

Lascars Newspaper Articles (1842 – 1850)



History



Newspaper article

Seamen's Hospital Society

5 February 1842

Wednesday, the 21st annual meeting of the Governors of this Society was held at the office in King William street, City, John Labouchere, Esq. in the chair. Amongst those present were Admiral Young, Sir Henry Hart, Captain Hope, Captain Fitzroy, and other naval officers. The minutes of former meetings having been read and confirmed, Mr Harley, the Secretary, read the Report, which commenced by an expression of gratitude for the liberal support the charity had met with during the past year.

The Committee regretted that scurvy continues to increase in the mercantile navy, in spite of Dr. Budd's pamphlet, which is gratuitously issued by the Society, and points out as a means of cure a supply of succulent vegetables and lemon juice.



The greatest sufferers appear to have been the Lascars, many of whom were taken to the Dreadnought with this malady in its most aggravated form, and many from the want of warm clothing suitable to this climate.

During the past year, 2,774 patients were admitted into the hospital, which is 195 more than in any preceding year. Since the first establishment of the institution, 41,055 patients have been admitted, and medical stores have been dispensed to 16,834 out-patients of the hospital. The Society had become entitled to a reversion of 3,331.6s8d., Three per Cents, out of the estate of John Lydekker, Esq.; also to legacies from John Renwicke, Esq. of 901.; Miss Mary Parish, 19l.19s; Thomas Barry, Esq.; and from Charles Davey, Esq., of 45l., which have been invested.

Thanks were offered to Her Most Gracious Majesty for her Royal favour. The Committee also acknowledged the kindness of the Lords of the Admiralty, of Sir George Cockburn, of the Corporation of the Trinity House, and of the East India Company. The number of patients at present in the hospital is 247, and out of the total admitted, 2,224 were from the navy, 1,793 in the East India service, and 37,038 were from merchant vessels of all nations. The receipts for the year were 6,376l 2s.6d., and the expenditure 7,201l. 12s.9d., leaving a balance of 825l.10s.3d due by the Society.

The Report was adopted, and the officers for the year ensuing were elected. Mr Young, the solicitor, stated that a Mr. W. Waters had bequeathed the residue of his property, amounting to 16,000l., between eight public charities was not clearly defined, the opinion of the Court of Chancery was taken, to which the Society was necessarily a party. A vote of thanks having been passed to the worthy chairman, the meeting was adjourned.



Newspaper article

Cruelty to Lascars

26 October 1850

Cruelty to Lascars. A verdict of manslaughter has been returned against Captain Rowles of the barque, New Liverpool, at an inquest upon the body of a Lascar seamen, which was concluded at Southampton on Tuesday, it appearing that the deceased had died from sea scurvy, induced by a diet of deteriorated quality, and in which there was a deficiency of succulent vegetables and the important and necessary substitute lime or lemon juice.



Newspaper article

Lascars in London

24 November 1850

Captain Hutton, the master of the ship Earl of Eglington, who has been repeatedly before the magistrates of the Thames police court respecting a crew of Lascars, twenty-one in number, who were brought to this country in the ship, Janet Mitchell, once more applied to Mr. Yardley, on Saturday, when the magistrate made some very strong comments on the “scandalous transaction”, and the treatment they had met with from the owner of the two ships and the captain himself.

For a better understanding of the case, a short narrative is required. The Lascars started from Calcutta on a voyage to Melbourne, the Mauritius, and Bristol, in the ship Janet Mitchell. The captain of that ship was drowned on the voyage, and the chief mate succeeded to the command. On the arrival of the ship in Bristol, the Lascars were



discharged, but their wages were not paid. They summoned the owner before the magistrates of Bristol, who ordered the wages to be paid. The order was not obeyed, and the men were brought to London and transferred to the Earl of Eglington, belonging to the same owner.

About six or seven weeks ago, they appeared before Mr. Yardley, with Captain Hutton, and complained that their wages were not paid.

Captain Hutton said it was intended by the owner to pay the Lascars when they got back to India. Mr. Yardley said they were entitled to their wages for their services in the Janet Mitchell here, and if they were not paid before the Earl of Eglington sailed they would have no security whatever for the payment of their wages in India. Captain Hutton said he would see the owner and endeavour to obtain the wages. Indeed he assured the magistrate they should be paid. Since then, the men have made several complaints, not only that their wages were not paid, but that sufficient provisions were not served out to them.

Messengers have been repeatedly despatched to the ship, and the magistrate has expressed a strong opinion that the Lascars had not been fairly treated. Lieut.

Colonel Marsh Hughes, of the East India company's service, and Hon. Secretary of the Strangers' Home about to be erected in Limehouse, and Mr William Glazier, a skilful interpreter, employed by the colonel, have endeavoured to obtain justice for the unfortunate strangers, who have been squatting about the court, with insufficient clothing and complaining of cold day after day.

A few days ago, Captain Hutton came to the court and informed Mr Ingham that he intended to take the Lascars to India as passengers, and they said they would not go without their wages. Mr. Ingham said he could not interfere, and expressed his surprise that the wages had not been paid.

At last, the serang, or chief, and two other Lascars, obtained summonses against Captain Hutton for refusing to deliver their clothes and effects, which he detained on board. The case was heard before Mr. Ingham on Thursday week, which Captain Hutton said that he was advised he could force the Lascars to proceed with him to India as passengers, and that he intended to obtain a certificate from the East India Company to enable him to do so. Mr. Ingham said, if Captain Hutton took them back at all, it must be as seamen on wages; but Captain Hutton said he had shipped on European crew, and did not want the services of the Lascars.

On Saturday, Captain Hutton again appeared, and, presenting a certificate from the East India House, to the effect that the ship was a proper one to take the Lascars out in, endeavoured, apparently, to get permission by a side wind to convey them as passengers - of course, without wages. Mr Yardley, however, threw the certificate indignantly back, and told Captain Hutton that his conduct and that of the owner was disgraceful, and a scandal to the merchant service. The Captain endeavoured to make some observations; but Mr Yardley ordered him to leave the court, observing that he wished his arm were long enough to reach the owner, who was in Scotland, and could therefore set the poor Lascars at defiance. It appeared that that was not the first time the owner, who lives in Glasgow, had been complained of at the Thames police-court.

Subsequently, a statement was made that the Lascars could not get their clothes from the ship but it was afterwards mentioned in court that the clothes had been flung onto the deck quay, and that the ship had sailed.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes, on behalf of the Strangers' Home Society, promised to look after the interests of the Lascars, and Mr Yardley gave some money to be distributed among them.

On a subsequent day, Colonel Hughes stated that the Lascars would be provided for at the Poplar Union workhouse, until the East India Company should send them back to their own country. The company is bound by the Merchant Shipping Act to repay the parish; but it can recover all expenses from the owner of the ship which the Lascars had navigated.



Article produced by ProQuest as part of British Periodicals www.proquest.com

Article published with permission of ProQuest. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

(However, schools may print this as often is as required for their educational purpose.)

Lascars:

Questions on the newspaper articles

What was causing their health problems?

What was the “scandalous transaction” described in the article, “Lascars in London” 1850

Which organisations were trying to support the Lascar sailors in the 19th century?
