

A Bumpy Ride for Lumpy Ore

In 1997, our Functions Officer, Peter Grant was master of the **Lowlands Trassey**, a Capesize bulk carrier of 163554 tons dwt. She was operated by Red Band for Fred Olsen's bulk division, First Olsen Tankers, and was on passage from West Australia to Dunkirk. This article appeared in Red Band's quarterly newsletter, **Link**, of July 1997.



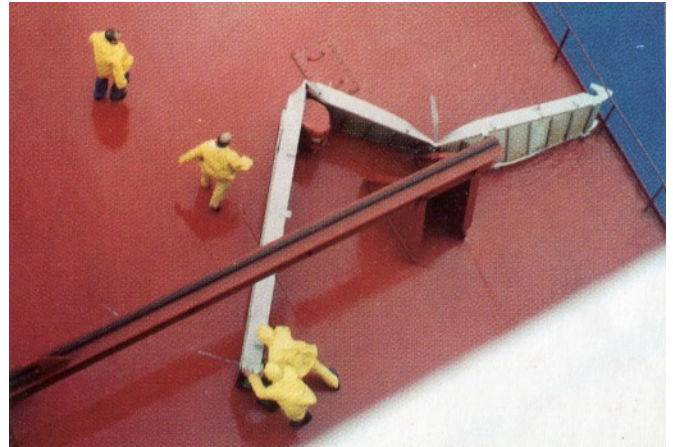
Rarely do we read about the trials and tribulations of the ships and their crew. Catastrophic events sadly seem to be the exception. With this report from the Bay of Biscay to Red Band's head office, *Lowlands Trassey* master, P. Grant, provides an interesting glimpse at some of the modern day maritime hardships endured around the world, every day.



“It was during loaded voyage 14, March 1997, on passage from western Australia to Dunkirk, France, that we sustained heavy weather damage,” reports Mr Grant. “We had just rounded the middle of the roaring 40s when winds picked up to a Force 10. We encountered mountainous seas with swells reaching 12 metres forcing us to reduce speed to six knots. As waves and wind battered the vessel, the foc’sle vent was severed, flooding the storage area to a depth of nearly one and a half metres. Luckily the forward power transformer was spared, however, oil drums broke loose spilling 800 litres of hydraulic fluid which was eventually soaked up by floating mooring ropes.”

“As the storm continued, the forward six-man life raft was destroyed, the electronic foremast bell was damaged beyond repair and four deck floodlights were ripped from their mountings. Further aft, the wharf ladder was lifted from its cradle and smashed into the starboard saddle tank vent, bending it into an “S” shape.”

“Fortunately we managed to weather the storm without sustaining any further serious damage to the vessel or injury to the crew, and successfully discharged our cargo of lumpy ore after reaching Dunkirk West on 17 April.



Having successfully navigated the narrow Charles De Gaul Lock with only metres to spare, our vessel was blockaded for several days by French fishermen protesting against mesh net regulations. Thankfully we were the first vessel freed from the blockade after having used our several day lay-up for, among other things, testing “free fall” lifeboat equipment - after our journey it somehow seemed appropriate.”