

Biographical information related to Lt. William Henn

In 1936, the Museum purchased a small collection of materials from a bookseller named John Grant in Edinburgh, Scotland. The materials included two albums of photographs and an album of watercolors and sketches. The compiler of the photograph albums was Mrs. William Henn (Susan Matilda Cunninghame-Graham Bartholomew, 1853-1911) and the artist of the watercolors and sketches was her husband, Lt. William Henn. The Henn's were active in the yachting circles in Great Britain and Europe from the mid-1870s through the 1880s. In 1886, they competed for the America's Cup with their 90-ton cutter *Galatea* but were soundly beaten in the first two races by the sloop *Mayflower*. For the next eight years the Henn's traveled throughout the Florida Keys and Gulf of Mexico. Lt. Henn died in Great Britain on September 1, 1894. Mrs. Henn continued to live and sail aboard *Galatea* until her own death on October 16, 1911.

The watercolors and sketches in the album had been placed in random order which necessitated extensive research to determine their proper order prior to accessioning. For the most part this work is believed to have been successful until the last few images which are simply too generic to date.

The research has produced a biographical outline of Lt. Henn's Royal Navy career, which are the subject of many of the images, and to a minor extent his active yachting life after his retirement. The information was compiled from numerous sources:

- An obituary printed in 'Forest and Stream' on September 8, 1894.
- Descriptions of Henn's service on board HMS *Daphne* came from "Dhow chasing in Zanzibar waters and on the eastern coast of Africa. Narrative of five years' experiences in the suppression of the slave trade [1873]" by Captain George Lydiard Sulivan.
- Information related to Henn's service on HMS *Dryad* was compiled from "Slave-catching in the Indian ocean. A record of naval experiences. [1873]" by Philip Howard Colomb, captain of the *Dryad*. [Henn's images 1936.0243.23, 1936.0243.19 and 1936.0243.20 were used as the basis for illustrations in the book.]
- Information was added from the publication "Squadron, Ending the African Slave Trade [2017]" by John Broich.
- While researching an article published in Motorboating in August 1945 stated: "One of the most interesting books in the library of the New York Y.C. is the holographic diary of a young lieutenant of the Royal Navy who, in 1868-9 as a junior officer aboard HMS *Daphne*, an auxiliary of 1,500 tons, was engaged in chasing in ships boats Arab dhows carrying on the slave trade on the West coast of Africa. The narrative, simply written, is illustrated by sketches in brush and pencil by the author." Contact was made with Vanessa Cameron, New York Yacht Club archivist/library, and they do hold the journal but we have been unable to acquire a copy of the work.
- Details were filled in from period newspaper reports and from the watercolors and sketches in the album.

Lieutenant William Henn, R.N. (1847-1894) was born in Dublin in 1847. Henn joined the Royal Navy in 1860 at the age of 13 and his first service was as a naval cadet aboard the HMS *Trafalgar* (Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent, October 3, 1861). His next service was as

a midshipman aboard the steam frigate HMS *Galatea* from 1862 to 1866 during the American Civil War. In 1862 the *Galatea* traveled with the Baltic Fleet [1936.0243.01]. Afterwards the ship was assigned to the North American and West Indies station. In November 1863 the ship was off the Rio Grande in the Gulf of Mexico and in January/February 1865 it was in the Chesapeake Bay [1936.0243.02, 1936.0243.03, 1936.0243.04]. He was present at the bombardment and capture of the forts at Cape Haytien, and at the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865.

A series of sketches of the 1866 Atlantic Telegraph cable laying project indicates that Henn served as a midshipman on board one of the Royal Navy vessels assigned to the service—most likely HMS *Terrible*. The other vessels present were HMS *Racoon*, *Albany*, HMS *Whiting* (tender to the *Racoon*), *Great Eastern*, *William Corry* and steamship *Medway*. While the collection includes a sketch of HMS *Racoon*, it also includes an image of the *Albany* raising the Atlantic cable, an event during which only the HMS *Terrible* was present. It seems hard to believe that if Henn was stationed aboard *Racoon* that he would draw an image he did not witness himself. Unfortunately, because he was a midshipman he does not appear on any of the Navy Lists, nor does his name appear in any period newspapers as being assigned to the HMS *Terrible*. [1936.0243.05-.08]

The Brighton Guardian of January 23, 1867 lists a midshipman named William Henn as being transferred to the HMS *Bristol*, a frigate serving as the flagship on the West Coast of Africa. The Navy List 1866/1867 states that Henn was made acting sub-lieutenant on February 13, 1867 but it does not show him stationed aboard any vessel. Henn's service record at the National Archives indicates he made sub-lieutenant on May 13, 1867. His first recorded service has him stationed aboard HMS *Lee* on July 2, 1867 (presumably this is because he wasn't an officer so his earlier service was not recorded). This is corroborated by a watercolor in his collection [1936.0243.09]. The watercolor bears an interesting inscription on the reverse: "H.M. Gun Vessel "Lee" which I escaped in going to the coast." Unfortunately it is unclear exactly why Henn used the word "escaped." The *Lee* was stationed in West Africa.

Henn was stationed aboard HMS *Daphne* as a sub-Lieutenant between August 1, 1867 and February 1869 while the ship was on anti-slave trafficking operations in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. The ship also had a supporting role in the Abyssinian War.

- Between December 11, 1867 and June 18, 1868 the ship was in the Red Sea supporting the expedition into Abyssinia. Henn served as a transport pilot. [1936.0243.11]
- The ship arrived at Aden, from Annesley Bay on June 21st and then sailed to Seychelles on July 18th. During this time the ship experienced a "south-west monsoon in all its strength" and reached Mahe with the "loss of our main-yard." The ship received a new main-yard from the HMS *Octavia* and after refitting sailed on the 24th of August for Tamatave. Arrived there on September 4th.
- Left Tamatave on September 9th and anchored off Mayotte on the 17th; on September 20th, when *Daphne* was in the Mozambique Channel two dhows were sighted, chased and boarded, but they did not appear to be carrying slaves; on September 26th they arrived at Mozambique harbor.
- On October 7th, when the ship was in between Mozambique and Zanzibar, a slave dhow was boarded.

- They examined the Kiswara River on the way to Zanzibar, arriving there on October 12th.
- Daphne sailed from Zanzibar towards Bombay on October 21st.
- Between October 26th and November 4th Daphne sailed between Zanzibar and Bombay and chased and boarded many dhows:
 - On October 26th the ship sighted and took three dhows and two cutters.
 - October 27th took two dhows
 - On October 28th they spotted a dhow which, in an effort to escape, ran through the breakers to the shore and within a few moments was a complete wreck. The crew could see slaves struggling in the water trying to get from the ship to shore. The captain sent a lifeboat and crossed the bar to try and save the many slaves they could see on the beach and in the water. Once they reached shore it was too late to rescue many of the slaves but they were able to pick up seven children aged 5 to 8 who were unable to crawl away due to extreme weakness.
 - On October 29th chased one dhow which ran itself ashore. Crew were sent in small boats to capture the dhow and returned with one captured slave (dhow destroyed).
 - October 31st: Captured two dhows, burned one after removing masts, sails and slaves.
 - Lt. Henn was placed in charge of one of the ship's cutters, which he used to chase dhows off the coast of Brava. On November 1st, the *Daphne* observed Mr. Henn chasing a dhow and lowered her sail. The dhow was brought alongside and discovered to have 156 slaves (48 men, 53 women, 55 children). "The deplorable condition of some of these poor wretches, crammed into a small dhow, surpasses all description; on the bottom of the dhow was a pile of stones as ballast, and on these stones, without even a mat, were twenty-three women huddled together—one or two with infants in their arms—these women were literally doubled up, there being no room to sit erect; on a bamboo deck, about three feet above the keel, were forty-eight men, crowded together in the same way, and on another deck above this were fifty-three children. Some of the slaves were in the last stages of starvation and dysentery. On getting the vessel alongside and clearing her out, a woman came up, having an infant about a month or six weeks old in her arms, with one side of its forehead crushed in. On asking how it was done, she told us that just before our boat came alongside the dhow, the child began to cry, and one of the Arabs, fearing the English would hear it, took up a stone, and struck it. A few hours after this the poor thing died, and the woman was too weak and ill to be able to point out the monster who had done it, from amongst the ten or dozen Arabs on board."
- In the end of October and beginning of November so many dhows had been intercepted by *Daphne* that before long they found themselves trying to take care of 322 liberated slaves. The captain tried to take the ship to Aden, but the current would not allow it (they were short of coal) and so altered their course for Seychelles. By the 18th of November the ship had drifted so far down the coast, that *Daphne* had no choice but to steer for Zanzibar. They acquired coal there and then sailed again for Seychelles with the slaves still aboard. The slaves were apparently on board *Daphne* for about six weeks. Captain Sullivan describes men and women pounding grain on the deck to be cooked.

- The ship's logbook records a Muster called 9th December at the Seychelles. The logbook entry for the following day states 'Employed landing slaves and cleaning ship'.
 - The book *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters and the Eastern Coast of Africa*, by Captain G. L. Sullivan, discusses landing the Africans in the Seychelles on page 194: On our arrival at Seychelles, it being known that small-pox was among us, we were put in quarantine, and the slaves were ordered to be landed on the Quarantine Island, and the next day every slave was out of the ship. No one, however, but those belonging to the ship could land there, and we employed the Africans in building a large hut sufficient to hold all of them. We erected a hospital tent, for those of our own crew suffering from the disease on the opposite side of the little island, and there they remained till convalescent. A few days after we had landed them, I went on shore to see them again, and found the interior of the large hut divided off into small huts or rooms, in some of which whole tribes were located, and in other smaller ones, married couples....Some four months later, when visiting these islands, we found that the epidemic had been fatal to about fifty more of the negroes, after we had left for Bombay.

On February 6, 1869 Henn transferred to HMS *Dryad*.

Movements of HMS *Dryad* 1869-1870:

- January 2, 1869 in Bombay
- February 20, 1869 at Bombay
- Reported that *Dryad* left Bombay in the end of February 1869 for the Persian Gulf on the look out for slavers off Ras-el-had
- March 24, 1869 captured dhow
- April 2, 1869 sailed from Bushire (Abu-shehr?) for Bohreni (Bahrein?).
- Between April 26, 1869 and May 5, 1869 captured four slave dhows, probably off Ras Madraka, Oman. [1936.0243.16-.18]
 - In May 1869 HMS *Dryad* was sitting on the northeast corner of the Arabian peninsula off the coast of Ras Madraka, Oman. Captain Colomb had placed *Dryad* in a position where he hoped they would see the slave carrying dhows before the dhows saw them. Colom hoped to place men on the top of a promontory to serve as look outs who could signal *Dryad* when dhows were in sight. Colom deployed two boats in hiding spots along the coast and stocked them with men, rifles, pistols, provisions and water. He also posted the ship's pinnace on which he stored powder and shell for a breech-loading gun that was mounted on the vessel's stern.
 - On May 5th, the crew of a dhow *Dryad* was chasing ran the vessel ashore hoping to escape overland with any slaves that survived the wreck. In an effort to save as many people as possible Colomb sent *Dryad's* cutter to a sight offshore near the wreck to provide covering fire while two gigs would land, rescue any survivors and ferry them through the surf to the cutter. While one of the gigs made it the wreck the second was swamped by the surf. Crew from the cutter swam through the surf to assist the crew of the swamped gig. William Henn, who had been in the gig that successfully landed headed up the beach with six other crew to try and

find survivors of the dhow wreck who had fled for the safety of rocks near the beach.

- The appearance of a second slaver led Colomb on a chase in *Dryad*, but the vessel did not reach the dhow in time and the vessel was dashed to pieces upon the rocks. With no more small boats the British were unable to rescue any survivors. When *Dryad* returned to the scene of the first wreck, Colomb found the cutter laboring toward *Dryad* through heavy wind and waves filled with fifty-nine men, women and children, but neither gig was visible and twenty of the crew could be seen standing on the beach. As it turns out the surviving gig had managed to make three trips through the surf to the cutter, but on the fourth trip with the gig overloaded with the remaining sailors and wreck survivors a wave broke over the vessel and sent it to the bottom. The survivors were hauled up to the beach. Two West African men working with the *Dryad* loaded their canoe with provisions and weapons and ran the gauntlet of the high waves on shore. Although the canoe was swamped by the surf they West Africans managed to haul it to the shore. With no way to reach the men, Colomb was forced to order the crew and survivors on shore to march towards *Dryad's* base on land—about ten miles back up the coast through hostile territory. *Dryad* lost two crew, two boats, destroyed two dhows and saved roughly 60 out of the estimated 300 enslaved East Africans that had been aboard them.
- May 18, 1869 captured dhow
- June 27, 1869 arrived Trincomalee from Aden
- July 9, 1869 at Aden left for Trincomalee on 10th [*Dryad* had captured five dhows with about 200 slaves on board and conveyed them to Aden]
- HMS *Dryad* left Trincomalee on August 9, 1869 for Mauritius. Army and Navy Gazette reported *Dryad* sailed from Trincomalee on August 9th for Majunga, on the northwest coast of Madagascar, from whence she was to take some slaves, surrendered by the local authorities, to Mauritius (story detailed below). She was afterwards expected to proceed to Tamatave on a diplomatic mission, after which she will act for the suppression of the slave trade along the coasts of Madagascar and Africa, and is to be at Bombay before the end of the year.
 - In March 1869, Capt. Edward Meara and HMS *Nymphe* visited the port of Majunga on the northwest corner of Madagascar. During the visit, the crew inspected dhows in the harbor to determine whether there were slaves on board but none of the vessels appeared to be slavers. Towards the end of the ship's visit two escaped slaves swam to the anchored *Nymphe* and were taken aboard. The following day the ship left port at which time the two slaves were questioned and it was learned that nearly 200 slaves had been landed from two of the dhows in the port not two weeks before *Nymphe's* visit (slave trading to Madagascar was reputedly illegal). The men told Meara that the dhows were still anchored in the port which led Meara to turn *Nymphe* around and head back to Majunga. When *Nymphe* anchored crew were sent ashore to identify the slave trading dhows, with assistance provided by an Arab trader on shore. Meara immediately ordered the

two dhows set on fire. He sent a note to the governor explaining that he had been “under the painful necessity of burning two dhows that had landed 200 slaves twelve days ago.”

- Meara spoke with officials who indicated that they reported the landing of the slaves to their own government. Later that day Meara visited the governor who reported that the landing of the slaves had been reported to the government at Antannarivo and they were awaiting a reply about what to do. None of this information had been reported by the governor during the days of *Nymphe*'s official visit. *Nymphe* insisted that he would not leave the port without the slaves that had been landed and the governor indicated it would take two months before a response was received. Meara left and later that night fired a warning shot across the fort, but didn't dare send his men ashore to try and hunt for the captives. The next day and in the days following his crew searched the dhows in port and managed to find another that was harboring slaves, which were taken aboard along with a cargo of rice and then the dhow was destroyed. *Nymphe* left Majunga the following day leaving hundreds of Mozambique captives in the hands of the Madagascar government.
- In July 1869, when a complaint about the *Nymphe*'s actions in Majunga was received from the chief British representative in Madagascar Capt. Colomb and HMS *Dryad*, then in Trincomalee, were sent to Madagascar to try and sort things out.
- In the meantime (August) Meara and *Nymphe* returned to Majunga to determine if the governor had ever received an answer to his inquiry about what to do with the slaves that had been landed. Meara was told by the governor that he was to continue holding the slaves as additional instructions would be forthcoming. Meara was told that 133 of the 174 captives were still alive and had been quartered among the town's residents which prevented Meara from making any sort of search and recovery. Shortly afterwards Meara learned that another 120 slaves had been landed in Majunga so it was obvious that the actively participating in the slave trade despite the treaty with the British indicating otherwise.
- Late in August or early September HMS *Dryad* arrived in Majunga armed with a letter bearing the seal of the Queen of Madagascar stating the Mozambique captives should be turned over to the British. After several days and much diplomatic maneuvering, 140 men, women and children were delivered to *Dryad*. The captives were then delivered to Mauritius as refugees.
- September 12, 1869 arrived at Mahe, Seychelles from Mozambique and left on 17th for NE Coast
- December 31, 1869 *Dryad* arrives in Bombay from Zanzibar (reported in Homeward Mail from India, China and the East Indies on January 31, 1870)

A short article in Allen's Indian Mail and Official Gazette dated March 8, 1870 shows that Lt. Henn traveled back to England on the HMS *Daphne*, possibly just as a passenger.

[1936.0243.25]

Departure of the "Daphne." HMS *Daphne*, Captain Douglas, proceed to England Feb. 10, via the Suez Canal. She has been in commission about two years and a-half, and would have remained out for a further term of service but that her boilers were found to be defective. She takes home several invalids from the flag ship and Galatea, the officers being Captain Merea, late of the *Nymph*, Captain David, R M., and Lieut. Hen [sic].

The muster entries for HMS *Daphne* show the ship at sea between 10th February and 5th May 1870. Between 10th February and 2nd March, *Daphne* sailed from Bombay to Aden, and then over the next ten days sailed up the Red Sea towards Suez. On March 14th at 6:55am she entered the Suez Canal (which had opened November 17, 1869) and completed the 100 mile journey to Ismailia the following day, arriving at Port Said a day after that. The ship stayed at Port Said for a couple of days, and then left for Malta, arriving at the island on March 30th. After a week there, she sailed on April 6th, arriving at Gibraltar on April 18th. The length of time it took to cross the Mediterranean indicate *Daphne* only used her sails, which would be expected if her boilers were indeed defective. The ship left Gibraltar on April 20th and arrived back in England on May 10th.

Henn was promoted to lieutenant on May 19, 1870.

Reported June 11, 1870 in Army and Navy Gazette that a medal was granted to officers and marines who were aboard *Argus*, *Dryad*, *Daphne*, *Nymphe*, *Octavia*, *Spiteful*, *Star*, *Satellite* and *Vigilant* during the Abyssinian operations between October 4, 1867 and April 19, 1868.

In 1870 Henn built his first yacht, an open lugger-rigged whaleboat, which he sailed from Plymouth to the Shannon (round Cape Clear), and in her made several voyages round the coast of Ireland.

According to Nautical Magazine Henn was sent to HMS *Aboukir*, which was serving as a receiving ship in Jamaica. The 1871 Navy List does not list him as being aboard nor does his service record.

On June 27, 1871 he was ordered to *Orontes* but this was cancelled.

In July 4, 1871 he was ordered to *Pylades* but this was cancelled.

Henn's service record states '31st Jan. 1872, 18 months leave to join expedition in search of Mr. Livingstone.' Henn was selected from many volunteers, and went to Africa as second in command of an expedition organized by the Royal Geographical Society Livingstone Search and Relief Expedition (22 January to 25 July 1872). [1936.0243.28-.32]

- The expedition embarked on the ship *Abydos* at Greenhithe, transited through the Suez Canal, across the Indian Ocean to Zanzibar where they disembarked on 17 March. At Zanzibar they prepared for their march into the interior and on April 26 April they set off, getting as far as Bagamoyo at which point they met up with two men who had just come from Stanley. The commander of the expedition, Lt. Llewellyn Styles Dawson

returned to Zanzibar and left Henn in charge of organizing the efforts to send the relief supplies to Livingston. While still at Bagamoyo on May 7 Henn records the arrival of Stanley and at that point determines to return to Ireland and the following day returned to Zanzibar with Stanley. The expedition then heads for Paris where it is met by reporters on July 25.

On October 27, 1873 his National Archives record shows him ordered to *Aboukir* but then cancelled.

The Navy List records Henn stationed on HMS *Royal Adelaide*. His service record states "Allowed to exchange with Lt. Mercer of *Royal Adelaide* 13 Feb? 73."

In 1874 he was, by his own request, placed on the retired list of his rank in the navy which went into effect on May 9, 1874 and is commuted on November 30, 1874. That same year Henn purchased the 31-ton cutter *Minnie*, built by Michael Ratsey. For two and a half years *Minnie* was his home. Henn sailed *Minnie* nearly 15,000 miles, including a winter voyage to the Mediterranean, where in 1877 she won for him the Grand Prix at the International Regatta, Cannes (the forerunner of the French Mediterranean regattas). In 1877, while in the Mediterranean, he met and married his wife, Susan Matilda Cunninghame-Graham Bartholomew. Susan and her brother, Robert, had been sailing through the Mediterranean at the time.

In 1877 Henn bought the 80-ton yawl *Gertrude*, built by Alfred Payne. His wife was as much a sailor as himself, and for seven years they lived on board, being continuously in commission except when the yacht was undergoing repairs. In that time they covered upwards of 40,000 miles, always wintering up the 'Straits,' and sojourning in home waters during the summer.

At the first Nice international regatta in 1879 *Gertrude* secured the 'Grand Prix,' and the following day the Prince of Monaco's cup. Subsequently she again carried off the 'Grand Prix' at Nice and 'Prix de Monte Carlo,' besides others at Cannes, Mentons, Genoa, Ajaccio, Oran, and several ocean matches at home and abroad.

In 1884, Henn gave an order to John Beavor-Webb to design a 90-ton racing cutter. At some point before the *Galatea* was launched, and it appears without Henn's knowledge, Webb sent a challenge to the New York Yacht Club. Sir Richard Sutton, at the same time determined to challenge with *Genesta*, and the joint challenge was promptly accepted by the New York Yacht Club, and for *Galatea* they agreed to waive the six months' notice required by the deed of gift.

- *Galatea* was constructed throughout with Siemens-Martin steel by Messrs. Reid of Port Glasgow, and was the last of the big cutters built under the 1730 rule. Her principle dimensions were: Length, L.W.L., 87ft., length over all 102ft. 7in., beam, 15ft., draught, 14ft., ballast (lead keel), 81 tons; sail area, Y.R.A., 8,230 sq. ft.
- Owing to defective casting of lead keel she did not stand up to her canvas as well as was anticipated. She was also very unlucky, experiencing many accidents including breaking her mast in three pieces during the Royal Ulster regatta. These mishaps prevented her from crossing the ocean with *Genesta*.
- In 1885, Mrs. Henn's photograph album shows *Galatea* under construction and participating in the Harwich Regatta, Royal Clyde Regatta, Royal Southampton Regatta,

Royal Yacht Squadron Regatta, going through a refit (at which time her hull color changed from black to white).

- In 1886, having been altered and improved the Henn's sailed *Galatea* for America, making a summer passage (under her ordinary trysail) of thirty days to Marblehead, touching en route at the Azores. She was beaten in the 1886 Cup by *Mayflower*, an 86ft. Burgess sloop (an enlarged Puritan) but the contests took place in light weather, which did not admit of either vessel attaining a high speed. On board *Galatea* were his wife (the first woman to participate in the America's Cup) and their pet Maltese monkey Peggy.
 - Peggy was not the only animal to live aboard *Galatea*. After her death she was succeeded by Pat McGinty (presumably another monkey), a raccoon (possibly more than one as the May 1891 *Forest & Stream* indicated that Mrs. Henn was traveling home on the *Umbria* with five raccoons!), cats and dogs.

Soon after *Galatea* arrived in New York, before racing for America's Cup, Lieut. Henn issued a challenge to any single-masted American yacht to sail a match against *Galatea* from Sandy Hook lightship to and around the islands of Bermuda and back, about 1500 miles. He left the challenge open for a month, but it was not accepted. She sailed home the end of October, 1887, under her ordinary storm sails, and, in spite of a week's head winds and a heavy easterly gale which compelled her to heave to for 19 hours, made the passage from Sandy Hook to Roche's Point in 17 days, 17 hours. Her best day's run was 257 miles. She also stopped for some hours fishing on the banks of Newfoundland. Mrs. Henn, who is an excellent navigator, accompanied her husband in both trips across the ocean. She also made a cruise of 1,000 miles with him round the reefs and keys of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico in a 28ft center-board skip jack, when the party narrowly escaped with their lives at Jupiter Inlet.

Lieut. Henn was on the Council of the Y.R.A., and was a member of the following yacht clubs: Royal Cork, Royal Northern, Royal Alfred, Royal Clyde, Mudhook, Royal Thames, Royal Torbay, Star Bay, and Nice; and an honorary member of the New York Yacht Club, Eastern of America, Corinthian of New York, Corinthian of Marblehead, Biscayne Bay (Fla) and Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron.

Lt. and Mrs. Henn used *Galatea* for a home and kept her afloat all year round. The Lieutenant always navigated and commanded his own ship, was a J.P. for Clare, and in 1886 returned the office of High Sheriff for that county.