

**PHOTO ESSAY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE *ECHO*.  
A SHIP THAT BECAME A CHERISHED COMMUNITY ICON IN TWO CITIES.  
ONE EACH SIDE OF COOK STRAIT.**



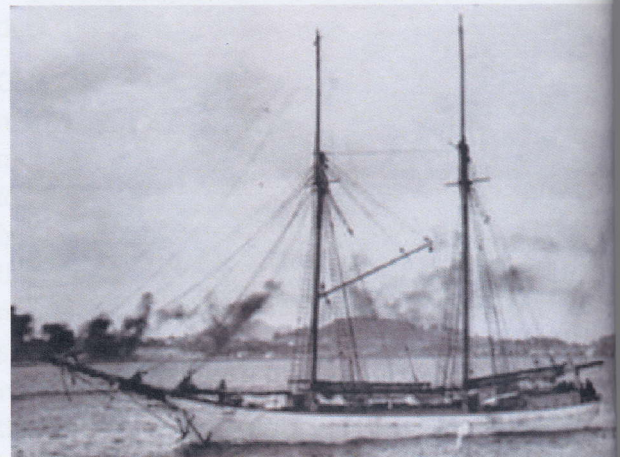
**Brand new for launch at William Brown and Sons Yard in Te Kopuru, Kaipara 1905**



**A handsome vessel as built, a fully rigged top-sail schooner. Berthed at Hokitika ca. 1910s**



**Working up the Waihou River to Paeroa ca. 1914**



**Gaff rig upper canvas struck. Freeman's Bay approaching the viaduct. Auckland ca. 1920**

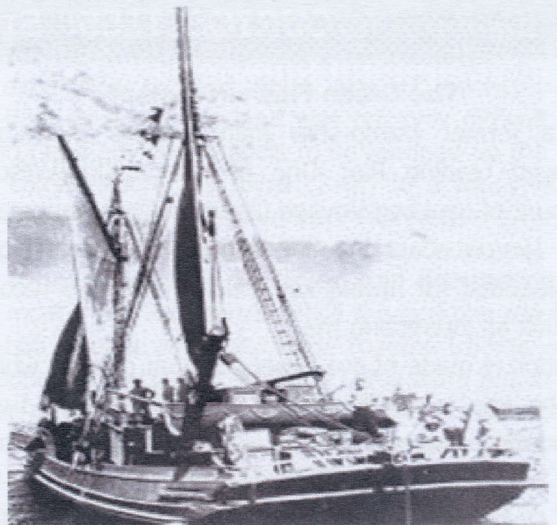


**'Full and By.' Rigged as a schooner . Sailing from Lyttelton ca. 1925**





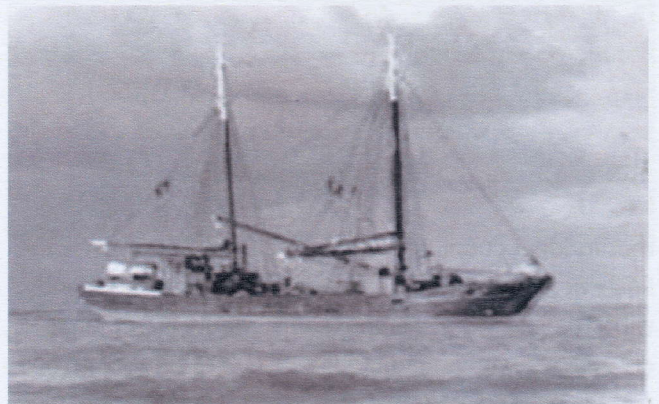
Lambton Harbour ca. 1930s



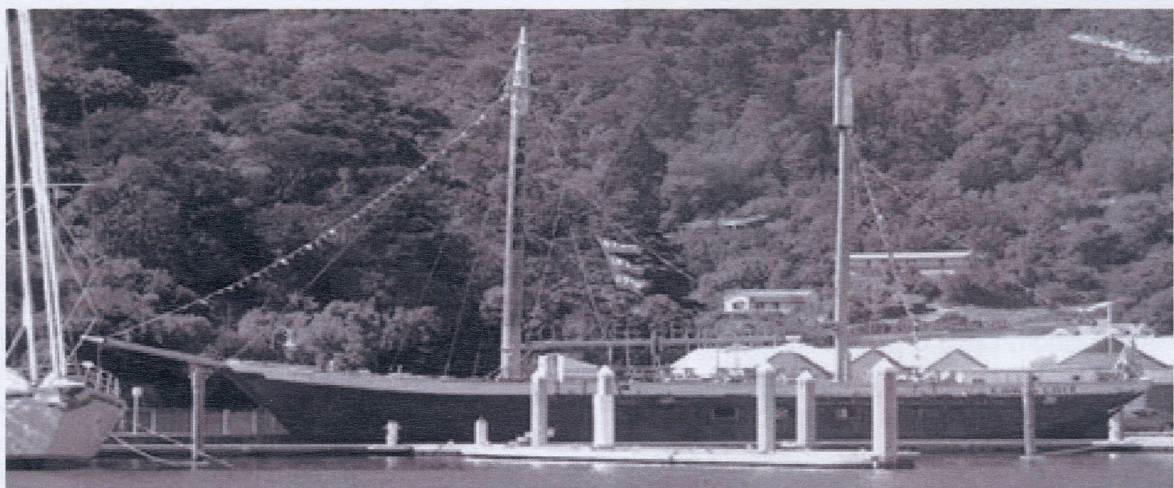
USS *Echo* in 1943 as requisitioned by the US military who modified her deck housing. Her exploits were later celebrated, unfortunately in Hollywood style, in the movie, "The Wackiest Ship in the Army."



As most older people remember her. In her final configuration. Departing Shed 13 Wellington for Blenheim. 1960



Ashore on the Wairau bar; a not unusual happening.



On the foreshore at Picton. Currently a restaurant and event centre. Regrettably only a caricature of her former self.

Note stumpy bowsprit in the centre right image. See page 54 for Ron's explanation.



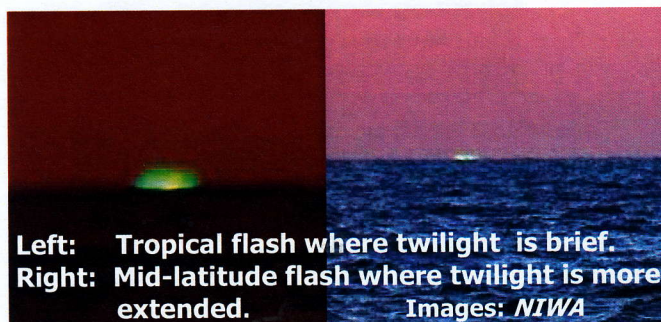
## CURIOSITIES: STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA!

### The Green Flash at Sunset

As a former tramp-ship man I have thoroughly enjoyed reading Part One of Arthur King-Wilson's account of his Long Voyage (April 2013) in Chapman's mv *Lynton*. Captain King-Wilson is to be highly commended for having kept such meticulous records of such an interesting trip.

Mention is made of the Green Flash at sunset, which, by the way, is not dependant on one's latitude. I was first made aware of this phenomenon whilst serving as 3rd Mate in another Geordie tramp, the mv *Linkmoor*, belonging to Lord Runciman's Moor Line Limited of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The man who told me about it was our Mate, Mr (later Captain) Roy Jenkins. At the time I thought he was 'having me on' but on several, wonderfully clear evenings, I was to find out that he had been serious because, just as the sun's upper limb sank below the horizon there it was the green flash, as clear as could be. Don't blink though or you will miss it!

Many years later, when employed as a harbour pilot at the busy minerals exporting port of Gave in Australia's Northern Territory, the topic of the green flash came up. The bloke I was speaking to thought that in ideal conditions it might be possible to see the flash at sunrise, as well as at sunset, consequently, with the aid of a visiting ship's Nautical Almanac it only took a few minutes to calculate the time and sun's bearing (amplitude) for several ensuing sun-risings



**Left:** Tropical flash where twilight is brief.  
**Right:** Mid-latitude flash where twilight is more extended.  
Images: NIWA

I kept a record of what then occurred and so here are the details, namely:

15th and 16th June 1988, at Gave Australia, approximate position 12° 11' South, 136° 47' East. 0641 local time or 2111 GMT (on both occasions) the Green Flash at SUNRISE was observed. On the second occasion, as well as noticing the flash above the rising sun, a pinnicular flash was seen slightly to it's right. Nothing was observed on 17th June as the horizon was obscured by low cloud.

And so there we have it. The green flash, at both sunrise and sunset are not optical illusions. The last time

I saw it was a couple of years ago when my wife, Sharon and I were on holiday at Wanganui on the West Coast of New Zealand's North island. I am pleased that Captain King-Wilson has mentioned this phenomenon in his *Lynton*' feature since it is the first time I have seen the matter referred to outside a meteorological or astronomical publication.

From 'Shipping-Today & Yesterday' August 2013  
by kind permission of the author

**Captain Clive Spencer, Tauranga**

### More Green Flash

I discussed Captain Clive Spencer's interesting observations with our Editor who says he has also observed the Flash in the tropics but not in mid-latitudes.

Although there have been several mentions of the Green Flash in the Meteorological Gazette from time to time I have never seen a really logical explanation for the occurrence. I have seen it from time to time at sea and on some two occasions observed it from Raumati Beach, on the Kapiti Coast, some 60nm south of Wanganui where Clive mentioned having seen it. While I know the flash is probably present at sunrise and sunset, if seldom observed, and that some seamen are not aware of it or if seeing it ignore it, possibly disregarding it as an optical peculiarity or an after-image.

While it may be surprising that many officers are not really aware of the Green Flash, especially as we are trained meteorological observers and fully aware of the sky and celestial sphere, there is I am sure, a good reason.

How's this? In latitudes above the 60s sunrise and sunset occur during the 4 to 8 watch. A busy time in most ships when the watch officer may wish to take an amplitude or even be in the middle of taking a round of stars. If so, some years back, he will be busy working up an error or a position, certainly not idly watching for an azimuthal green flash. Even in modern ships there is more to command attention when under way than azimuthal sight-seeing.

What is the Green Flash? There are many and various explanations such as being hyperphysical, quasi-scientific, atmospheric optics, after-image luminosity and some other theories quite creative but nothing really definitive. Next time you see it just enjoy it, as Captain James Cook said, '*another of earths great exhibitions.*'

Or as Omar Khyam philosophises in his Rubaiyat, '*For in and out, below, tis nothing but a magic shadow-show, played in a box whose candle is the sun, round which we phantom figures come and go.*'

**Captain Ronald Palmer, Wellington**



### MORE ABOUT THE GREEN FLASH

I must admit I have never seen it out of the tropics but I have seen it plenty of times there.

We used to record it in the Meteorological Log when I was serving as third mate on weather reporting ships. Blue Star were very keen on their ships being Meteorological Office reporting ships.

**Captain Graham Williams, Waikane**

### THE GREEN FLASH?

Think on this.

*There was a door to which I found no key:  
There was a veil past which I could not see...*

Also from: 'The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam'

**EDITOR**

### ANYONE FOR CANNON BALLS 1/- AND 2/6

In the nineteenth century English and occasionally French warships visited Akaroa Harbour and often took the opportunity to engage in gunnery practice. This was probably normal training, but may have had more to do with impressing the locals. The cannon rounds were apparently not recovered but left where they fell and this resulted in a bounty for the kids in Akaroa.

Akaroa in the days of my youth was much smaller and isolated than the hyped up resort and tourist destination it is today. 70 years ago the population was around 450-500 and far from the current summer tourism population that can temporarily increase to many thousands.

They were gentler times and although residents were more or less aware of their *part* French heritage (*part* because English whalers had settled and founded the town years before the French arrived) nobody cared much and the streets were named just that, *streets*, until the developers and tourist operators discovered the place in the 1960s. The local council was then lobbied to change all the street names to *Rue* so that the purchasers' of land and homes in the township could vicariously convince themselves they were somehow living in French ambience. The older locals still call them *streets*.

In those earlier days money was much more difficult to obtain than it is today. None of us kids had an allowance and in summer collected and winnowed cocksfoot (grass seed) gathered from roadsides for a few pennies or ran messages, or milked for older ladies as many people had their own cow.

There was, however, another method that was much more profitable but this needed effort, determination and some endurance. The recovery and sale of cannon balls!

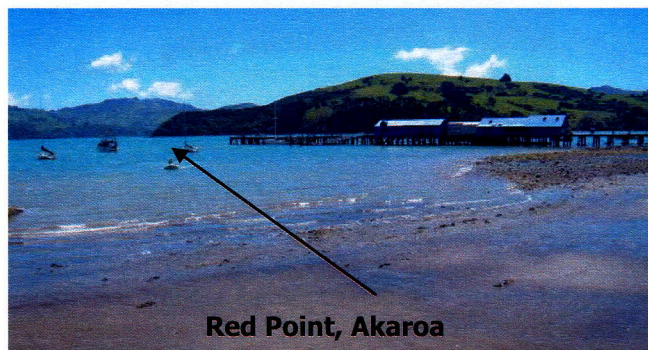
With diligent search these could be recovered from around Red Point which had been the aiming point for naval gunnery practice for many years in the 19th century. The balls were seldom recovered by the ships, as impact could impair their spherical shape, but

time had moved on sufficiently by the 1930-40s for these to be rarities and almost even antiques.

An expedition to Red Point was of necessity by row-boat as access by land was not only difficult but would need any cannonballs to be humped up the cliff and carried some 1.5 miles (2.4k) to a road, which was not only impractical but very few people owned a car we could use once we reached the road.

Our expeditions were similar to gold prospecting, in that most trips were barren while the odd one resulted in a ball — once we found three together! Some were imbedded in the cliff or reef and some were just in the water around tide mark. In any case a barren search could still be turned to fun by rowing around the point to Lushington Bay for skinny dipping.

I must reiterate they were most hard to find and needed diligent searching, perhaps we only managed a couple or so a month, as local kids had sought after them for years, but we felt it was worth it because that was big money to us.



**Red Point, Akaroa**

They came in roughly two sizes 'biggies' and 'smallies'. They were heavy and one needed care when placing them in the dinghys or they could easily bilge right through the bottom. The biggies needed to be wedged up to stop rolling about as well. We preferred the small ones as they were much easier to sell, and it was more difficult to land and find somewhere to store the big ones.

During summer and especially Christmas holidays there were many holiday-makers and there was a good market, if not a 'ready market' for the small balls. The big balls were not so popular, due to their weight, but were occasionally sold. Our market place was the War Memorial reserve that was also the town camping ground in those days.

Pricewise we sold the 'littlies' for 1/- (10c) and the 'biggies', hopefully, for 2/6 (25c) or what we could get, but mostly the tourists paid the asking price. The largesse was distributed equally amongst those involved in the recovery. Those that were not sold found a ready home in the old houses as door-stops and many homes may have had one or two. Certainly our uncle had a couple and a whole pile of them in his shed from his own days of youth, but these were 'untouchables'.

They were good days and while we had expectations for food and shelter we knew our families could not provide too many extravagances. I don't think we expected too many and soon learned to provide extras



for ourselves. The cannon ball saga was one way. Not possible today with the Historic Places Trust, Museums, etc. protecting heritage sites and artefacts and OSH with all those other agencies who oversee child activities. Maybe they don't understand endeavour and adventure. Maybe their operatives never really had a proper childhood like us. Maybe?

**Captain Terence Vangioni, Wellington**

**HIDING YOUR LIGHT ON THE GOLF COURSE.**

Many years ago while I was serving as second mate in the collier *Kokiri*. The master was 'Ginger' Heenan and the mate was 'Monty' Montgomery, later also to become master in the USSCo. Generally a good mix of shipmates.



**Captain J.C. (Monty) Montgomery**

**Image: Ship and Marine**

Monty was a golfing enthusiast and originally introduced me to the game. Earlier I had been shipmates with him in the East-Coasters where weekends in various ports became opportunities to indulge ourselves exploring the characteristics of the local golf clubs where a round could also result in the added reward of an invitation to spend a social evening in the local clubrooms.

Monty was a most exceptional amateur player who if, memory serves, once belonged to a prominent Scottish club where he eventually lowered his handicap, to become a scratch golfer. I was hardly a partner for him but from time to time we did meet a suitable opponent. At these times I relegated myself to caddy rather than expose my lack of expertise. Under Monty's early tutelage and later with practice I did eventually become a reasonable player with a respectable handicap but have not played now for many years.

The point of all this preamble is to apprise my reader of the background to the following anecdote.

One week-end while berthed in Greymouth awaiting loading Monty, Ginger (a non-player) and myself went out to the local golf course at Kaiata a few k's up the river.

Monty had played off from the first tee and both he and Ginger watched as I struggled to make a reasonable shot which, of course, never happened. Maybe I was several over par before I even made the green on this occasion. My performance was watched by the team following us and at the next tee Monty offered then the courtesy of 'playing through'.

They politely refused, but one of the party had obviously watched my botch-up but just as obviously not seen Monty's king hit. So thinking we were all 'newbies' began to give us some well-meaning golfing advice. He placed the tee and ball then began to tell Monty about stance and how to hit the ball. Monty was ever polite and listened quietly. When his 'instructor' told him to take a couple of practise swings he did so, then gave a mighty swing and sent the ball almost all the way down the fairway, straight and true to just short of f the next green.

Our mentor, looked at Monty and said. "See what happens when you do it properly. Try to remember what I said, " or words to that effect. Monty, ever the gentleman, thanked him politely and we moved on. Monty's only comment, from memory, was "Nice fellow."

Well, so was Monty—a true gentleman.

**NIC CAMPBELL**

**SYDNEY STAR 1952—STEERING PRACTICE.**

In February 1952 I was a cadet on the *Sydney Star* when we sailed from Liverpool with a full general cargo, including steam locomotives and tenders on deck, for New Zealand, first port Wellington.

New Zealand ports were still suffering congestion from the 1951 waterfront dispute. When we arrived in Wellington we spent the next 63 days there, sometimes alongside, sometimes at anchor. Discharging was finally completed in Port Chalmers; hatches were cleaned, dunnaged, and cooled down to load frozen cargo. Loading was completed in Lyttelton with a full cargo of frozen meat and the usual mix of general cargo in non refrigerated spaces. We finalled from Lyttelton in July 1952.



**Sydney Star at Lyttelton late July 1952. Blue Peter hoisted at yardarm prior to departing later that day for London, UK.**

Some 800 miles out in the Pacific, about 3.30 pm Saturday afternoon, the ship was shaken by what seemed to be a massive explosion from the engine room followed soon after by two smaller ones. The engines were soon stopped and we, the two cadets, Graham Williams and Derek Rawlinson, assumed it was a crankcase explosion in one of the two six