

History

Mischief by Phil Roderick

This bit of Mischief is not mischief at all, it's about a boat named "Mischief" in her way one of the more famous of the Cardiff pilot cutters.

The story begins 28TH July 1873 in the Bristol Channel, the unregistered pilot boat "Mischief" was wrecked. Onboard that day were Pilot William MORGAN aged 40 a Cardiff man, John HARVEY an able seaman aged 48 born Kinsale and Samuel HARVEY an apprentice aged 17 born Polruan Cornwall. William Morgan was to remain a Cardiff pilot for many years and Samuel HARVEY went on to become a Cardiff pilot.

Then in Swansea 1876, John MASON a shipwright built a boat. I can't find much about her early life, but in 1885 she is registered in Cardiff by William MORGAN a Cardiff pilot and named "Mischief". He used her in his trade as a Bristol Channel Pilot and then in 1888 she is sunk after a collision off Barry. The name "Mischief" was to continue though as on 21st March 1906 Pilot William MORGAN of 113 Windsor Road Penarth registers his new boat at Cardiff. She is a Cutter with an elliptical stern with oak panels and beams, she is Carvell built with oak and pine planking with a gross weight of 17.58 tons. She was built by Thomas BAKER at East Canal Wharf Cardiff; she is called "Mischief."

William MORGAN uses her right up until 1913 when the Cardiff pilotage authority decide to modernise the way pilots operate and buy in three steam cutters which are to be manned by a group of pilots working in a shift pattern. The Cardiff Steam pilot company arrange a loan from a bank to buy all the old sailing cutters from their owners. William MORGAN sells "Mischief" to the company on 14th November 1913.

The pilot company sells her on 5th August 1914 to a Barry pilot named Arthur William GARRET of Red Brick Crescent Barry. But yet again progress was to get in the way of "Mischief" as by 1916 the Barry Pilotage authority follow Cardiff's lead and buy in a steam cutter, so Arthur GARRET does as William MORGAN did and sells her to the Barry Steam boat pilot company.

"Mischief" was now out of a job.

She was then sold on 11th August 1919 to a man from London one Percy John Henry UNNA of 25 Victoria Street London SW1. He took her out to Takoradi on the Gold Coast.

The shipping register of Cardiff bears these words at the bottom of the page "Registry closed 11th August 1927."

The end of "Mischief"

I think not. In January 1954 she came to the notice of a man who could be best described as coming from the pages of a Boys own annual. He had won the MC and bar in WW1 and the DSO in WW2. --- Bill TILMAN born in 1898. One of his crew on an expedition to Greenland in 1970 remarked that he must have been away from home and on hard tack for nearly all his life.

TILMAN had decided in the early 1950s to go on sailing and mountaineering expeditions and needed a strong craft. He was to write in 1954.

"Mischief" was put in touch with a man who owned the right type of boat "Mischief" built at Cardiff in 1906, was originally a Bristol Channel pilot cutter 45ft long. Her only known history to me was her first entry in 1927 when presumably her life as a working boat came to an end and was bought to turn her into a sailing yacht. Since then she has had nine owners and the latest had brought her to Malta.

In her life with TILMAN she ranged far and wide, Patagonia, into the Antarctic Ocean, to Greenland and to remote regions both North and South. In all she covered more than 110 thousand miles with him.

In 1968 she sank off Jan Mayen in the Arctic Ocean Lat 71. She was 62 years old.

So there we have it "Mischief" a Cardiff boat that saw a large part of the world, built just to work the Bristol Channel by "Thomas BAKER" a Cardiff man.

Displacement

Built in Cardiff in 1906 Originally a Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter.
- 45ft LOA

- 13ft beam
- 7'6" draft
- Thames Tonnage about 29t Registered tonnage 13.78
- Displacement about 55 tons
- 9 owners up to 1955
- New Perkins 4/99 diesel engine

Did not use 20ft top mast on trip due to extra strain , windage, and massive five supporting wire stays, and limited advantage of topsail.Â

Â