
SHIP TO SHORE

J. & J. DENHOLM

1866–1991



JONATHAN MANTLE

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The Glenpark off Dumbarton Rock in the River Clyde, 1956

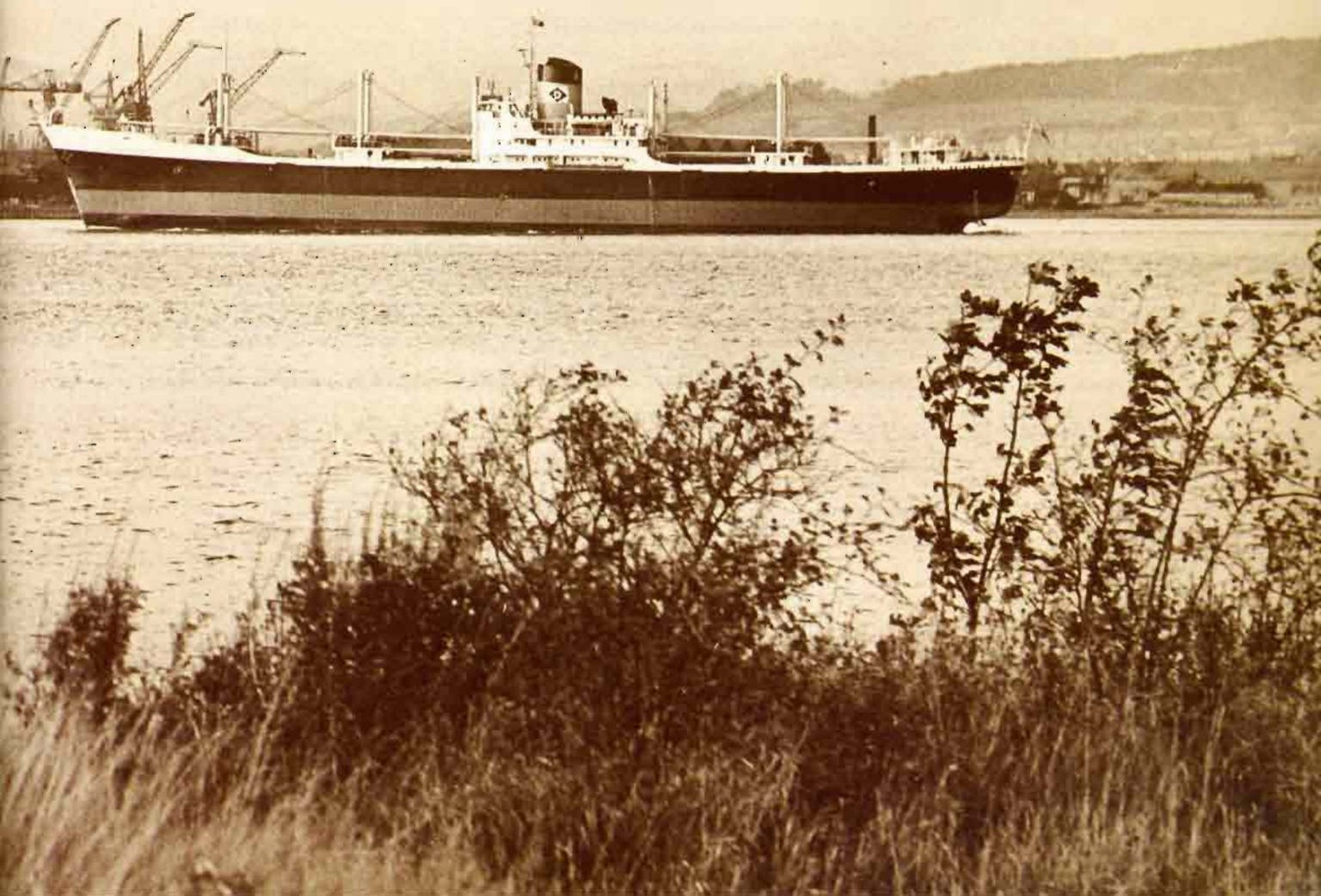


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Half title: *The bulk carrier Broompark.*

Front cover: Mountpark *with* David
Sinclair. *An imaginary encounter from a
painting by A.H. Turner.*

FOREWORD

WE HAD SOME doubts about producing a history to mark Denholms' 125th year, but decided, based on the experience of producing the 100 year history in 1966, that it would be wise to do so at this time when generations are changing and before memories are dimmed or lost. Indecision about going ahead left us rather short of time and we have been fortunate to find, in Jonathan Mantle, an author prepared and able to meet a tight deadline. Our thanks are due to him and to the publishers, James & James, who have had to contend with many last-minute alterations and demands for inclusion of new information.

It is difficult in so short a space to portray the company and its development. In the early years, the company was the family. Now it has a life of its own and, although the family is still closely involved, it depends on a multitude of dedicated and skilled professional managers. Few of them are mentioned in the text, because they are too numerous. It is, however, as much to the skills of these people as to the contribution of the family that the company owes its continuing prosperity.

I have contributed as far as my memory permits to this history, but memories grow dim and only go back so far. I can remember my grandfather vaguely as an old man, sitting in an armchair, wearing a black skullcap; the man whose boundless energy enabled him to build a shipping company in his lifetime belongs to an era before my memory. Sadly many things have gone unrecorded and many recorded were lost when the Greenock office was destroyed in the Second World War. I know from hearsay that at one time my grandfather involved himself in a china clay business in Cornwall, but that it failed and left my father and my uncle with the strong view that they should 'stick to their last'. I hope that the development of our business, with the theme of the ship to shore interface, would not be felt by them to be straying too far from our last.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ian Denholm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Ian" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while "Denholm" is written in a larger, more expansive script with a prominent flourish at the end.

CHAIRMAN

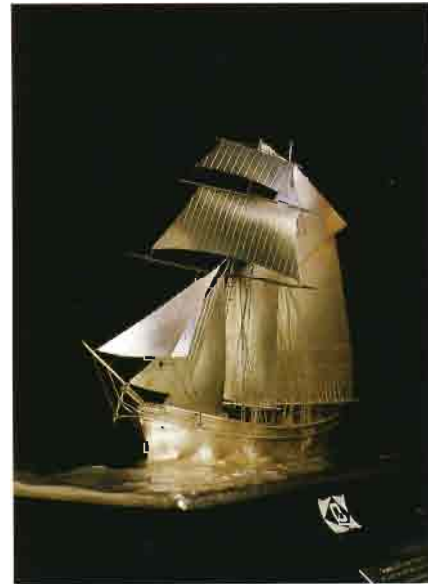


Johnnie David Sinclair of Brixham Leasing of Rye, 2nd 1874. L.A. G. Sinclair master

David Sinclair, the first ship owned by Denholms. The 122-ton Brixham topsail schooner was bought for £2,500 in 1872. She was much the same size as the fishing boats in which Denholm Fishselling at present has shares, and was similarly owned in partnership with the skipper.

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A silver model of the David Sinclair, presented to John Denholm on the occasion of his Diamond Jubilee celebrations, April 1929.



SANCTIONED BY THE BOARD OF
TRADE, AUGUST 1871.
IN PURSUANCE OF 17 & 18 VICT. c. 104.



68153

(O)

OFFICIAL LOG BOOK.

No. 1.

FOR EITHER

FOREIGN-GOING OR HOME TRADE SHIP.

Name of Ship.	Official Number.	Port of Registry.	Registered Tonnage.	Name of Master.	No. of his Certificate (if any).
David Sinclair	68153	Brisbane	122 ¹¹⁶ / ₁₀₀	Superseated Jas. A. P. B. 29.541	

Port at which and Date when Voyage commenced.	Nature of the Voyage or Employment.	Port at which and Date when Voyage terminated.
Port <u>Brisbane</u> Date <u>16th Nov - 1872</u>	<u>Foreign</u>	Port <u>London</u> Date <u>20 Jan 74</u>

Delivered to the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine at the Port of London

on 31st day of January 1874.

Countersigned

[Signature]
Superintendent.

Edward Clark Master.

Wm. Wall & Co. Address.

NOTE.—The above Entries are to be filled up by the Master, and the Log Book is to be delivered to the Superintendent within forty-eight hours after the Ship's arrival, or upon the discharge of the Crew, whichever first happens, in the case of a "Foreign-going Ship;" and within twenty-one days after the 30th of June and the 31st of December respectively in every year in the case of a "Home Trade Ship."—See Section 286.

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1871.

A

I

STARTING IN SAIL

1866–1882

SHIPS AND THE sea were in the Denholm family for two generations before James Denholm founded the business at Greenock 125 years ago. His grandfather, James Denholm, was a tide officer in the customs service. His uncle Michael Carmichael, became master of the iron barque *Bodrhuddan*. His father, another James, who was also a Master Mariner, had shipped with Michael Carmichael and died of tuberculosis at the age of 38 while serving as mate on board the *Bodrhuddan*.

The early loss of his father left James Denholm the head of the family at only 13 and, although his next few years were difficult, there appears to have been little doubt in his mind that it would be through the sea that he, too, would eventually make his mark.

James began work at 14 in a Glasgow law office. He spent two years there and, by his own account, hated every minute of it. He moved at 16 to another law office; then at 18 to the office of J. M. Taylor, Writer. The hard years of clerking and saving stood him in good stead as, coupled with his native energy and determination, they enabled him, at the age of 20, to establish himself as James Denholm, Factor, at 41 Cathcart Street, Greenock in 1866.

As a factor and land-agent James quickly built up a sound and sizeable business, but his horizon always lay beyond the factoring and ownership of land-locked property. He used his commercial standing to build up connections

Opposite: *The log book for a voyage of the David Sinclair, in 1874, from Brixham to Italy and on to New York. During the voyage the ship incurred storm damage, a member of the crew was lost from liver failure and two stowaways were discovered. The Master, Mr Brittain, was later charged with the manslaughter of the ship's cook during the voyage.*

James and Mary Denholm, parents of James and John Denholm, the founders of J. & J. Denholm.



with Glasgow merchants and his knowledge of seafaring to liaise with ship-owners in the Bristol Channel ports, Liverpool and London. His early speciality was Brixham schooners and soon all such vessels calling at the Clyde found an agent in James Denholm.

After only three years in business he was known no longer as a factor but as an agent and shipbroker; and in 1869 he was joined by his 16-year-old brother, John, who had served his apprenticeship in a shipping office. The business of J. & J. Denholm was born.

James and John Denholm expanded their agency and broking business with a drive that outstripped their rivals. Theirs was the first in a series of teams of two brothers that were to run J. & J. Denholm successfully for three generations and for over a century.

In 1871 James also expanded his immediate family, marrying Jessie Bell McKenzie, adopted daughter of another shipping-agent. They had two children, a daughter called Mamie and a son who died at birth. James's own health was beginning to suffer, but it is likely that he only threw himself more determinedly into building up the business he had founded.

For five years, the last two of them with his brother, he had worked towards the obvious end in what was, at that time, a flourishing British shipping industry – the ownership of a ship. But it was John, not James, who eventually identified their first vessel in 1872.

She was the 122-ton Brixham topsail schooner *David Sinclair*, which he

sighted one day for sale in Albert Harbour. The asking price was £2,500.

John Denholm immediately made his way to the bank with the intention of negotiating a loan. The manager, however, was less impressed by his initiative than by the fact that he was still only 19 at the time. He told John to come back when he was older and showed him the door.

Outside the bank, John encountered two local businessmen, Alex Morrison, a carpenter and chandler, and the Greenock sailmaker, Thomas Black. It is not known whether he immediately put the proposition to them, or merely com-



John and James Denholm circa 1870.

plained at the way he had been treated by the bank, but the result was that they accompanied him to the ship. They showed their faith in his judgement by offering to put up the cash.

The *David Sinclair* was not a large ship. Her dimensions were 87 feet overall, 21 feet 3 inches beam and 11 feet 9 inches draft; little different from some of the fishing-boats in which Denholms have an interest today such as the *Maranatha II*, which is 86 feet overall, 24 feet beam and 13 feet draft (and which cost over £1 million).

But the *David Sinclair* was active in the then-thriving trade between Newfoundland and the Continent. James and John Denholm were soon working her, as they did others after her, in the West Indies trade, outward with coal and homewards with grain, sugar and resin.

[illegible]

Charter agreement, April 1877, between J. & J. Denholm and Alexander Bell & Sons, London merchants, for a voyage to Bilbao, trading bulk wheat for bags of flour.



James Denholm would not, however, live much longer to enjoy either his family or the ownership of Denholms' first vessel. In 1875 he died aged 29, as his father before him, of tuberculosis. John Denholm took command; he was then just 22 but had already been in the business for six years.

The *David Sinclair*, under her master, Captain Browning, continued to trade profitably under the Denholm flag: records show that in November 1876 she sailed from Ayr to Lisbon with a cargo of coal at 8s. a ton; in December 1876 from Larache to the UK, carrying grain at 5s. 3d. a ton; and in April

Jane, named after John Denholm's first wife Jane Kerr McCracken. They married in 1881. The Denholm flag was later changed with the advent of steamers, as it was discovered that the original design got dirty too quickly!

1877 from Ostend to Bilbao, carrying out wheat in bulk and returning to the UK with flour in bags at 16s. a ton.

By the time of the Bilbao voyage she had also undergone a change of ownership – but she remained in Denholm hands. In January of that year, 1877, she was sold to a company set up to buy and run her under the control of John Denholm for a commission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of gross freight; the first example of ship management by a company that was to become an international leader in this field.

In 1881 John Denholm married Jane Kerr McCracken, the daughter of a former boilermaker. They had two children: Helen, who married Alex Morrison, no relation of the shareholder in the *David Sinclair* venture but a marine engineer who was to become the company's first Superintendent; and James, who emigrated to Australia after the First World War. But Jane Denholm died young and it would be the children of John Denholm's second marriage who would, in due course, carry on the business.

In the meantime the Denholm fleet continued to grow. By 1882 J. & J. Denholm owned 12 ships, mostly trading to and from the West Indies, and like the *David Sinclair*, they were all wooden sailing-ships: schooners, barques and barquentines. In those days, before the full development of the telegraph and other swift methods of communicating, it was normal for the vessels' Captains to have a shareholding in them and it is interesting that on the Shareholders' Register today, there are still descendants of some of the original Masters.



Mary Sinclair off Dover, 1880s.

2

STEAM AND STEEL

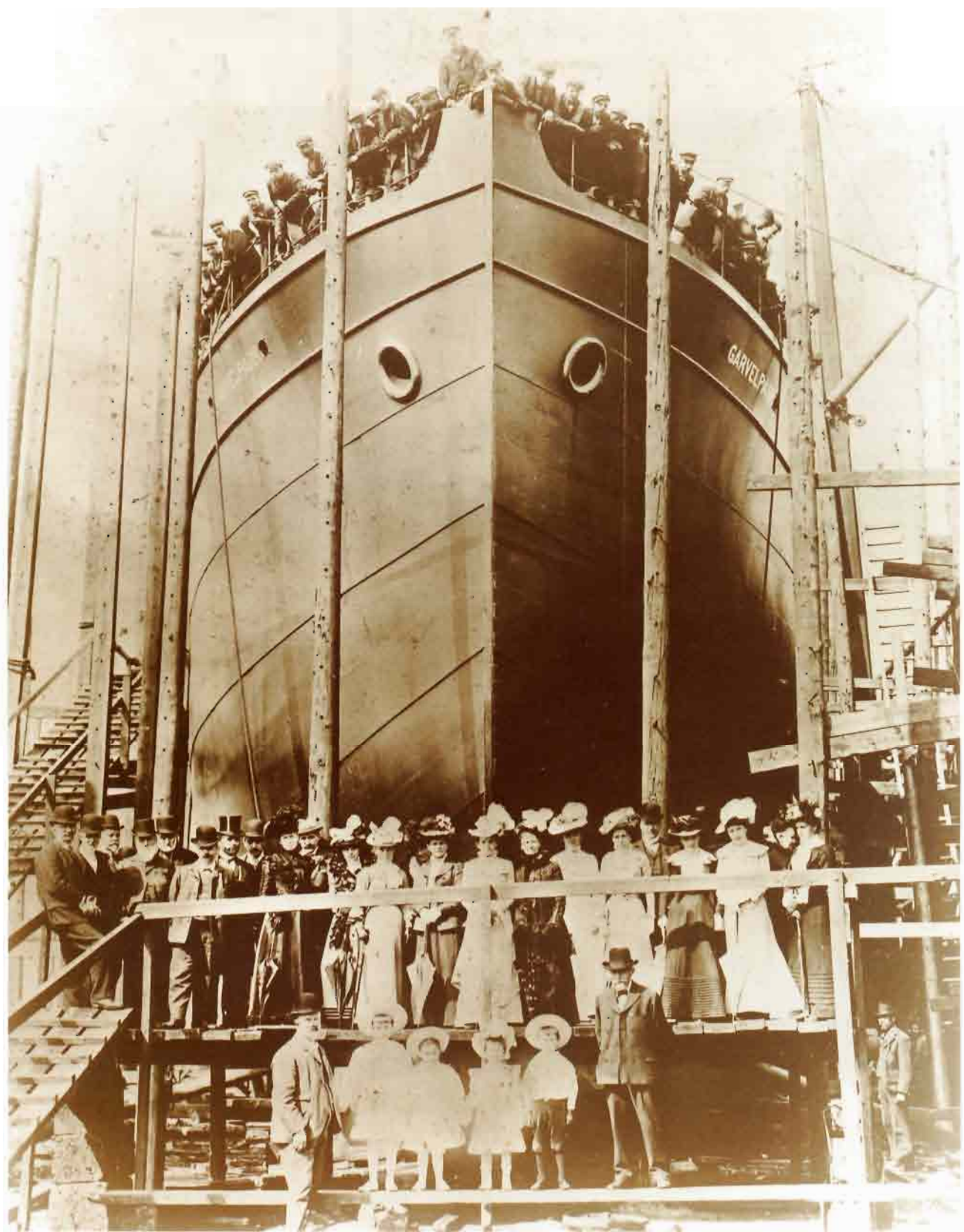
1882–1914

STEAMSHIPS WERE initially slow to develop as viable alternatives to sail. Although a remorseless stream of technical innovations and advances gradually whittled away the superiority of sail, many shipowners were still deeply sceptical about the virtues of steam engines and resisted the temptation to change from wood and sail directly to steam and steel.

The result was a succession of developing composite ships: first, sailing-ships with paddles; then sailing-ships with screw propulsion, followed by steamships with auxiliary sails, before, finally, steamships were accepted. At the same time the materials of which the hulls were constructed were changing from all-wood, to composite – wooden hulls with iron frames – to iron ships and finally to all-steel riveted construction.

John Denholm moved directly from sailing-ships to steel steamers, a step which saved much money and greatly assisted the growth of the company. On 18 October 1882, J. & J. Denholm entered into an agreement with the Carron Park Steamship Company of Glasgow to purchase the *Carronpark*, a 388-ton steel-hulled steamer, for £8,300. As was then the custom, a new company was set up to own the vessel. This was the Cathcart Steamship Company, which issued 83 shares of £100 each.

A series of steel-hulled steamers followed and the Denholm steamer fleet grew while the company ran down its sailing fleet of barques, barquentines





and schooners. The *Carronpark* was followed by a succession of *Mountparks*, *Wellparks*, *Glenparks*, *Cathcartparks*, *Deerparks* and *Garvelparks*.

The early Denholm steamers were all named after parks in Greenock. Greenock, however, has but six parks, so John Denholm had to start using the names of parks elsewhere, and then of trees. There would even be a *Denpark* and a *Holmpark* – although never a *Denholmpark*, as that name would have been too long to use in cables, as had been found from the *Cathcartpark*.

The second steamer, the *Mountpark*, was purchased in 1883 and earned £332 1s. 10d. profit in her first year for her owners, who included John Den-

Above: *Cathcartpark*, 1897. The ship's long name proved expensive for telegraphy.

Opposite: The launch of the SS *Garvelpark*, 1901. The small boy on the right of the front row is John C. Denholm, who was to become Chairman of J. & J. Denholm Ltd.

holm, Alex Morrison and John Denholm's future father-in-law, Robert Miller. In her second year the *Mountpark* earned them £186 18s. 9d., but in June 1887, while *en route* from Hamburg to Greenock, she was lost in the Sound of Islay. A replacement *Mountpark* was built at Dundee and she too earned good profits before being replaced in 1897 by the third of seven Denholm ships to bear that name and the first ship of more than 1,000 tons to be owned by Denholms.

John Denholm's family grew, too, when in 1891, after his first wife's death, he married again, to Jane Cochrane Miller, the daughter of Robert Miller, a Greenock engineer and boilermaker. They had seven children, including the two brothers John and William, who were to run the company in their turn. Jane died in 1906 and, following her death, John Denholm married Jane's sister Jessie, it having just become legal to marry a deceased wife's sister.

This man of great energy and drive also found the time in 1902 and 1903 to become President of the Greenock Chamber of Commerce, and in 1904 began a five-year term as Provost of Greenock. Even he had to acknowledge, however, that managing a separate company for each of his successful steamships was beyond him. In 1909, the structure was rationalized and all six ships

The Stockholm General Meeting of the Baltic and White Sea Conference, 1908. John Denholm is seated at the right end of the front row. He became President of the Conference in 1927.



were bought by The Denholm Line Steamers Ltd, which was owned by the former partners in the ships and was managed by J. & J. Denholm, itself eventually incorporated as a limited liability company in 1916.

The first meeting of The Denholm Line Steamers Ltd took place on 14th October 1909. John Denholm was appointed director and company secretary and the Chairman was James Duncan Morrison, son of Alex Morrison, one of the investors in the *David Sinclair*. Other directors were Duncan Nicol, a coal merchant, and Alexander Menzies, a shipowner, who died the following year.

The share capital of the new company was £42,800. The Union Bank of Scotland Ltd, Greenock, were appointed as bankers. The solicitors were Messrs. Black & Cameron and the auditors Messrs. Hardie & Rowan. In the case of the bankers, they were rather more friendly than their predecessors had been when John Denholm first approached them in 1872, and he had no trouble in securing a £25,000 overdraft facility. The company also raised £40,000 in debentures and in its first operating year made a profit of £1,966 18s. 6d. In 1880, the purchasing power of the pound was fifty times that of today.

But if steam had ended the days of sail, the sea was no less hazardous. In The Denholm Line Steamers' first year of operation the *Cathcartpark* was stranded on the island of Samsoe and the *Deerpark* ran aground at Villa Real, although both ships were eventually refloated.

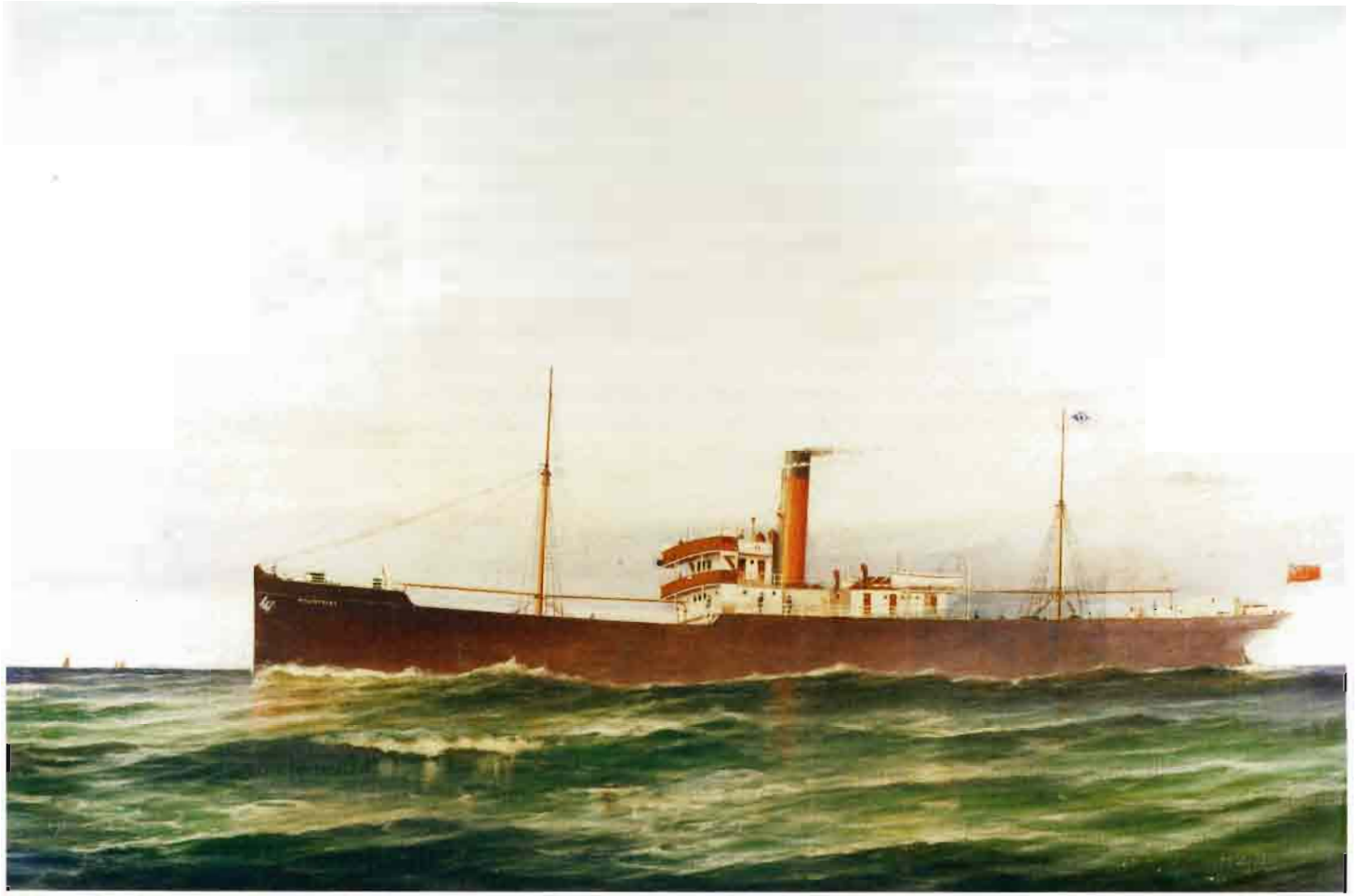
The following year the *Mountpark* sank off the Kent coast after being in collision with the SS *Tremont*, an incident resulting in considerable loss of life, for which the Denholm ship was exonerated of all blame. An order was promptly placed at Port Glasgow for a new 1,376-ton ship of the same name. In 1912 the *Cathcartpark* was en route from Runcorn to Wick with a cargo of salt when she was wrecked on the Torran Rocks.

Both the size of the individual ships and that of the Denholm fleet grew rapidly. Losses continued to be offset by new buildings and early in 1913 the loss of the *Deerpark*, after becoming stranded in Kyle Rhea, was followed by an order for a new steamship from the Greenock & Grangemouth Dockyard Company.

By 1913 the Denholm fleet totalled seven again, and was valued at £89,000. John Denholm was a vigorous 59-year-old at the head of a tightly knit team to whom he was linked by marriage or long acquaintance. He had no plans either to retire or to slacken in his resolve to bring about further expansion. But by 1914 the world was on the brink of a crisis after which things would never again be the same.



John Denholm, founder, and Chairman until 1937. A photograph taken in the 1920s.



Mountpark, built 1912, requisitioned by the Admiralty 1914. She was lost after a collision with the SS Alexandra in the Bristol Channel during the First World War.

3

WAR, DEPRESSION AND WAR 1914–1945

THE OUTBREAK OF the First World War had immediate and dramatic effects on Denholms, as it did on all British shipowners; but never even in the darkest days of requisitioning and losses did it occur to them that this was merely the prelude to 30 years of economic and political crises culminating in yet another war.

In the first year of the war, the *Holmpark* was requisitioned by the Government, the *Mountpark* stranded on Falsterbo Reef but later refloated, the *Garvelpark* seized by the Germans at Danzig, and the *Broompark*, *Mountpark* and *Carronpark* requisitioned by the Admiralty; though the *Broompark* was later de-requisitioned.

Denholms were undeterred, however, and even commissioned three new steamships at a total cost of nearly £100,000, all of them enjoying the newly-available facility of onboard electric light.

The family was also drawn into the war on a personal level. John Denholm's second son, John, was called up and survived Gallipoli, where he was wounded twice. He ended the war as Gunnery-Lieutenant on a river gunboat on the Danube. His third son, Robert Denholm, was killed in a flying accident while training with the Royal Naval Air Service. William, the youngest son, went to sea in the last year of the war as an apprentice on board the company's ship *Glenpark*.



Lieutenant J.C. Denholm RNVR, on board HMS Ladybird in Port Said, 1917.



Mountpark, built 1912, aground in the River Forth. A crew member is being brought ashore by breeches buoy.

The acquisition and disposal of Denholm ships continued in wartime as it had done in peacetime, albeit sometimes for different reasons. The *Hazelpark* was torpedoed and sunk in the English Channel without loss of life, less than a year after being delivered, and the *Mountpark* collided with the *SS Alexandra* in the Bristol Channel, both ships sinking with the loss of five lives.

The year which saw the end of the First World War proved eventful for Denholms. The more modern vessels were fitted with wireless; the *Heathpark* was chartered to the Italian Government only to be requisitioned shortly afterwards; and the new *Wellpark* and *Glenpark* were delivered. However, in November 1918 the *Heathpark* was lost at sea off Bilbao.

Denholms entered the post-war years with seven steamers: the *Broompark*, *Carronpark*, *Denpark*, *Elmpark*, *Glenpark*, *Holmpark* and *Wellpark*. The company had received substantial compensation for the losses, including compensation for the *Garvelpark*, which eventually reappeared after having been seized by the Germans. As the insurance had already been paid, however, Denholms had no further claim on her.

In 1919 a company meeting fixed the directors' remuneration at £200 a year and announced profits of £78,634, the purchasing power of the pound then being twenty times that of today. This was the first such meeting attended by John and William, the two sons of John Denholm who were to follow him into the business.

In the same year, The Denholm Shipping Company was founded; a consortium whose members were Denholms and the Greenock & Grangemouth Dockyard Company. Its purpose was to take over and run the ships being built speculatively by the latter. This consortium would continue for ten years before becoming part of The Denholm Line Steamers.

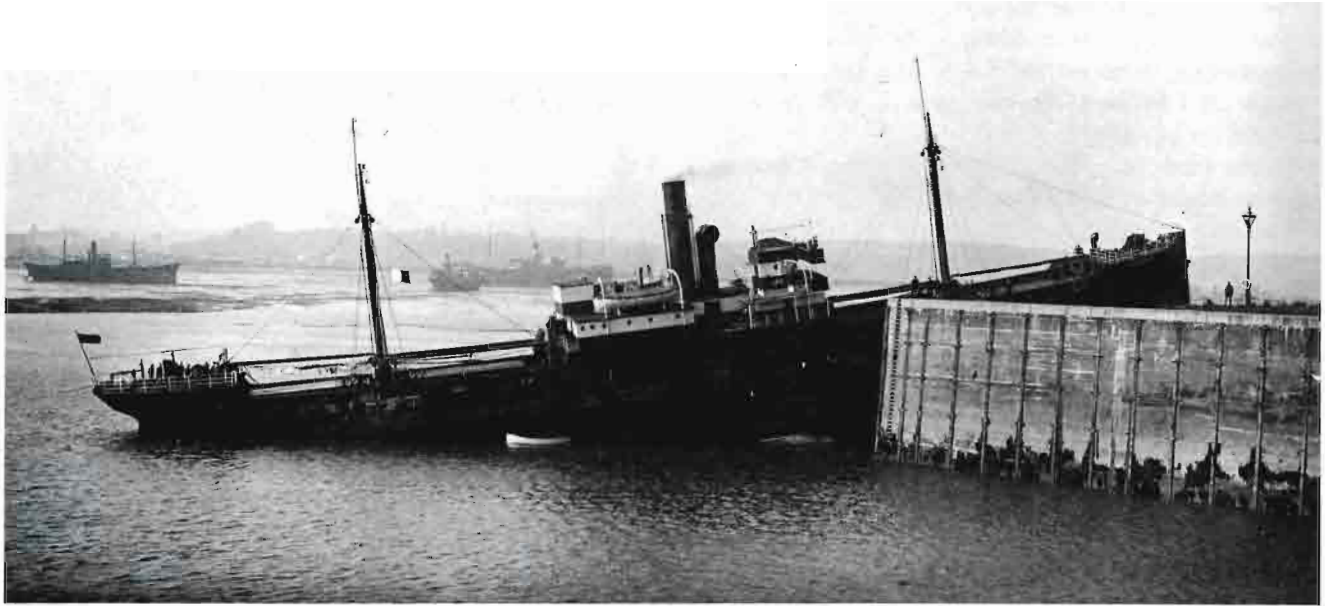
John C. Denholm became a director of J. & J. Denholm Ltd in 1921 and his younger brother William followed three years later. These were to be eventful years in which the two heirs-apparent learned the business. The fleet itself changed rapidly: four ships were sold and eight other ships purchased, including the *Lodorer*, better known during the First World War as the *Q5* on which Rear-Admiral Campbell won the VC, and which was renamed the *Hollypark*.

By 1921 the brief post-war recovery was over, however, and the deepening depression led to the entire Denholm fleet being laid up. One ship was employed by early 1922 and five more followed that spring, but by winter two of these were laid up again. Collapsing freight rates, industrial disputes and escalating building costs set the pattern for the rest of the decade. John Denholm was now 68, but his energies seemed inexhaustible, and he stood unsuccessfully as Unionist candidate for Greenock in the General Election of 1922.

By the following year the entire fleet was again at work and the new *Broompark* and *Briarpark* were delivered. The see-saw effects of the recession continued, however. In 1924, several ships were laid up, as were three for part of 1925. In the same year the *Glenpark* and *Wellpark* grounded near Sweden, but the company still showed a profit. In that year John Denholm became President of the UK Chamber of Shipping and a Vice-President of the Baltic and White Sea Conference (now BIMCO). In 1926 he was moved to remark at the company's annual general meeting that the previous twelve months had been amongst the worst he had experienced in all his years in the shipping trade.

Also in that year, a reparation payment from Germany for the wartime seizure of the *Garvelpark* came as a pleasant surprise – although in Germany itself resentment at precisely this kind of payment would help to propel Hitler to power and lead to far greater shipping losses for Denholms and others in the Second World War.

Denholms characteristically traded and built their way through the recessions of the 1920s, with the help of their long experience and the sound



Briarpark, 'Ashore at Cardiff, 28 September 1924'. An embarrassing incident for the Master, but fortunately the damage was not disastrous.

base on which the company was founded. New and bigger ships were purchased: the *Holmpark* from Lithgows in 1927 and the *Clunepark*, *Denpark* and *Eldonpark* in 1928. In the same year the smaller loss-making *Wellpark*, *Hazelpark* and *Heathpark*, were sold and more new-buildings followed.

By 1929 the Denholm fleet consisted of 18 ships, many exceeding 8,000 tons deadweight, trading worldwide with cargoes of grain, sugar and nitrate, as well as on the West Indian routes plied by the *David Sinclair* and its contemporaries more than half a century earlier. Sadly, they were still steamers, as Denholms had failed to follow the lead of the great Cardiff shipowner, Sir William Reardon Smith, who built standard Doxford ships, with 'tweendecks and diesel engines, in 1929.

In its time, the Denholm flag, the 'Diamond D', had flown on more than 50 vessels, and in April 1929 a silver model of the *David Sinclair* was presented to John Denholm at his Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The model was displayed at Denholms' then-new offices at 37 Renfield Street, Glasgow, and is still on show in Denholms' Head Office in Glasgow today.

By the turn of the decade the Great Depression was upon the industrialized world and the freight market collapsed again. Three Denholm steamers were laid up in 1930, and by the end of the year the fleet was reduced to ten. The following year was even worse and 1932 proved no better. Lay-ups and disposals were commonplace, with luxury liners lying cheek by jowl with

tramps. In 1931 The Denholm Line had to rescue The Denholm Shipping Company by buying five ships from it; these were soon disposed of.

Years later, John Denholm's son, John, publicly conceded that he and his brother William had wondered whether or not Denholms would survive; but he added that the lack of new-buildings had given them hope that supply and demand would come into balance again.

In 1934 John Denholm, now aged 81, was too ill to take the chair at the annual general meeting and his son John stood in for him. John Denholm was again unable to chair the meeting the following year, but at the very end of his life, the health of the shipping industry began to improve.

Having lived to see the first profits since 1930 (brought about in 1935 by a share in the £2 million government tramp-ship subsidy) John Denholm died on 31 August 1937, at the age of 84. It was the end of an era. The new Chairman of both J. & J. Denholm and The Denholm Line Steamers was John C. Denholm. Alex Morrison and Matthew Hill, both associated with the company for many years, were appointed directors of The Denholm Line Steamers.

Just before John Denholm died, an order was placed with Charles Connell & Co. for two new ships of 4648 tons. This order marked the beginning of a lengthy relationship between Denholms and Connells.

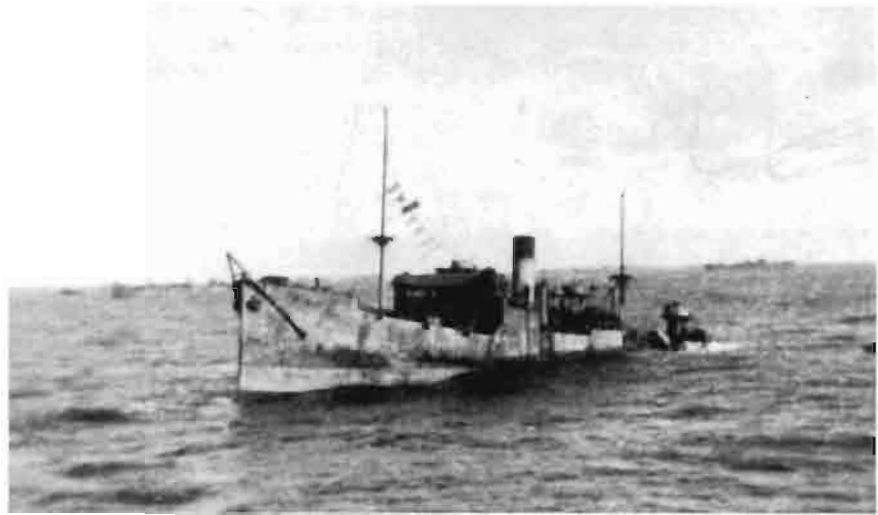
By September 1938, the Denholm fleet consisted of nine ships with two new steamers on order from Lithgows. That same month, the British Navy mobilized. A year later, the world was again at war.

As had been the case in the First World War, losses soon took place, ships were requisitioned and office staff were called up. In February 1940 the *Eldonpark* sank without loss of life, having ran aground in the Bristol Channel. In June the *Earlspark* was torpedoed off Bordeaux with the loss of her Master and four of her crew. In 1941 the *Mountpark* was sunk in the Irish Sea by



The Greenock agency was busy during the war.

Grangepark, sinking through enemy action, 19 November 1942.



Lieutenant Colonel W.L. Denholm in Belgium, 1940. He was the Commanding Officer of the 77th Highland Field Regiment.



an enemy air attack. In 1942, the *Lylepark* and *Wellpark* both disappeared without trace in the South Atlantic – survivors eventually becoming Japanese prisoners of war. 1942 saw the *Broompark*, *Denpark*, *Grangepark* and *Holmpark* torpedoed and sunk.

Denholms were among the companies designated to manage numerous vessels built for the Ministry of Shipping, some of which were lost and some of which survived the war. The company also suffered the loss of its Greenock and London offices as the result of air raids during the same week, and with them lost many of its records. Many Denholm Masters and crew were decorated: particularly Captain William Walker, who received the DSO, the first to a Merchant Navy officer, for his bravery on a Russian convoy.

John C. Denholm was made a Commander of the British Empire for his work with the Ministry of War Transport, where he was in charge of operations on the Clyde. William Denholm, having fought in France and Belgium, escaped via Dunkirk to return to the family business. Directors Alex Morrison and Matthew Hill died during the war years, and Crawford Black, a son of one of the original backers of the *David Sinclair* venture, was appointed a director.

At the end of the Second World War, the outlook for John and William Denholm was not encouraging. Denholms had only two ships left, the *Glenpark* and the *Clunepark*, the newest and the oldest respectively. The founders were dead, as were the original members of the board who might have formed a link with the founders' era. The prospects for the British shipping industry were more uncertain than they had been at any point in the century. What were they going to do?

4

THE DECISION TO CONTINUE

1945–1966

THE TASK OF rebuilding the Denholm fleet must have seemed daunting in 1945; the cost of building a new ship had risen to £250,000, more than double the cost of a ship built before the war, and this had to be financed from insurance recoveries which were restricted to the original cost of the ships lost during the war. John and William Denholm faced the choice of either rebuilding a fleet or selling out, as did many shipping companies. Both had their attractions.

‘We’d have done nicely if we’d sold out,’ Sir John recalled, ‘but we made the decision and we went ahead . . . other firms waited for the slump and told us we were fools – but the slump never came,’ he added, in an echo of the reaction to his father’s decision to move directly from wood and sail to steel and steam.

Denholms ordered two new ships from Charles Connell & Co. and began buying ex-government vessels. They hedged their bets by buying two outright and taking three on bareboat charter with an option to buy one of them. This option was later exercised and the ship, originally the *Ocean Strength*, was renamed *Broompark*.

This was the ship in which William Denholm’s son, Ian, had begun his career with the company in a North Atlantic convoy in February 1945. *Ocean Strength* was commanded by Captain J. M. Henderson, who was later to become the



John C. Denholm, Chairman,
1937–1966.

Norscot, 18,600 d.w.t. tanker. The first owned by the Norscot Shipping Co. and managed by J. & J. Denholm.



company's Marine Superintendent and whose high standards and pursuit of excellence contributed greatly to the development of the company's ship management business. The second engineer was Mr William McAllister, whose younger son, Captain William McAllister, succeeded Captain Henderson and is today the Marine Director of Denholm Ship Management.

In the long term these purchases turned out to be a bargain, but at the time John and William felt obliged to shelter their shareholders from possible disaster. So they repaid half the capital of the company to the shareholders before, as Sir John put it, they 'gambled' with the rest. By 1951, Denholms had seven ships 'all of them bought at prices we could never have hoped for if we had waited to see what would happen'.

Denholms took a substantial risk in rebuilding their fleet after the war. Later, Sir John said: 'We did take a chance . . . the decision to go ahead and chance it was probably the most difficult one to make in all the firm's history.' But the gamble paid off, both in its own right and as part of the process of expansion which led the company into a field in which it would rank among the free world's leaders. For these were the years which also saw the beginnings of Denholms as modern-day ship-managers, a business that began as much by circumstance as by design.

By 1951 Denholms had been introduced by Charles Connell & Co. to H. Clarkson & Co., a London shipbroking company. All three joined Mowinkels, Norwegian shipowners, to form the Norscot Shipping Company, which built



Vancouver Forest, built 1969, under heavy ice.



Clunepark in Venice, summer 1958.

and operated the 18,600 d.w.t. tanker *Norscot*, the management of which was awarded to Denholms.

One of the impediments to rebuilding Denholms' fleet after the war had been a determination to avoid excessive borrowings, as the brothers had seen how, in the slumps of the 1920s and 1930s, it had been the over-borrowed shipowners who were forced out of business.

The tanker *Norscot* was placed, at the time of her order, on long-term charter to Esso. This charter provided the collateral – the reliable incoming against which the owners could incur fixed debt service outgoing – for substantial borrowing.

The *Norscot* was one of the first British vessels financed by a British bank against a time charter. Previously, British banks had only been prepared to accept bareboat charters to companies such as Shell, as adequate collateral. For Denholms this was the first partnership of its kind.

In due course, the Norwegian group was bought out, but Connells, Clarksons and Denholms continued to operate the *Norscot*. The *Norscot* was followed by a sister ship, the tanker *Scotstoun*, also built by Charles Connell & Co., but this time chartered to BP.

In 1951, a second joint venture, Scottish Ore Carriers Ltd, was formed by Denholms, Lithgows, Connells and Clarksons. Scottish Ore Carriers built up a fleet of six 9,000-ton ore-carriers which were chartered to BISC(Ore) for 15 years. Again, the management of the ships was awarded to Denholms. Scottish Ore Carriers' first vessel, the *Ormsary*, was delivered by Lithgows in 1953 and was a steam ship because of the unacceptably long delivery dates

for diesel engines. Notable among the Scottish ore-carriers was the *Morar*, a free-piston gas-turbine ship, delivered in 1959, which took Denholms, as managers, to the frontiers of marine engineering technology, albeit up what turned out to be a blind alley.

The formation of consortia continued with St Andrews Shipping Co., a partnership with Scottish Ore Carriers and BISC(Ore) in 1952, which ordered four 14,000-ton ore-carriers from Lithgows. Through these joint ventures new capital was brought into Denholms' shipping sphere and the number of ships under management was growing.

John Denholm, who was knighted in 1955 for his services to the shipping industry, having been President of the Chamber of Shipping the previous year, and William, were preoccupied with the fixing of the group's own ships and working them on the market. Thus it fell to Ian Denholm, who had joined the board in 1951, and his younger brother, Robert Denholm, who joined the board in 1954, to oversee the fledgling ship management business.

The blockage of the Suez Canal, in 1956, temporarily lengthened shipping routes and inflated freight rates. The Denholm Line Steamers had two of its best years in 1956 and 1957, but the reopening of the Canal ensured that the freight market fell as quickly as it had risen.

By 1957 the Denholm fleet had grown to 289,000 tons deadweight and consisted of seven cargo ships for The Denholm Line Steamers, two ore-carriers for St Andrews Shipping Company, three ore-carriers for Scottish Ore Carriers, the *Norscot* and *Scotstoun* and five ships for companies in which the group had no financial interest. Effective ship management meant achieving less time out of service, and a key factor in achieving this was to have the right quality of officers and crew. An extensive cadet training programme was established and one of the Scottish ore-carriers, the *Crinan*, was redesigned as a cadet ship.

In 1957 Denholms' growing reputation and the Clarkson connection led to the first ship management contract between Denholms and the Norwegian-American shipowner Erling Naess, who had escaped from Norway to New York during the Second World War and thereafter established himself as a dynamic and progressive shipowner. When Clarksons arranged for Naess to buy the *Naess Trader* they recommended Denholms as managers. A close friendship grew between Erling Naess and William Denholm and another partnership had begun.

The real breakthrough for Denholms came two years later. Naess had a large Liberian-flagged fleet managed from New York, which was crewed by Italians who were employed at much lower wages than Americans. When threatened with union action to force him to pay his crews at American rates, Naess turned to Denholms, who had good relations with the shipping unions



Naess Trader, built 1957.

Naess Champion, 1962, at 85,000 d.w.t., a supertanker of her day.





Euroliner launched 1970 for the Scarsdale Shipping Company and managed by Denholms. Euroliner achieved an unofficial speed record on her first voyage from New York to Rotterdam, averaging 26.5 knots. (See page 37.)

in the United Kingdom, and transferred the management of the 14 Liberian-flagged ships to Denholms overnight. These were the first non-British-flagged ships managed by Denholms and marked the beginning of a new era.

The late 1950s saw a number of other management contracts and by the end of the decade the fleet had grown to 38 ships, totalling 736,000 d.w.t. The early 1960s saw more ships come into management as new shipowner clients were obtained and the fleets of the established clients expanded.

Two ships of note that joined the management at this time were the tankers *Naess Champion* and *Naess Sovereign*, which at more than 85,000 d.w.t. were at the time of delivery the largest ships in the British merchant fleet. The chief



engineer of the *Naess Sovereign* for a time was Michael Brown, grandson of John Denholm, who later became Technical Director of Denholm Ship Management Ltd. and is today a Director of J. & J. Denholm.

In the space of a few years, Denholms had become one of the biggest ship managers in the world, and the ship management business had become the dominant part of the Denholm group. Staff numbers grew rapidly, additional office space had to be found, and accounting systems were upgraded from handwritten ledgers to punch cards, the forerunners of today's computers.

By 1964 the Denholm fleet had grown to 48 ships of 1,332,000 d.w.t. While the ship management activity grew between 1956 and 1966, the Denholm-owned fleet struggled in the post-Suez recession. In the early 1960s the *Norscot* was laid up in the Gairloch and the *Mountpark* and *Wellpark* off Ballachulish.

Chemical Explorer, launched October 1971 and managed by Denholms. (See page 38.)



Mountpark, launched 1965. The largest ship ever owned by J. & J. Denholm.

In 1965, William Denholm was knighted for his services to the shipping industry, which included several years as Chairman of the British Shipping Federation and a period as a Vice-President of the Baltic International Maritime Council. In that year, a new *Mountpark* was built by Connells; at 33,000 d.w.t. she is still the largest ship that has been owned by the group. The *Mountpark* cost £1,350,000, 80 per cent of which was financed by a government credit scheme under which Denholms obtained a 10-year loan at an interest rate of $4\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. She was long-term chartered to Associated Bulk Carriers, a consortium formed by Erling Naess and P. & O.

1966 saw Denholms' centenary year, and both at sea and on shore the company celebrated 100 years of trading completed under only two Chairmen. Sir John, now aged 72, handed over the Chairmanship of the business to his brother Sir William. The challenge of growth, first brought about by the decision by John and William some 20 years earlier, had been met on a scale that neither of them could have imagined.

In 1966 the Denholm group employed nearly 2,500 people – around 125 of them ashore – and operated 45 ships for a dozen owners. Denholms was an organization which was still family-owned, had established itself as one of the leading companies in the British shipping industry and had won a world-wide reputation. Denholms had every reason to look forward, as well as back, with pleasure and a modest degree of pride.

5

ONE PER CENT OF THE WORLD FLEET

1966–1980

TO ACCOMMODATE THE rapid development in ship management, new concepts had to be introduced and intensive training programmes undertaken.

Denholms had already introduced the concept of the ship group, where a ship manager (usually a master mariner) and superintendent engineer, with their staff, worked together across a desk rather than, as had been usual in the industry, in separate marine, technical and management departments.

Conferences were held regularly at Strathclyde University's residential management training centre, attended by senior officers and head office personnel. The aim was to bridge the ship-shore divide and impress upon the senior officers the fact that they, too, were managers, as well as navigators and engineers.

In 1969 the group opened an office in Hong Kong, with the aim of improving the selection of Chinese seafarers for vessels managed by the group in Glasgow for overseas principals.

General purpose manning, aimed at more effective use of manpower through teamwork on board ship, was developed and introduced first on the *Naess Talisman* which operated with British officers and Chinese crew. It was a success and very shortly thereafter was extended.

The cadet training programme, leading to the re-design of the *Crinan*, has already been mentioned and this programme was substantially extended. Entry



*William L. Denholm. Chairman,
1966–1974.*



Nordic Clansman, Scotland's first 'jigsaw' tanker. The stern and bow sections were launched nine months apart. Here she is seen passing under the Saint Nazaire bridge on the estuary of the Loire in Brittany.

qualifications were raised and courses adjusted to allow engineering cadets to obtain higher qualifications.

Throughout the post-war period the association with Clarksons had been of the greatest importance to Denholms' development, and in the 1960s Clarksons embarked on a shipbuilding programme. These ships were specified and designed in conjunction with Denholms. To meet the demands of the new-building programmes, Denholms developed a strong new-building design and construction supervision team.

While the development of the ship management business went on, there were also substantial developments on the owning and shipbroking sides of the business. Scotsraig Shipping Co., the successor to the Norscot and Scotstoun Shipping Companies, chartered and constructed specialized lumber-carriers which were entered in the Scanscot Pool. Scanscot was an 8-ship bulk-carrier pool operated by Brostroms' subsidiary, Leffler, and specializing in the carriage of packaged lumber from British Columbia to the United Kingdom and the East Coast of America. The first British ship in the pool, the *Conon*



Mini-bulker Monach, launched 1972 and owned by Milton Shipping Company.

Forest, went into operation in March 1969. At the same time the sale of the *Ormsary* for scrap signalled the beginning of the end of the ore-carriers, deemed to be too small and insufficiently automated for the 1970s.

In 1971 Denholms entered into an agreement with Lord Maclay to develop jointly, a fleet of 3,000-ton minibulkers. Milton Shipping Co. was formed to own these and a subsidiary, Denholm Maclay, to manage them. Later Lord Maclay's interests in Milton and Denholm Maclay were purchased by Denholms. After a period away from the shipping industry, Lord Maclay rejoined the Group and is today Marketing Director of the Ship Management division.

Denholms' shipbroking arm, Denholm Coates & Co., whose Chairman Tim Brown is another grandson of John Denholm, conceived and developed the Atlantic Bulkcarriers Pool. This pool is composed of handy-sized (circa 30,000 d.w.t.) bulk-carriers operating worldwide in tramp trades, taking contracts or running the market as appropriate.

In 1970 Denholms were awarded the contract to manage four of the world's most modern container ships, the gas-turbine vessels being built for Scarsdale Shipping Company for charter to Seatrain Lines. These were the first ships sailing under the British flag to be powered by aircraft jet engines, their controllable pitch propellers being the biggest fitted to any merchantman. The first, the *Euroliner*, achieved an unofficial record for a cargo ship on her first voyage from New York to Rotterdam, covering the distance at an average speed of 26.5 knots. These new ships were highly automated and required engineering skills of a high order.



Robert (left) and Ian Denholm.

Britannia Team, one of the combined carriers managed for Seateam.



By 1971 the average age of the ships in the Denholm-managed fleet was just over three years, making it one of the most modern in the world. More new ships were to come, among them the chemical carrier *Chemical Explorer*, the first vessel of its kind to be managed by Denholms, launched from the Hebburn Yard of Swan Hunter in October 1971.

The following year, Sir William Denholm retired as Chairman of The Denholm Line Steamers and was succeeded by Ian Denholm. Ian Denholm's brother, Robert, was appointed Deputy Chairman. Sir William remained Chairman of J. & J. Denholm Ltd until 1974.

Four more ships, two for Clarksons, one for Seatrain and one for Brostrom, were launched, and in all 14 more vessels came under management. A change of company name was decided upon. As Ian Denholm said: 'In the late 1860s, as J. & J. Denholm, we were an agency. By the early 1870s we had become shipowners. Now, essentially, we are ship managers.' The name of the company managing the ships was changed to Denholm Ship Management Ltd. The technical staff in Glasgow was further augmented and at head office, where total staff now exceeded 200, an IBM computer was installed.

New-building continued in new forms with the launch of Scotland's first 'jigsaw' tanker, the *Nordic Clansman*. The bow and stern sections were launched nine months apart and the two halves joined with the help of laser technology to keep them level to within a millimetre.

As ever, the growth of the fleet and the group's managerial and technical expertise were not always rewarded with ideal trading conditions. The OPEC oil embargoes of 1974 and the energy crisis had immediate effects on the tanker trade in terms of both cargoes and operating costs. But the size and modern nature of the Denholm managed fleet, coupled with the strength of the onshore administration, meant that the group was confident enough to see beyond the depression, in the same way that it had taken a sceptical line towards the so-called 'booms' during the Korean War and the Suez crisis.

During the years 1972 to 1974, Ian Denholm was first Vice-President and then President of the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, for which he was made a CBE in 1974. This increased involvement in the affairs of British shipping devolved more of the day-to-day running of Denholms' ship management activities on to his brother, Robert. As had been the case in the past, the strength of an organization headed in this way was emphasised.

New ships continued to be launched and ordered and although some were sold by their owners, more came under management. A training ship for Denholm cadets was commissioned to be built – the eighth to bear the name *Wellpark*. This was delivered in 1977, the year in which Denholms undertook management of their first ultra-large crude carrier *Burmah Endeavour*, which, at 457,841 tons deadweight, was the largest British ship.

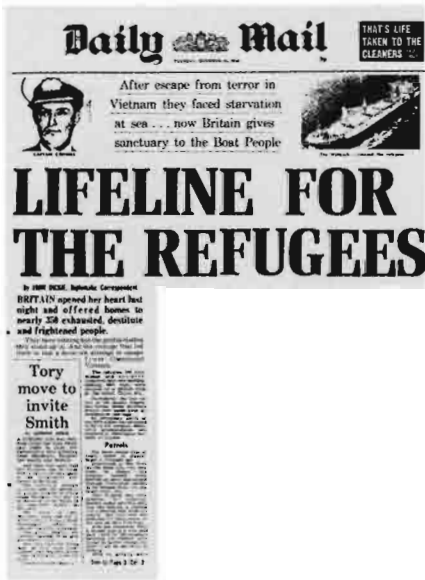


Tor Scandia, a roll-on roll-off ferry managed for Tor Line.

This was also the year in which Sir John and Sir William Denholm retired from the board. The company they had inherited from their father and passed on to Sir William's sons was now an organization managing more than 50 ships, from gas-turbine container ships to fast reefers, from the tiny *Monach* to the massive *Burmah Endeavour*. By deadweight tonnage, Denholms now managed one per cent of the free world's shipping.

The ship management business carried Denholms through the depression of the 1970s. But the high cost of British seafarers and overcrowding in the management market internationally meant continued economies were needed at sea and onshore, and profit margins were squeezed. The group began to consider the idea of diversification and expansion into areas it had either neglected or never previously explored.

This had begun in a small way as far back as the mid-1970s, when the group had become involved in a modest way in onshore oil exploration, and also acquired farms in Fife and woodlands during a period of massive inflation as protection against a currency collapse. In 1979 Denholms purchased the travel business of Davidson, Park & Speed who traditionally handled Denholms' crew travel requirements. This was expanded in 1982 by the purchase of Norbury Travel Services, a travel agent operating in the retail trade. The currency had not collapsed as feared, but the conditions of the late



Daily Mail, October 10 1978, reporting the dramatic rescue carried out by the *Wellpark* in the South China Sea.

1970s did not yet encourage them to sell up. In 1978 freight rates and ship values slid and profits fell to half the previous year's figure.

On 1 October of that year, the *Wellpark*, under the command of 31-year-old Captain Hector Connell of Dunoon, spotted and rescued 346 Vietnamese men, women and children from a small boat in the South China Sea. They were 120 miles from the nearest land and the condition of their boat was such that they would otherwise have perished.

The rescue took place in the aftermath of Hurricane Lola and a massive swell meant the *Wellpark* lifeboat was rising and falling 10–15 feet as the starving and dehydrated boat people were trying to board from their craft. Babies were thrown to the lifeboat crew and at one point so many people were jumping into the lifeboat's after end that it was impossible to reach the engine controls and water was being shipped over the gunwhales.

Many acts of heroism were performed and for this outstanding feat of seamanship Captain Connell was awarded the MBE and the entire complement of officers, cadets and crew was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Bronze Medal. Both Hong Kong and Taiwan subsequently denied entry to the refugees and the publicity given to the rescue was instrumental in asylum being granted to them by the British Government.

In a happier association with Hong Kong in 1979, Denholms marked the tenth year of their office there, during which time the staff had increased from two to 28. However, a ten-year connection ended when the four gas-turbine vessels *Euroliner*, *Eurofreighter*, *Asialiner* and *Asiafreighter*, which regularly called at Greenock, were sold by Denholms' management client Seatrain to a German company to be re-engined with conventional machinery; the oil price increases had made the gas-turbines uneconomical. But other ships flowed into Denholm management and freight rates also improved.

6

EXPANDING ONSHORE

1980–1991

THE 1980s STARTED on a positive note with the three handy-sized bulk-carriers *Wellpark*, *Scotspark* and *Glenpark* all trading profitably on a buoyant market and six minibulkers managed by Denholm Maclay. The strength of the market was encouraging many owners to order new tonnage and these new orders allowed the ship management company to win substantial contracts to supervise the new-buildings. The group felt able to order a new ship, the *Broompark*, from Sunderland Shipbuilders at a cost of a little over £10 million.

Denholms had always had an agency business in Greenock and Glasgow; indeed, some of the earliest records are letters from James Denholm to owners sending them disbursement accounts for their vessels' calls at Greenock. This company had expanded dramatically during the Second World War, when it handled the agency of the majority of ships in Greenock, which was a major convoy assembly port. By 1970, thanks to the agency of British Petroleum for tankers coming to the new terminal at Finnart, it was handling a total of 420 ships a year in Glasgow and Greenock.

In 1980 the group bought John Denholm & Co. Ltd, an unconnected agency company based in Grangemouth. This purchase marked the beginning of expansion of the agency business into areas outwith the Clyde Estuary.

The spate of ordering of new tonnage in the industry as a whole during 1979 and 1980 led to the supply of ships increasing at a time when the world



Left to right: Mike Brown, Tim Brown, Robert Denholm and Ian Denholm.



The ultra-large crude oil carrier Burmah Endeavour, managed by Denholms and, at 457,841 d.w.t., the largest British ship when she was built in 1977.

economy was in reverse. Profits fell sharply throughout the shipping industry and owners began to reduce operating costs by employing Far Eastern crews in place of European crews. Suddenly the pool of British officers on which the group's ship management business had been built became surplus to requirements.

In May 1980 Ian Denholm's son, John, who had trained as a chartered accountant, joined the firm. He was appointed to the board of J. & J. Denholm Ltd in September of that year. In 1981, Sir John Denholm died at the age of 87. He had begun work in an era when the British shipping industry led the world, but by the time of his death his nephew, Ian, was able to point out gloomily that there was no longer any other than a historical reason why an owner should put his ships under the British Flag. In the year Sir John died, the group managed to make a profit only by dint of a substantial gain realized on the sale of the *Scotspark*.



Throughout 1982 the recession deepened. Some of the group's ship management clients found themselves in financial difficulties and their ships were either sold or repossessed by the mortgagees. Those who did not fail used the depression in the industry to negotiate lower management fees.

But 1983 started on a positive note with the establishment of a new agency company in Avonmouth to look after the interests of a shipping line which was importing Far Eastern forest products. In June that year, following the sale of the *Glenpark*, a meeting of the boards of J. & J. Denholm and The Denholm Line Steamers was held to discuss future strategy. This meeting marked a turning-point and out of it emerged the decision to diversify into other activities and to sell the remaining six 3,000-ton bulk-carriers.

Robert Denholm died in November 1983. He had made an immense contribution to the group. In his early years, Robert, together with Ian, had built for the group a ship management business with a worldwide reputation, and

Ga Chau, the renamed Wellpark, is one of the two ships currently owned by Denholms. She is managed from Hong Kong.

in his later years Robert had played the key role in expanding the agency business and determining the strategy for the group. Over and above his services to the group, Robert, like his father and uncle before him, had devoted a great deal of time to the affairs of the shipping industry, particularly with the Baltic International Maritime Council and the British Shipping Federation.

While the depression in the shipping industry continued unabated through 1983 and 1984, the search for opportunities to diversify began in earnest. The agency business was further expanded by the acquisition of businesses based in Southampton, Felixstowe and Poole. But while an interest was taken in a number of small companies, including Bion, an offshore painting contractor, nothing substantial was acquired until April 1986, when the group acquired the seafoods business of Christian Salvesen plc for a total cost of £5.5 million.

This major diversification was made after careful thought. The business, which encompassed interests in fishing boats, fishselling activities, fish factories and fish merchanting operations, was closely related to seafaring and shipping, but not subject to the same endless volatility as the freight market. It was a high-risk business, but in a field the group felt it understood. The business constituted a logical chain, and, above all, was well-managed.

By 1986 there were signs of a possible recovery in the shipping markets, but the recession over the previous five years had been deep and it forced fundamental changes on Denholms' ship management business, as is evidenced by the fact that whereas in the mid-1970s Denholms had been the second largest employer of British seafarers, employing some 4,000 of them, by 1986 the number had fallen to less than 1,000. This melancholy statistic marked the year which also saw the death of Sir William Denholm at the age of 85.

Following the acquisition of the seafoods business and the reduction in the group's exposure to shipowning, there seemed little logic in maintaining J. & J. Denholm and The Denholm Line Steamers as separate entities. So J. & J. Denholm bought the shares in Denholm Line which it did not already own, thus creating the J. & J. Denholm Group in the form it is today.

During 1988, critical reviews of the travel agency division and the Group's farming interests were carried out. It was felt that acceptable returns were unlikely to be earned in the foreseeable future and the businesses were disposed of.

After ten years of turmoil, during which the group's shipowning activities had made profits in only two, the freight markets recovered in 1987. However, in view of the experience of the previous decade, the decision was taken not to rebuild the fleet, but instead to devote the group's resources to expanding its newly-acquired seafoods business, its world-renowned ship management business and its original agency business.

In 1989, following a second term as President of the Chamber of Shipping, Ian Denholm was knighted; and in 1991 he was elected President of the Baltic International Maritime Council, a post held by his grandfather.

Denholms' management skills have been extended into the off-shore oil industry. Diving support ship Samudra Suraksha.



7

DENHOLMS TODAY

TODAY, AFTER 125 years, and as the fourth generation begins to take over, Denholms is a very different company from the one which celebrated its centenary in 1966. Capitalised at some £30 million, less than half the assets are in shipping, and, as further evidence of the shift in balance, 600 people are employed ashore in the UK alone.

The business is far less dependent on the family, and its four main divisions are headed by thoroughly professional managers, expert in their fields, only one of whom is a descendant of John Denholm.

The biggest business is now Denholm Seafoods, which employs over 240 people and half the capital of the group. It ranks as one of the major forces in the British seafoods industry, with interests in 79 fishing-vessels, fish-selling operations in nine ports around Scotland and Northern Ireland, four fish factories, an international fish-trading business, a refrigerated transport company and an interest in a fish farm. It is managed by Alistair Allan, based in Leith, the port of Edinburgh, and by John Shaw, based in Hull.

The Denholm Line Steamers, which continues as the group's shipowning subsidiary, owns the *Broompark* and the *Ga Chau*, which was formerly called *Wellpark*. Both ships are registered offshore and are managed from Hong Kong, evidence of the way in which British owners have been forced to flag out their ships to remain competitive. Denholms' ships are traded within



Ian F. Denholm, Chairman since 1974.



Above: One of Denholms' fleet of refrigerated vehicles.

Right: The Broompark.

Below: Shotblasting.



the Atlantic Bulkiers Pool, and the Chairman and Managing Director of The Denholm Line Steamers is 'Tim' Brown, who has spent his whole life in ship-owning and shipbroking. His headquarters are in the offices of Denholm Coates in London. Although sadly reduced in size, the Denholm Line has weathered the serious depression which has seen so many household names in the British tramp-shipping industry disappear. Now, with improving freight rates, it is again contributing satisfactorily to profits.

The Ship Management division, which has faced fierce competition and very difficult trading conditions over recent years, is still a powerful force in the industry, managing from its four centres in Glasgow, Hong Kong, the Isle of Man and Houston, Texas, about 100 ships for 42 different owners. It employs 2,000 people in its four areas of operation and the tonnage managed, at 5.5 million d.w.t., although no longer 1 per cent of the world's fleet, is still greater than that of the total mainland UK-flagged fleet. The headquarters are in Glasgow.

The Agency and Forwarding division has a turnover of £13 million and employs 140 people at offices in Greenock, Grangemouth, Hull, Felixstowe, Tilbury, Rochester, Southampton, Poole, Avonmouth and Liverpool, where it provides agency services to many different owners and is involved in warehousing and forwarding. It is a far cry from the original agency James Denholm started in Cathcart Street, Greenock, 125 years ago. It is headed by Peter Haworth, who was with Robert Denholm at the time of the establishment of the agency presence in Avonmouth and at the start of the new initiative in agency development. Robert Denholm's elder son, Niall, works in this division.

In addition to these four main divisions the Group has investments in a number of other businesses. Foremost amongst these is the Offshore Services business which is centred around the painting and blasting business of Bion, acquired in 1986.

The Denholm Group faces the future with a more balanced business than ever before. The common theme running through all the constituent parts is the ship-shore interface. All the businesses are concerned with or have grown from this. This is the theme for the future.



The agency and forwarding business encompasses warehousing and distribution of cargoes.

A fishing boat agented by Denholm Fishselling.



FLEET LIST

Ships beneficially owned by J. & J. Denholm,
The Denholm Line Steamers and their subsidiaries

VESSEL	ACQUIRED	BUILT	GRT	DISPOSED
Sailing Ships				
1 <i>David Sinclair</i>	1872	1872	130	Unknown
2 <i>Gilbert Wheaton</i>	Unknown	1865	122	Unknown
3 <i>Belle</i>	Unknown	1859	149	Unknown
4 <i>Jane</i>	Unknown	1878	266	Unknown
5 <i>Jessie</i>	Unknown	1879	257	Unknown
6 <i>Kate</i>	Unknown	1877	203	Unknown
7 <i>Minerva</i>	Unknown	1866	348	Unknown
8 <i>Polly</i>	Unknown	1878	255	Unknown
9 <i>Sea King</i>	Unknown	1866	441	Unknown
10 <i>Mary Sinclair</i>	Unknown	1872	130	Unknown
11 <i>Mary</i>	Unknown	1864	446	Unknown
Steamers				
12 <i>Carronpark</i>	1882	1881	388	1893 Sold to French buyers.
13 <i>Mountpark</i>	1883	1882	563	1887 Sank in Sound of Islay.
14 <i>Mountpark</i>	1887	1887	563	1897 Sold to Robert Miller.
15 <i>Wellpark</i>	1889	1888	659	1893 Sank.
16 <i>Glenpark</i>	1893	1893	860	1904 Sold to Danish buyers.
17 <i>Wellpark</i>	1893	1893	860	1904 Sold to Swedish buyers.
18 <i>Cathcartpark</i>	1894	1894	607	1897 Stranded.
19 <i>Cathcartpark</i>	1897	1897	840	1912 Stranded on the Torran Rocks.
20 <i>Mountpark</i>	1897	1897	1,149	1911 Sank after collision with <i>Tremont</i> .
21 <i>Deerpark</i>	1901	1901	928	1913 Stranded in Kyle Rhea.
22 <i>Garvelpark</i>	1901	1901	927	1915 Seized by Germans at Danzig.
23 <i>Glenpark</i>	1904	1904	993	1915 Sold to South Metropolitan Gas.
24 <i>Wellpark</i>	1904	1904	992	1915 Sold to Limerick Steamship Co.
25 <i>Broompark</i>	1910	1910	1,325	1915 Sold to South Metropolitan Gas.
26 <i>Mountpark</i>	1912	1912	1,376	1917 Sank after collision.
27 <i>Carronpark</i>	1912	1912	1,401	1920 Sold to Anglo Polish S.S. Line.
28 <i>Holmpark</i>	1914	1914	1,468	1920 Sold D.R. Llewelyn, Merrett & Price.
29 <i>Denpark</i>	1916	1916	2,121	1920 Sold D.R. Llewelyn, Merrett & Price.
30 <i>Hazelpark</i>	1916	1916	1,964	1917 Sunk by enemy torpedo.
31 <i>Heathpark</i>	1917	1917	2,305	1918 Posted missing.

VESSEL	ACQUIRED	BUILT	GRT	DISPOSED
32 Beechpark	1917	1917	4,763	1917 Sunk by enemy warship.
33 Elmpark	1917	1917	2,161	1919 Sold R. Stanley Shipping Co.
34 Broompark	1917	1917	2,126	1920 Sold D.R. Llewelyn, Merrett & Price.
35 Glenpark	1918	1918	2,133	1932 Sold to Scandinavian Shipping Co.
36 Wellpark	1918	1918	2,134	1928 Sold to Belgian Buyers.
37 Ashpark	1919	1919	1,968	1920 Sold D.R. Llewelyn, Merrett & Price.
38 Hollypark	1919	1904	3,207	1928 Sold to shipbreakers.
39 Leapark	1919	1919	5,173	1919 Sold to London & Piraeus SS Co.
40 Rowanpark	1920	1920	1,935	1929 Sold to Merchiston Shipping Co.
41 Carronpark	1921	1920	2,637	1933 Sold to Russian buyers.
42 Hazelpark	1921	1920	2,461	1928 Sold to German buyers.
43 Heathpark	1921	1920	2,460	1928 Sold to German buyers.
44 Mountpark	1921	1921	2,699	1933 Sold to Russian buyers.
45 Cedarpark	1922	1922	5,087	1928 Sold to Italian buyers.
46 Myrtlepark	1922	1922	1,931	1924 Sold to General Steam Nav. Co.
47 Willowpark	1922	1922	1,931	1930 Sold to North British Shipping Co.
48 Briarpark	1923	1923	1,942	1929 Sold to Danish buyers.
49 Broompark	1923	1923	2,464	1932 Sold to Finnish buyers.
50 Holmpark	1927	1927	5,780	1942 Sunk by enemy torpedo.
51 Clunepark	1928	1928	3,491	1948 Sold to Dundee, Perth & London Shipping Co.
52 Denpark	1928	1928	3,491	1942 Sunk by enemy torpedo.
53 Eldonpark	1928	1928	5,184	1940 Ran aground in Bristol Channel.
54 Earlsark	1929	1929	5,186	1940 Sunk by enemy submarine.
55 Lylepark	1929	1929	5,187	1942 Sunk by German raider.
56 Beechpark	1931	1919	5,135	1937 Sold to Brynmyr SS Co.
57 Elmpark	1931	1920	4,999	1937 Sold to Cereal Trade & Shipping Co.
58 Firpark	1931	1920	1,955	1932 Sold to Latvian buyers.
59 Grangepark	1931	1919	5,132	1942 Sunk by enemy torpedo.
60 Laurelpark	1931	1922	1,935	1933 Sold to Russian buyers.
61 Mountpark	1938	1938	4,648	1941 Sunk by enemy aircraft.
62 Wellpark	1938	1938	4,649	1942 Sunk by enemy warship.
63 Broompark	1939	1939	5,136	1942 Sunk by enemy torpedo.
64 Glenpark	1939	1939	5,136	1951 Sold to Dutch buyer.
65 Garvelpark	1947	1945	7,192	1958 Sold to Trans-Oceanic SS Co.
66 Hollypark	1947	1942	7,187	1955 Sold to Buchanan Shipping Co.
67 Mountpark	1947	1946	6,722	1959 Sold to Maritenia Shipping Co.
68 Wellpark	1947	1946	6,722	1958 Sold to Shamrock Shipping Co.
69 Broompark	1947	1942	7,173	1951 Sold to A. Crawford & Co.
70 Carronpark	1949	1949	5,328	1962 Sold to Hong Kong buyers.
71 Lylepark	1951	1951	5,269	1962 Sold to Liberian buyers.
72 Glenpark	1956	1956	6,151	1969 Sold to Ianmaris Corp. of Panama.
73 Clunepark	1958	1957	9,963	1973 Sold to Korthian Maritime Inc.
74 Broompark	1959	1959	6,100	1968 Sold to Northern Marine, Monrovia.
75 Wellpark	1960	1958	6,859	1973 Sold to shipbreakers.
76 Mountpark	1965	1965	21,999	1974 Sold to Oceanic Seaways Inc.
77 Scotspark	1969	1969	16,792	1981 Sold to Southrong Shipping, Singapore.
78 Glenpark	1971	1971	16,782	1983 Sold to Halla Maritime, Korea.
79 Monach	1972	1972	1,594	1983 Sold to Swiss buyers.
80 Mingary	1973	1973	1,599	1986 Sold to Oceanspot Shipping Co., Cyprus.
81 Moidart	1973	1973	1,599	1986 Sold to Oceancharm Shipping Co., Cyprus.
82 Mountpark	1976	1971	1,598	1982 Sold to Italian buyers.
83 Mishnish	1976	1976	1,599	1987 Sold to G. Roussos, Piraeus.
84 Wellpark/Ga Ghau	1977	1977	18,622	
85 Markinch	1978	1978	1,592	1987 Sold to Pyrgos Shipping Co., Piraeus.
86 Regents Park	1980	1972	1,600	1983 Sold to German buyers.
87 Broompark	1982	1982	18,190	

SHIP TO SHORE

