

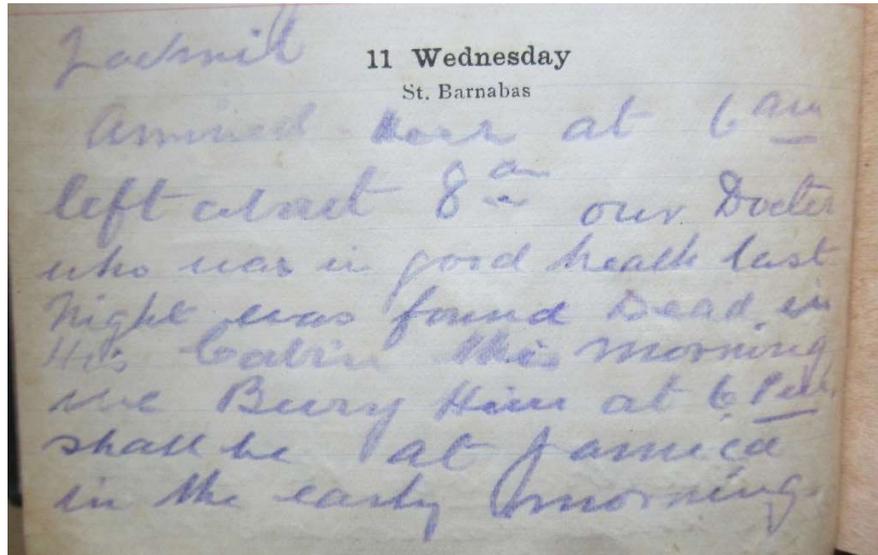
Jonathan Frost Rare Books Limited



Three emigrant journals, and the diary of a ship's steward (1863, 1885/6, 1902 & 1929)

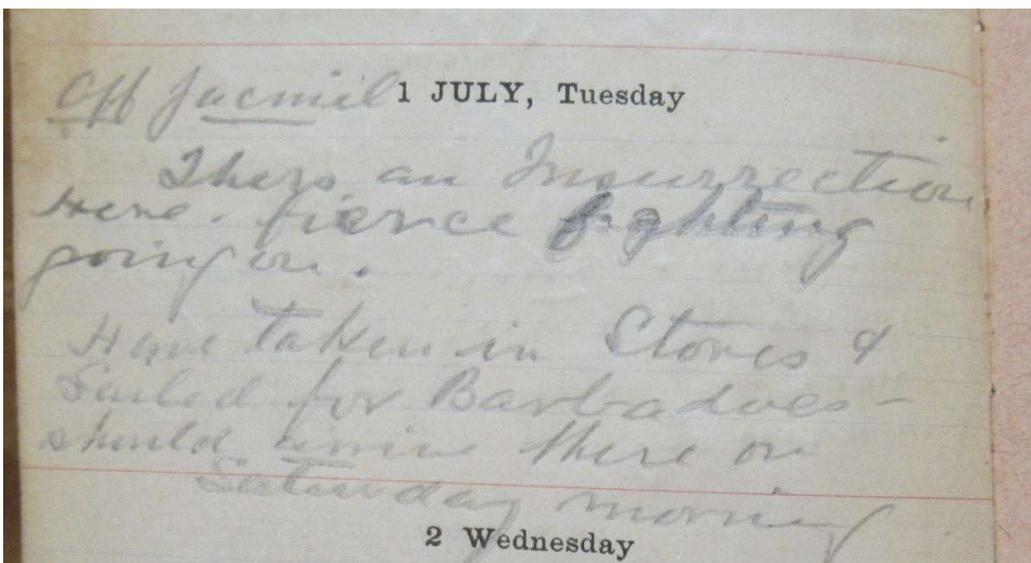
1. **The 1902 diary of a Bedroom Steward, I believe named William Pailly or possibly Bilby, working aboard the S. S. Thames (passenger & mail steamship) and S. S. India (passenger steam liner).**

A Renshaw's Diary, bound in black cloth, lettered and patterned in gilt and blind, somewhat bumped and rubbed. Text block toned and slightly delicate with cracking at the yellow endpapers. The diary is sparsely filled, 36 pages having entries, but what there is gives a rare glimpse of daily life aboard ship around South America and the West Indies, as well as the routes between England and Australia, in the early years of the 20th century from the perspective of a low-ranked member of the crew. Including matters of disease, injury and death at sea, which are a regular hazard; the ship's doctor dies on the first voyage, and there is a harrowing account of an initially trivial injury to our diarist's foot, which rapidly



deteriorates into something more serious. The first entry is on Friday 28th March, sailing for Buenos Ayres, the last on Wednesday 29th October leaving for Melbourne. Many entries are short and practical, but interesting, "Permandu [Malaysia?] Beautiful fine, but hot, arrived at 2.30 left 4.20 were quaranteed. The bubonic plague is very bad there.". There is a brief account of a narrowly avoided shipwreck off Fernando de Noronha: "Rough stormy weather. Hazy. Heavy sea running. Nearly ran on Fernando we were not half a mile off when sighted just missed it by full speed astern.". The entry regarding the doctor's death reads: "Jacmel arrived here at 6am left about 8am Our doctor who was in poor health last night was found dead in his cabin this morning We bury him at 6pm. Shall be at Jamaica in the early morning.". There are mentions of snakes, sharks, natives, chronic sunburn and mosquitoes during a hot, intense week running between Colón (Panama), Limon (Costa Rica), a "wild desolate place" which I think is called Savenilla and Cartagena in Columbia, where a parrot is purchased, also lace. On Tuesday July 1st there is this short but intriguing statement: "Off Jacmel There's an insurrection here. Fierce fighting going on.", though I cannot find reference to a

significant insurrection in Haiti in July 1902. On the 4th September William joins the S. S. India at Gravesend for a voyage to Australia, after which there are continuous daily entries until 8th October. During this place takes place the saga of the injured foot, illustrating the pressure stewards were under to keep working, with no sick pay provision, it begins with this innocuous statement: "My boot has chafed the skin of left instep which is very sore." Two days later: "My foot very bad, a kind of boil formed, the Dr.

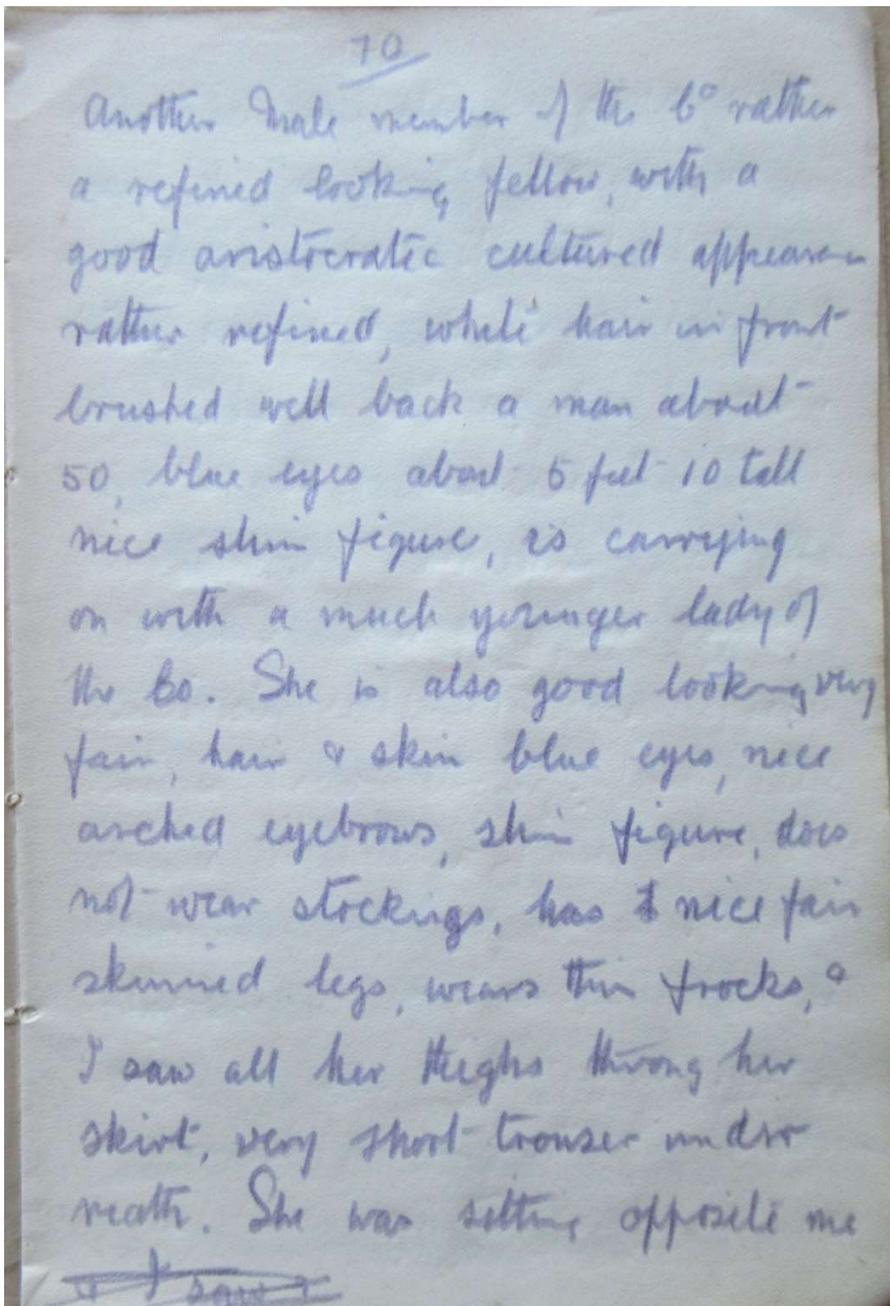


opened it & squeezed it, think it will improve now." This activity the next day finally causes him to cease work: "My foot worse. Went alongside took about 200 passengers aboard. Went in stores, took [...] potatoes etc aboard. Carrying bags of potatoes of 120 lb up the ship's gangway as made my foot very bad, the pain is simply agonising.". After this he is hospitalised by the ship's doctor and the consequences of being unable to work are stated simply: "Am very unlucky & the Winter at home means extra expense. Had been hoping to remit wife at Freemantle.". He continues to be unlucky for

the next 17 days, receiving no pay and noting being "stone broke" after about 15 days. On October 3rd his luck changes, at the expense of another steward: "3 stewards disrated to day for broaching stores, pinching a quart bottle of beer. I got a table today thro a passenger complaining of lack of attention by his Steward. Hope they will turn out alright.". There are details of sickness on board and two other stewards being sent home at Aden. A rare glimpse of one of the more exotic jobs potentially open to the working classes at the turn of the 20th century, allowing opportunities to see the world, but with many hazards, much precarity and the necessity of being away from home and family for extended periods.

£350

2. The emigrant journal of a young man travelling from London to Hong Kong in 1929 on board the S. S. Kanyan (operated by P&O between 1919 & 1932).



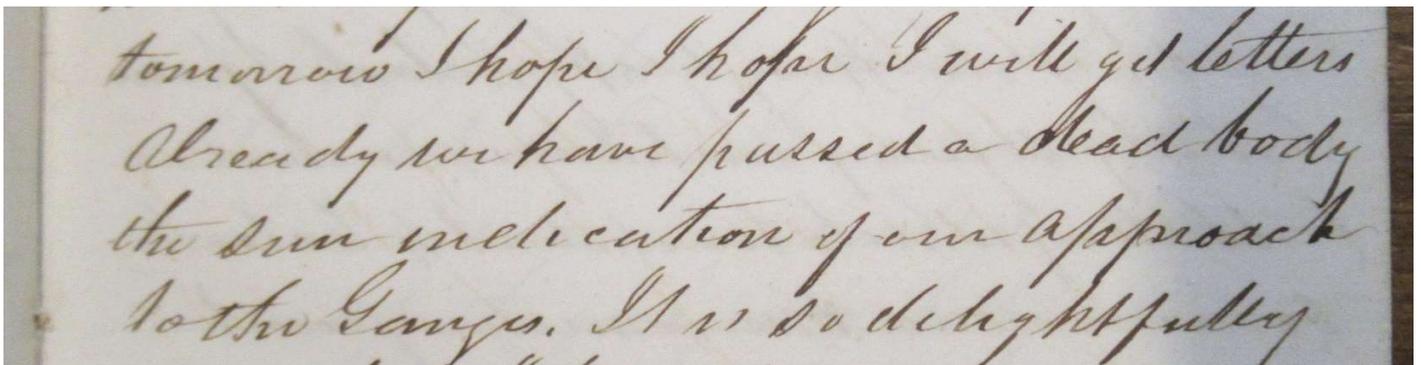
A 78 page manuscript, written with a purple copying pencil, entirely devoted to the voyage of a young man on his way out east for the first time, bound for work in an office in Hong Kong. The voyage commences at 9.30pm on Tuesday 7th March and ends at 7am on 12th April. A small red limp cloth notebook, the covers rubbed, stained and split, the pages slightly toned and creased. There is a single blank leaf to the rear. Colourful accounts of life aboard ship, including deck quoits, dances, midnight rags, daily bathing and seasickness. The ship stops at Southampton ("Went to pictures saw Gloria Swanson in Sadie Thompson. No good!"), Port Said ("Had not been ashore 5 min when asked to see Kan Kan dance. Offered Spanish Fly, otherwise amber liquid, rude cards, & photos of nude women. Port Said is known as the sink of the East no wonder!"), Suez ("several rude sights one man with his Tes-- & P—hung outside his trousers"), Aden, Colombo, Penang and Singapore. During the early days aboard ship there is much talking with the "sailor boys" on deck, but class boundaries re-assert themselves and this soon fades out of the account. The transition into the Colonial Englishman abroad is completed in the middle of the Red Sea: "Changed into open neck shirts & discard undershirt much warmer now, very hot in the sun, must wear Topee in midday". There are detailed accounts of the stops at Colombo, Penang and Aden, including trips taken out from the boat, with the costs, including that of vehicle hire, noted. At Singapore there is a description of "an animal importer": "Tigers, monkeys, orangutan, pythons, black jaguar, birds & many other animals were in very small cages [...] the tigers were

quite recently caught in the jungle & so were all the other animals etc. It was cruel to see them so confined." . Our narrator has a sharp eye and a flair for characterisation and includes an extraordinary level of detail about the other passengers, who, unlike him, are named, with details of their age, background, appearance and reasons for travel. There is Bardelle – *"An Italian Mussolini type"*; Miss Thurston – *"a goody, goody, type [...] not a bad sport [...] pulled well in the ladies tug of war"*; Mr J. B. Atkinson – *"tall young man [...] inclined to be coarse [...] rather a swanker"* and Mr. Holland – *"He looked like a fat pork butcher when dressed in evening dress. One who would always have the proletarian look even if he were a millionaire & however much he tried to hide it."* . But, perhaps best of all, is a large theatrical troupe called the 6 degrees, who have been touring India and join the ship at Singapore, they are full of cliques, love interests, misalliances and an apparent tendency to display their thighs and bottoms at the slightest provocation, and fascinate our narrator, with at least 5 pages devoted to their complex relations and activities. An entertaining read, documenting the mental and emotional transition which takes place between the home and destination of the emigrant, as well as presenting a cross section of peripatetic society, as it existed towards the end of the British colonial era, only months before the Wall Street Crash.

£500

3. **The epistolary emigrant journal of newly married, Mrs Patterson's voyage on The Queen of the South, a 3-masted, iron auxiliary screw steamer, from London to Calcutta in 1863.**

A small limp black cloth bound notebook with marbled pages, loosely bound, the spine almost entirely lacking. Consisting of a title page and 97 numbered pages, I think the last page has been lost or deliberately removed at some point. (the voyage has been completed by page 81, with the final 16 pages devoted to the first few weeks of a new life in Calcutta.) It is an epistolary journal, consisting of a transcript of letters written on the voyage and shortly afterwards, beginning on Sept 25th 1863 at Gravesend, pausing in Cape Town on 2nd November, then Madras on December 16th, arriving in Calcutta on December 23rd 1863, 3 months later. Most letters are addressed to her father, the final one to a friend, although it is moderately confusing on first reading as the second entry, after a letter to her father, begins: *"My Dear Everybody. As this is to be a kind of diary I shall not address it to anyone in particular."* . There is a note of the composition of the crew and passengers: *"we have 120 passengers and 106 of crew. Of the former 13 are French nuns [...] going to Mauritius [...] they have been laughing, playing and screaming like children"* . The rigid class boundaries on



ship are starkly delineated, and it would appear our narrator is at the top of the pile, with the best room. The military personnel account for a large proportion of the passengers and do not come out of it well: *"A Lieut. Sweeney of the 20 Hussars a most unpleasant one, he tried to be very intimate with me at first & B was delighted with him, but I did not admire his manners much & snubbed him & my opinion has proved right. He has not been sober since we started & falls down in the saloon every night in the most disgusting manner."* Betting features heavily as something to be disapproved of: *"Every day at dinner 5 or 6 pounds are won & lost on an unfortunate girl (I don't know her name, but who goes by the name of the "missing-link" on board, meaning the link that some professors declare has only been lost between man & the gorilla. She is certainly ugly & has a prodigious appetite so they are constantly betting on how many "goes" of pudding she will take"* and of course drinking and gambling go hand in hand: *"Duller and duller is the ship getting &*

faster & more furious is the gambling becoming. Cards & dice from 9 in the morning until 12 and later at night. After that the young gentlemen regale themselves with brandy until they are successively carried off to bed." There are hints at the romance and tension aboard with two pages devoted to the following scandal: "Miss Chapman. Oh the torment & annoyance that wretched little vulgarian has given me [...] She took to flirting most desperately with a Mr Smith, an Engineer Officer. Flirtation indeed was no name for it, she made herself the talk of the ship. [...] at last I was worried into speaking to Mr S.. I did it of course as if it was half fun[...] but he took it quite grandly intimated that he considered her too far beneath him even to flirt with and besides that he considered a young lady travelling alone to be fair game". At Cape Town there are detailed descriptions of shopping and a visit to a vineyard: "We rushed to the feather shop for ostrich feathers are for nothing here. I got one a yard long, white & brown for 7/6 & a lovely white bunch for my hat for 2d.". The tone and mood of the journal becomes considerably less light-hearted as India is approached. At Madras there is an alarming incident at the hotel: "B & I bolted all Miss C's doors & left her, as we thought secure for the night, her

I can communicate. But to return to
 life on board, Yesterday at half past 10
 we had service made the morning on
 deck. It was a very pretty sight but
 not half so strange & ghostly as it was at
 night when we had it again on deck
 by lamp light. The vessel looks so
 mysterious & ghostly, gliding along with
 all sails set, in the moonlight. She
 leaves quite a wake of fire behind her
 now the Phosphorescent light is so strong

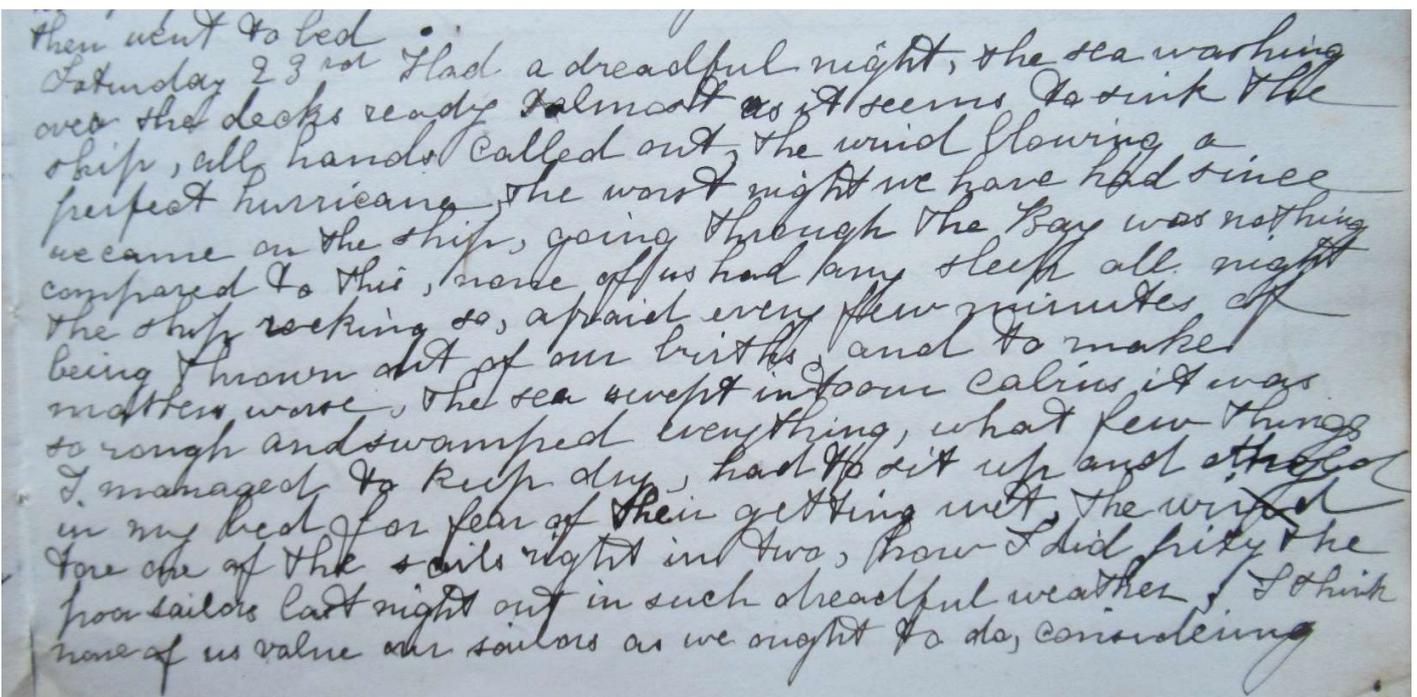
room was only separated from ours by folding doors, but just as I was undressed she came knocking and calling at the doors saying there was a man coming into her room. She was dreadfully frightened. A window of her room opened on the veranda & in it one of the natives had coolly seated himself to watch her undressing, as I sympathised with her fears, I had to go & sleep with her, but we threw the folding doors open & kept our light burning all night so that we could see B & he paraded in every hour or so to see that we were all safe." Returning to the ship for the final leg of the journey we begin to see the brutal realities of the stark divisions in colonial life between "whites" and "natives", through the eyes of our narrator, who is experiencing them for the first time: "Just after coming on board I had a foretaste of what I fear I shall often have to witness in India "licking a nigger" as they called it & which appears to me to be regarded by old Indians in the light of an amusement. One of the wretched boatmen it seems stole a sheet & blanket out of one of the cabins & so they seized him and beat him with a rope. I heard such screams above that I rushed up thinking someone was

overboard & just ran out on the poor bleeding wretch. I got dreadfully sick & I am sure would have fainted but some of the gentlemen who were looking on admiringly pulled me away to the other side. They declare it an everyday occurrence in India." Upon arrival in India there is a detailed description of a marriage, arranged with some difficulty, and some of the early travails of our émigré: "Thursday I was in bed, for oh what these devils of mosquitoes have made me suffer, my face is as bad as when I had small pox & my legs & arms are swelled like elephants. They nearly put me in a fever but I am better now but still disfigured". They are staying in a boarding house at this point and Mrs Patterson is not terribly keen on most of her new acquaintances: "To describe to you all the wallahs that call here they come by the half-dozen then we have 5 in the house altogether there are 7 gentlemen at our table [...] all unmarried, ugly & of the most idiotic not to say low description it is depressing to be amongst them". A fascinating but difficult and oppressive read, the sense of rigid social structure, physical confinement for 3 months on board ship, discomfort caused by sea-sickness, heat and mosquitoes, then the trials of adjusting to colonial life in India just 5 years after the revolt/rebellion/mutiny, are vividly expressed by a woman who has just entered into that most common of restrictive conditions, matrimony, and abandoned home, friends and familiar surroundings to inhabit the role of memsahib.

£650

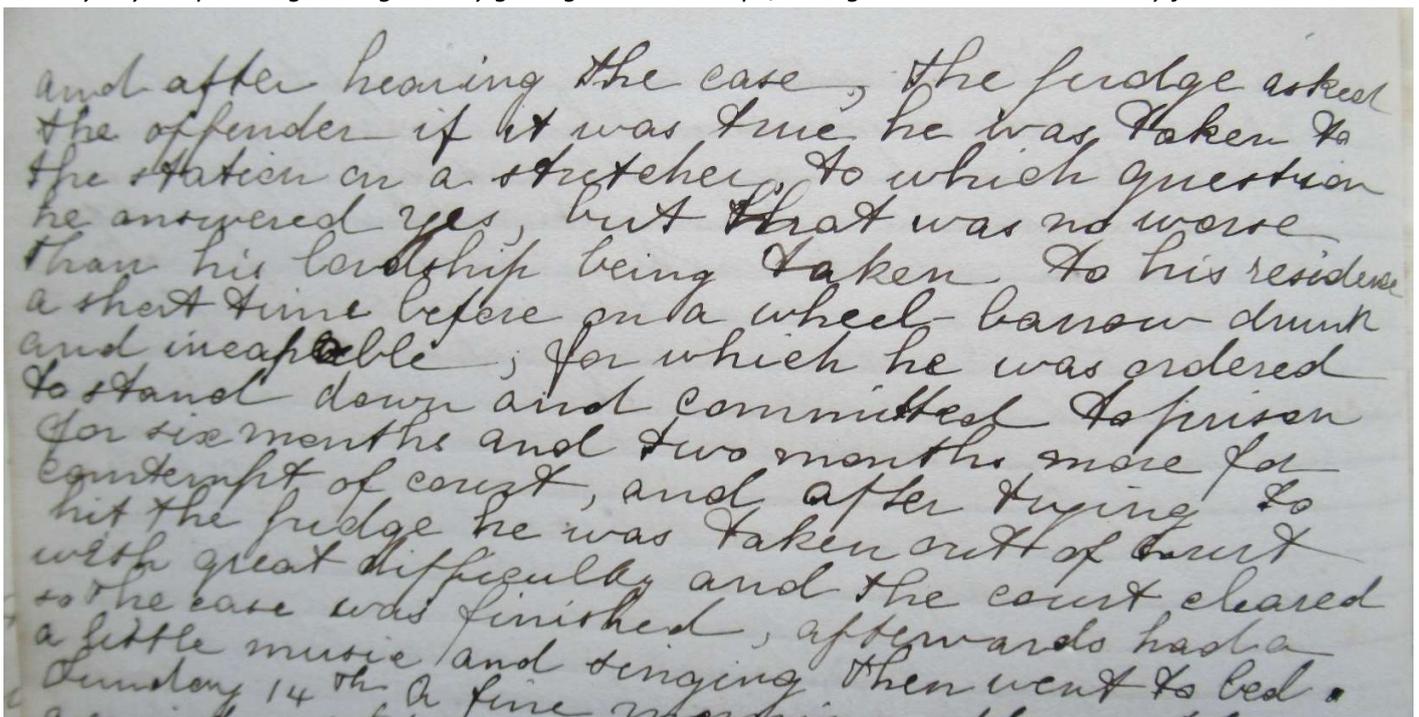
4. **A journal kept during 85 days on the sailing ship Invercargill (Captained by John Muir) from Gravesend to Wellington in 1885, of a family emigrating to New Zealand, written by a young woman named, A. Hancock.**

Beginning Dec 5th 1885 – "Below Gravesend", finishing on March 1st 1886 with arrival in Wellington imminent. 40 closely written pages, exclusively devoted to the voyage, contained in a medium sized, black limp cloth notebook, which



is somewhat fragile with loss to the spine and some more minor damage to the covers. The first page and a bit are devoted to two days of loading and waiting to sail: "taking in stores & gunpowder etc" and getting used to life aboard ship: Dec 7th "it does not seem much like Sunday to-day, every-body hard at work and no services, all is still confusion on board. This morning they gave us biscuits for the first time, so we shall have to sharpen our teeth.". It takes some time to acclimatise to the motion of the ship, and The Bay of Biscay is not on its best behaviour, consequently a page covers a fortnight's sailing: "have got to the Bay of Biscay, have only gone along-side of it not through it have only had one fine day for nearly a fortnight. The last that we saw of England was the coast of Devonshire and Lands End, past the coast of France, have passed Lisbon and America. It was what I called very rough going through the Bay but the sailors seemed to think it only a little squally, one night especially the sea broke over the ship, forced its way into the cabins and everything

was full of water we were in a pickle. I can assure you everything was floating in water [...] nearly all have been sick even to the sheep and pigs". We are introduced to the ship's doctor: "a Swede, and going the journey for his health [...] he is a tall fine fellow, and very active, I have seen him and the other passengers too, helping the sailors to pull the ropes when they are taking in or putting the sails out for amusement, and joining in the singing, for they always sing when they do that, I saw the doctor climb up the rigging yesterday, it made one quite giddy to watch him". The tropics are reached by the top of the 3rd page, we are told how much water comes aboard and makes everything mouldy and mildew, and that: "they have begun to give us all lime juice every day to keep us in good health". The crew are described and there is regular commentary on the food on board: "The Captain is a Scotchman, but a very reserved man it is very rare he speaks to anyone, he is rather short and stout, in all including officers there are twenty-eight seamen, we do not live near so well as we did when we first came on board, the principal meat we get is tinned mutton, pork and salt beef which is not fit to eat I believe it was bad before it was salted". There is further mention of the lack of provision for religious worship aboard: "Jan 3rd the first Sunday in the new year it does not seem like the real sabbath on board ship never any services one of the sailors told me it was the first ship he was ever on that services were not conducted on Sunday [...] we have some of all nations and denominations on board, we have English, Irish, Scotch, Russians, Swedes etc". The animals are also noted: "one might almost have fancied when they came on board ship that they were in a farm from the number of animals there are on board, and the noise they make, first the cock crows then the sheep bleat, the ducks quack, the pigs grunt". Our writer and her family seem to be travelling 1st class, but this means little once you are on the Atlantic in a sailing vessel: "The wind is blowing a hurricane and the waves mountain's high, and you may be sure I am writing in the midst of great difficulties and the waves are washing right over the decks. [...] This morning not able to get out on deck, should have had no breakfast had it not been for the kindness of the sailors, neither mother nor any of us at all well, had scarcely any sleep last night are gradually getting nearer the Cape, have gone within the last twenty-four hours 351

A snippet of a handwritten manuscript in cursive script. The text describes a legal case where an offender is taken to a station on a stretcher. The offender is described as being worse than his lordship, who was taken to his residence a short time before on a wheel barrow drunk and incapable. The offender is ordered to stand down and committed to prison for six months and two months more for contempt of court. After trying to hit the judge, he is taken out of court with great difficulty and the court cleared. The case is finished, followed by a little music and singing, then going to bed. The date is Sunday 14th. A fine morning is mentioned at the end.

and after hearing the case, the judge asked the offender if it was true he was taken to the station on a stretcher, to which question he answered yes, but that was no worse than his lordship being taken to his residence a short time before on a wheel barrow drunk and incapable; for which he was ordered to stand down and committed to prison for six months and two months more for contempt of court, and after trying to hit the judge he was taken out of court with great difficulty and the court cleared so the case was finished, afterwards had a little music and singing then went to bed. Sunday 14th a fine morning

miles. [...] Had a dreadful night, the sea washing over the decks ready almost as it seems to sink the ship, all hands called out, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane. The worst night we have had since we came on the ship, going through the Bay was nothing compared to this". Once they are "in the South Atlantic past Cape southward" there are increasing details of wildlife: "There are a few birds to be seen flying about to-day, molly-hawks, albatross, Cape-pigeons etc.". and a graphic and detailed account is given to the death and uses of an albatross: "...the breast they were going to make a muff of which when made would be worth forty shillings, the claws they make tobacco pouches of, the bone in the wings they make pipe stems of, and the head looks very pretty stuffed. Their were numbers of them flying about, they catch them with a line with an hook attached at the end, and a piece of salt pork without any trouble for four or five birds will try for one bait, when caught they hang them up by the legs and strangle them, when dying they are sick and throw up

an immense quantity of water drenching the place where they are hung". Slightly alarming "pranks" occur: "Affairs on the ship beginning to get complicated, passengers and mates losing their clothes and finding them in out of way places put there by no one. [...] one of the passengers found a dead chicken wrapped up in paper in their berth, put there by no one as usual". There are continual notes on the ship's progress and the health of her mother and father (mother has weak eyes, father has a fall and develops a gouty complaint), and there are the reflections of the emigrant upon the country that has been left behind: "We are now in the Indian Ocean supposed to be about four thousand miles from Wellington, oh how we are all longing for the sight of land, [...] instead of nine weeks it seems like years since we came on here, since we left the old country, as I sit here in my cabin writing I am wondering how those who are so dear to us that we left behind are getting on in England. I think so much about you all especially when we are laying awake at night rocking in our berths unable to sleep.". A keen interest is taken in the mishaps of the crew: "one of the stewards has just fallen down with a dish in his hand with a ham joint on it that was being taken up to the saloon for their dinner. The dish was completely smashed but the meat was alright after it was put on another dish. Another cabin boy fell down the saloon stairs and was rendered unconscious they were obliged to give him some claret to bring him too". Long passages are devoted to detailing the entertainments: "Afterwards went into second class cabin to see a law case tried for assault it was laughable the passengers were dressed up for the occasion and acted it well, they borrowed mother's spectacle for the judges clerk to wear the offender was dressed up as an Irishman who had got the worse for drink and insulted a gentleman in London, he was brought into court handcuffed, he was rather troublesome, but he did get the Irishman well". There is one intriguing mention of a ship's newspaper: "Have just been reading a paper called the lion which is supposed to be printed and published on board recording principal events of the week". The final entry is made the night before the ship is due to arrive in Wellington: "just seen a lighthouse near us, are now 47 miles from Wellington expecting to wake up in the morning in Wellington Harbour, have just seen the star Venus, are now going to bed feeling very hungry because we have nothing to eat. Hoping this is the last night we shall spend on board.". A vividly written account of the trials, hardships and joys experienced on the emigrant route to New Zealand in the late nineteenth century.

£850