

What's the Story?

What can you discover about the history of the ferries from these stories & anecdotes?

Student Introduction

- ▶ An anecdote is a short and amusing but serious account, which may depict a real incident.
- ▶ What can you learn from the following anecdotes and stories?



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In over 140 years, Red Funnel has never lost any vessel in active service, but that's not to say there hasn't been the occasional drama!

Probably one of the most unfortunate incidents befell the 'Princess of Wales'. This paddler never even entered service. Whilst on trials on the river Clyde, she was sliced clean in half by the Spanish owned 'Balmoral Castle'. Luckily all the passengers on the 'Balmoral' survived, but 3 painters regrettably lost their lives.

The 'Duchess of Yorke' began service in 1896 and served as a minesweeper in World War I. She was handed back in 1921 and had her name changed to the 'Duchess of Cornwall'. At 2045 hrs on the 18th April 1935, the 'Duchess' set off from the Royal Pier to Cowes when she struck a submerged object near Calshot Castle. Unable to contact either Southampton or Cowes she was eventually rescued by a tug the following day - much to the relief of her weary passengers! After a long and distinguished service, her career ended during the same German bombing raid that destroyed 'Her Majesty'.



One ship destined to have a career dogged by incident was the 'Prince of Wales'. In 1896 on a foggy morning she rammed Clarence Pier in Southsea at speed. It was reported that the pier came off worse, but luckily no one was hurt. In 1903 she came into contact with a submarine at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. The damage to the submarine went unreported, but the 'Prince' was holed below the waterline. In 1927, whilst backing into the fairway at Cowes, the unlucky ship collided with a schooner. Some 80 passengers were aboard and the ship had to be towed back to Southampton. In 1934 she collided with sister ship, 'Princess Helena', off Cowes, somehow both ships managed to reach port. In 1935, only 11 months after the last incident, she collided and sunk the 30 foot yacht, 'The Robin', on her maiden voyage. In 1937, to the relief of many in the Board Room, the 'Prince of Wales' was retired.

Questions

1. Which paddler never even entered service, and why?
2. Using your own words, describe what happened near Calshot Castle in April 1935.
3. Which ship sunk 'The Robin'?



The 'Gracie Fields' was a reversion to steam after the limitations of the diesel powered, 'Medina'.

She became as popular as her namesake and was named by the popular entertainer in 1936. In 1939 her career almost ended when involved in a freak

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5. What 'showered' passengers in 1939, and why?
6. Using your own words, describe the highs and lows of 'Gracie Fields' career.
7. Name as many types of sea-faring vessel mentioned in the text on pages 1 and 2 as you can. Write a list using direct quotations from the text.

During World War II she was requisitioned by the Navy as a minesweeper and was used in the troop evacuation of Dunkirk.

Having helped evacuate 280 troops from the beaches on the 28th May, she returned the following day for another 750, but was hit by a shell on her return journey.

HMS 'Pangbourne' assisted and rescued all the troops, but the 'Gracie Fields' later sank.

8. What is the purpose of the type of text featured on page 1 and 2?
9. Who is the audience for this type of text?

