



A research note on the history of ships, places, organisations and events associated with the
Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA)

RFAs without names

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Introduction

This backgrounder summarizes research undertaken into lesser known vessels that were oceans away from the frontline vessels that formed the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Indeed these small vessels were not dignified with actually having a name – they were simply known as ‘C-craft’. Little is known or shown in Admiralty records on these vessels. Yet a number of them when sold into the second-hand market had successful careers in the European coastal trade.

Origins

In 1900, the **Fleet Coaling Service** (during World War One this was to morph into the **Fleet Fuelling Service**) was constituted under the Fourth Sea Lord. This was to embrace all coaling craft. Initially they arranged an audit of all their craft. This concluded that all should be

numbered consecutively and that this number was to be clearly painted up on either side of each craft.

Initiated in April 1904 this ‘C’ numbering system covered a wide range of vessels that undertook functions largely, but not exclusively, for the Fleet Coaling Service. These Crown vessels appear largely not to have been registered under the Merchant Shipping Acts and their crews were engaged locally on Yard Craft Agreements on behalf of the Director of Stores.

In 1948 an Admiralty Fleet Order introduced the classification of ‘Naval Servicing Craft’ and a range of vessels under 1,000 gross registered tons were categorised as ‘Servicing Craft (Civil)’. This of course included some of the Fleet Fuelling Service and Stores Carrying craft. However, this did not involve any change in the naming or function of C-craft.



In 1951 the Admiralty introduced a standardised livery scheme that would appear to have included 'C-craft': hull – black; upperworks and funnel – buff; funnel with black smoke band; ships' boats – upper black and lower white; davits and stanchions – black; lifesaving appliances white. To this they introduced coloured bands to identify the relevant administrative authorities. These were to be painted around the funnel below the funnel top and around the hull next to the rubbing strake. The distinguishing colours were:

- Yellow (*interestingly not Green as frequently quoted*) for the craft administered for the Director of Stores;
- Green for Director of Victualling;
- Red for Armament Supply Department;
- Azure blue for Director of Dockyards, and White for dockyard Engineer-in-Chief.

Little verifiable information is available on these small vessels. Clearly some were built to classification society standards and fitted to Ministry of Transport/Board of Trade requirements regarding accommodation, lifesaving arrangements, Load Line, radio and surveys. As a result a handful were registered as British merchant ships under Section 80 Merchant Shipping Act 1906, the Order-in-Council 121 of March 1911 and the following were allocated to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Some official document make reference to dockyard based Fleet Fuelling Tugs, C10, C11, however, there is insufficient evidence of them being operated as RFAs.

	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965
C8	ooooo	ooooo	ooooo	oo●●●	●oooo	ooooo
C85	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C614	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C615	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C616	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	●●●●●
C617	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	●●●●●
C619	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	ooooo
C620	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	●●ooo
C621	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●ooo	ooooo
C623	oooo●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C624	ooooo	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	●●●●●
C625	ooooo	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	●●ooo
C633	ooooo	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C641	ooooo	o●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C642	ooooo	o●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C647	ooooo	o●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	●●●●●	●●●●●
C648	ooooo	o●●●●	●●●●●	●●ooo	ooooo	ooooo
C653	ooooo	oo●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●

● **C8** (1958-1960) Self-propelled stores lighter | classed by British Corporation for coastal service | official number 187731 | pendant number X79 | signal letters MKLT

Ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; launched 1940 by The Rowhedge Ironworks Co Ltd, Rowhedge, Colchester, Essex [yard number 595]; completed during 1940 however, she was not registered until 25.02.1958 in London (34/1958) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C8** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a stores lighter under the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting duties as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil). 09.02.1960 Bill of Sale to Peter Millward Herbert, Bude, Cornwall; 11.02.1960 Bill of Sale to Alderney Tramp Shipping Co Ltd, Guernsey, Channel Islands, 25.02.1960 registry transferred to Port of Guernsey. The sale value



reportedly £1,000, renamed RIDUNIAN. Became a marine loss on 28.03.1962 – sank when on passage to Alderney to Guernsey, all of her crew survived. 🚢 displacement (fl) 380 ton; 181.83 grt, 160 dwt; length 102.8ft oa, 95.5ft bp, beam 20.8ft, draught (mean) 7.5ft. **Machinery** single 5-cyl engine by Newbury Diesel Co Ltd developing 250 bhp @ 330 rpm, single 3-blade 4.10ft dia bronze propeller, speed 8 knots. **Complement** 7. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). 160-ton cargo capacity.

● **C65** renamed as **RFA NORA**

● **C85** (1940-1956) Self-propelled coaling lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service | (official number 168043 | pendant number X74/A124 | signal letters GRCV//MRQM
Ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; launched 12.07.1940 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 648]; completed during 1940; registered 23.11.1940 in London (393/1940) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C85** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a collier with the Fleet Fuelling Service, under the Director of Stores for local crewing and management; 26.11.1940 completed; 03.1941 fitted with salvage suction pipeline (22ft of 4-inch armoured hose), circa 1943 reallocated to the RFA Service with

resultant changes in crewing agreement; 30.08.1945 disarmed 12.1945 plastic armour as bridge protection removed; 28.01.1948 on coastal service as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 15.07.1949 fire when at Chatham, 08.1949 allocated to Sheerness then placed in care and maintenance reserve; transferred to Ministry of Transport, London for disposal, 03.09.1956 Bill of Sale for sale to F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhithe, Kent with the RFAs C614, C633, C641 and C462 for £49,500; 12.02.1959 renamed CONFORMITY when converted for service as a tanker with oil fuel bunkers; 24.10.1970 sold Arie Rijdsdijk, Boss en Zonen for scrapping by Hendrik Ido Ambacht. 🚢 343.5 grt, 360 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 127.2ft bp, beam (moulded) 25.10ft, depth (moulded) 10.5ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating 3-cyl triple expansion engine by builder, coal-fired Scotch type boiler by Cammell Laird, Birkenhead, 385 ihp, single propeller, speed 8.5 knots. **Complement** 10. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 300t, two 26ft tubular steel derricks with SWL 30cwts; hull material specified as best Siemens Martin Mild Steel with British plates and angles; bridge house built of teak with drop windows; crew accommodation, galley, WCs aft. Construction cost is reported at £17,000.

● **C614** (1943-1956) Self-propelled coaling lighter | London | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading when aground | official number 168464 | pendant



numbers X114/A113 | signal letters BRZR/MRQM
12.05.1941 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty as a repeat of C85; laid down 11.06.1942; launched 24.02.1943 by W J Yarwood & Son (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 713]; registered 24.06.1943 in London (142/1943) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C614** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, completed 02.07.1943 as a collier with the Fleet Fuelling Service, under the Director of Stores for local crewing and management; 28.01.1948 on coastal service as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary based at Sheerness; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 1949 refitted by J Russell & Co, Victoria Dock, London, during 1949 she was placed in care and maintenance reserve at Sheerness; 05.1956 transferred to Ministry of Transport, London for disposal using a London broker – W E Frank & Co (Shipsales) Ltd, 15.05.1956 Bill of Sale for sale to F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhithe, Kent with RFAs C633, C641 and C462 for £49,500; 23.10.1957 registry closed and she was renamed COMMODITY when converted for service as a tanker; 28.05.1969 sold Jacques Bakker and Zonen, Bruges for scrapping. 🚢 346.26 grt, 300 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 123.2ft bp, beam (moulded) 24.5ft, draft (loaded) 10.5ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating 3-cyl triple expansion engine by builder with Scotch type return-tube boiler by Cammell Laird, 385 ihp, single propeller, speed 8 knots. **Complement** up to 12. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 300t, hull

material specified as Best Siemens Martin Mild Steel with British plates and angles; bridge house built of teak with drop windows; hold amidships with two hatches; two cargo winches; one tubular steel mast with steel cross tees and two derricks of mild tubular steel. Crew accommodation, galley, WCs fitted aft.

● **C615** (1943-1971) Self-propelled stores lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for harbour and estuary services | official number 169840, pendant number ??, signal letters ??
13.05.1941 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 23.02.1942; launched 09.01.1943 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1804]; completed in 1943; registered 15.04.1944 in London (145/1944) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C615** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a stores lighter with the Director of Stores for local crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 27.08.1971 Bill of Sale to Davies & Cann Ltd, Plymouth (manager Edgar Smith, Chingford, London), 13.02.1973 Bill of Sale to Peter Millward Herbert, Bude, Cornwall, 03.03.1973 Bill of Sale to Welsh Seafoods Ltd, Bangor, N Wales; 12.07.1973 ship's name recorded as SEGONTIUM. *No further verifiable details available.* 🚢 displacement (fl) 362; 192 grt, 185 dwt; length 102.3ft oa, 99ft bp, beam (moulded) 21.5ft, depth (moulded), draught 8.5ft. **Machinery** single 6-cyl EMX6 two-stroke single acting cold starting marine diesel engine by H Widdop & Co Ltd,



Keighley, 180 bhp @ 400 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when buildt). Cargo capacity 200t. Build to comply with Ministry of War Transport and Home Office regulations. Hull built of mild steel; wood construction wheelhouse. Crew accommodation, galley, WCs fitted aft. Single hold with 30.5ft x 14ft hatch, fixed mast and 20cwt derrick.

● **C616** (1943-1972) Self-propelled stores lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for harbour and estuary services | official number 169790 | pendant number ?? | signal letters ??
13.05.1941 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 00.00.1942; launched 20.02.1943 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1805]; completed during 1943; registered 03.03.1944 in London under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C616** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a stores lighter with the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 10.1968, by virtue of the Defence (Transfer of Functions) Act 1964, her ownership transferred to Her Majesty, represented by Secretary of State for Defence 22.02.1972 her registry was closed upon instructions from MoD; 00.05.1980 sold to Elliot Diving Company, renamed SEAMILL. 2017 offered for sale as a houseboat lying at Rochester, Kent. 🚢 displacement (fl) 362; 192 grt, 185 dwt; length 102.3ft oa, 99ft bp, beam (moulded)

21.5ft, depth (moulded), draught 8.5ft. **Machinery** single 6-cyl EMX6 two-stroke single acting cold starting marine diesel engine by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 180 bhp @ 400 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 200t. Build to comply with Ministry of War Transport and Home Office regulations. Hull built of mild steel; wood construction wheelhouse. Crew accommodation, galley, WCs fitted aft. Single hold with 30.5ft x 14ft hatch, fixed mast and 20cwt derrick.

● **C617** (1944-1972) Self-propelled stores lighter | LR 100 A1 for harbour and estuary services | official number 169796 | pendant number ?? | signal letters ??
13.05.1941 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 01.08.1942; launched 06.05.1943 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1806]; completed during 1943; registered 08.03.1944 in London (95/1944) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C617** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a stores lighter with the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 based at Chatham she appears to have been removed from the Registry; 29.10.1968 registered under Secretary of State for Defence, London SW1 under OiC121 of March 1911; 22.02.1972 Registry closed on advice of MoD. *No further verifiable details available.* 🚢 displacement (fl) 362;



192 grt, 185 dwt; length 105.3ft oa, 99ft bp, beam (moulded) 21.5ft, depth (moulded), draught 8.5ft. **Machinery** single 6-cyl EMX6 two-stroke single acting cold starting marine diesel engine by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 180 bhp @ 400 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 200t. Build to comply with Ministry of War Transport and Home Office regulations. Hull built of mild steel; wood construction wheelhouse. Crew accommodation, galley, WCs fitted aft. Single hold with 30.5ft x 14ft hatch, fixed mast and 20cwt derrick.

● **C619** (1943-1963) Self-propelled stores lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for harbour and estuary services | official number 169605 | pendant number ?? | signal letters MRKX
14.04.1942 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 12.10.1942; launched 1943 by The Rowhedge Ironworks Co Ltd, Rowhedge, Colchester, Essex [yard number ??]; completed in 1943; registered 25.09.1943 in London (234/1943) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C619** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a stores lighter with the Director of Stores for crewing and management as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; she was delivered to the NSO Portsmouth dockyard in 12.11.1944 by a runner crew on a Home Trade agreement by a commercial company based in Fenchurch Street, London

EC3; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 00.00.1963 laid up Portsmouth; 07.1965 sold to H G Pounds, Portsmouth for scrapping. 22.02.1972 Registry closed on advice from MoD. 🚢 180.67 grt, 113 dwt; length 97.5ft oa, beam 21ft, draught 8ft. **Machinery** single 5-cyl two-stroke, single acting diesel by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 250 bhp, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** up to 9 when on coasting work. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 250t.

● **C620** (1944-1966) Self-propelled stores lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for harbour and estuary services | official number 169826 | pendant number ?? | signal letters ??
30.04.1942 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 18.12.1942; launched 13.01.1944 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1831]; completed during 1944; registered 04.04.1944 in London (129/1944) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C620** a stores lighter, reportedly initially under the management of New Medway Steam Packet Co; 1946 with the Director of Stores for crewing and management with Fleet Fuelling Service as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 1965 transferred to Ministry of Transport for disposal; 00.00.1966 sold to H G Pounds, Portsmouth for scrapping. 22.02.1972 Registry closed on advice from MoD. 🚢 displacement (fl) 362; 192 grt, 185 dwt; length 102.3ft oa, 99ft bp, beam (moulded) 21.5ft, depth



(moulded), draught 8.5ft. **Machinery** single 6-cyl EMX6 two-stroke single acting cold starting marine diesel engine by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 180 bhp @ 400 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7 on coastal work. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 200t. Build to comply with Ministry of War Transport and Home Office regulations. Hull built of mild steel; wood construction wheelhouse. Crew accommodation, galley, WCs fitted aft. Single hold with 30.5ft x 14ft hatch, fixed mast and 20cwt derrick.

● **C621** (1944-1961) Self-propelled stores lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for harbour and estuary services | official number 169858 | pendant number ?? | signal letters MTDW.

Ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down ?? ; launched 12.02.1944 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1832]; completed during 1944; registered 15.05.1944 in London (173/1944) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C621** with the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall SW1 designated as her managing owner, a stores lighter under the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary, allocated to Chatham; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 17.08.1961 sold to Henry Pounds, Portsmouth, 18.08.61 manager M J Brush of May Hill Shipping Co Ltd, Maldon Essex (mortgage with United Dominions Trust Ltd,

London), 29.11.1961 renamed MAUREEN BRUSH; 30.10.67 Maldon Shipping Co Ltd (mortgage North Central Acceptances (London) Ltd, London; 08.11.1971 recorded as renamed BILL BRUSH; scrapped. *No further verifiable details available.* 16.12.99 Registry recorded as closed. displacement (fl) 362; 192 grt, 185 dwt; length 102.3ft oa, 99ft bp, beam (moulded) 21.5ft, depth (moulded), draught 8.5ft. **Machinery** a 6-cyl EMX6 two-stroke single acting cold starting marine diesel engine by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 180 bhp @ 400 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7 on coastal work. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 200t. Build to comply with Ministry of War Transport and Home Office regulations. Hull built of mild steel; wood construction wheelhouse. Crew accommodation, galley, WCs fitted aft. Single hold with 30.5ft x 14ft hatch, fixed mast and 20cwt derrick.

● **C623** (1944-1956) Self-propelled coal lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading aground | official number 169973 | pendant number ?? | signal letters GLWB

14.08.1942 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 04.1943; launched 29.06.1944 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 720]; completed during 1944; registered 22.09.1944 in London (299/1944) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C623** a collier with the Fleet



Fuelling Service, under the Director of Stores for local crewing and management, 28.01.1948 on coastal service as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; largely based at Sheerness; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); circa 1950 she was laid up on care and maintenance; transferred to Ministry of Transport, London for disposal using W E Frank & Co (Shipsales) Ltd as their broker, 17.09.1956 sold F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhithe, Kent, renamed COMMODITY; 1957 converted for service as a coastal tanker; 00.05.1969 sold Jacques Bakker en Zonen for scrapping at Bruges; 22/02.1972 Registry closed on advice from MoD. 17.08.1977 sold to Stour Salvage Ltd. *No further verifiable details available.* 🚢 299 grt, 000 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 123.5ft bp, beam (moulded) 24.5ft, draft (loaded) 10.5ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating 3-cyl triple expansion engine by builder with Scotch type multitubular boiler by Cammell Laird Co Ltd, 385 ihp, single propeller, speed 9 knots. **Complement** 5. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built).

● **C624** (1945-1969) Self-propelled fuel oil lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading aground | official number 180551 | pendant number ?? | callsign GLWD
14.08.1942 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty; laid down 1943; launched 05.02.1945 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 721]; completed 1945; registered

17.04.1945 in London (73/1945) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C624** a Fleet Fuelling Service tanker with the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 00.05.1969 laid up at Chatham for sale. 22.02.1972 registry closed on advice from MoD. 🚢 298.7 grt, 350 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 123ft bp, beam 26ft, draught 26ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating 3-cyl triple expansion engine by builder, return tube boiler by Cammell Laird Co Ltd, 500 ihp, single propeller, speed 9 knots. **Complement** 5. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). 350t oil fuel.

● **C625** (1944-1965) Self-propelled coal lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading aground | official number 169831 | pendant number X05 | signal letters BTMJ/MSKY
14.04.1942 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty as a repeat C85; laid down 07.1943; launched 07.01.1944 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [726]; completed during 1940; registered 11.04.1944 in London (135/1944) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C625** a collier of the Fleet Fuelling Service with the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 08.1945 commencement of reducing wartime requirements, eg, disarming; 24.06.1946 transferred Yard Craft agreement Devonport; 1948



categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 17.09.1965 sold for £3,655 to Metal Recoveries (Newhaven) Ltd, Polegate, Sussex; 11.08.1966 Registry closed upon ship being scrapped. 🚢 359.90 grt, 000dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 127ft bp, beam 26ft, draught 00ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating single 3-cyl triple expansion by builder, return tube boiler by Cammell Laird Co Ltd, 320 ihp, single propeller, speed 9 knots. **Complement** 10. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). 300 tons.

● **C633** (1945-1956) Self-propelled coal lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading aground | (official number 180582 | pendant number X101/A102 | signal letters GNLM)
04.11.1944 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty under contract CP88/104116/43 as a repeat C625; laid down ??; launched 22.03.1945 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 768]; completed during 1946; registered 13.07.1945 in London (109/1945) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C633** a collier of the Fleet Fuelling Service, with the Director of Stores for local crewing and management; 08.1945 commencement of reducing wartime requirements, eg, disarming; 28.01.1948 on coastal service as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary based at Sheerness; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); transferred to Ministry of Transport, London for disposal using W E Frank & Co (Shipsales) Ltd, London as

their broker, 03.09.1956 ownership with to F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhithe, Kent together with C85, C614, C641 and C462 for £49,500; 26.10.1960 registry closed when converted for service as a tanker, 23.07.1956 renamed CITY; 07.1969 sold to Shell Mex & BP Ltd, London; 31.07.1969 resold and scrapped at John Cashmore Ltd, Newport. 🚢 352.2 grt, 360 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 127.2ft bp, beam (moulded) 24.5ft, draft (loaded) 10.5ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating single 3-cyl triple expansion by builder with return tube boiler by Cammell Laird Co Ltd, 385 ihp, single propeller, speed 8.5 knots. **Complement** 10. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 300t, hold amidships with two hatches, hull material specified as Best Siemens Martin Mild Steel.

● **C641** (1946-1956) Self-propelled coal lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading aground | official number 180837 | pendant number X125 | signal letters GNLV
24.04.1944 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty under contract CP78091/44; laid down 04.04.1945 as a repeat C625; launched 25.09.1945 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 773] completed in 1945; registered 22.03.1946 in London (65/1945) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C641**, a collier with the Fleet Fuelling Service, under Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services on East Coast of



Scotland (Rosyth); 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 10.01.1949 transferred to manning as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary based at Rosyth; circa 1949 she was placed in care and maintenance reserved at Sheerness; 1952 a scheme for ABC Defence measures was approved; transferred to Ministry of Transport, London for disposal using W E Frank & Co (Shipsales) Ltd, London as their broker, 03.09.1956 (Bill of Sale 18.05.1956) ownership to F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhithe, Kent together with C85, C614, C633 and C462 for £49,500; 30.01.1958 renamed CANDOURITY; 30.01.1958 registry closed when converted into a fuel tanker; 19.06.1969 sold to Van den Bosche & Co, Antwerp for scrapping. 🏢 352 grt, 361 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, 127.2ft bp, beam 14.7ft, draught 9.9ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating, single 3-cyl triple expansion by builder, boiler by Cammell Laird Co Ltd, 385 ihp, single propeller, speed 8.5 knots. **Complement** 10. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** 09.1945 instructions issued to suspend defensive measures and wheelhouse constructed of timber rather than non-magnetic protective plating. 300 ton.

● **C642** (1946-1956) Self-propelled coal lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service and loading aground | official number 181548 | pendant numbers X126/A201 | signal letters GNLW
21.07.1944 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty under contact CP82350/44; laid down

02.10.1945 as a repeat C625; launched 10.01.1946 by W J Yarwood & Sons (1938) Ltd, The Dock, Northwich, Cheshire [yard number 774]; completed during 1946; registered 18.12.1946 in London (461/1946) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C642** a collier with the Fleet Fuelling Service, under Director of Stores for local crewing and management on coasting services; 24.11.1947 deployed to Chatham and Sheerness; 24.09.1948 transferred to service as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; circa 1949 she was placed in care and maintenance reserved at Sheerness; 05.1956 transferred to Ministry of Transport, London for disposal using W E Frank & Co (Shipsales) Ltd, London as their broker, 03.09.1956 ownership sold to F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhithe, Kent (Bill of Sale 15.05.1956) together with C85, C614, C633 and C461 for £49,500; 11.07.1956 renamed CLANITY; 11.07.1958 registry closed when converted into a tanker; 11.09.1969 scrapped in Belgium by Scrappingco SA, Antwerp. 🏢 352 grt, 360 dwt; length 133.4ft oa, beam 24.7ft, draught 9.5ft. **Machinery** steam reciprocating, single 3-cyl triple expansion by builder, boiler by Cammell Laird Co Ltd, 320 ihp, single propeller, speed 8.5 knots. **Complement** 10. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** 09.1945 instructions issued to suspend defensive measures and wheelhouse constructed of timber rather than non-magnetic protective plating. Cargo 300 ton.



The steam collier C642, she and her four sister ships were ordered under a wartime construction programme – designed and built for coastal work. [Ship's cover 502A]

● **C647** (1948-1968) Self-propelled lubricating oil lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service | official number 182893 | pendant number ?? | signal letters GLWN
26.05.1944 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty under contract CP69315/44 for a stores lighter; laid down ??; launched 01.09.1947 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1847]; completed during 1947; registered 16.11.1948 in London (360/1948) under OiC of March 1911 as **C647**, a lubricating oil tanker of the Fleet Fuelling Service under the Director of Stores for crewing and management; allocated to the Fleet Fuelling Service as a Royal Fleet

Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 22.02.1972 registry closed on advice from MoD. 27.09.1968 at Malta when sold by the MoD. 🚢 202 grt, 118 dwt; length 100ft oa, beam 21.5ft, draught 8.1ft. **Machinery** single 6-cyl two-stroke diesel by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 180 bhp, single propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). 200t store lighter. Her lubricating oil equipment was manufactured at Devonport Dockyard.

● **C648** (1948-1958) Self-propelled lubricating oil lighter | Lloyd's 100 A1 for coasting service | official number 182906 | pendant number ?? | signal letters ??
26.05.1944 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty under contract CP69315/44 for a stores lighter; laid down ??; launched 01.09.1946 by James Pollock & Sons, Faversham, Kent [yard number 1848]; completed during 1947; registered 16.11.1948 in London (360/1948) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C648** a lubricating oil tanker of the Fleet Fuelling Service under Director of Stores for crewing and management as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary; 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil), 07.1958 assigned to Ministry of Transport for disposal; Bill of Sale 12.08.1958 to F J Everard & Sons Ltd, Greenhite, Kent; 11.11.1958 renamed COMITY, converted to a tanker, 1960 re-engined with single 4-cyl Newbury diesel; 08.04.1964 - Bill of Sale 03.02.1964 to Marine Salvage & Survey Service Ltd, South Croydon,



Surrey, (manager W J Sutton), mortgage with Equity (Plant & Equipment) Ltd, Chatham, Kent, 10.06.1964 mortgage with Seismographic Service (England) Ltd, Keston, Kent; 03.07.1964 reported renamed CONSTELLATION; 10.04.1965 mortgage transferred to Lloyds & Scottish Finance Ltd, London; 24.01.1966 Overseas & General Brokerage & Finance Co Ltd, London WC2 and Swiss Jersey Bank of Commerce Ltd, St Helier, Jersey Ltd, name unchanged; 01.04.1968 Southwold Marine Aggregates Ltd, Southwold mortgage with Overseas & General Brokerage & Finance Co Ltd, 24.06.1968 renamed CAREYNA; 1972 sold to Carter & Ward of Wickford Ltd, Wickford, name unchanged; 01.1977 sold to Metal Recoveries Ltd, Newhaven for scrapping. *No further verifiable details available.*



The motor lighter C648 – a lubricating oil tanker built for coastal work. [TARBS collection]

🚢 202 grt, 200 dwt; length 102.2ft oa, 100.25 bp, beam 21.5ft, draught 8.1ft. **Machinery** single 6-cyl EMX6 two-

stroke single acting cold starting marine diesel engine by H Widdop & Co Ltd, Keighley, 180 bhp @ 400 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, speed 7.5 knots. **Complement** 7. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General remarks** Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). 200t store lighter. Her lubricating oil equipment was manufactured at Devonport Dockyard.

● **C653** (1948-1968) Self-propelled lubricating oil lighter | LR 100 A1 for coasting service | official number 181893 | pendant number ?? | signal letters GLWQ 15.02.1945 ordered for His Majesty represented by the Admiralty under contract CP52447/45; laid down 05.11.1945; launched 12.11.1947 by The Rowhedge Ironworks Co Ltd, Rowhedge, Colchester, Essex [yar number 672]; completed during 1948; registered 19.04.1948 in London (123/1948) under OiC121 of March 1911 as **C653** a lubricating oil tanker under the Director of Stores for crewing and management on coasting services as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary. 1948 categorised as Servicing Craft (Civil); 1968 recorded as 'sold out of service'; 22.02.1972 registry closed on advice from MoD; 19.07.2007 reported at Gravesend, Kent. *No further verifiable details available.* 🚢 displacement (fl) 380 ton; 196 grt, 160 dwt; length 102.10ft oa, 95ft bp, beam 20.8ft, draught (mean) 9ft. **Machinery** single 5-cyl two-stroke diesel by Crossley Brothers Ltd, Manchester, 250 bhp @ 330 rpm, single 3-blade bronze propeller, dia 4.10ft, speed 9 knots. **Complement** 9. **Navigation/sensors** minimalist radio outfit. **General**



remarks Plastic armour protection on wheelhouse (when built). Cargo capacity 150 tons.

● **C712** (1954-1955) Self-propelled naval stores lighter.

Some reference made to this vessel being RFA – inadequate details are available to confirm this.

● **C716** (1954) Self-propelled naval stores lighter.

Some reference made to this vessel being RFA – inadequate details are available to confirm this.

Sources

MoD(RFA)/NHB material, Navy Lists, AFO (Admiralty Fleet Order)1356/49, AFO3308/48, AFO1356/49, AFO3672/51, AFO4117/51, AFO S167/47, AFO S229/47, BR875.

TNA Kew, ADM1/1896, ADM1/17008, ADM239/1, ADM239/1, BT381/2689, CUST130/201, CUST130/170, CUST130/173, CUST130/176, CUST130/178, CUST130/180, CUST130/182, CUST130/185, CUST130/187.

NMM Greenwich, Ships cover 502, Ships cover 502A, Ships cover 502C.

Jimmy Smith (RFA Historical Society and RFA Association) and Dave Sowdon (World Ship Society).



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