

A Moment in Time # 9

Remembering the little “Yellow Perils” of the Coast

Collated by Geoff Walker

Most of my time as a mariner was spent in the Middle East, Africa, India and Asia but I well recall my occasional visits to the UK ports during my early sea-going years during the 1960's. I was always intrigued by the abundance of British coastal shipping around at that time. There appeared to me to be one main player, which immediately springs to mind, namely, F.T. Everard & Sons Ltd. Obviously, there were other prominent coasting companies, it is just that I never saw much of them during my time, but my eyes always seemed to fall upon those little yellow hulled ships, that seemed to be everywhere.

One would normally see one of these small hard worked short sea traders in most ports, up rivers, and at remote jetties, (often not even depicted on an Admiralty Chart), more often, than not, sitting on the sea or riverbed at low water. They were iconic small ships that provided an excellent coastwise service around the UK and near Continental Ports, mostly transporting bulk cargoes such as Coal, Aggregate, China Clay, Limestone, Cement, Timber, Paper Pulp and Grains. Not to mention awkward or oversized general cargo from time to time.

These little gems were manned by the most experienced of mariners, superb seaman, and with ship masters that were the best of the best, when it came to ship handling skills. They were dedicated to the ships and often served on them for years, without spending much time ashore, thus gaining special and intricate knowledge of the coastal trades in which they were engaged; they knew the effects of tides and currents, every shoal, rock, lightship, lighthouse and their respective characteristics.

To the average seafarer sailing on international trades, seeing these ships moored in the remotest of locations, up rivers, and creeks and in places so confined (making one wonder how they got there) certainly stimulated wonderment and awe. This short article is an acknowledgement of those fine seamen, of the “little ships”, who possessed the skills and understanding of their business, every one of them being an absolute specialist.



F.T. Everard and Sons Limited

F.T. Everard was known simply as “Fred Everards”, or their ships as “Yellow Perils”, due to their yellow-cream painted hulls. The company was started by Frederick T. Everard towards the end of the 19th century, initially to operate Thames Barges, which they both built and managed. From the outset their vessels were either named after family members or given the suffix 'ity' to their names.

It was in the 1920s that Everards became first involved with motorized barges. These craft remained basic but functional, with the only navigational aid consisting of a ship's wheel and magnetic compass.

However, they were extremely successful in their fulfilling their role, hauling cargoes up and down the River Thames and near coastal Ports, and both their fleet numbers and the size of vessels increased over ensuing years, as their trades became more varied and further afield. By the 1920s the company had ventured into coastal tankers designed to carry edible oil, which proved to be a lucrative trade for them. It was during later years they ventured into Petroleum and Fuel Oil tankers and were instrumental in developing the main oil terminal at Plymouth, at Cattledown Wharves on the River Ply.

By the mid-1950s, F.T. Everard had close to 100 ships including tankers, increasing in size with each new building project. The company acquired several other shipping companies, amongst which was Glen and Co which they bought in 1961. Unfortunately for Everard the steady trade of carrying coal from ports near pits to gas works ended almost overnight (in the late 1960s) when oil replaced coal. Thus, the decline in some of their traditional trades saw the company move increasingly into ship management by 1970s.

Nevertheless, they remained very traditional in their thinking and it is reputed that it was not until the outbreak of war in 1939 that their first vessel was reportedly fitted with radio. Their operations base was at Greenhithe, in Kent, on the River Thames and often groups of their vessels could be seen hipped up alongside each other and tied to buoys whilst awaiting cargoes or undergoing maintenance. Greenhithe remained their main center of operations throughout the company's lifetime.



(unknown photographer)

An earlier Wartime built vessel **Angularity** (ex - Empire Shoal). Built at Harland & Wolff, Govan, for Ministry of War Transport in 1941. 878 GRT 1150 DWT.



Penelope Everard.
A regular Baltic
Trader carrying
timber and Paper
Pulp, or Soya Beans
to Erith from
Rotterdam. Built
1963. 1583 GRT
2545 DWT. There
were several built
of the same class.

(Image Richard Cox)



(image JK Byass)

The sleek looking **Ethel Everard** 1599 GRT 2601 DWT built in 1966 by Clelands Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Wallsend. Easily recognizable being the only “Goalposter” within the fleet. Sold to foreign interests in 1984 and wrecked 1985.



(unknown Photographer)

An unidentified Everard's coastal vessel waiting to load. This is a typical example of a group of dry cargo coasters they had within their fleet of the same class, all with similar specifications. Used in their near coastal and middle trades in the post WW2 years and always identifiable by their yellow painted Hulls and distinct red and white funnel insignia.



The **Adaptity**. Built 1945, by Goole Shipbuilding Co Ltd., 945 GRT 1191 DWT. Pictured laying serenely alongside at one of the smaller UK ports. Handy for a quick run ashore being so close to the town. The ship lasted with the fleet until 1970 when she went for demolition.

(unknown Photographer)



(unknown Photographer)

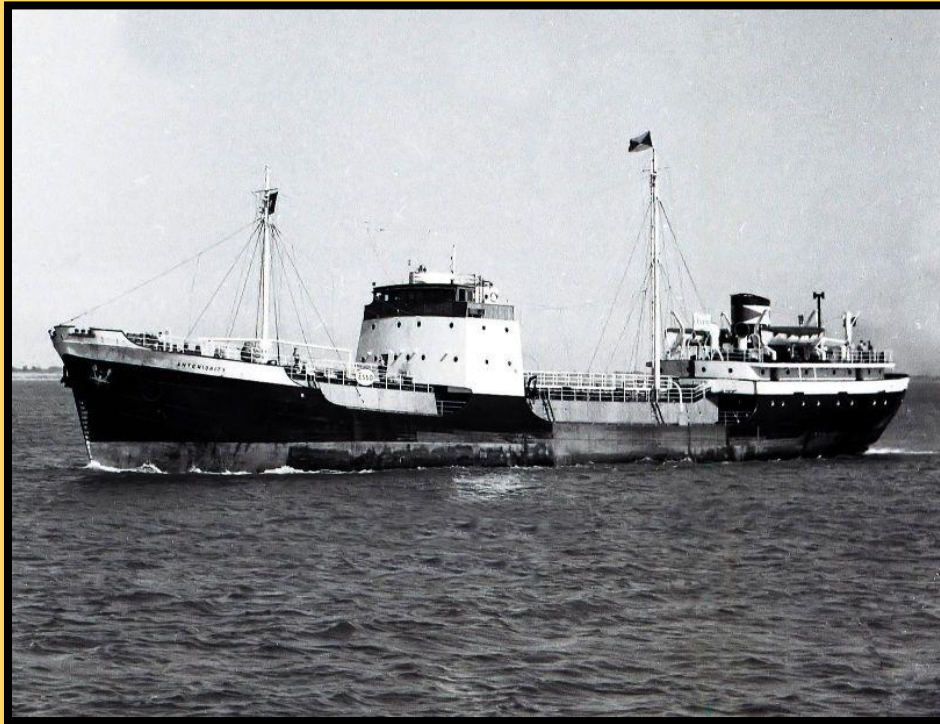
The smart looking **Summity**, with a full load of timber, presumably from one of the Baltic Ports. Built for Everards in 1972 by Goole Shipbuilding co.Ltd., Sold 1987 and capsized in October the same year after having been sold, and renamed "Sumnea". The bulk carrier capsized at Dover, Kent with the loss of three of her six crew. Survivors were rescued by the RNLI Life Boat.

By the mid-1950s, Everards had close to 100 ships including tankers, increasing in size with each new building program. Everard acquired several other shipping companies, amongst which was Glen and Co and J.Hays and Co., which they bought in 1961. By the 1970s they had firmly established themselves in ship management. A further acquisition was made when they bought Comben Longstaff in 1980, together with their 9 vessels which were integrated into the Everard fleet.



The smaller Everard coaster **Sonority**. 589 GRT built in 1952 by Fellows & Co Ltd., Great Yarmouth. Photographed at Bideford Quay, Devon. A picturesque setting. Sold in 1976 and renamed Rowancraig, she then underwent several other changes in ownership before being scrapped in Greece 1986.

(Image William Davies)



One of Everard's fine looking coastal tankers, **Anteriority**, 2,003 GRT and Built in 1954.

Photographed in Southampton Water during 1960s. She was sold in 1968 and unfortunately wrecked off northern Crete in 1982.

(unknown photographer)



Speciality Built

1951 by

Grangemouth

Dockyard Co.Ltd.,

1557 GRT 1837

DWT. This ship was

involved in a

collision with the

Argentinian ship

MV Rio Tercero, off

Greenhithe in the

River Thames

during 1972. She

was scrapped in

1972 as a

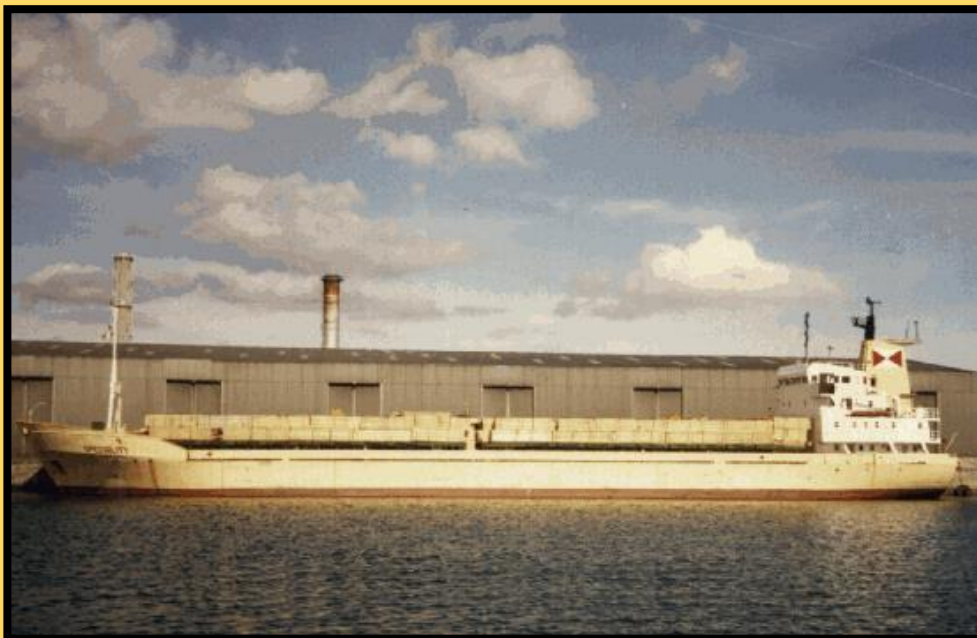
consequence.

(unknown photographer)



Actuity. Built 1945 as Empire Tedship for MOWT, it was acquired by Everard's in the 1950s

(unknown photographer)



Speciality 1597
GRT Built 1977
by Goole Shipbuilding Co.Ltd., seen with a full deckload of packaged Timber from Archangel in Russia. Photographed at Dublin awaiting discharge. Sold in 2002.

(unknown Photographer)

A random selection of some typical pre and early post WW2 “ity” names, used since the company of F.T. Everard & Sons was formally established in 1920. It is important to note the same shipnames may have been retained and used multiple times for different company ships, throughout the years., ie Angularity 501/1934, Angularity 878/1941 (ex-Empire Shoal). Some Everard family names were also used from time to time. This company tradition remained until its demise in 2006.

AUDACITY 589 GRT Built 1928	ALACRITY 554 GRT Built 1940	ASTRALITY 2186 GRT Built 1954
AUTHORITY 616 GRT Built 1928	AFFIRMITY 249 GRT Built 1953	ASSIDUITY 350 GRT Built 1930
ASPERITY 699 GRT Built 1929	ACCLIVITY 1179 GRT Built 1952	ACTUALITY 311 GRT Built 1933
ACTIVITY 358 GRT Built 1931	ARIDITY 336 GRT Built 1931	GRIT 501 GRT Built 1934
ACRITY 403 GRT Built 1934	ANGULARITY 501 GRT Built 1934	ACCRUITY 456GRT Built 1935
AQUEITY 301 GRT Built 1934	ANONITY 303 GRT Built 1936	SEDULITY 490 GRT Built 1936
SAGACITY 490 GRT Bilt 1936	SEQUACITY 870 GRT Built 1937	SINCERITY 634 GRT Built 1936
SERENITY 487 GRT Built 1937	SIGNALITY 487 GRT Built 1937	SUAIVITY 634 GRT Built 1937
SODALITY 829 GRT Built 1938	SPIRALITY 554 GRT Built 1939	SUMMMITY 554 GRT Built 1939
SENIORITY 2898 GRT Built 1949	ADHERITY 780 GRT Built 1951	AUTHENTICITY 983 195
PENELOPE EVERARD 1583 GRT Built 1963	GILLIAN EVERARD 1598 GRT Built 1963	ROSEMARY EVERARD 1599 GRT Built 1964



In December 2006, F.T.Everard was taken over by James Fisher and Sons shipping group, who in their own right were a major competitor of F.T.Everard’s tanker operations. Included in the acquisition was 11 coastal tankers and the Cattedown Oil facility located on the River Ply at Plymouth. Hence it only became a matter of time before the “Yellow Perils” all but disappeared and F.T.Everard’s familiar little ships had been relegated to meer memories in many of the the UK’s coastal and river ports. Many of the Everard dry cargo coasters were either sold off or sent for demolition. So ended another rich era of UK’s coastal shipping industry. The only saving grace being that the Everard take over was by another UK shipping group and not a foreign entity.



(Courtesy James Fisher Everard)

MT Sincerity. The new company in which the ex Everard tankers are employed is branded **James Fisher Everard**. Their principal trading routes encompass the entire European coast line transporting petrol, diesel, kerosene and an assortment of bio fuels.

MT Sincerity (above) built in 2006 and has a DWT of 4430 tons. Typical of other ex Everard tankers, already intergrated into the James Fisher Everard tanker fleet, operating around the European coastline offering eco-friendly and cost-effective solutions for transporting gas oil, kerosene and various bio fuels.



(courtesy James Fisher Everard)

Near Coastal tanker **Speciality**, built at Wuhan – China, in 2006 a group of four buildings from China

End

References. F.T. Everard various archival documentation.

James Fisher Everard various archival documentation

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