



# A Guide to the Collection of Ship Paintings



# Historical Background



The schooner *Pass By* of Salcombe

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Salcombe was little more than an obscure fishing village with an unsavoury reputation for smuggling, but by the 1830s the port had become famous throughout the maritime world for its beautiful clipper schooners, the 'Salcombe fruiterers'. Built for speed in the shipyards at Salcombe and Kingsbridge, these small, fine-lined vessels raced home to the fruit markets of London, Bristol, Liverpool and Hull with cargoes of highly perishable fruit, notably oranges from the Azores, dried fruit from the Mediterranean and pineapples from the Bahamas.

With mainly local owners, masters and crews, the schooners played a leading part in the fruit trade for nearly forty years. Other ports were involved, notably Brixham, Rye, Whitstable, London and Ipswich, but it was the Salcombe fruiterers that were the most acclaimed. By the 1860s, however, they were progressively forced out of the trade by steamships and so local shipowners entered the schooners into the Newfoundland fish trade and acquired a large fleet of deep sea trading vessels to sail the world's oceans in search of cargoes.

The town fell on hard times when the local shipping industry collapsed in the 1880s with many of the local shipwrights and mariners migrating to ports such as Plymouth, Liverpool, Cardiff and Hull in search of work. All that was left were a few boatyards which provided work for a limited number of craftsmen building fishing boats and pleasure craft. However, Salcombe was saved by the growth of the holiday trade. The first 'holiday home', The Mould, situated between North and South Sands, had been built in 1764. Other large properties were built around the Estuary in the nineteenth century for wealthy people drawn to Salcombe by the mild climate and superb scenery. The arrival of amateur yachtsmen and holiday makers, aided by the opening of the railway to Kingsbridge in 1893, did much to compensate for the loss of work in the maritime trades.

## The Fruit Schooners and Deep Sea Traders

The **fruit schooners** were vessels of between 60 and 150 tons and were 'built to go to windward like steam, to use weather that obliged vessels five or six times bigger to lie to, and to make the voyage out and home with a dispatch often phenomenal.' (*William Clark Russell*).

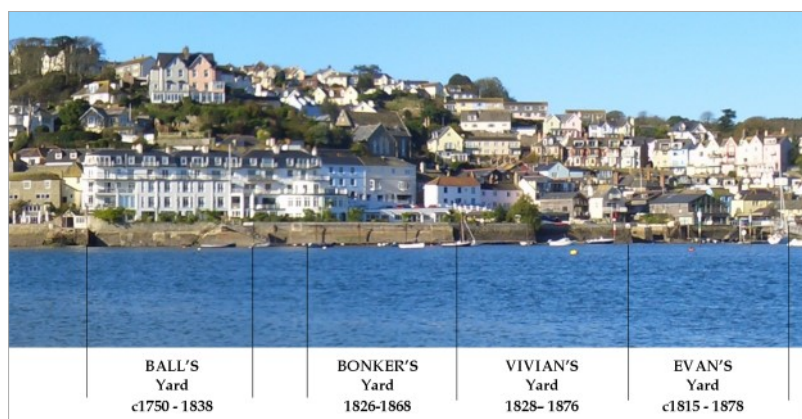
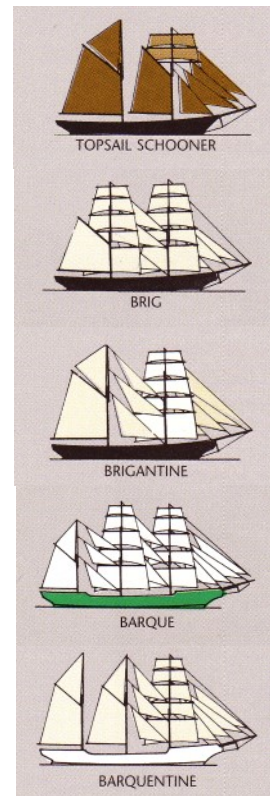
In the Azorean orange trade small schooners were employed because the ports they traded in were open roadsteads with few facilities. Loading times had to be kept short and the weight of cargo kept low to avoid crushing the fruit. Small consignments also avoided glutting the market and reduced the risk in the event of loss. The orange season lasted from early November until late April and fast, 'weatherly' vessels were required which could thrash their way down, against the prevailing winds, to the Azores in the worst of the winter weather. With a perishable cargo under the hatches, speed had to be maintained on the return voyage whatever the conditions and, in this role, topsail schooners with fine-lined, deep-keeled hulls and carrying a huge press of sail, were ideally suited.

Large fore and aft gaff sails were carried on the fore and main-masts, and a mass of fore and aft headsails and staysails which enabled them to lie closer to the wind than any square-rigged ship. Yet, with all their square canvas set – a topsail, topgallant and royal on the foremast, a large square foresail from the foreyard and stunsails set outside – the topsail schooner could run before the wind as well as any square-rigger.

The larger **deep sea traders** – the two masted brigs and brigantines and the three-masted barques and barquentines depicted in the collection were built more for carrying capacity and economy, than for speed. They carried coal and general goods to ports around the world and brought home cargoes such as sugar from the West Indies, Brazil and Mauritius, cotton, coffee and rice from India and tea from China.

The design of these wooden sailing ships was brought to perfection in the little yards of John Ball, William Bonker, James Vivian senior and junior, the Evans family and Henry Harnden in Salcombe and, in Kingsbridge, by William Date 'one of the greatest of all the builders of small sailing ships in the west country'. (*Basil Greenhill*)

At least 319 merchant sailing vessels are known to have been built in Salcombe and Kingsbridge between 1785 and 1912. They included 148 schooners, 40 brigs and brigantines, and 20 barques and barquentines.



*Salcombe: sites of the main shipbuilding yards*

## Notes on the Ship Paintings



### The Ship Portraits Gallery in the Ship Room

East Wall

South wall

West Wall

Of the 36 ship portraits in the Museum's unique collection, ten are set in the Bay of Naples with a smoking Mount Vesuvius in the background. Naples was noted for its 'pierhead painters' – usually untutored artists (many of whom were from Genoa), who painted souvenir portraits of ships for their masters and, on occasion, for crew members. A number of the portraits depict a vessel on her maiden voyage or on her first voyage under a new commander. They were painted while the vessel was in port and, as the stay might be brief, often had to be completed quickly.

In addition to Naples, the ports of Smyrna, Malta, Genoa, Leghorn and Trieste are also represented, as are the English Channel and the mouth of the Mersey, and some show vessels in a storm at sea. The tradition of a 'fair weather-foul weather' pair of paintings became established during the 1840s, with the 'foul weather' picture showing the vessel under storm canvas, striding through mountainous seas under a thunderous sky.

Although rather stylised and naïve, the paintings had to be accurate in their technical details in order to satisfy their purchasers. In the 'fair weather' paintings, a broadside profile view of the vessel was always depicted, with all the sails set and pennants flying and with every part of the rigging visible and in the right position.

## Notes on the Ship Paintings (*continued*)

Most of the paintings in the collection were painted in gouache (an opaque form of water-colour) on paperboard. Only seven are worked in oil, which probably took too long to dry.

Showing on deck in many of the portraits are the crew – usually numbering about five or six on a schooner – with the master or pilot standing abaft with a telescope to his eye. The ship's cat or dog is often depicted and, occasionally on the larger deep sea traders, a woman, presumably the captain's wife, is to be seen. Sometimes she is holding a child, as in the painting of the *Golden Fleece* (painting no. 7):



*Left: Detail from the portrait of Golden Fleece showing Marcus Harnden with telescope, his wife Sarah Jane and two of their children. Centre and right: Marcus and Sarah Jane Harnden*

A number of vessels have the appearance of a 'man-of-war' with fake gun ports ('Nelson ports') and black and white stripes on their hulls, presumably as a deterrent against attack for, although the capture of Algiers by the French in 1830 reduced the chance of being attacked by Barbary corsairs, piracy remained a problem in the Mediterranean until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

John Masefield included a traditional ballad – *The Salcombe Seaman's Flaunt to the Proud Pirate* – in his collection, the *Sailor's Garland*, published in 1906. It tells the story of a Salcombe ship successfully beating off a pirate attack on the Barbary coast and opens with the following verse:

*A lofty ship from Salcombe came,  
Blow high, blow low, and so sailed we;  
She had golden trucks that shone like flame,  
On the bonny coasts of Barbary.*

Many Salcombe households proudly possessed a ship portrait hanging above the mantelpiece – the inspiration no doubt for many a fireside yarn by the retired 'shellback' in the family. In the late 1920s a number were exhibited in the Wesleyan Chapel where they were photographed by Alfred Fairweather. Today, the photographs of 110 Salcombe vessels in the Kingsbridge Cookworthy Museum's Fairweather Collection, together with Salcombe Maritime Museum's magnificent portraits provide a unique record of Salcombe's great days of sail and tell us much about the ships and their crews, whilst the sheer number of paintings is a measure of the pride and affection felt for the ships by the small community that built, owned and manned them.

## Notes on the Ship Paintings (*continued*)

### Signal Flags

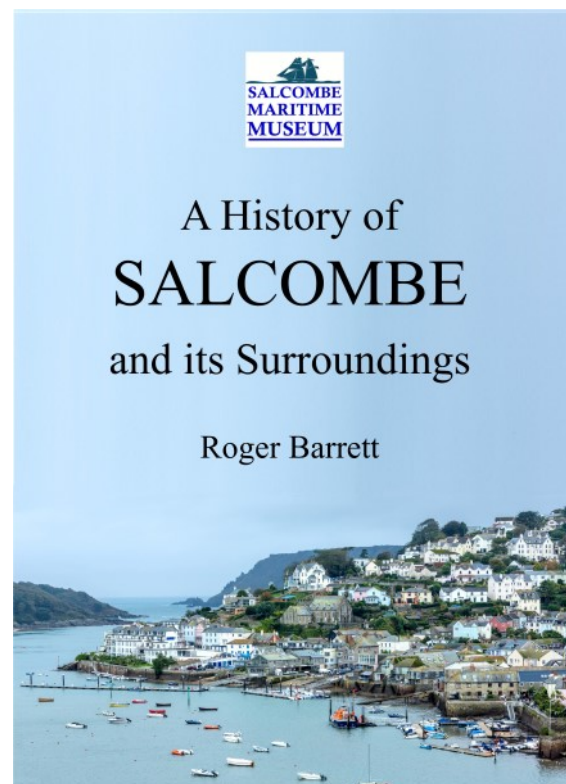
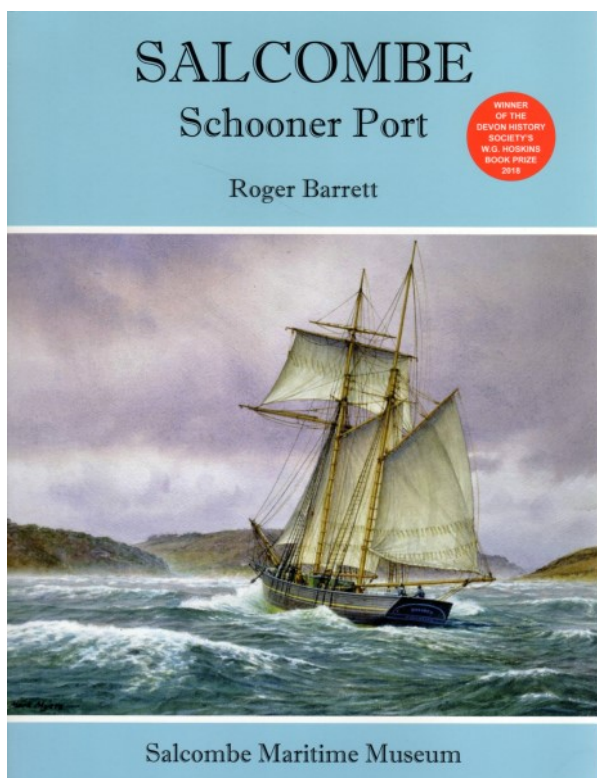


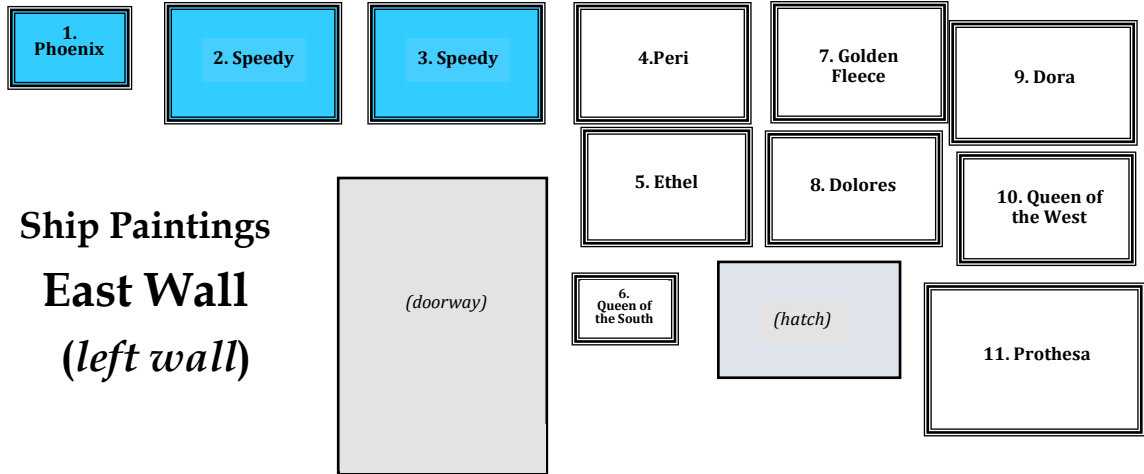
*Flag hoists on the schooner Clara*

Some of the vessels shown in the paintings are flying the pennant of the Salcombe Shipping Association at the top of the foremast. This was a red flag bearing the ship's club number prefixed with an 'S'. For example, *Isabella* was assigned the number S74, *Marian* S127, *Zenobia* S168 and *Clara*, depicted in the picture below, S106. *Clara*, is also flying the red

ensign at the after peak and, from the main mast, her Marryat flag code to identify her – a distinguishing pennant above four numeral flags: 1958. The Marryat flag code continued to be used by some masters even after the introduction in 1857 of the Commercial Code, afterwards known as the International Code. The *Queen of the West*, shown in painting no. 10, displays her Marryat Code numerals: 4279 and, in painting no. 13, her Commercial Code letters: JHVK.

For more information about Salcombe merchant sailing vessels see the Maritime Museum's publication '*Salcombe: Schooner Port*' and '*A History of Salcombe and its Surroundings*' on sale here





**Ship Paintings  
East Wall  
(left wall)**

**1. PHOENIX**



The 103 ton schooner *Phoenix* was an early fruit schooner. She was built in 1835 by William Bonker for Hurrell & Co. Her principal trading ports were St. Michael's in the Azores for oranges, Malaga for raisins and Messina and Palermo in Sicily for lemons. A seaman, Richard Trute, was lost overboard in 1840 and a boy, Edward Turner, in 1841. In 1842 *Phoenix* sailed from Cardiff to Barcelona with a cargo of iron under the command of Captain William Port. She was never heard of again

**2 & 3. SPEEDY**



*'Speedy of Salcombe off Ischia Island, December 24th 1870. C J Smith, master'*

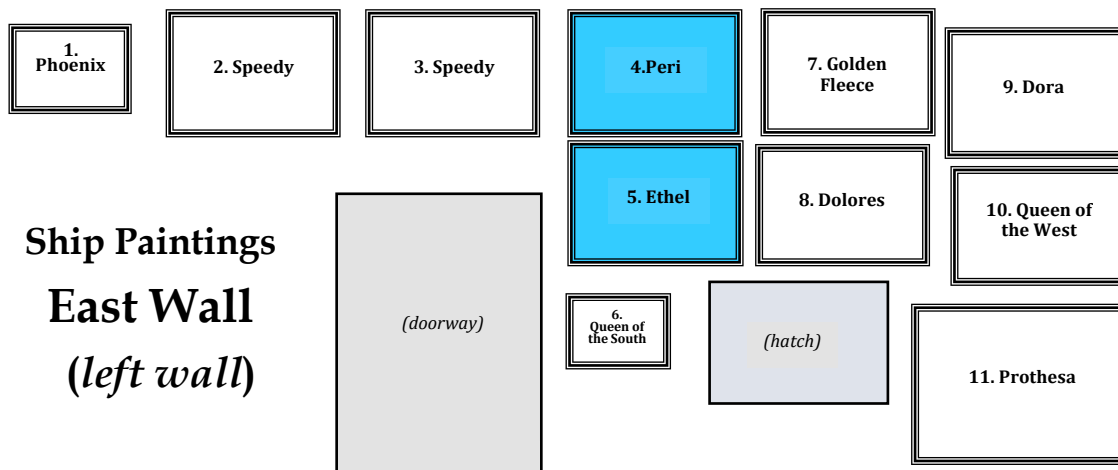
A fine pair of fair weather/foul weather paintings of the 90 ton fruit schooner *Speedy* built by Date of Kingsbridge in 1852 for Grant & Co. Until 1860, *Speedy* was mainly employed in the Azorean orange trade, living up to her name by making fast passages.



*'Speedy entering the Moli, Naples, December 29th 1870. C J Smith, master'*

In the 1860s *Speedy* traded mainly with Mediterranean ports such as Tarragona for wine and nuts and Zante for currants. After 1870, like many of the fruit schooners, she entered the Newfoundland fish trade. She was sold to Youghal in Ireland in 1881.





#### 4. PERI



*'Peri, entering the Mersey in 1836.'*

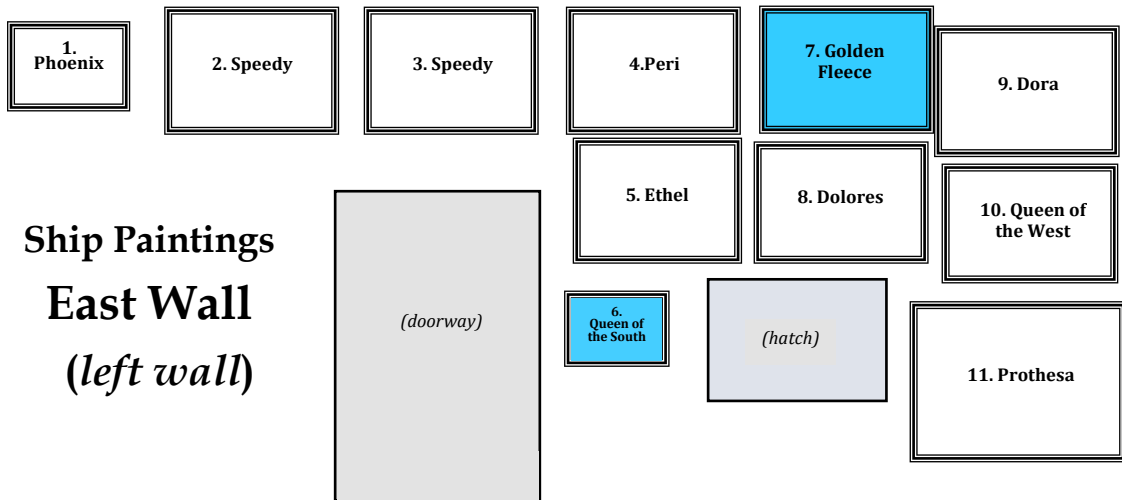
*Peri* was one of the early Salcombe schooners involved in the fruit trade. Built in 1831 by James Ball of Salcombe for J. Netherton, she spent most of her career in the Azorean and Iberian fruit trades. In 1838, when she was on passage from Denia, Spain to Liverpool, Capt. William Vivian was washed overboard and, in 1840, when John Dawe was her master, she was struck by lightning on a voyage from Liverpool for Terceira in the Azores. In 1850 *Peri* lost her masts in a collision with the *Magdalena* of Shields off the Isle of Wight and had to be towed to Salcombe. She finally met her end in February 1863 when she went ashore at Morte Point, near Morteheo off the North Devon coast. The crew were saved.

#### 5. ETHEL



When the 195 ton brigantine *Ethel* was launched from Date's Shipwright's Yard in 1876, Miss Hoppell failed to break the bottle of wine on the bows. Perhaps this was the cause of her subsequent run of bad luck. Employed by her owner, William Wakeham Steer, in the West Indian sugar trade, *Ethel* suffered from a number of crew desertions in Barbados and Demerara, lost her fore and main topmasts on a voyage from Antigua to Salcombe in 1879 and her port gangway and bulwarks on a voyage from New York to Falmouth in 1886. In 1881, William Goodyear, her master, shot and killed one of his crew whilst *Ethel* was on passage from Cartagena, Columbia to Havana – the seaman apparently having got in the line of fire when the captain was attempting to shoot the ship's dog!

In the 1880s *Ethel* was sold to John Ennor of Newquay and employed in the coasting trade. In January 1891 *Ethel* went ashore near Kimmeridge whilst carrying stone from Guernsey and had to be towed off. Two months later, on a voyage to Newport with cement, she struck rocks two miles east of Lynemouth and was wrecked. The crew came off by boat.



### 6. QUEEN OF THE SOUTH



*'Queen of the South of Salcombe, Wm. P. Quick, Commander, passing South Foreland 1855.'* (Painted on glass)

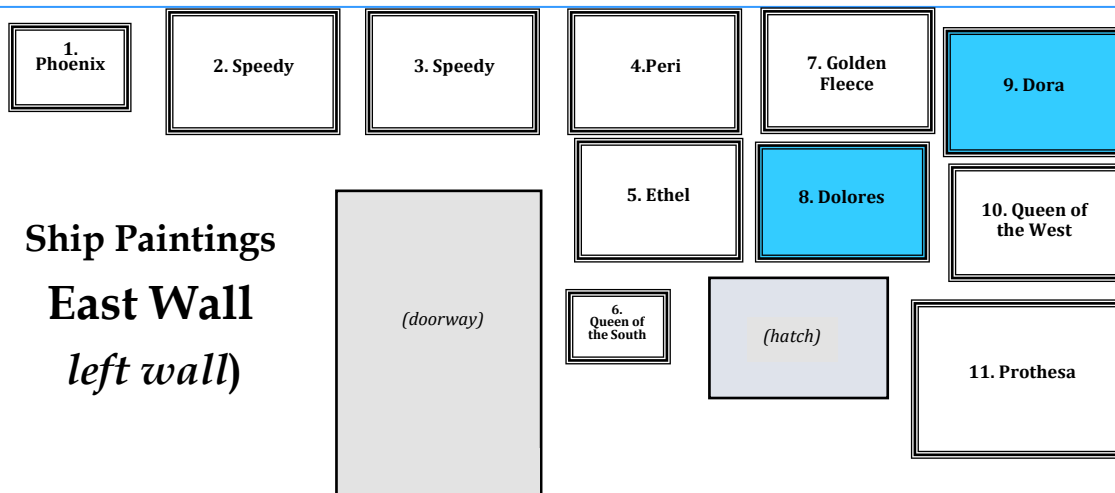
The 120 ton schooner *Queen of the South*, built by Vivian for the Balkwill family in 1850, was probably from the same half-model as the *Queen of the West* judging by the closeness of her lines. Her first master, William Pepperell Quick (1808-1871) was the brother of Edward Quick who commanded the *Queen of the West*. Both vessels were principally engaged in the Azorean orange trade but were also regular visitors to Mediterranean ports. In 1880 *Queen of the South* was sold to Minehead owners and she eventually ended her days as the Morecambe Channel Lightship.

### 7. GOLDEN FLEECE



*'Brig Golden Fleece of Salcombe leaving Palermo, Marcus Harnden Commander'*

The 176 ton brig *Golden Fleece*, which Henry Harnden launched in April 1873, was built for Hannaford & Co. She was a deep sea trader and visited a host of ports under the command of Henry Harnden's brother Marcus, including San Francisco via Cape Horn. Marcus' wife Sarah Jane (née Quick) often accompanied him and, in 1875, she gave birth to their second son, Charles, in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1879 Marcus died of yellow fever aboard the *Golden Fleece* while on passage from Madagascar to Natal. A year later she was sold to Newfoundland. She had a hard life with several dismastings and encounters with ice until she was finally lost with all hands in 1892.



## 8. DOLORES



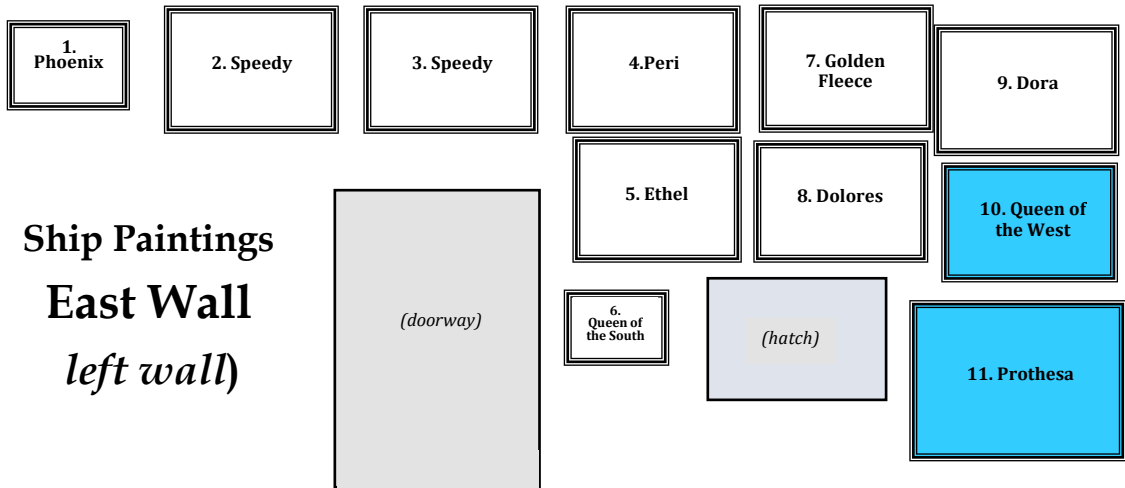
The 96 ton schooner *Dolores* was built by William Bonker at Salcombe in 1841 for R. Hurrell & Co. Her maiden voyage was from Liverpool to Malaga. Her principal trading ports were Lisbon, St. Michael's and Malaga, although she occasionally plied the Atlantic on the Newfoundland run. She was commanded by a 'roll call' of well-known Salcombe masters: Philip Cove (the younger), John Pepperell, William King, John Penwill, William Cove, Richard Arundel and John Luckham. *Dolores* was sold to Plymouth owners in 1867 and by 1878 she was registered at Runcorn. In 1880 she was wrecked in the Shetland Isles whilst carrying fish and fish oil from Lerwick for Liverpool. The crew were saved.

## 9. DORA



*'Dora, Naples, James Luckham, Master.'*

The 81 ton schooner *Dora* was the second of eighteen vessels built in the Vivian yard for the Balkwill family (the first was the schooner *Elizabeth* in 1838, the last the barquentine *Brizo* in 1877). Edward Quick (1811-1890) was her master until 1849 when he left to take up command of *Queen of the West*, another Balkwill vessel. Until 1852 *Dora* was principally engaged in the Azorean orange trade. Thereafter, her main ports of call were in the Mediterranean with an occasional voyage to Newfoundland. She was sold to Runcorn owners in 1866 and later that year was wrecked near Milford Haven.



### 10. QUEEN OF THE WEST



The well-known 120 ton schooner *Queen of the West* was built by James Vivian of Salcombe in 1849. Her curved, raking stem, flat sheer and sharp waterlines forward (which made her very wet in a sea) are all characteristic of the fruit schooners, which were built to get their small, light, cargoes home to Britain as quickly as possible. Owned by Balkwill & Co., her masters were nearly all well known local men:

Edward Quick, W.K. Johnson, Thomas May, James Luckham, William Pepperell Quick jnr., John Pepperell, John Canham, George May and Edward Quick jnr. *Queen of the West* was sold to Milford Haven in 1889. She was trading between the Mersey and Ireland in 1932 and lying in Wicklow in 1939. She was, apparently, still on Lloyd's register in 1964!

### 11. PROTHESA



The 147 ton brig *Prothesa* was built by Robert Johnson of Bideford in 1855, for the Kingsbridge solicitor, Gabriel Beer Lidstone who named her after his mother, Prothesa Beer. Lidstone employed *Prothesa* in general deep water trades and she made a number of voyages in the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic. In 1856 she put in at Salcombe with 12,000 quarters of wheat

from Beirut and later that year discharged over 4,000 pineapples from Eleuthera in the Bahamas at London. *Prothesa* was sold to W.B. Hutchings of Teignmouth in 1871. For the next thirty years she regularly carried pottery clay from Teignmouth to Glasgow, returning with coal. She was hulked in the early 1900s.

**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**12. EUGENIE**



*Brigantine Eugenie, Wm. Forbes, Commander, on a passage from Patras to England 1856.'*

John Evans built the 136 ton brigantine *Eugenie* for Forbes & Co. in 1856 and William Forbes was her first master. She was employed principally in the Ionian and Valencian dried fruit trades but in the 1860s she made several voyages to the West Indies. On 22 June 1868 *Eugenie* returned to Salcombe after losing her main topmast and topsail yards when off the Lizard. Once repaired, she put to sea on 2 July but, as she was leaving the harbour under the charge of Pilot Jarvis, the current took her onto the Old Harry Rock near Salcombe Castle. On the ebbing tide it was impossible to get her afloat until her cargo was taken out. She floated as the tide came in but her crew, finding that her keel had broken and that she was leaking badly, took her up to Evans' yard for repairs. She was sold to Swansea in 1878 and broken up in 1902.

**13. QUEEN OF THE WEST**



*'Queen of the West, Salcombe, W.K. Johnson, Master'*

*See notes on previous page  
 (painting no. 10)*

**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**14. ISABELLA**



*'Isabella of Salcombe, J. Evans, Master, entering Smyrna, 1853'*

The 102 ton schooner *Isabella* was built in Salcombe in 1852 by John Evans for Beer & Co. of Kingsbridge. *Isabella* sailed in the Azorean orange trade throughout the 1850s but in the 1860s she was more often to be found in and around the Mediterranean. Her freights included Newcastle coal to Messina, sulphur ore from Pomaron in Portugal, beans from Morocco, olive oil, anchovies and marble from Leghorn and figs from Smyrna (Izmir, Turkey). She also made several voyages to Newfoundland. In 1873 *Isabella* sank off Rotterdam but was later raised. She was still sailing in 1881 but her subsequent fate is unknown.

**15. JUAN**



The fruit schooner *Juan*, 92 tons, was built by William Bonker in 1848 for Hurrell & Co. She was a regular trader with St. Michael's in the Azores, the Valencian ports of Denia and Alicante and, after 1864, Newfoundland, carrying salt from Cadiz and returning with dried fish for the catholic countries of southern Europe. In 1876/7 *Juan* was lengthened and re-rigged as a three-masted schooner and sold to John Hill of Salcombe.

In December 1889, the master of the *S.S. Wild Flower* from Philadelphia, reported that he had passed *Juan*, abandoned with all the vessel's boats gone. She was in a position dangerous to other shipping as she was in the track of vessels coming from America to the Channel. The following day news arrived that the crew were safe and had been rescued by the steamship *Pennland* of Antwerp and landed in New York.

**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**16. KATE**



*'Schooner Kate entering the Bay of Naples, 1880.'*

William Bonker launched the 'pretty little' 54 ton schooner *Kate* in 1861 for Tolcher & Co. who employed her in the coasting and fruit trades. Joseph Tolcher was her first master. In 1863 she caught fire whilst alongside Dodbrooke Quay but fortunately Captains Ball and Jarvis, who were walking in a nearby meadow, spotted the smoke and organised efforts to extinguish the fire before it spread to the schooner *Fanny* and the steamer *Kingsbridge Packet* which were lying alongside. In the coasting trade *Kate* carried malt and Welsh coal and, in the fruit trade, she regularly plied the Azorean and Mediterranean trade routes. *Kate* was lengthened in 1875 (now 80 tons) and William Wakeham Steer became her managing owner. By 1880 she was trading between the Mediterranean and Newfoundland. *Kate* was sold to Plymouth in 1893 and to French owners in 1913.

**17. CLARA**



*'Clara of Salcombe, John S. Penwill, Master, 1858.'*

The 171 ton schooner *Clara* was launched from Elizabeth Evans' shipyard in July 1858 for Henry Grant & Co. Her first captain was John Symons Penwill, formerly of the *Speedy*. In addition to voyages to the Mediterranean in the dried fruit trade, *Clara* made a number of transatlantic crossings calling at Quebec, New York, the Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad, Bahia and Pernam-buco in Brazil. In December 1869, on a voyage from London to Mossel Bay in South Africa, *Clara* was lost off the Nore when she was run down at night by the barque *Sydenham*. All hands were saved.

**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**18 & 19. ERME**



Named after a local river, the 206 ton, three masted schooner, *Erme*, which William Bonker built in 1863 for Balkwill & Co., was involved in the East Mediterranean dried fruit trade amongst other general trades. Her master was William King. In 1864, on a voyage from Cephalonia and Patras for Liverpool, the bosun was lost overboard. The official log book recorded that ‘Peter Peterson, bosun, a native of Norway

fell overboard while in the act of gybing the mizzen and was drowned, although everything was done to save him.’ After returning from another voyage to Cephalonia in 1868, one of the three apprentices, George Aggar, aged 15, was killed when he fell from aloft in St. Katherine’s Docks, London. Whilst loading cargo at Mossel Bay, South Africa in 1872, *Erme* dragged her anchors in a severe storm and was lost, though all lives were saved.

**20. SPRING**



*Schooner Spring, Capt. Benjamin Bushell leaving Genoa, 1868*

At a time when the demand was for larger vessels, the 138 ton schooner *Spring*, which William Date built for Francis Lambly Yabsley, was something of an anachronism when she was launched in 1867. Over the next eighteen months her master, Benjamin Bushell, made four voyages to the Mediterranean: two to

Zante, one to Smyrna and one to Genoa. Returning from Zante in 1868 he was knocked overboard and drowned. In the 1870s *Spring* entered the Newfoundland trade. *Spring* also traded in the West Indies and with New York. Sold out-of-port in 1878, she was run down and sank in 1890. Recovered, she was re-named *Gravesend* and ended her days as a hulk in Gravesend Reach. *Spring’s* figurehead is preserved in the *Cutty Sark* collection at Greenwich.



**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**21. ARGYRA**



The 228 ton brig *Argyra* was built in 1866 by Elizabeth Evans for Balkwill & Co. In 1878 James Luckham, her master, suffered a terrible loss when *Argyra* was wrecked on the island of Juist on the German coast. Luckham, on a voyage from Rio de Janeiro, with a cargo of hides, put into Salcombe on 9 September 1878 and took on board his wife Catherine, 52, and his daughter, also Catherine,

11, for the last leg of the voyage to Hamburg. Amongst the crew were his son James, 24, who was the mate, and another son Thomas, 14. When *Argyra* ran aground on Juist, sons James and Thomas went with their mother and sister in a lifeboat, but it capsized in the heavy surf and all four were drowned. A seaman, James Reid, also drowned but Captain Luckham and five men were saved.

**22. RESTLESS**



The 189 ton brigantine *Restless*, was built by William Date of Kingsbridge for P.O. Hingston in 1865. Under Hingston's management, *Restless* sailed principally in the West Indian sugar trade, with the occasional voyage to Newfoundland and the Mediterranean. In 1881 she was driven ashore in a snowstorm in Penarth Roads with twenty other vessels. The

crew were rescued but 'hopes were not entertained of saving any of the vessels'. She was refloated, however, and from the mid-1880s, under the command of William Adams Wood, her new managing owner, she was largely employed in the home trade, carrying granite from Guernsey to English ports. In 1914, laden with stone for London, *Restless* was run down by the dredger *Lord Desborough* of London, below the South Shoebury buoy. Three of her crew drowned, the remaining four were saved and taken aboard the dredger.

**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**23, 25 and 26 ZENOBIA**



*'Zenobia, Capt. Southwood, of Salcombe'*



*'Schooner Zenobia in a Gale, 5 miles off Cape Cornwall, Oct. 23 1868'*



*'Schooner Zenobia entering the Bay of Naples, Oct. 1869, Wm. C. Southwood, Master'*

In 1868 Harnden & Whiddon built the 99 ton schooner, *Zenobia* for J. Hannaford & Co. Her early career was spent in the Mediterranean and Newfoundland trades. Hannaford sold her in 1883 and her new managing owner, the shipbuilder William Date, employed her in home trades. On June 3rd 1887 the following report appeared in the Kingsbridge Gazette: 'For days uneasiness has been felt at Salcombe for the safety of the schooner *Zenobia*. She sailed from Newport with coal to Ballinacura, Co. Cork, Ireland. A telegram reached Salcombe late on Friday stating that a boat's stern had been picked up at Llanelly, Wales, with the name *Zenobia*, Salcombe on it. It is feared that all hands have been lost. Capt. S. Fitzwalter and his son formed part of the crew as well as a man called Youlden from Salcombe. (Youlden had taken the place of Edward Callard on the ill-fated voyage). There were two other men in the crew.'

The figurehead of the *Zenobia* is displayed in the *Cutty Sark* Collection at Greenwich.

**Ship Paintings**  
**South Wall**  
*(facing wall)*

12. Eugenie	15. Juan	18. Erme	21. Argyra	24. Alvington
13. Queen of the West	16. Kate	19. Erme	22. Restless	25. Zenobia
14. Isabella	17. Clara	20. Spring	23. Zenobia	26. Zenobia

**24. ALVINGTON**



In 1865 a 313 ton barque was built by Watson, at Pallion, Sunderland for Balkwill & Co.

Named the *Alvington*, after the village near Kingsbridge, she was employed mainly in East Indian Trades. On her maiden voyage to India and Ceylon, her

master John Harnden had to deal with the insubordinate conduct of two of his crew – John Murray OS, who gave him constant abuse and refused to do his duty, and Alexander Murray, the cook and steward, who was slovenly and could not cook. John Murray was left in jail in Galle and Alexander Murray was discharged at Chittagong. It was at Chittagong that Capt. Harnden died of bilious fever. John Dawe Adams, *Alvington's* next master, completed nine voyages in her before transferring to *Churchstow* in 1876 – seven of them to India and the East Indies, one to the West Indies and one to Brazil. On her return from Brazil in 1871, *Alvington* lost five crew members to yellow fever.

John Harding took over command in 1876 and spent the next eleven years constantly voyaging in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. During the 1880s he was accompanied by his wife Bertha and their two children. Many of his later voyages were to and from New York and involved sometimes fruitless searches for profitable cargoes in various South American and South African ports. *Alvington* was sold to French owners in 1887 for £600.

## Ship Paintings

### West Wall

(right wall)

27. Leader	30. Churchstow	33. Creole	36. Restless
28. Leader	31. Pass By	34. Morning Star	
29. Daring	32. Doris	35. Lord Devon	(Alcove)

#### 27 and 28. LEADER



The *Leader*, a 196 ton brigantine, built by Elizabeth Evans in 1869, spent her early years carrying fruit from the Mediterranean and St. Michael's in the Azores before entering the sugar trade. She was a joint venture between Edward Quick, who was her first master (with 26 shares) and Robert Hancock Balkwill, her managing owner (28 shares). In 1877 a coroner inquest took place into the deaths on board *Leader* of two young men who had suffocated whilst the vessel was being fumigated. Both men were found to be 'trespassers, if not worse'. *Leader* was sold to Whitstable as a collier in 1886 and ended her days as a hulk at Topsham in 1913.

#### 29. DARING



The 149 ton schooner *Daring* was built by James Vivian junior for Richard Balkwill. Her launch on 9 July 1859 did not go smoothly as the slipways at Vivian's yard were not sufficiently well greased. She sailed regularly to St. Michael's, the Mediterranean and, in her later career, to Nassau and the United States. In the early 1880s *Daring* was sold to W. S. Allport of Padstow and, in 1889, to J. Stephens of Fowey.

In September 1891 she sailed from Glasgow for St John's, Newfoundland, and was never seen or heard of again.

**Ship Paintings**  
**West Wall**  
*(right wall)*

27. Leader	<b>30. Churchstow</b>	33. Creole	36. Restless
28. Leader	<b>31. Pass By</b>	34. Morning Star	
29. Daring	32. Doris	35. Lord Devon	(alcove)

**30. CHURCHSTOW**



Trethowan of Falmouth built the 473 ton barque *Churchstow* for Balkwill & Co. in 1876. Her first master was John Dawe Adams. Whilst in Salcombe ownership between 1876 and 1894, *Churchstow* completed seventeen voyages, mainly in Eastern trades. On her maiden voyage to India and Burma in 1876 she was caught in a hurricane off Chittagong and was thrown on her beam ends for four hours. On her last voyage, between 1891 and 1893,

*Churchstow* sailed from London to Mauritius where she loaded sugar for Melbourne. On the passage to Australia most of the crew suffered from malaria and the steward died. From Melbourne, *Churchstow* sailed laden with bricks, barley and oats for Freemantle; from Freemantle to Hong Kong with sandalwood; from Hong Kong with tea and 'China goods', via Hobart to Callao, Peru, finally returning to Havre via Cape Horn. At Havre *Churchstow* was sold to Greek owners in 1894 and, in 1897, was reported 'abandoned'.

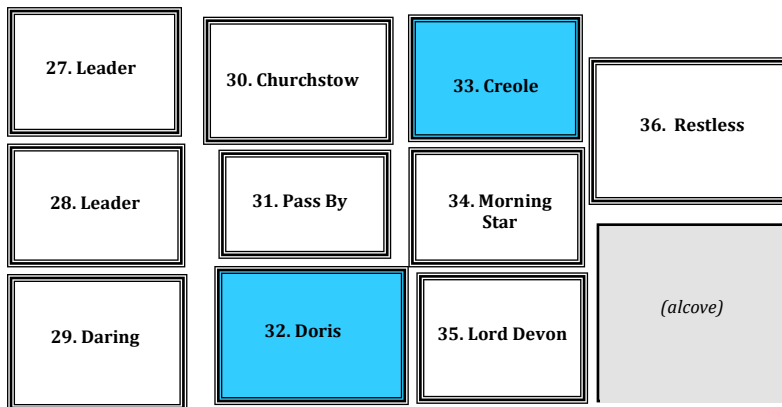
**31. PASS BY**



In July 1862 'one of those beautiful schooners for which this port is famous was launched from Mr. Date's yard on Tuesday. She is named *Pass By* and will be commanded by Capt. Yabsley under the management of Capt. Sladen at Salcombe.' *Pass By* traded regularly with the Azores, Mediterranean, West Indies, Bahamas and Newfoundland. Events from her career include a grounding off Yarmouth on Newcome Sand in December

1862 and at Eleuthera in the Bahamas in July 1875. She was re-floated on both occasions. In 1878, her then captain, John Masters, drowned at Twilight, Newfoundland. In October 1885 *Pass By* was sold to Stephens of Fowey who her re-conditioned 'from keel to truck' and ran her successfully for twelve years in the Newfoundland, Mediterranean and West Indian trades, in which she made some notable passages.

**Ship Paintings**  
**West Wall**  
*(right wall)*



**32. DORIS**



*'Schooner Doris of Salcombe entering the Bay of Naples, December 17th 1890, C.W. Roach, Master.'*

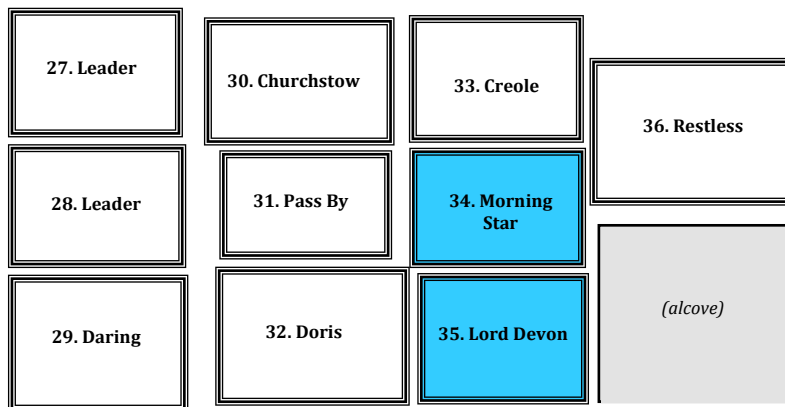
The 94 ton schooner *Doris* was launched from the shipbuilding yard of Henry Harnden in June 1880. She was one of the last merchant vessels to be built at Salcombe. Her managing owner was Capt. W. Steer and her first master was C. Roach. Most of her career in Salcombe ownership was spent on voyages between Newfoundland, the Mediterranean and home ports. In April 1886, she was run into by the steamer *Toledo* of Hull off Dungeness and was towed into Dover, badly damaged and leaking. *Doris* was sold to Bridgewater in 1897 and, after passing through several owners, she was bought by the Slade family of Appledore who converted her to a ketch in 1914. In 1918 she was lost off the Normandy coast at Isigny, where she broke her back and sank. (Isigny-sur-Mer is now a twin town of Kingsbridge).

**33. CREOLE**



Launched in 1878, the 289 ton brig *Creole* was the last vessel built in the Evans Yard at Salcombe. She was built for Richard Heath Sladen and was employed in the West Indian sugar trade. Most of her voyages involved taking coal out from Cardiff, loading sugar at Barbados, St. Lucia and Demerara and discharging it at Bristol or London. In 1881 she was run into and dismantled by the iron ship, *Buckhurst*, in Penarth Roads, near Cardiff. Her last voyage was in 1888 when she set sail from Sharpness for Demerara and was never heard of again.

**Ship Paintings**  
**West Wall**  
*(right wall)*



**34. MORNING STAR**



The 280 ton barquentine *Morning Star* was launched from Date's yard in 1871. Her first owner was Francis Lamble Yabsley of Portlemouth and her first master William Bushell, also of Portlemouth. Yabsley employed her in the Brazilian and West Indian sugar trades. In 1878 she sailed from Cardiff to Mauritius and on to Bombay and Chittagong. In 1879 Mr. Putt, *Morning Star's* mate, fell from the rigging.

Fortunately no bones were broken. She was altered at Harnden's yard in 1888 and in December 1890 she lost sails and all her standing gear in a hurricane, which lasted for thirty hours, between New York and Pernambuco, Brazil. William Steer was her managing owner by 1888 and, in 1891, she was sold to Guernsey owners. *Morning Star* was lost in 1904 on a voyage from Guernsey with granite for London. The crew of nine were saved.

**35. LORD DEVON**



The 114 ton schooner *Lord Devon* was the last foreign-going trading vessel built at Salcombe for local owners. She was launched in 1885 by Thomas Saunders at Salcombe for the Salcombe Shipowning Company who entered her into the Newfoundland saltfish trade. The fish schooners sailed from English ports to the Mediterranean with a general cargo and then carried salt to Newfoundland or Labrador. They would then return to southern Europe with fish and bring home cargoes of fruit and other goods.

This was a gruelling trade and the *Lord Devon* regularly suffered storm damage on the Atlantic crossing. In February 1890 she had bulwarks damaged and rails and galley smashed on a passage to Gibraltar and, in February 1892, she was forced to put back to St. John's, Newfoundland 'with decks swept and other damage, cargo shifted, part of the cargo damaged by sea water and part of the cargo jettisoned.' In 1900 *Lord Devon* was sold to W. S. Allport of Padstow. For the next 26 years, she gave good service in the coasting trade. In November 1926 she was caught in a severe storm off Lundy and had to be towed to Cardiff where she was subsequently condemned.

**Ship Paintings**  
**West Wall**  
*(right wall)*

27. Leader	30. Churchstow	33. Creole	36. Restless
28. Leader	31. Pass By	34. Morning Star	
29. Daring	32. Doris	35. Lord Devon	

**36. RESTLESS**



*Painting by Reuben Chappell\**

*See notes on page 17  
 (painting no. 22)*

\*Reuben Chappell (1870-1940) was one of the last, and one of the best known of the 'pierhead painters'. It is thought that he painted over 12,000 pictures of sailing ships and steamers during his lifetime and, today, his oil and water-colour paintings and sketches are found in numerous galleries and museums throughout the world. In 1904 he and his family moved from Goole in Yorkshire to Par in Cornwall, where he painted the ships that visited the china clay ports.



## The Ryder Collection



*Commander S.W. Ryder RNR*

Twenty-four of the paintings in the collection were bequeathed to the Museum in 1996 by W E (Peter) Ryder - a member of a well-known Salcombe seafaring family. Peter Ryder's grandfather Edward was a master mariner. He was captain of a number of the vessels whose portraits are seen here. In 1865 his son Samuel Wills Ryder was born. Before long he too went to sea as a ship's boy.

Samuel, spent his teens aboard Salcombe ships, sailing on voyages to the Mediterranean, West Indies and the Azores. By 1884 he realised that the future lay in steam-powered ships built of iron or steel and joined such a vessel owned by the British India Company. In 1887, aged only 23, he gained his master's ticket and in 1888 he took command of a 2,000 ton steamship.

After twenty years of adventurous seafaring Ryder 'swallowed the anchor' in the early 1900s and came home to Salcombe where he bought the York Hotel. This was later renamed Salcombe Hotel (now apartments). As a Royal Navy reservist, Ryder was called up for service in the Great War and, promoted to the rank of Commander RNR, he spent the last year of the war as a convoy commodore. His experiences are related in his book, *Blue Water Ventures*, published in 1931.

Ryder returned home to Salcombe at the war's end. He re-married and with his second wife had two sons, Samuel Wills known as Jim and Edward known as Peter. The family now owned the ferry and the Ferry Inn, where the paintings in the growing collection were exhibited.

The Museum, the people of the South Hams and our visitors are greatly indebted to Samuel, and his sons, Jim and Peter - for collecting and saving this unique record of local ships.



*Compiled by Roger Barrett*

*Revised April 2025*

[www.salcombemuseum.org.uk](http://www.salcombemuseum.org.uk)    [info@salcombemuseum.org.uk](mailto:info@salcombemuseum.org.uk)

© Salcombe Maritime Museum

# SALCOMBE: SCHOONER PORT

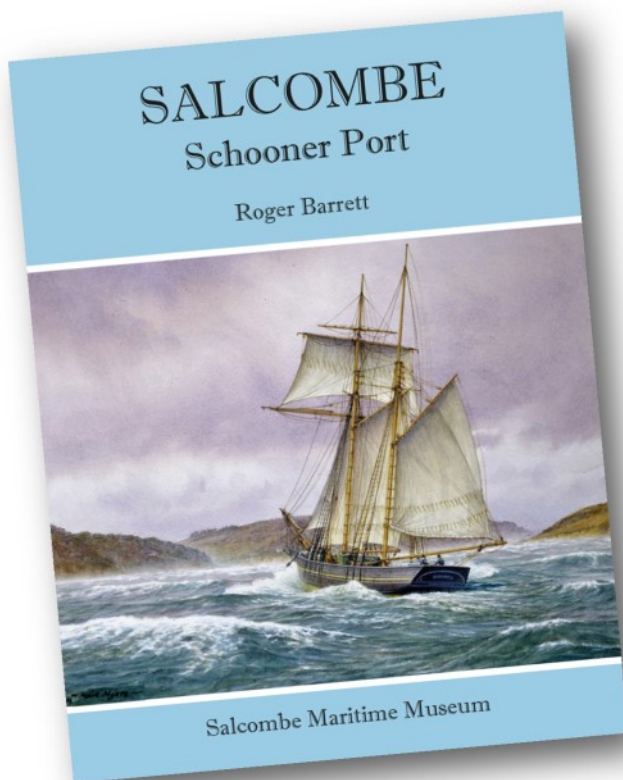
An illustrated account of Salcombe's heyday as a shipbuilding and ship-owning port famed for its clipper fruit schooners.

Written by Roger Barrett, Curator of Salcombe Maritime Museum.

222 pages, 256 illustrations. Price £19.99

**WITH COLOUR PLATES OF ALL THE SHIP PAINTINGS**

Winner of the Devon History Society's W.G. Hoskins Prize 2018



'Among the finest historical treatments of a small maritime centre that I have ever encountered'.

*International Journal of Maritime History*

'Utterly engrossing. Anyone interested in the Devon ports should read this book.' *Journal of the South West Maritime History Society*

'Wonderfully illustrated, well-researched and well-written, this book is a welcome addition to our knowledge of nineteenth century sailing vessels.' *Devon Historian*

'A veritable "treasure trove". The author has an immense depth of knowledge about the area and packs a lot of detail into the book.' *The Mariner's Mirror.*

Order via email to [info@salcombemuseum.org.uk](mailto:info@salcombemuseum.org.uk)

