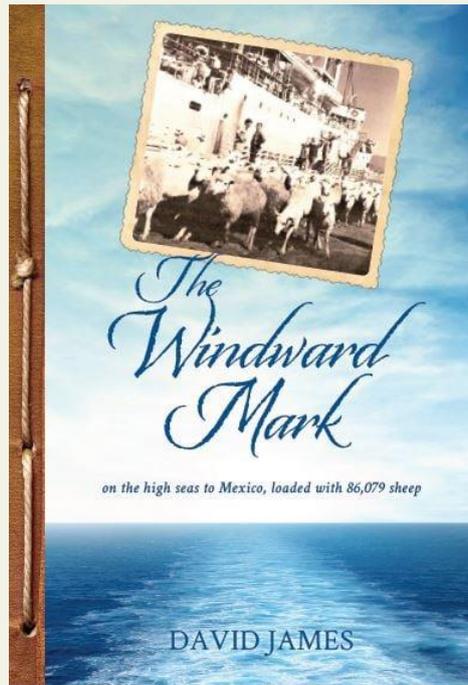


How I Came To Write The Book



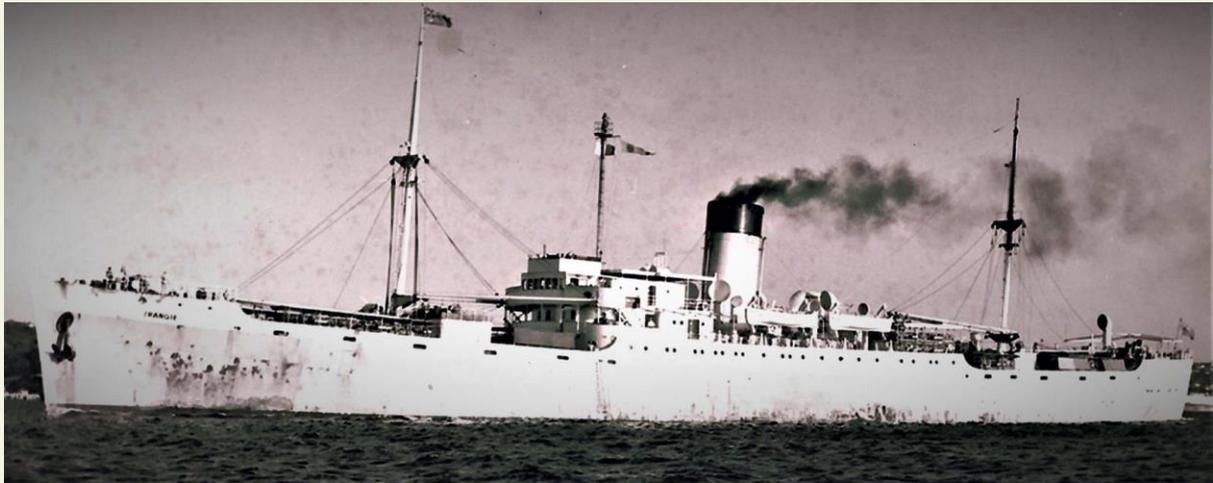
In 2007 a colleague worked on short-term engagement as Chief Engineer on a foreign-flagged ship, the *MV Danny F II*, loaded with cattle on passage from Sao Paulo, Brazil to Lebanon. The ship, was on its fourth set of owners having been formerly a Wallenius Line car carrier. In 1995 it was sold to Rachid Fares Enterprise Proprietary of Fremantle, Western Australia after having been converted in Singapore to carry livestock.

In 2005 she was detained by AMSA in Adelaide with serious defects. Like so many other livestock carriers, *MV Danny FII* was old and ill equipped for the task. In fact there have been seven stock carriers which have capsized making for a rate twice that of conventional ship casualty losses; the most recent being the Gulf Livestock 1 which capsized on September 3, 2020 with only two survivors.

Many started their final voyages initially stable but as the fresh water, fodder and fuel was consumed en-route ran into trouble in bad weather, as happened last year in the case of the Gulf Livestock I. In that case 41 crew lost their lives leaving only two survivors, demonstrating once again just how easily and very quickly safety in this trade can be so seriously compromised, with tragic results.

In 2009 *MV Danny F II*, had departed Uruguay bound for Syria with 77 crew, 10,224 sheep and 17,932 cattle but nearing its destination of Tripoli was struck by a storm in the eastern Mediterranean and quickly developed a serious 20 degrees list which rapidly was made worse as the livestock lost their footing and many slid to the low side. Abandon ship was ordered but she rapidly capsized, taking 43 crew including Captain Molloy plus all the sheep and cattle to the bottom.

This knowledge re-kindled memory of my own time in a stock carrier during 1964 aboard one of the pioneering vessels in the trade aboard the Australian owned and operated *SS Trangie*.



SS Trangie

Within the year the company was bankrupt, ship stranded in Mexico leaving a great many questions unanswered. So I started my own enquiry investigating all the available documentation held in the National Archives of Australia, Canberra. Although quite revealing, in some ways it raised new questions that demanded a response and so I set off on a seven year journey of research and discovery to fill in the answers as best I could which in turn forms the backbone of my recently published book, *The Windward Mark*.

The 28 year old ship which we used for the venture was originally built as the *SS Eros* in 1936 for Vaccaro Lines/ Standard Fruit and Steamship Co of New York to carry bulk shipments of green bananas on a fast six week cycle between Jamaica and the UK.

The more I delved the more intrigued I became until I became really hooked when I uncovered her heroic performance in the Battle of the Atlantic; twice torpedoed by the Germans and a number of mysterious special voyages for the British Ministry of War Transport in April 1940.

And then there were the distinctive characteristics of her steam-driven propulsion; five boilers providing superheated steam energy to a triple-expansion, open crankcase engine; a simply amazing piece of gear to see in operation at full sea speed, all the parts whizzing up and down (from which these engines used to be universally known as 'up and downers') and around and around in plain view, (as anyone old enough to remember peering down into the machinery of the Manly ferry *SS South Steyne* (as did I) may recall).

And, because steam ships are now long gone from the sea and old fellers like me who worked them are now quite rare, so I thought the history of all that should retain an honest description of seafaring life, as it used to be. Even down to pseudo-

bohemian, frolics ashore in exotic bars frequented by long distance deep seafarers such as we, "Blue-Fins". And so I have put some of that down for the record.

Then there was the issue of shocking cruelty to the sheep in sweltering conditions below deck amounting to an unacceptable level of mortality, which on the worst voyage reached 19.4%; thrown overboard. And the progression of the approval process despite the strong objections of the Department of Primary Industry and severe (and correct) reservation within Treasury over company claims to be financially viable. Even the doubtful manner in which the whole enterprise gained export approval turned out to be a hitherto unknown bureaucratic battle between the highest levels of government.

And finally, I attempt to convey, in an auto-biographical sense the story of the first quarter century of my own life's travails in negotiating the thickets and tangles of post-adolescent, self-discovery.

And so it is that I self-publish *The Windward Mark*.

David James

The Windward Mark, hard cover with dust cover 291 pp, \$37 plus postage, available from the author dj6331@gmail.com