

Prefatory Note: Conrad's Shipmates in British Ships

THE ENTRIES in the tables have been sorted into alphabetical order by surname, and the data abbreviated to make the fullest use of the space available. The 21 columns of the master table have been reduced to ten by omitting columns for ships' official numbers, ships' names, name and year of service in last ship, advance and allotment data, pay off sums, and release signature.

A unique reference code has been created for each seafarer by combining abbreviated ships' names with the type of AAC (HT = home trade or FG = foreign-going) and the two digit rotation number on the AAC. This device separates the HT and FG engagements in the *Tilkehurst*, while the two FG voyages in *Torrens* are distinguished by A and B. Ship data, Conrad's service, and references are given in Table 1.

The names given, of seafarers, ports, or ships take into account the author's perceptions and comparisons with Hans van Marle's notes where there was disagreement favouring Van Marle's transcriptions of non-British or Irish names. The many doubtful interpretations have been indicated by a question mark. Seafarers with British names having overseas birthplaces may be genuine, but they may also reflect the practice of adopting a British name or of anglicizing birth names.

The dates of engagement and discharge are as in the AACs, but the number of days in company with Conrad will only be the same if Conrad and a fellow seafarer signed on and off on the same dates. Otherwise, the shared period will be shorter than the period indicated by the dates of engagement and discharge. The dates and places of engagement for masters and apprentices (often unspecified or with the word "remains" inserted) have been amended to the dates of the opening and closing the AACs concerned.

Consideration has been given to trying to check individual data against external data sources, such as the Census. However, taking into account the high proportion of overseas-born shipmates together with the proportion of uncertain transcriptions, it was decided to leave such detail to writers concerned with specific Conrad shipmates. It is anticipated that the errors assumed to be in this listing will be progressively corrected through the research of Conrad scholars, and that the master files held by the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) will from time to time be updated. The possibility of their being developed into a searchable data base is under consideration.

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