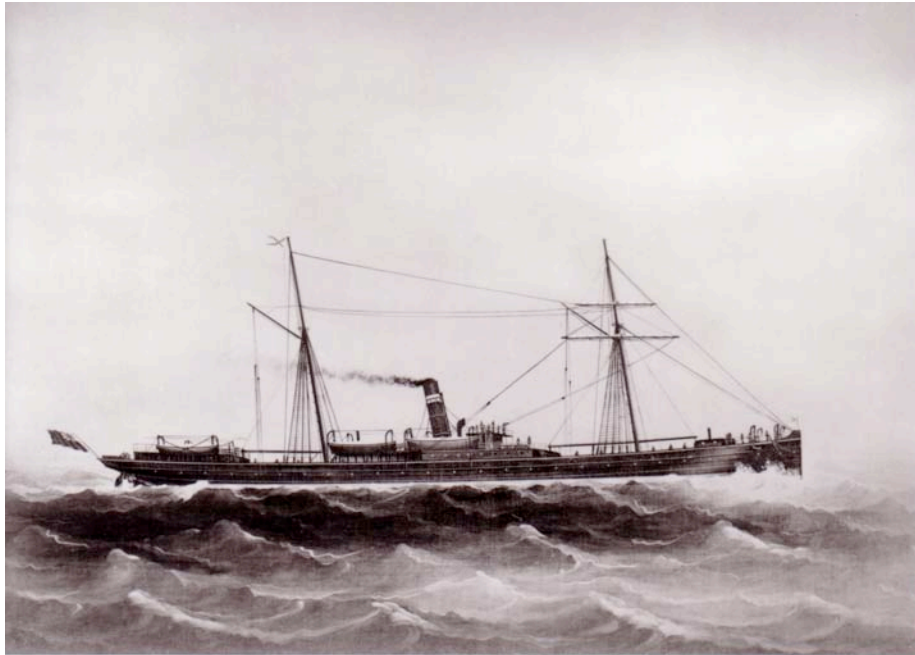


## THE FIRST CHINDWARA



The first *Chindwara*, cost B.I. £35,000. She was built by William Denny and Bros, of Dumbarton, and she was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1879. *Chindwara* was one of four near sisters, and, in giving these four ships names beginning with the same initial letter, B.I. initiated a system of grouping ships of a particular class within its fleet.

A ship of some 1,983 gross tons and 285 feet in length, *Chindwara* was almost completely dependent on her engine. Such sails as could be carried on her fore and main masts being used principally for steadying purposes. Interestingly, from the point of view of safety, she, and her three sisters, were the first Denny built ships with double bottoms.

*Chindwara* carried 19 first class and 1,104 deck passengers, and her 2-cylinder compound steam engine gave her a speed on trials of 11.55 knots.

On her maiden voyage from London to Karachi, Persian Gulf ports and Bombay, the *Chindwara* carried B W Macdonald as ship's clerk. He was later to become one of the founding partners of Macdonald, Hamilton and Company, which was, for many years, closely associated with B.I. and P & O affairs in Australia.

In 1882, the *Chindwara*, commanded by Captain Murdo Macfarlane, carried the 13<sup>th</sup> Bengal Lancers from Bombay to Ismailia to take part in the military campaign that resulted in the overthrow of Arabi Pasha. Once the troops had disembarked, Captain Macfarlane and the master of the *Huzara*, Captain Campbell, took leave to go and view the battle of Tel-el-Kebir. Those were the days when set-piece battles were considered to be something of a

spectator sport, and it would appear that these two Captains were well looked after by the Regiment. Some time later, Captain Macfarlane was to record that "Campbell and I had a survey of the battlefield and picked up what loot we could as curios".

The *Chindwara* was employed to support military activity in Burma in 1885, and she then spent much of the following decade on the Bombay-East African service, where she carried labourers from India to work on the Uganda railway. It is interesting to note that, when transporting these labourers, quarantine regulations were avoided by reducing speed to ensure that the *Chindwara* was at sea for 16 days.

Apart from a grounding incident in 1901, the first *Chindwara* appears to have led an uneventful life, and she was sold for breaking up in Bombay on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1904.

*The picture of the first Chindwara is reproduced with the kind permission of the P&O History and Archives. Grateful thanks are due to Bill Laxon for his help and support with the text, which is largely taken from the excellent book on The British India Steam Navigation Company written by him and F W Perry. Whilst this book is now out of print, an up-to-date version of it is available on CD from the Publishers Ninety North.*