

## Special Feature

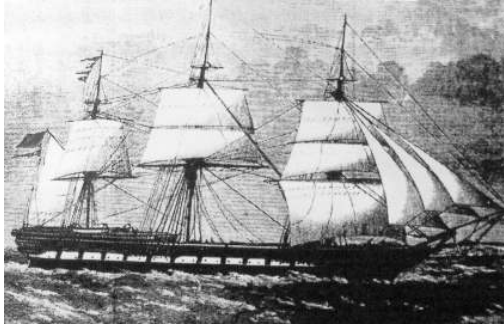
# Arthur Seeks the Story of *The Cospatrick*

We had lived in Fifield for thirteen years until 1998 when Freida and I came to join this newly - opened retirement community here, in York.

A kind friend in Fifield sent us the last issue of *The Wychwood* as part of a Christmas present and it has evoked many memories for us! Sad though it was to read the note about the death of Don Salter, that itself brought back memories of how, as a Fifield representative, I used to join the group gathered on publication day to put the magazine together; all of us sitting at tables in the village hall, folding, stapling and counting out copies before I took my batch back to Fifield for distribution. How well the magazine has grown!

### Researching 'The Cospatrick'

Then the article by Janet Wallace! (I remember the day, now almost twenty years ago, when I saw Janet in the surgery and said that people seemed to be speaking increasingly quietly nowadays - and how Janet made the necessary arrangements after that!) But, most of all for me, she mentioned the centenary of the loss of the *Cospatrick* in 1874 while it was on its way to New Zealand with emigrant poverty-stricken agricultural labourers from a broad area, especially in Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Northants. (Is the locally written edited diary entitled *Rain and Ruin* still available, I wonder?)



With my love of the sea and interest in ships I was intrigued! Why, where and how was the *Cospatrick* lost?

### A Scale Model

What was her story? I set out

to discover and, if possible to get plans and build a scale model of her and, inside, put a list of those who were so sadly lost at sea. There were only three survivors. I found one small picture of her leaving the Thames on her last voyage. Visits to the Maritime Museum at Greenwich, then at the Woolwich Arsenal, housed in a listed building which had been the old bell foundry, were of little use. There seemed to be no plans in existence because she had been built in Burma, of native teak by shipwrights who, I believe, had been sent out from Scotland.

However, I did find a copy of the Board of Trade enquiry report into her loss and sad reading it made. It described how, at one point in the disastrous fire, the captain had been seen dropping his wife and their four year old child over the side into the sea.

The picture showed her built in the style of a Blackwall frigate, of which there had been several, all built with beautiful lines but designed to carry substantial cargoes or large numbers of passengers while at the same time achieving passage times

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to the antipodes which could compete closely with those of the better-known clipper ships. From the picture and from plans of similar ships I was able to lay out scale plans and sections and, slowly, start to build a plank-on-frame model. Increasing age (I am now uncomfortably over eighty) and diminishing returns (the two might just be linked) means that the model is still unfinished. I hope I might be able to complete it during the coming year but I know how fate treats my best intentions!

If or when finished she will be a little over 60 centimetres long and, fully rigged, just a little more than that in height.

Perhaps, with the background information which I have gathered, her eventual proper home should be somewhere near the memorial on Shipton Green.

**Arthur Ashton**

*For more about The Cospatrick see The Wychwood Feb/March 2005*

## Ringing Bells!

*In response to our article on the bell-ringers in the Christmas issue of The Wychwood we are delighted to continue the story through the reminiscences of John Hawkes and Barbara Pearce. Editor*

### **John is Back in Touch!**

John Hawkes rang to say how much he had enjoyed reading Alan Vickers' article. George Bartlett, who appeared in both photographs, was John's grandfather and John's mother Dorothy Bartlett appears in the photograph taken in the 1930s. John was surprised to see his name mentioned in the article about his old boyhood chum Robert Barrett. I gave him Bob's address and I hope that they exchanged Christmas cards and are now back in touch!

### **Barbara Remembers Harry Miles**

Barbara Pearce recognised her Great Uncle, Harry Miles, in the earliest photograph accompanying the article. He was the bell-ringer of whom it was said could ring two bells at once! Harry went on to become a very famous bell-ringer indeed and Barbara has a copy of *The Ringing World* for May 1974 with an article dedicated to Harry, which proves it.

Harry Miles was born at Rose Cottage, Church Street, Shipton in 1884. He was taught bell-ringing by George Bartlett when he was 11. He rang for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and again on the death of the Queen in 1901. This time it was a muffled peal at Chipping Norton and afterwards Harry walked all the way home in the dark. He rang at least 47 peals with the Rev Robinson including the Reverend's 1000<sup>th</sup> peal in 1905; at that time a record. He even rang in a peal 60 years later to commemorate the event and was the only survivor of the original band.

He moved to Cornwall in the 1940s and was Captain of St Uny's Tower in Lelant. Harry produced the *Ringers' Roll of Honour* for the Second World War in St Paul's Cathedral, a task that took him five years of work. For twenty years he served on the national Central Council of Church Bell-Ringers regularly ringing and teaching until he died aged 95 in 1979.