published a similar gloomy report, even to the extent of the analogy of the *Llewellyn's* loss to that of the *Yongala*, which disappeared with all hands back in 1911.⁹⁰

The press of the day also gave considerable coverage to the human face of the tragedy, not only providing information and photographic images of the crew and passengers, but also directing attention to their families. From such coverage it becomes very obvious that the local community at Rockhampton was hit hard by the loss of all those who were aboard the *Llewellyn*. The Rockhampton *Capricornian* on 16 August carried a lengthy article, which detailed the lost ship's passengers and crew:

Miss Rowena Gordon, who may be regarded as the only passenger by the *Llewellyn*, was a probationary nurse at the Rockhampton General Hospital. She was about twenty-one years of age. She appears to have been a native of the Proserpine district [...] and was appointed to the staff of the Hospital [...] in 1918. She was going back to Bowen on a visit to friends when she met her death. [...]

Mr. W J Bradford, [...] was born at Ipswich, Queensland in [...] 1875. [...] He had been twenty-five years in the employ of Messrs Walter Reid and Co-for fifteen years in their mercantile department and for ten years in the shipping department [...] and] is survived by Mrs Bradford. [...]

Captain Leister King Holloway, master of the *Llewellyn*, was born [...] in England [...] in 1885 [...] and entered] the service of the Queensland Marine Department [in 1912 when ...] he was appointed pilot for the port of Rockhampton[.] [...] Captain Holloway retained his position as pilot at this port until [...] November, 1918, when he was appointed Acting Harbour Master to relieve Captain S. Wilkinson, who was retiring [...]. On the 6th of December, however, he received official intimation of his appointment as Harbour Master [...] at Rockhampton. [...] Mrs. Holloway has left two sons, aged four years and two and a half years respectively [...]

Mr. Alfred Dummall, who was mate of the *Llewellyn* on her last trip, was a native of Perth, Western Australia. He was fifty-six years of age [...] After coming to Rockhampton he joined the service of the Marine Department and saw about thirty years' service under Captain A.E. Sykes [...] in recent years [he also took...] command [of *Llewellyn*] on all trips except when the Harbour Master happened to be on board. Mr. Dummall married, in Rockhampton, Miss Jane Ana Crossley, by whom he is survived. He has also left two daughters—Mrs. E. Samways, Upper Dawson- road, Rockhampton, and Mrs. W.J. Robinson, Derby- street, Rockhampton. [...]

Mr. Robert Henderson, chief engineer of the *Llewellyn*, was born [...] in Scotland, in 1875. [...] H]e entered the service of the Marine Department as chief engineer of the steamer John Douglas [...] in 1909 and is survived by] Mrs. Henderson and [...] four children. [...]

Mr. John Beaton, fireman on the *Llewellyn*, was a native of [...] Scotland. He was sixty-four years of age [...] He

[...] came to Rockhampton about forty-five years ago [...] He married here Miss Elizabeth Noonan, [...] Mr Beaton has left in addition to his wife, three sons, the youngest [...] Frank Beaton, of the Twenty-fifth Battalion, [...] recently returned from the front [...] having lost] his left leg [...] in France.

Mr. Henry Smith, casual fireman on the *Llewellyn*, was a native of London. He was thirty-nine years of age. [...] He came to Australia as an able seaman and reached Rockhampton about eight years ago. [...] For the last four years he had been employed by the Marine Department [...] He is believed to have had a sister living in London.

Mr. John William Harwood, casual fireman on the *Llewellyn*, was a native of Rockhampton. He was thirty years of age [...] and unmarried. [...] In] 1916, he was granted a third-class engineer's certificate by the Queensland Marine Board, and for the last three years he had been a casual employee of the Marine Department [...]

Mr. Charles William Oswald, temporary fireman on the *Llewellyn*, was a native of Rockhampton. He was thirty-one years of age and unmarried. [...]

Mr. Robert Wilson, head seaman on the *Llewellyn*, was born at The Valley, Brisbane, about 1876. He came to Rockhampton about twenty-five years ago in the service of the Marine Department [...] About twenty-two years ago he married Miss Brophy, in Rockhampton. His wife died about two years ago, and his eldest daughter, of three, about a month after her mother.

Mr. Richard Mann, able seaman on the *Llewellyn*, was a native of [the ...] Shetland Islands. He was sixty[-]one years of age ... He came to Rockhampton thirty-six years back [...] Mr. Mann married Mrs. Selina Dunk, [...] who had been left with two children to care for. Seven more children were added in time to the little family. Of these, however, only four are alive, namely Mrs. J. Pike, who resides in Sydney, and three daughters who live in Rockhampton, the youngest being fourteen years of age and the eldest twenty-five years of age.

Mr. Lawrence Georgeson, deck-hand on the *Llewellyn*, was a native of [...] the Shetland Islands. [...] He came to Rockhampton about thirty years ago. About ten years later he married Miss Elizabeth Gauld [...]

Mr. William Yarwood, cook of the *Llewellyn*, was born [in ...] England. He was fifty-two years of age [...] He came to Queensland about thirty-two years ago, and two years later he married Miss Phoebe Williams at Lutwyche. Some time afterwards he came to Rockhampton [...] He has left a wife and a family of ten, the youngest of whom is seven years of age. Three of the children are married. Two of the sons recently returned from the front.⁹¹

The *Capricornian* issue on 16 August inexplicably had no details regarding the second engineer, T. Ingham. An earlier issue of this paper on 2 August had a far shorter account of those lost, but did include relevant information about him, and indicated that he 'was on a visit to his brother who has a eucalyptus farm at Coowonga, on the Emu Park line.'⁹² Of interest here too was the story of William McLeod the permanent fireman of the *Llewellyn* who by a chance bout of influenza, did not accompany the vessel on this fateful voyage; his luck on this occasion, had



FIG. 4. Nurse Rowena Gordon. (*Capricornian*, 16 August 1919)

been repeated before: ‘Some few years ago he went to Geelong to join the *Loch Marie* in a similar capacity. When he saw the ship he declined to take the position. She was lost at sea on that voyage, never having been heard of again.’⁹³ An article in the *Brisbane Courier* at this time also clearly revealed that concerns for the well-being of those 12 crew and 2 passengers (R. Gordon and W. Bradford) lost aboard the vessel also affected families well outside of Rockhampton – this tragic loss was felt around the state by friends, family and the general public at large.⁹⁴ (Figs 4, 5)

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, AND THE
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE
LOSS OF THE Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN*,
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1919

While the search for the missing *Llewellyn* was taking place, questions were raised in the Queensland Parliament about any instructions issued to the master of the vessel prior to departure as well as later to the nature of the cargo being carried aboard.⁹⁵ In the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 6 August, the Hon. W.H. Barnes, member for Bulimba, asked Treasurer E.G. Theodore: ‘Were any instructions issued to the master of the Government steamer ‘*Llewellyn*’ as to his course of action in the event

of meeting rough weather during the voyage upon which the vessel was lost?’” Mr Barnes also asked whether the Treasurer would ‘lay upon the table of the House all special instructions issued to the master, having regard to the safety of the vessel in this and other respects?’ The Treasurer replied that ‘[n]o instructions were issued and none were considered necessary, as the ordinary qualifications of a master include prudence and the knowledge of how to act for the safety of his vessel in case of bad weather or other emergency.’ At the same time, Mr Theodore contended that despite no special instructions being issued, ‘as an extra precaution for safety and navigation the harbour master of Rockhampton, who is also the shipping inspector at that port, went in charge of the vessel for these particular voyages.’⁹⁶

On this same day, Mr Forde, the member for Rockhampton, also asked the Treasurer about claims for compensation by the families of those presumed lost on the *Llewellyn*. ‘In the event of it being definitely proved that the officers and crew of the ‘*Llewellyn*’ are lost, will the Government promptly and generously settle all claims made for compensation under the Workers’ Compensation Act?’ To this question the Treasurer responded that ‘[c]laims will be dealt with under the Workers’ Compensation Act and will be settled as expeditiously as possible.’⁹⁷ The 12 Queensland Marine Department officers and crew lost aboard the *Llewellyn* were covered by the recently introduced legislation, The Workers’ Compensation Act, 1916, which had increased the amount in the case of death of a worker while employed in his duties from £400 to £750.⁹⁸

On the 12 August, further questions regarding the *Llewellyn* were raised in the Legislative Assembly. Mr Corser, the member for Burnett, in the absence of Mr G.P. Barnes, asked the Treasurer: ‘What was the nature and extent of the cargo which the Government steamer ‘*Llewellyn*’ was carrying at the moment of her recent loss?’ Mr Corser also inquired as to ‘[w]hat was the registered tonnage capacity of the ‘*Llewellyn*’?’ The Treasurer stated on this occasion that the cargo aboard the *Llewellyn* on this voyage consisted of ‘Foodstuffs, chiefly flour; quantity, 46 tons 18½ cwt., dead weight measurement’. The registered capacity of this vessel was then stated as being ‘160 tons gross; 66 tons net-exclusive of bunkers.’⁹⁹

A commission of inquiry was shortly established to investigate the circumstances surrounding the

loss of the *Llewellyn*.¹⁰⁰ The Queensland Portmaster was advised by the Treasury Under Secretary that the personnel chosen for this commission were to be the Police Magistrate P.M. Hishon (as chairman), Captain W.J. Collin (who was also a member of the Marine Board of Queensland), and Captain Stephen Wilkinson (the recently retired Rockhampton Harbour Master). The Marine Board of Queensland was also apprised of the commissioners chosen for this inquiry at a meeting of the board on 25 August.¹⁰¹ Sittings of this commission primarily took place at the Rockhampton Police Court on 16, 17, 18, and 19 September, and were concluded at the office of the Queensland Marine Board in Brisbane on 1 October 1919.

The findings of the inquiry into the loss of the *Llewellyn* were submitted to both houses of the Queensland Parliament on Tuesday, 7 October 1919.¹⁰² The Treasurer was informed of the findings of the report of the commission prior to this date, but had declined to publicly release any details until the report had been tabled in Parliament.¹⁰³ The *Brisbane Courier* on 8 October summarised the details of this report:

The board showed that it was estimated that the *Llewellyn* carried 47 tons on the first trip, and 41 tons on the second and final trip. The board inclined to the view that the vessel was lost in the neighbourhood of St Bees Island.

The report continued: "As to the condition of the vessel, the evidence is that extensive repairs were effected in July, 1918, no expense being spared to put the ship and boats in first-class order, and her compasses were also adjusted in August of that year. Opinions of witnesses competent to judge confirm this view, and no doubt appears to exist as to the satisfactory condition of the vessel on the occasion of her departure from Rockhampton on 16th July last. The evidence to the contrary is that of the witness Wragge, whose testimony the Commission regard as worthless. He positively declares that the *Llewellyn* had a belting while he was working on the vessel between December, 1915, and March, 1917, when, in fact, she had no belting. He also asserts that she had a Plimsoll mark, when, in fact, she had no Plimsoll mark."

"Having gone carefully into the evidence, the Commission finds that the *Llewellyn* left Rockhampton on July 16 last in a satisfactory and seaworthy condition, that she was manned by competent officers and an efficient crew, and that she appears to have been last seen by the s.s. *Rocklily* at 9.45 p.m. on the 17th idem, bound North, in fresh south-easterly weather. No evidence is available as to the circumstances surrounding the disaster which befel [*sic*] her later."

The board records its sympathy with the relatives.¹⁰⁴

The government also ordered that this tabled report be published for the public record (refer to Appendix A).¹⁰⁵

At the time of this commission no evidence was able to conclusively show what caused the loss of



FIG. 5. Captain Holloway. Source: (*Capricornian*, 16 August 1919)

the *Llewellyn*. Despite the fact that the one witness, A.C.P. Wragge, was largely discredited in the findings of this inquiry, he did point out problems with the sea handling capabilities of this vessel in certain types of severe weather. Even though Wragge seemed to be confused or totally inaccurate as to certain aspects of the construction of the *Llewellyn*, he did point out that the vessel had handling problems in particular situations. These facts were shown to be correct, especially with the evidence provided regarding the incident at Moreton Bay in 1912 when the *Llewellyn* was unable to carry out its functions as pilot steamer in a period of particularly bad weather. The commission seemed to gloss over this incident, even suggesting that the government decision of the day to prevent the *Llewellyn* from operating in such conditions was actually in reference to the vessel *Lucinda*. Other factors to be considered are that the *Llewellyn* was a vessel of some age and design and not constructed as a cargo vessel, though was able to carry certain quantities of cargo. When such cargoes were required they could be efficiently

carried in good weather without any real concerns for the safety of the vessel, as indicated by the successful first relief mission to Mackay and Bowen on 4 July. The *Llewellyn* had also operated successfully for over 30 years with few incidents indicating reasons to be concerned about its seaworthiness.

On 17 July 1919 the vessel was carrying out a role for which it was not primarily designed, but capable of, during a period of social and economic crisis which required extraordinary remedies. Into this equation came the unpredictable nature of the sea. The real culprit in this tragedy was the weather. The officers and crew aboard were largely men of considerable experience; the vessel which they operated, though old and heavily laden, was generally in good operating condition and well maintained, and quite capable of carrying out this particular food relief task, had the weather not intervened.

CONCLUSION

The loss of the crew and passengers on the Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* was to become Rockhampton's worst shipping disaster. This tragic event was made all the more tragic by the fact that no real trace of any of the 12 Rockhampton-based Marine Department crew, nor the 2 passengers, was ever discovered.¹⁰⁶ The impact was especially hard upon the local Rockhampton families, some quite large, who lost fathers and husbands, as well as upon friends and work colleagues at Rockhampton and elsewhere in Queensland. Following the findings of the commission of inquiry into the loss of the *Llewellyn* and the determination that the vessel was indeed totally lost with all hands, the vessel's registry was closed on 22 October 1919.¹⁰⁷

The annual report of the Marine Department for the year 1919-20 sadly recounted the tragic events surrounding the mysterious loss of the *Llewellyn* on 17 July 1919. This report, and a memorial board erected in the Rockhampton Harbourmaster's Office also paid a humble tribute to the services of the 12 Marine Department crew members lost in July 1919.¹⁰⁸ The Queensland Maritime Museum received this memorial board from the Harbourmaster's Office in the late 1970s, and this was then put on public display in this museum at South Brisbane. On 18 July 2004, this memorial was relocated to the Customs House at Rockhampton and unveiled as part of a display commemorating the loss of the *Llewellyn*.¹⁰⁹ (Refer to Appendix B)

With time, the memory of this vessel and the persons lost has faded somewhat from Queensland's maritime historiography, though several authors have resurrected events to varying degrees.¹¹⁰ Now with the confirmed discovery of the actual wreck in 1998, the opportunity has arrived to depict the true place and service of this vessel, its crew, and the pilot service and associated branches of the Queensland Marine Department of the 1880s-1920s.

Back in 1911, the Marine Department's reportage of the loss of the steamer *Yongala*, contained melancholy thoughts on the inability to locate the wreck of this particular vessel. '[A]lthough, several attempts have been made to locate the wreck, the ever hungry sea, with a painful tenacity, holds on to the dread secret of her fate and the true cause of the disaster.'¹¹¹ These apt words could as easily be lent to the loss of the *Llewellyn*. Despite the fact that the last resting-place of the *Llewellyn* has now been determined, the sea will always hold onto some of the secrets associated with that last night of human tragedy aboard the *Llewellyn* in July 1919. Hopefully a full maritime archaeological survey and recovery of artefacts will eventuate so that some questions may be answered. In the end though, other questions will forever remain the realm of speculation, with the sea holding onto the true cause of this disaster and the fate of all those souls lost.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX A

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO THE LOSS OF Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN*

Brisbane, 3rd October, 1919.

SIR.-We have the honour to report having held an inquiry on the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th September, ultimo, and 1st October, instant, into the loss of the Q.G.S. "Llewellyn."

Mr. H.D. Macrossan, with him Mr. Allen, of counsel, instructed by Mr. D.P. Carey and Mr. H.J. Henchman (Crown Law Office), appeared for the Crown to place before the Commission all the evidence available relative to the matter of the inquiry.

By permission of the Commission, Mr. Larcombe, of counsel, instructed by Mr. H. Grant, appeared to watch the interests of Mrs Bradford, widow of the passenger named William John Bradford, and, instructed by Mr. F.H. Swanwick, to watch the interests of Mrs. Henderson, widow of Robert Henderson, engineer of the "Llewellyn": Mr. R.C. Boland, solicitor, to watch the interests of Mrs. Yarwood, widow of William Yarwood, cook of the "Llewellyn": and Mr. J.D. McLaughlin, solicitor, to watch the interest of Mrs. Dunmall, widow of Alfred Dunmall, acting master of the "Llewellyn," who, on the trip to Bowen on 16th July, 1919, acted as mate to Captain Holloway.

The following witnesses were examined, and their depositions are forwarded enclosed herewith, together with a list of exhibits, Nos. 1 to 37: -

Herbert Wrake Walker, Shipping Manager for Walter Reid and Co., Ltd.

William Urquhart McLeod, Fireman, Q.G.S. "Llewellyn."

William Johnson, Receiving Clerk for the A.U.S.N. Co.

Henry Benjamin Hadgraft, Wharfinger for Rockhampton Harbour Board.

William Parkinson, Messenger and Boatman, Marine Department, Rockhampton.

Alexander King, Engineer-Surveyor to Marine Board, Rockhampton.

Thomas Michael Walsham, Boatbuilder and Shipwright, Marine

Department, Rockhampton.

George Henry Fitzgerald, Coxswain, Pilot Station, Sea Hill.

Archibald Campbell, Engineer-Surveyor, Marine Board, Brisbane.

Charles Rasmus, Head Lightkeeper, Cape Capricorn Lighthouse.

Sarah Fitzgerald, wife of Thomas Henry Fitzgerald, Pilot Station, Sea Hill.

Lillian May Rasmus, Postmistress, Cape Capricorn.

Alexander Coutts, Gardiner, Master, s.s. "Rocklily."

Donald McDonald, Acting Harbour Master at Rockhampton.

William Hamilton, Chief Clerk, Marine Department, Brisbane.

Frederick Markusen, Master, Q.G.S. "Cormorant," Brisbane.

James Mulcahy, Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant, District Naval Office, Brisbane.

Alfred Charles Peter Wragge, Seaman, Rockhampton.

The lastnamed witness was examined at the request of Mr. Larcombe, witnesses Charles Rasmus, Sarah Fitzgerald, Lilian [*sic* Lillian] May Rasmus, William Hamilton, Frederick Markusen, and James Mulcahy at the request of the Commission, and the other witnesses at the request of Mr. Macrossan:

[...]

It is understood the vessel was designed and constructed for pilot service, and was not originally intended to be a cargo carrier, she having no appliances for handling cargo.

Owing to the continuance of the seamen's strike and the depletion of foodstuffs at North Queensland ports, it became necessary for the Government to despatch certain vessels to relieve the situation and, accordingly, on 16th July the "Llewellyn" was despatched for Bowen with a cargo of foodstuffs, consisting of 35 tons 4 cwt. deadweight and 11 tons 16 cwt. measurement (Exhibit No. 12). She had also on board between 33 and 34 tons of coal, 1,400 gallons of fresh water, and some mails, together with deck cargo comprising 30 cases of kerosene, 2 tons of firewood, and 10 to 15 cwt. of domestic stores, which she discharged at Sea Hill and Cape Capricorn. Her draft on leaving Rockhampton was 10 ft. 1 in. forward and 10 ft. 3 in. aft. She arrived at Cape Capricorn the next morning, and continued the journey north at 8.40 a.m. in weather described by Head Lightkeeper Rasmus in his evidence as "dirty, squally, showery weather threatening." In his log for this date (Exhibit No. 10), which he now explains is recorded on the Beaufort scale (the old State table) and not according to the Commonwealth formula (Exhibit No. 11), which is the official scale, the entry regarding the wind, weather, and sea conditions at 9 a.m. on the 17th July, about twenty minutes after the departure of the "Llewellyn" is as follows :-Wind, S.S.E., 5; Weather, 7 B.C.: Sea Disturbance, 2. Interpreted according to the Beaufort scale, this indicates that there was a fresh breeze blowing from the south-east, a moderate sea, and fine cloudy weather.

The evidence shows that on a previous trip, on 4th July, 1919, the "Llewellyn" was despatched from Rockhampton for Mackay and Bowen with a cargo of foodstuffs, consisting of 46 tons 16 cwt. deadweight and 1 ton 13 cwt. measurement (Exhibit No. 13). In addition, she had on board 35 tons of coal, the usual supply of fresh water (about 1,400 gallons), and some mails. Having reached her destination, she discharged

her cargo, and later returned to Rockhampton with a cargo of fruit. Her draft when leaving Rockhampton was 10 ft. 1 in. forward and 10 ft. 2 in. aft.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the total deadweight carried on each trip, as portion of the goods was manifested and charged freight on a measurement basis in accordance with ordinary shipping practice; but from the evidence of Mr. Walker, shipping manager for Walter Reid and Co., Limited, who may be regarded as having expert knowledge in these matters, the loadings were roughly 47 tons 16 cwt. on the 4th July and 41 tons on the 16th July. With the exception of lighthouse stores (about 4 tons), the other deadweight in the vessel was much the same on each occasion, so that on leaving Cape Capricorn on the 17th July the total deadweight was 6 tons 16 cwt. less than on the previous trip on 4th idem.

It is believed that the light seen by the "Rocklily" was that of the "Llewellyn." The "Rocklily," then bound south, was anchored at "Sarah's Bosom" (Hexham Island), sheltering from strong south-east weather. The "Llewellyn" at the time was passing north about 2 1/2 miles from the "Rocklily"—the relative positions of the vessels are indicated by red marks on chart "Keppel Bay to Percy Islands" (Exhibit No. 15). Since then she has not been heard of, and we may reasonably conclude that she has been lost with all hands. The names of the passengers and crew are contained in Exhibit No. 28.

The correspondence (Exhibits Nos. 3 and 26) shows that she was reported overdue at Bowen, and in consequence the Portmaster at Brisbane, acting on instructions from the Hon. the Treasurer, immediately despatched the Q.G.S. "Relief" to traverse the probable track of the missing vessel. Other Government steamers, the "Excelsior" and the "Otter," and the privately-owned ketch "Florant" and small craft assisted in the search. A comprehensive and extensive survey was carried out between the 21st July and 9th August, resulting only in some wreckage (Exhibits Nos. 19 to 25, 29 and 33) being found on St. Bees Island, which wreckage has been identified as portions of the "Llewellyn." The fact that this wreckage was found on St. Bees Island, and none elsewhere, gives colour to the suggestion that the vessel may have met her fate in that locality, and possibly in close proximity to the island.

As to the condition of the vessel, the evidence is that extensive repairs were effected in July, 1918, no expenses being spared to put the ship and boats in first-class order, and her compasses were also adjusted in August of that year (Exhibits Nos. 4, 5, 6, 27 and 30). Opinions of witnesses competent to judge confirm this view, and no doubt appears to exist as to the satisfactory condition of the vessel on the occasion of her departure from Rockhampton on 16th July last. The evidence to the contrary is that of the witness Wragge, whose testimony the Commission regards as worthless. He positively declares that the "Llewellyn" had a belting while he was working on the vessel

between December, 1915, and March, 1917, when, in fact, she had no belting. He also asserts that she had a plimsoll mark, when, in fact, she had no plimsoll mark. Having gone carefully into the evidence, the Commission finds that the "Llewellyn" left Rockhampton on the 16th July last in a satisfactory and seaworthy condition, that she was manned by competent officers and an efficient crew, and that she appears to have been last seen by the s.s. "Rocklily" at 9.45 p.m. on the 17th idem, bound north, in fresh south-easterly weather. No evidence is available as to the circumstances surrounding the disaster which befell her later.

In conclusion, the members of the Commission wish to place on record their sympathy with the relatives of those who have been lost in the "Llewellyn." The circumstances are particularly sad in view of the fact that they were on a mission to relieve the food shortage existing in Bowen.

APPENDIX B

CONSERVING AND COMMEMORATING THE WRECK OF THE Q.G.S. *LLEWELLYN*

During 2004 and 2005, the Museum of Tropical Queensland (MTQ), a campus of the Queensland Museum, completed two projects aimed at preserving the memory and the remnants of the Q.G.S. *Llewellyn*. Both projects were funded by the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Program and undertaken by Coleman Doyle at MTQ.

Project 1

On 18 July 2004, a ceremony was held in Rockhampton to officially open a display commemorating the loss of Q.G.S. *Llewellyn*. This was the 85th anniversary of the vessel's sinking in July 1919. Descendants of the crew and passengers, many of whom were from Rockhampton, were invited to attend. The two sons of the Captain of the *Llewellyn*, Leister King Holloway, were able to attend the



FIG. 6. Leister (right) and Cyril (left) Holloway (sons of Capt. Holloway) standing in front of the Honour Board in 2004. (Photo, Coleman Doyle, MTQ)

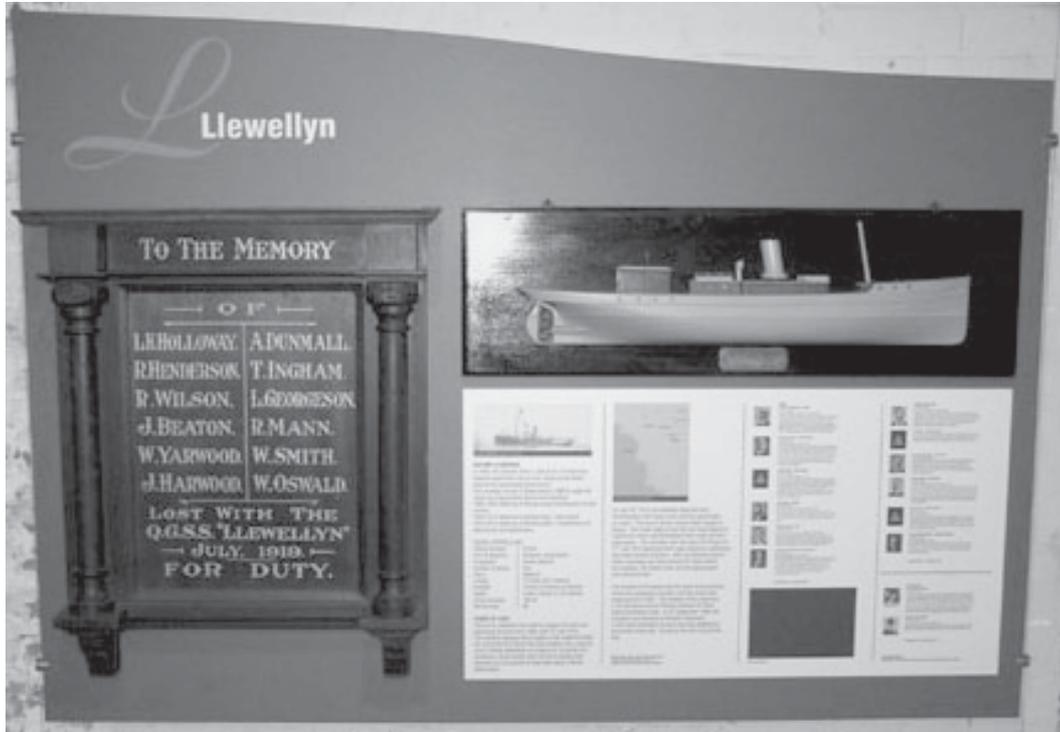


FIG. 7. Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* Honour Board on display at the Rockhampton Customs House. (Photo, Coleman Doyle, MTQ)

opening (Fig. 6) at the Customs House. The Deputy Mayor of Rockhampton, Councillor Jim Webber, unveiled the centrepiece of the display, the Department of Harbours and Marine's original Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* Honour Board, which is on loan from the Queensland Maritime Museum (Fig. 7).

Project 2

MTQ has also completed a Management and Conservation Plan for the wreck of Q.G.S. *Llewellyn*. It aims to provide sustainable protection and management for the shipwreck, which is located on the seabed 35km east of Mackay. The vessel is intact, except for the funnel, wooden decks and parts of the superstructure. It is partially encrusted with coral and a haven for local fish species (Fig. 8).

The Conservation and Management Plan recommends that, in accordance with the UNESCO Convention of the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, and in response to the concerns of many of the descendants, the vessel be left undisturbed on the seabed. People can still dive on the wreck but they must apply to MTQ for a permit. MTQ will inspect the wreck every two years to monitor its physical condition and work with local divers and Marine Park authorities to monitor the site for suspicious vessels.

The wreck of the *Llewellyn* is significant for many reasons. It is historically significant as a time capsule of a working government steamer in early 20th-century Queensland. It has the potential to be used for interpretive displays about life in regional Queensland in the early 1900s, the work of the Marine Department and the dependence on sea travel prior to the building of highways and railroads. It is socially significant to the descendants of the crew and passengers. A comparison with the wreck of the SS *Yongala*, which sank south-east of Townsville in 1919 could yield significant results.

Due to strong currents and winds, the depth of the wreck at 30-35m below sea level and frequently poor visibility levels, the wreck of the *Llewellyn* is not accessed often by recreational divers. The Management and Conservation Plan for the *Llewellyn* prepared by MTQ aims to maintain it in situ for future generations.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Daily Mercury*: 28 August 1998, pp. 1-2; 29 August 1998, p. 1; 2 September 1998, p. 1. Also refer to, JOL: Newspaper clippings: "Llewellyn" (Ship) [this file contains: *Morning Bulletin*, 28 August 1998, p. 5].

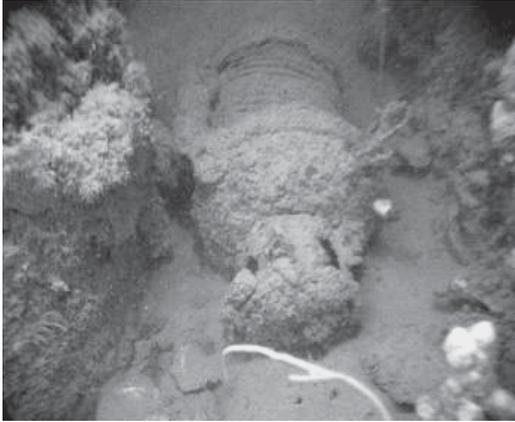


FIG. 8. Lantern from the Q.G.S. *Llewellyn* encrusted with coral. (Len Zell, MTQ)

- 2 Examples of various newspaper stories dealing with the *Llewellyn* and her loss include: *Morning Bulletin*, 15 November 1967; *Weekend Independent*, 28 August 1992; & also refer to, JOL: Newspaper clippings: "Llewellyn" (Ship) [this file also contains: *Bowen Independent*, 1 September 1967, p. 6; *Northern Miner*, 30 August 1967, p. 1; & *Daily Mercury*, 23 August 1967, p. 2, 24 August 1967, p. 2, & 25 August 1967, p. 5].
- 3 Maureen Nettle, 1990. *The Yongala* mystery (Maritime Museum of Townsville: Townsville).
- 4 *Daily Mercury*, 2 September 1998, p. 1.
- 5 Sarah Kenderdine, 1997. *Culture and Heritage: Shipwrecks and Associated Objects* (State of the Environment Technical Paper Series (Natural and Cultural Heritage). Department of the Environment: Canberra), p.8.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
- 7 Report on Harbours and Lighthouses. (Dated 14 October 1884). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1884, Vol. II, Part 2 (Edmund Gregory, Acting Government Printer: Brisbane), p.793.
- 8 Lloyd's Register of Shipping: from 1st July, 1914, to the 30th June, 1915 (Lloyd's Register of Shipping: London, 1914); *The Register of Australian and New Zealand Shipping: 1915-1916* (Mason, Firth & M'Cutcheon Pty Ltd: Melbourne, 1915); R. Parsons, *The Port of Maryborough: a history* (Ronald H. Parsons: Lobethal, 1994), p. 31.
- 9 I. Nicholson, *Log of Logs: Vol. Two* (Ian Nicholson: Nambour, Qld 1993), p. 298; *Harbours & Marine: Port & Harbour Development in Queensland from 1824 to 1985* (Queensland Government Department of Harbours & Marine, 1986), p. 122; R. Blackwood, *The Whitsunday Islands: An Historical Dictionary* (Central Queensland University Press: Rockhampton, Qld 1997), p. 256; & C. Jones, *Australian Colonial Navies* (Australian War Memorial: Canberra 1986), pp. 50-52.
- 10 Blackwood, *op.cit.*, pp.119 & 205.
- 11 Report on Harbours and Lighthouses. (Dated 13 August 1885). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1885, ... Vol.III, Part 2 (James C. Beal, Government Printer: Brisbane 1885), p.409.
- 12 NAA: CRS A7531: Collector of Customs, Brisbane. Register of British Ships: Main Register Subsequent to Merchant Shipping Act 1854, Port of Brisbane. 21 January 1856 – 26 January 1898: Volume 2, 12 August 1868 – 9 December 1887, p.146.
- 13 NAA: CRS A7533: Collector of Customs, Brisbane. Register of British Ships: Appropriation Book for Official Numbers, Port of Brisbane. 11 September 1855 – 21 January 1982.
- 14 Secondary sources referring to the *Llewellyn*'s service at Maryborough include: *Harbours & Marine: Port & Harbour Development in Queensland from 1824 to 1985*, *op.cit.*, p.144, 258-259, & 287; & Parsons, *op.cit.*, p.10-11, & 31.)
- 15 Report on Harbours and Lighthouses. (Dated 13 August 1885). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1885, ... Vol.III, Part 2 (James C. Beal, Government Printer: Brisbane 1885), p.407.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 QSA: HAR/226: Harbours and Marine Department: Reports on Harbours and Lighthouses. (24 September 1886), p.2.
- 18 Report on the Department of Ports and Harbours for the Year 1891-92. (Dated 14 September 1892). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1892, ... Vol.IV, Part 2 (James C. Beal, Government Printer: Brisbane, 1892), pp.474-475; QSA: HAR/226: Harbours and Marine Department: Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1894-5. (30 September 1895), p.4; Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1896-7. (25 July 1897), p.4; & Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1897-8. (1 July 1898), p.5. Also refer to, *Harbours & Marine: Port & Harbour Development in Queensland from 1824 to 1985*, *op.cit.*, p.287.
- 19 QSA: HAR/226: Harbours and Marine Department: Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1894-5. (30 September 1895), p.4; Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1896-7. (25 July 1897), p.4; & Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1897-8. (1 July 1898), p.5.
- 20 Report on the Department of Ports and Harbours for the Year 1890-91. (Dated 26 Aug.1891). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1891, ... Vol.IV, Part 2 (James C. Beal, Government Printer: Brisbane 1891), p.518.
- 21 *Maryborough Chronicle*, 8 June 1891.
- 22 *Maryborough Chronicle*, 10 June 1891. Also refer to: Table No. 2. Casualties to Vessels on the

- Queensland Coast for the Year ended 30th June, 1892, in Report on the Department of Ports and Harbours for the Year 1891-92 (Dated 14 September 1892). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1892, ... Vol.IV, Part 2 (James C. Beal, Government Printer: Brisbane 1892), p.481.
- 23 *Maryborough Chronicle*, 12 June 1891.
- 24 Report on the Department of Ports and Harbours for the Year 1890-91. (Dated 26 August 1891). V&P of the Legislative Assembly during the Session of 1891, ... Vol.IV, Part 2 (James C. Beal, Government Printer: Brisbane 1891), p.518.
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- 34 'Appendix No. 3. Casualties from 1st July, 1904, to 30th June, 1905.', in Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1904-1905. (Dated 7 August 1905). QPP printed during the Third Session of the Fifteenth Parliament: Volume II (George Arthur Vaughan, Government Printer: Brisbane 1905), p.1037.
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- 36 Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1905-6. (Dated 14 August 1906). QPP printed during the Fourth Session of the Fifteenth Parliament: Volume II (George Arthur Vaughan, Government Printer: Brisbane 1906), pp.1403-1404.
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- 38 QSA: HAR/227: Harbours and Marine Department: ... Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1908-9. (4 October 1909), p.2.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Queenslander*, 19 December 1908, p.29. Note that this article also contains various related photos of the pilot station, Moreton Bay, and the pilot steamer *Llewellyn* on p.24. The photo of the *Llewellyn* which is captioned: Pilot Steamer 'Llewellyn' Sending A Boat on Board An Oversea Vessel, is also available from the following repository: JOL: Photograph: *Llewellyn*: 'Pilot steamer "Llewellyn" sending a pilot on board an overseas vessel.' [Accession No.84-1-1; Negative No.42331].
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- 44 *Brisbane Courier*, 1 August 1919, p.7.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 25 June 1912, pp.6 & 7; & 26 June 1912, p.5.
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- 56 QSA: HAR/285: Harbours and Marine Department: ... (iii) Returns of ships arriving 1910-20 at Rockhampton and Port Alma: Shipping Arriving At Rockhampton and Broadmount. Year 1918, p.4.
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- 58 Richard Morris, Mr. Justice Higgins Scuppered: The 1919 Seaman's Strike. *Labour History*, No.37, (November 1979), pp.52-54; & Joe Harris, *The Bitter Fight: A Pictorial History of the Australian Labor Movement* (University of Queensland Press: St Lucia 1970), p.278.
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- 65 Morris, op.cit., p.54.
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- 67 D. Hunt, *The Townsville Meatworkers' Strike, 1919*. In D.J. Murphy (ed.) *The Big Strikes: Queensland 1889 - 1965* (University of Queensland Press: St Lucia 1983), p.154.
- 68 *Daily Mercury*, 7 July 1919, p.2; also refer to, 8 July 1919, p.2. See also, *Brisbane Courier*, 8 July 1919, p.7.
- 69 QPP printed during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament: Volume III (Anthony James Cumming, Government Printer: Brisbane 1919-1920), p.348.
- 70 *Brisbane Courier*, 14 July 1919, p.7. Also see, *Daily Mercury*, 14 July 1919, p.2; & 16 July 1919, p.4.
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- 76 *Daily Mercury*, 22 July 1919, p.2; 23 July 1919, p.6; & 25 July 1919, pp.3 & 4; *Brisbane Courier*, 25 July 1919, pp.6 & 7; & *Capricornian*, 2 August 1919, p.11.
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- 79 *Capricornian*, 2 August 1919, p.14.
- 80 Ibid., 2 August 1919, p.17.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 *Capricornian*, 9 August 1919, p.6.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Ibid., 9 August 1919, p.11.
- 85 Ibid., 9 August 1919, p.14.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid., 9 August 1919, pp.20 & 30.
- 88 *Daily Mercury*, 7 August 1919, p.2.
- 89 JOL: OM95-18: Alfred George Davies Cutting Book [Maritime related press cutting book; actual article attached with no source details, but believed to be Queensland newspaper late 1930s, possibly 1937].
- 90 *Capricornian*, 16 August 1919, p.19.
- 91 Ibid., 16 August 1919, pp.31-32. on p.27 of this same newspaper (16 August 1919) is a photographic

- section entitled: Llewellyn Tragedy-Passengers and Crew. This contains images of Captain A. Dunmall; L. Georgeson; R. Henderson; R. Mann; Captain L.N. Holloway; picture of the vessel S.S. Llewellyn; J. Harwood; W.J. Bradford; Nurse Rene Gordon; J. Beaton; W. Oswald; & W. Yarwood. This section also noted that photos were unavailable for T. Ingham, R. Wilson, and H. Smith. (The text of this article also found in: 'The Wreck of S.S. Llewellyn July 1919'. Paper presented by Maritime Archaeological Association Mackay, Mackay Maritime Museum, [date?].)
- 92 *Capricornian*, 2 August 1919, p.11.
- 93 *Ibid.* For similar coverage of all those lost aboard the *Llewellyn*, see *Daily Mercury*, 28 July 1919, p.3; & 5 August 1919, p.4.
- 94 *Brisbane Courier*, 29 July 1919, p.7 (including a photo image entitled 'The Missing Steamer Llewellyn', also on p.7); & 30 July 1919, p.7.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 6 August 1919, p.6; & 7 August 1919, p.7; & *Capricornian*, 9 August 1919, p.20.
- 96 Official Record of the Debates of the Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament: Vol. CXXXII (Anthony James Cumming, Government Printer: Brisbane 1919-1920), pp.34-35; & also refer to, JPQ during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament (Anthony James Cumming, Government Printer: Brisbane 1919-1920), p.14.
- 97 Official Record of the Debates of the Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament: Vol. CXXXII, op.cit., p.35; & also refer to, JPQ during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament, op.cit..
- 98 This new Act was effective from 1 February 1917. QSA: A/69399: History of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland), p.1.
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- 101 QSA: MBQ/D15: Marine Board of Queensland: Minute Book 3 or 4 June 1918 - 5 Jan. 1920.
- 102 Official Record of the Debates of the Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament: Vol. CXXXIII, op.cit., p.1145; & JPQ during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament, op.cit., pp.63 & 280.
- 103 *Brisbane Courier*, 8 October 1919, p.13; *Daily Mercury*, 6 October 1919, p.3, & 8 October 1919, p.5; & *Capricornian*, 11 October 1919, pp.24 & 28.
- 104 *Brisbane Courier*, 8 October 1919, p.13.
- 105 Official Record of the Debates of the Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament: Vol. CXXXIII, op.cit.; & JPQ during the Second Session of the Twenty-First Parliament, op.cit., pp.63 & 280.
- 106 Lorna McDonald, Rockhampton: A History of City and District (University of Queensland Press: St Lucia 1981), pp.86-87.
- 107 NAA: CRS A7531: Collector of Customs, Brisbane. Register of British Ships: Main Register Subsequent to Merchant Shipping Act 1854, Port of Brisbane. 21 January 1856 – 26 January 1898: Volume 2, 12 August 1868 – 9 December 1887, p.146. Also refer to, 'Ships Lost or Decommissioned' section, The Register of Australian and New Zealand Shipping: Including Shipping Registered at Fiji and New Guinea: 1921-1922 (Mason, Firth & M'Cutcheon: Melbourne 1921), p.169.
- 108 Report of the Marine Department for the Year 1919-1920. (Dated 30 August 1920). QPP printed during the First Session of the Twenty-Second Parliament: Volume II (Anthony James Cumming, Government Printer: Brisbane 1920), p.563.
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- 110 Lionel Berck, St. Bees Island: Its History, Life-styles & Tales (Boolarong Press: Brisbane 1995), pp.105-106; Blackwood, op. cit., pp.255-256; & Delys Jeppesen, The Fate of the "Llewellyn", Proserpine Historical Museum Newsletter, No.32, (September 1998), pp.11 & 12.
- 111 Report on the Marine Department for the Year 1910-11., op.cit., p.1183.
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