

Wood Motor Yacht "FLYING CLOUD"; No. 1800 in the Yacht Register; 859 tons gross; Built in 1918-6mo; Port of Registry, Plymouth.

Owner:- The Duke of Westminster, G.C.V.O., D.S.O.

Classed:-            \* I2AI                            ONE 22  
                              6,23                                LMC 6,23  
                              s.s.Ply-22

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This vessel was built in June 1918 at Biloxi, Miss. by the Mississippi S.B. Corporation for the Levee Transportation Co. of Cambridge, Mass, U.S.A., and classed \*I2AI, her name then being "ELIZABETH RUTH".

She left Mobile in October 1918 for Sydney via Panama with a general cargo on board, and was towed into Havana, Cuba leaking seriously. Her cargo was discharged, the vessel drydocked and overhauled. She reached Colon at the end of November 1918, and was reported to be again in a leaky condition.

At the request of Lloyd's Agent the Society's Acting Surveyor at Cristobal examined the vessel afloat and recommended that after the discharge of her cargo she should be examined in dry dock. Temporary repairs were effected and the Surveyor issued an interim certificate to enable the vessel to proceed on her voyage.

She was again forced to put back to Balboa leaking seriously in March 1919, and Mr. Preston, one of the Society's Surveyors at New York was sent specially down to Balboa to inspect the vessel.

He reported that the vessel had sagged about 6" from her original form, and that the decks were down to about 1" camber in lieu of 4" as originally designed. No edge bolting was found fitted in the ceiling, and there were signs of leakage in way of the stern tube fittings. He also reported considerable shrinkage in the woodwork generally, and stated that the workmanship appeared to be of inferior quality, and recommended that the vessel should proceed in ballast to a Gulf port for further examination in drydock.

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The vessel arrived at Mobile on the 2nd July, and on the 5th July, 1919, Mr. French, the Principal Surveyor for the United States and Canada, proceeded to Mobile and, in company with Mr. Buchanan, the Society's Surveyor at New Orleans, under whose inspection the vessel was built, carefully examined her whilst in dry dock,

Mr. French reported that the keel was found hogged about  $8\frac{3}{4}$ " , the bilges being slightly deformed and the deck with  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " camber only. He added that considerable shrinkage had taken place and that the fastenings in several parts had become loose, the ceiling had not been edgebolted as required on the approved plan, and that pointers had been omitted.

Specifications for additional strengthening and bracing were drawn up, but the work was not put in hand until January, 1920. She was then surveyed by Messrs. Cowie and Osbon, the Society's Surveyors at Mobile, and was under repair until the 24th April, 1920.

The repairs included the fitting of a false keel and an arched keelson, <sup>and</sup> the fitting of forged knees to alternate frames. The vessel was caulked from keel to gunwale; the machinery removed and three hold beams fitted in after end of vessel, formerly the engine space. Additional stiffening was fitted in the form of two pointers or diagonal stringers forward and one aft. Other stiffening was also introduced.

The vessel arrived at Trinidad in March, 1921, and tenders for certain repairs to the masts, etc. were, it is understood, requested from the Trinidad Government Floating Dock and Workshop, but no report of any survey was received as the Society had

no Surveyor stationed at Trinidad.

The vessel was purchased by the Duke of Westminster towards the end of 1921 and was under survey at Plymouth from December 1921 to April 1922, at Ipswich from May to the end of June 1922 and at Plymouth from the 6th-10th July 1922.

Mr. James Butler, the Society's Surveyor then at Plymouth, reported in April 1922 that a Special Survey (equal to a Half Time Survey) had been completely held except as regards some alterations, which were subsequently carried out at Ipswich, where new Vickers-Petter Oil Engines were fitted.

Fire broke out on board on the vessel's return voyage from Ipswich to Plymouth, and the minor damage sustained was repaired at the latter port early in July.

The case received the consideration of the Classing Committee on the 4th August 1922, when the vessel was classed 12A1 "Yacht" with notations of s.s.-22 and LMC 7,22.

The vessel again came under survey at Ipswich, Brightlingsea and Southampton between the 2nd December 1922 and the 19th June 1923. She was examined afloat and the original poop deck was taken up and new timbers fitted in accordance with approved plans. A large number of leaky upper deck bolt fastenings were removed and re-fitted and various other repairs effected. The main engines were removed from the vessel and reinforcements carried out to the fore and aft main engine bearings, a number of upper deck planks were renewed and a new windlass fitted.

Minor repairs due to damage sustained through heavy weather were effected under the survey of the Society's Surveyors at Marseilles in February 1924.

In January 1924, in reply to an inquiry, the Owner's Agents were informed that it was considered advisable that the vessel should be placed in drydock annually for examination and painting, and that as she had not been examined in drydock

since April 1922, it was recommended that she should be so examined at the Owner's early convenience.

The Southampton Surveyors reported on the 17th June last that on examining the yacht they found that the stem was decayed, the forecastle margin planks, also several of the timbers in way, decayed, and upon opening up the ceiling six feet below the top the timbers were decayed at that position. They also stated that the outside planking on the forecastle side was decayed and that on clearing away a decayed plank amidships on the port side it was found that the timbers were decayed there also.

Mr. Nicholas, the Society's Principal Surveyor on the Outdoor Staff in London, was instructed to join the Southampton Surveyors in their survey, and he reported that the stem head and apron piece in way of the bowsprit housing was badly decayed through dry rot for practically half of the sectional area.

The forward lengths of waterway and covering board on both sides of the forecastle deck, also a few short lengths of forecastle deck plank were removed, and the beam ends and frame heads thus exposed were found to be much decayed through dry rot. The faying surfaces of the upper strakes of the outside planking and of the inside lining or ceiling in way also shewed signs of decay from the same cause. Under the forecastle one plank in the first strake of ceiling above the upper deck waterway on each side, also one plank in the strake below the forecastle deck shelf on the starboard side were cut out on account of decay and the frame timbers thus exposed were found badly decayed through dry rot. In addition, one short length of the outside planking on the port side abreast the fore mast and one short length along the port quarter, about five feet below the upper deck, were cut out on account of decay, and the frame timbers thus exposed were found to be

more or less badly decayed through dry rot.

Mr. Nicholas represented to the Master the necessity of cutting proper listings in the ceiling and opening up other parts in order to make further examination of the vessel internally, but the Master informed him that in the circumstances he did not feel fully authorized to put such work in hand.

The Owner's Agents were informed of the report received from Mr. Nicholas, and it was pointed out to them that for the retention of the vessel's class in the Yacht Register, it would be necessary for the vessel to be submitted to a very thorough examination and for extensive repairs to be effected involving the Owner in considerable expense, and they were asked to bring the matter before the notice of the Owner with a view to his coming to a decision whether he considered it desirable to undertake the work necessary for the continuance of the Class.

Subsequently the Master informed the Society's Surveyors at Southampton that it was not the Owners' intention to continue the vessel's class in the Yacht Register, and in the circumstances the Classing Committee on the 18th instant decided to recommend that the vessel's class be expunged from the Yacht Register with a Black Line (—) indicating that from reported defects the vessel is no longer entitled to retain her classification.

When the case came before the General Committee on the 24th instant, they decided to defer consideration of the matter for a week to admit of a further communication being made to the Owners' Agents.

The Owner's Agents writing on the 28th instant stated that they had been instructed by the Client to request the vessel to be withdrawn from Classification.

The Agents, who yesterday called and interviewed the Deputy Chairman and Chairman of Classification, have written

the accompanying letter, which, together with the remarks of Mr. Nicholas, the Principal Surveyor on the Outdoor Staff in London, who last reported on the vessel, is now submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

31.7.24.



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