

February 2019

Volume 41 Issue 2



The Binnacle

Victoria Model Boats
Victoria, B.C.



Victoria Model
Shipbuilding Society



January Show and Tell

Ken Lockley on the
Shetland Bus
and the YAG



A Tale of Three Princes

What is it, Arnold?





**From
The Bridge**

Hello Everyone

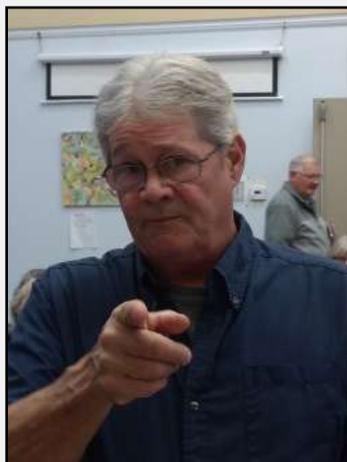
Well, here we are in February, the winter of course is the quietest time of the year with not a lot going on.

Our next event is the Swap meet on March 14th. Bring all the stuff you want to sell off, swap, or give away. There should be a lot of interesting stuff there.

For sure we are all waiting for the nice weather to return.

It has been very difficult trying to find a parking spot down at Harrison pond. They have turned our normal parking into storage for machines and pipe so the entire parking along the pond is parking for construction.

Mike.



2019 Executive Committee

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<i>Secretary: Vacant</i>	479-2761
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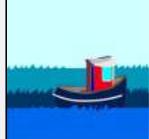
ON THE RADAR

Upcoming Events

Spring Swap and Shop, March General Meeting, March 14th.



Meetings: Second Thursday 7:30-9:30
St. Peter's Anglican Church, Lakehill
3939 St. Peter's Road
Upcoming meeting: March 14th.



POWER: Sundays 10-12
Harrison Model Yacht Pond (HMYP)
Dallas Road at Government Street



SAILING: 1st. and 3rd. Sundays
Beaver Lake



LANGFORD LAKE
Wednesdays 9:30
Langford Lake, Leigh Rd. at Trillium

In Memory

For those of you who knew Alex James.....he passed away at RJH on January 17th, 2019. He was a very dedicated member of the VMSS and led an interesting life. There will be a "Celebration of Life" at Goward House, 2495 Arbutus Road on Saturday, Feb 16th, at 2:00 pm. The family are asking that you "please come and share a story". Flowers are gratefully declined.

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Your Club Needs You!

It's a tough month and tough weather to drag yourself out to the club general meeting, but please try. We have two important issues we want to discuss, whether to go forward with what looks like an opportunity with Heritage Acres, and the running of next month's Swap and Shop meeting. Also we would like some time spent on events we want to run this year with Mike's Events Calender below. Please remember that only paid-up members may vote.

Heritage Acres Committee Report

The Committee looking into a possible second pond site at Heritage Acres has had a meeting and a site walkabout with the SHAS President.

SHAS has responded favourably to our club establishing a pond at Heritage Acres. Our Committee will be presenting a report at the February meeting. Our Executive and the Committee supports moving forward with discussions with the folks at SHAS. The decision as to whether or not we move forward will depend on a vote from the membership.

Nanaimo Model Boat Club Show

Mike Claxton reports that the Nanaimo mall show is April 12-14th at the usual location.



The January Mystery Ship.

Bill Sturrock got this picture down at Ogden Point on the 20th. of January. The grey thing in the middle is the latest addition to Canada's Navy, and being very well received by our servicemen. Go on the internet to (https://www.cgai.ca/the_mv_asterix_delivers_canada_s_supply_ship_impresses_at_sea) for the full skinny.



2019 Events Calendar.

January			
Executive Meeting	3rd.		Sundays 6, 13, 20, 27
General Meeting		10th.	
February			
Executive Meeting	7th.		Sundays 3, 10, 17, 24
General Meeting		14th.	
March			
Executive Meeting	7th.		Sundays 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
General Meeting		14th.	
April			
Executive Meeting	4th.		Sundays 7, 14, 21, 28
General Meeting		11th.	Nanaimo Show Apr. 12-14
May			
Executive Meeting	2nd.		Sundays 5, 12, 19, 26
General Meeting		9th.	Battle of Atlantic
June			
Executive Meeting	6th.		Sundays 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
General Meeting		13th.	
July			
Executive Meeting	4th.		Sundays 7, 14, 21, 28
General Meeting		11th.	
August			
Executive Meeting	1st.		Sundays 4, 11, 18, 25
General Meeting		8th.	Saanich Fair 28, 29, 30
September			
Executive Meeting	5th.		Sundays 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
General Meeting		12th.	
October			
Executive Meeting	3rd.		Sundays 6, 13, 20, 27
General Meeting		10th.	
November			
Executive Meeting	7th.		Sundays 3, 10, 17, 24,

General Meeting	14th.		
December			
Executive Meeting	5th.	Sundays 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	
General Meeting	12th.		Christmas Dinner 12th. Light Up Parade ?
To be Determined:-	Point Hope Shipyard		
	Steering Course		
	Heritage Acres		
	Port Alberni Boat Show		
	Burnaby Visit	Tug tow races, Steering Course	
	Bellingham Visit	West Coast RC modellers.	

Mike has produced the above as a draught of the year's events calendar. We want to bring everyone on board with what we want to try to do this next year, so the additions at the bottom are for your discussion and approval.

January Show and Tell.

Ken Lockley shows his YAG boat very nearly complete.



Caldercraft.

Mike Creasey shows the latest progress on his Fort/Park ship. In his hand is the electronics board with the unusual feature of a working cooling water discharge. Mike told us he got the scale cowl vents from



Harold Lacey showed some of the tools he has used for his designed and built from scratch models. There was his own sanding block, the modifications he made to a bench plane, the handle he built for a miniature plane, and his trusty, tape wrapped handle modelling knife.



(My apologies to Harold for the poor quality of the picture.)

And Ed White showed the progress on his vintage "A" class sailboat. The 40 lb lead detachable keel is in the foreground with its carrying handle.

NEXT BUILD; by Ken Lockley February 2019

In a recent study of US Navy Sub Chasers, I came across an interesting aspect that I would like to share with you. The “Shetland Bus”. The Norwegian fisherman, as we have all read, were a very important link for the rescue of downed allied airman. So much so, that the allies tried hard to support this important link. In 1943 the US Navy turned over 3 Sub Chasers to the Norwegians for additional rescue help. These ships were capable of 18-20 knots on short runs and would leave the Shetlands with pre arranged meeting areas, and would pickup serviceman from small Norwegian fishing boats off the coast of Norway. Then they would return to Scalloway, capitol of the Shetlands, and eventually return to England. I’m sure there were many Canadian airman thankful to the Norwegians for this help.



The vessel above is “Hitra”, one of the original three US Sub Chasers that the US gave to the Norwegians back in 1943. It remained in service with the Norwegian Navy till the middle 1950’s. It became a derelict until the late 1970’s when a group challenged the government to repair the ship and make it an active navel vessel. As you can see it looks great now and it spends the summers visiting remote communities on their coast. This last April it sailed across to Scalloway, Shetlands Islands for an Anniversary of the “ Shetland Bus”. This was the nickname of the clandestine operating group that made the link between the Shetlands and Norway from 1941-1945.



The vessel above is YFB 316 and there is a sister vessel YFB 317 which is the one that inspired me to build my model. Ten of these vessels were built in the 1950's. Several used by RCAF, at least five used by the Navy for youth training (YAG) and a couple used as Yard Ferry Boats (Blue boat) which is what you see above.

Some miscellaneous pictures of my model nearly finished and in the water at Harrison.



There is more small detail items to go on the vessel. A few items have been ordered and we are waiting on that.

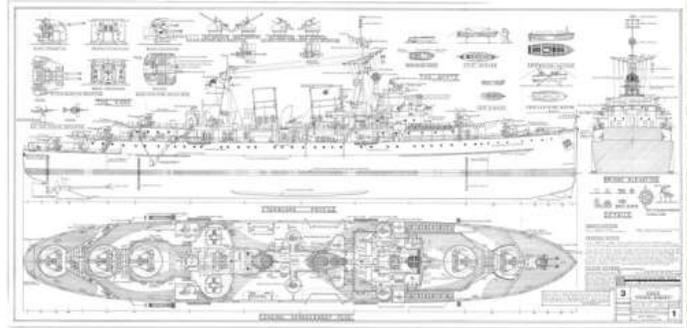
Thanks to Ron Hillsden for plans and many pictures that really helped.

The picture in the water is one of Rick G. took. Thanks on that.



A Tale of Three Princes.

At The Hobby Centre in Ottawa (<https://the-hobby-centre.myshopify.com/pages/vanguard>), they have for sale a set of 1:96 plans of HMCS Prince Robert. \$30 plus \$4.10 postage will get you two sheets drawn by D B Munro. They'll make up into a 48 inch long 7inch beam anti-aircraft cruiser from WW2. It'll look right on the water at a weight of about 15 lbs. and a speed of about two and a quarter knots. Closer to home the Esquimalt CFB museum has what looks like the same plans, and will print you a set, but I haven't yet found out the price.



Thereby hangs a really good story of three Canadian Princes.

In 1929 CN Steamships, the subsidiary of Canadian National Railways, ordered three small luxury liners from Cammell Laird for service on the West coast of Canada. They were 385 feet long, 57 feet beam, 21 feet draught, displacing 5736 tonnes. They were to carry three hundred passengers at 22 knots. Twin screws driven by Parsons geared turbines for a total of 19,300 ihp. They were named Prince Robert, Prince Henry, and Prince David and they got here (B.C.) in 1930. Unfortunately another arrival was the Great Depression, and there was no longer the trade to support them. So in 1932 Prince David and Prince Henry were sent back east to join the Canada to West Indies service.



But the three ships were not commercially successful throughout the 1930s. and in 1939, with the start of World War 2, they were transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy for conversion to armed merchant cruisers. Twelve six-inch guns, previously installed in pre-World War 1 King Edward VII class battleships, were available in Canada for the conversion and the design was completed by a Montreal company of naval architects.

Prince Robert was converted at Burrard Dry Dock, Esquimalt, Prince Henry at Vickers, Montreal, and Prince David at Halifax Shipyards. The conversion trunked their two forward funnels into one, installed four single six-inch gun turrets, two forward and two aft, two three-inch guns amidships and some lighter anti-aircraft weapons. Two depth charge chutes were installed over the stern. They were



not fitted with centralized gun control systems or with anti-submarine sonar.

They were the largest ships in the Canadian navy until the arrival of the cruisers Ontario and Quebec in 1944.



Prince Robert was the first to be completed and was ready in September 1940. Although the Canadian Navy had planned to keep her in Canadian waters as protection for the west coast ports, the British C in C of the America and West Indies station decided she should be used along the South American coast to disrupt enemy shipping. On

18th September she arrived off Manzanillo, Mexico, where the German merchant vessel SS Weser was getting ready to sail. Weser was carrying supplies for the German auxiliary cruiser Orion and was due to meet the Orion in the Marshall Islands. On the 25th of September Prince Robert followed Weser out to international waters, surprised her with a boarding party and captured her. Prince Robert escorted her prize back to Esquimalt where the former German ship was taken into Allied service.

Prince Robert returned to patrol the South American coast until early February 1941, and then spent the next seven months escorting Australian troop convoys across the Pacific. She refitted in Esquimalt in September and October, and then in November escorted the troop transport Awatea that carried the Canadian contingent for the Hong Kong Garrison. A hundred and nine members of the Canadian Rifles were carried on Prince Robert herself. She returned to Canada in December and resumed patrols along the west coast.

After a refit in May 1942, in which she was fitted with ASDIC, 20 mm AA cannon, and plastic bridge armour, she was re-united with her two sister ships, Prince Henry and Prince David, to join the American fleet at Kodiak, Alaska in August. This was to support the Aleutian Islands Campaign to eject Japanese forces from the islands of Attu and Kiska.

The campaign was successful and the Canadian force was released at the end of October.

By the end of 1942 it was clear that anti-aircraft defence was the priority for convoy escorts, and Prince Robert was chosen for re-conversion to an anti-aircraft cruiser. So in the first six months of 1943 her main armament was changed to ten 4 inch quick firing guns in five twin turrets. The turrets were dual purpose, both high and low angle, and alongside them were eight 2 pounder pom-





poms in quadruple turrets and twelve 20 mm Oerlikon cannon. She was also given four depth charge throwers on the rear deck. She was now one of the most powerful anti-aircraft ships in the war.

As soon as she was ready she was despatched for the Clyde, but was kept in Bermuda for more modifications to her gunnery system. She was finally ready for active service on the 20th of October and sailed to join the Mediterranean fleet to escort convoys from Britain to North Africa and in the Mediterranean sea. For eleven months she remained on this duty and then, as the German air threat diminished, she was sent back to the Pacific.

She was overhauled again in Esquimalt and then in June 1945 her Oerlikon mounts were replaced with four twin 40 mm Bofors in San Francisco. She joined the British Pacific Fleet in early August, just in time for the Japanese surrender. So she became part of the Task Force sent to secure Hong Kong from Japanese control. Her commander represented Canada at the formal surrender of Hong Kong on the 16th. of September.

In a piece of historical symmetry, Canadian prisoners of war from the units that Prince Robert had ferried to Hong Kong in 1941 were brought aboard to be transported back to Canada.

(Lieutenant-Commander Fred Day of the HMCS Prince Robert with liberated Canadian prisoners of war at Sham Shui Po Camp, Hong Kong, August 1945.)



Of the 1,975 Canadians that she had left there, 290 died and 443 were wounded in the losing battle for Hong Kong, and a further 267 died in the dreadful conditions endured in the Japanese prisons. Those that Prince Robert retrieved arrived back in Esquimalt on 20th October 1945.

In December, Prince Robert was paid off and was laid up in Bedwell Bay until she was sold to the Charlton Steam Shipping company in 1947. Charlton reconverted her to a passenger ship but far from a luxury one. She could take 750 passengers in eight-berth cabins and 20-40 bed dormitories. She was first chartered to the International Refugee Organization to transport displaced persons and refugees from Europe. She sailed from Bremehaven to Sydney, Australia, then Bremerhaven to Rio de Janeiro, and then Naples to Rio, Naples to Halifax, and Naples to Central America.

Then she sailed pilgrimage routes until she was sold to Fratelli Grimaldi in 1951, renamed Lucania and rebuilt again, this time to take 90 first class passengers, 90 intermediate, and 560 tourist class. Sailing between Italy and Venezuela, Lucania worked for another ten years and then was broken up for scrap near Livorno in 1962.

Lucania



Prince David was not a lucky ship. Back in 1932, she spent six months aground on Bermuda, was eventually retrieved by Canadian National and had another four years service on the Canada-West Indies run before she was laid up in Halifax in 1937. Her conversion to an armed merchant cruiser involved a very extensive refit by comparison with Prince Robert. But the conversion was complete by the end of December 1940, and on the 12th. January 1941 she left Halifax with the also now complete Prince Henry to do workups off Bermuda. The passage was stormy, and both ships showed up one of the weaknesses of the Princes, excessive rolling in high seas. This would continue to undermine their usefulness as platforms for their obsolete 6 inch guns.

She remained on the West Indies Station in Bermuda as a convoy escort until April, when she was sent to search for the missing British AMC, Voltaire. A German communique had been picked up saying that Voltaire had been sunk by the German auxiliary cruiser Thor. She found only an oil patch and small remnants of wreckage. Voltaire was armed with the same 6 inch guns as the Princes and was badly outclassed by the more modern Thor's 150 mm guns with central director gear.

At the end of August came a famous incident when Prince David sighted an unknown vessel in poor visibility which failed to respond correctly to Prince David's challenge. Prince David took after her, firing her forward guns, but the unknown ship fled at high speed. Prince David reported the vessel as a heavy cruiser, but it later became known that no such German ship was in the area. The newspapers of the time, however, reported that Prince David had frightened off the Admiral Hipper.

Shortly after this incident the Prince David came upon the British merchantman St. Margaret making for Trinidad at slow speed with engine trouble. The vessel's master asked for advice from Prince David's Engineer Officer, who inspected the damage and reported that St. Margaret was unlikely to make the 1300 km. to Trinidad. Prince David took the merchantman in tow and got her safely to Bermuda on September



3rd. (The salvage claim took until 1950 before the last cheque was sent!).



The attack on Pearl Harbour changed things for Prince David. She was immediately transferred back to Esquimalt for a refit and weapons upgrade.

In July 1942 she spent three days on a lighter duty, participating in making the film "Commandos Strike at Dawn" in Saanich Inlet. Only her starboard side shows in the movie, because of the huge sound truck that had been hoisted aboard to port. Saanich Inlet stands in for a Norwegian Fjord, an airstrip which is now Victoria International Airport for a secret German airstrip, and Goldstream Marina for the Norwegian Wharf. Paul Muni, Anna Lee, Lillian Gish, Cedric Hardwicke and Robert Coote supplied the human interest. It's available on U-tube right now, (for \$2.99 unfortunately).

Then in late August, all three Princes with the corvettes Dawson and Vancouver were despatched as Force D to the Aleutians to join the US force expelling the Japanese from Attu and Kiska islands. They didn't see combat, but fought hard with the appalling fogs and storms that characterize the region. Three months saw the successful end of the campaign and Force D returned to Esquimalt.

By then, it had been decided that the three Princes could be better used in other roles, and that Prince David and Prince Henry would be converted again, this time to troop landing ships in preparation for the coming invasion of Europe.

They were reconfigured to carry 550 infantrymen in six Landing Craft Assault and two Landing Craft Mechanized. Large sick-bay facilities were built into them to cope with expected casualties. The old 6 inch gun turrets were replaced with two twin 4 inch mountings, two single Bofors 40 mm guns, and ten Oerlikon 20 mm cannons. The work was complete in December 1943 and Prince David arrived on the Clyde in February 1944 for final fitting-out. Then in April 1944 both Princes were joined with their flotillas of assault landing craft, and three Canadian flotillas of larger infantry landing craft that would make the Channel crossing under their own power.



So on D-Day, 6th June 1944, Prince David was in the thick of it, landing 418 troops on Juno beach. Over the course of that day, all Prince David's landing craft were lost and Prince David, with wounded on board, returned without the landing craft to Southampton. Both Princes made four more reinforcement trips to the Normandy beaches, through into July.

Then at the end of July, re-equipped, the two Princes sailed for Naples to take part in the invasion of Southern France. Prince David carried French Commandos who she landed 6 hours before the main operation started in order to take the gun batteries at Cape Negre. After the initial action she took the wounded back to Corsica, from where she made two more reinforcing trips to the

French coast.

On the 14th of September she was at the Greek island of Kithera with 530 British commandos to begin the liberation of Greece. They were greeted not by the enemy but by delighted Greeks, and her landing craft went with the commandos to a series of attacks to take control of the inner Aegean Islands.

By the 15th of October Prince David had on board Prime Minister George Papandreou and his government of Greece in exile. At Piraeus, the port for Athens, they were again met with a happy welcome. Prince David and Prince Henry ferried both troops and supplies into Greece for the next few weeks. Unhappily the liberation of Greece turned into the Greek civil war as the new government clashed with communist guerillas, who had led the resistance and controlled most of the interior. Prince David made two more trips to Piraeus with reinforcing Greek troops and then with ammunition and 300 troops of the British 2nd Parachute Brigade. On the second trip a mine tore a hole in the port side below the waterline. She made it to Piraeus and then crossed to Tunisia to get a large patch fitted.

The patch was not a success, it fell off a few days after she left for Gibraltar. Presumably she was re-patched at Gibraltar, and then at the end of February 1945 she returned to Esquimalt to be re-fitted and then transferred to the British Royal Navy for use in south-east Asia. But instead she was paid off and laid up in Lynn Creek, North Vancouver, her war service over.

But the war's end wasn't the end for the Princes. Prince David was purchased by Charlton Steamship co. in September 1946. She was converted back to passenger service in Britain and renamed Charlton Monarch. For the next four years she served the immigrant trade from Europe to Australia and South America. But she suffered a number of break-downs and finally she was broken up at Swansea in 1951.

Prince Henry had functioned as a cruise ship after her move to the Atlantic seaboard in 1932 and continued as such, interrupted by grounding at St. George's, Bermuda on 13th March 1944, until she was chartered to the Clarke Steamship company of Quebec in 1937. Clarke operated her in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the summer, and in the winter, between Miami and Port-au-Prince, Kingston, and Havana. Clarke Steamship bought her in 1938 and renamed her North Star.

Then like her two sister ships, she was converted to an armed merchant cruiser. This was done mainly in Montreal, and finished at Halifax. She sailed with Prince David in January 1941 for work-ups at Bermuda, and then on the 1st of March, she transited through the Panama Canal to join HMS Diomedé, a cruiser built late in WW1, to patrol for German shipping off the coast of South America.





On the 24th of March, she refuelled at Callao, Peru. There, she saw in the port four German Merchantmen. So she left Callao on the 25th and took station just outside Peruvian waters to wait for them. On the 1st of April two ships, Muenschen and Hermonthis left the port and Prince Henry intercepted. Both merchantmen were set on fire, apparently by their crews and after some unsuccessful attempts to recover them, both were sunk. The crew of Muenschen escaped capture and made it to shore at Casma, Peru, where they were arrested, the crew of Hermonthis were taken aboard Prince Henry, and taken to Esquimalt when Prince Henry returned for a refit three weeks later.

She continued on Pacific patrol till September, when she was sent to St. John's, Newfoundland to become a depot ship for the Newfoundland Escort Force. This force was to cover convoys across the mid-Atlantic and by the end of 1941, was 80 % of Canada's naval strength.

But by January 1943 Prince Henry was needed back in the West Indies to assist the U.S. Caribbean Frontier force for two months. She was involved in the rescue of two crews of American merchantmen but then was ordered back to Esquimalt on the 20th of April, arriving the 7th of May. From Esquimalt she was sent with her two sister ships to the Aleutian Islands campaign, as told above, and was fitted with plastic bridge armour and ASDIC.

Beginning on the 6th of March, 1943, Prince Henry went into Burrard Dry Dock in East Vancouver to be converted (like Prince David) into an infantry landing ship for the invasion of Europe. She sailed for the UK on 6th January 1944. A nice part of the story is that she stopped in Bermuda and there picked up 250 British schoolchildren who had been evacuated to Bermuda during the London Blitz. She landed at Clydebank to be fitted with radar, new communications equipment, and Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns.

Then, in April, Cowes, Isle of Wight, to pick up her flotilla of landing craft and to train with the invasion fleet. On 2nd. of June she loaded with troops of the Canadian Scottish and the 7th Canadian Infantry and landed them successfully on Juno Beach, 1 mile east of Courselles. Prince Henry's flotilla were luckier than Prince David's and all landing craft returned successfully, along with 57 wounded and a number of survivors from ships sunk from the assault. Prince Henry returned to Cowes in a nine ship convoy at night.

She then turned to ferrying reinforcements to Utah Beach, making four more trips to Normandy by mid-July. Prince Henry and Prince David between them had transported 5,566 troops to Normandy.

But there was lots more work to do. On the 24th of July she sailed for Gibraltar and then Naples for Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France. Prince Henry's first load for this operation was the Admiral and headquarters staff for the Sitka Unit B force subdivision and 279 members of the First Special Service Force (later known as the Devil's Brigade) a combined unit of US and Canadian troops that was the ancestor of today's special forces in both countries. Prince Henry landed them on the coastal islands of Port-Cros and Ile du Levant to eliminate coastal defences ahead of the main landings. Prince Henry did two more shuttles between Corsica and the landing zone with reinforcements.

Then it was back to Italy and September was spent ferrying troops and landing craft in preparation for landings in Yugoslavia and Greece. From Taranto on 15th. of October Prince Henry and seven other landing ships sailed for Piraeus, arriving on the 17th. Again, reinforcement trips from Taranto followed, and then a relief mission to Salonika.

From 23rd. to the 29th of December Prince Henry with both her own landing craft and Prince David's carried out an evacuation from Preveza of civilians away from the Greek Civil War. In total she evacuated 4400 people. She stayed in the Mediterranean until March 1945 and then joined a convoy returning to the UK and arrived in London on the 15th April. The Royal Navy had requested two ships on loan from Canada for operations in south-east Asia so Prince Henry was paid off in London by the RCN. The British assumed control of the ship in London and then decided to use her as an accommodation and headquarters ship in Wilhelmshaven in late 1945 and then Portsmouth and Falmouth. The next year they purchased her and renamed her the Empire Parkston and used her as a troopship between Harwich and the Hook of Holland for the next ten years.



Her last major incident was her requisitioning by the Royal Navy in 1956 and use again as a landing ship at Port Said in the Suez Crisis. She was the first ship to land elements of 16 Parachute Brigade on 5th November. Historically the last futile gasp of the British Empire. After Suez Empire Parkeston returned to the Harwich-Hook run until September 1961, when troop movements by air became the norm. She was broken up at La Spezia, Italy in 1962.

So there you have it, three ships that are an intimate part of the Western Canadian Story, rooted right here in Esquimalt. A single basic design, but with at least 7 historically correct variants to model. Good plans are available right here at the CFB museum and beyond any doubt, lots more history and detail to discover. Plenty of photos and a world-wide story. Luxury liners, immigrant ships, warships, troopships, auxiliary landing craft, this project has everything. Give me one good reason not to drop this writing right now and get on with building a hull plug!

Sources: I have sourced this article almost entirely from Wikipedia, with a side trip to CFB Esquimalt museum. And I've left out a lot. For instance, on Douglas Street, next to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, where Rexall Drugs is now, used to be Prince Robert House. With a magnificent model of the original Prince Robert in it. Where's that now? Do you know how many Venezuelans are of Italian origin? And so on. I had to stop somewhere!



The Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society is a non-profit club, open to all, established in 1978 under the Societies Act of B.C.

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