

History of the towage industry in the Port of Fowey



Chapter 1

**The history of towage in private ownership
1869 to 1961**

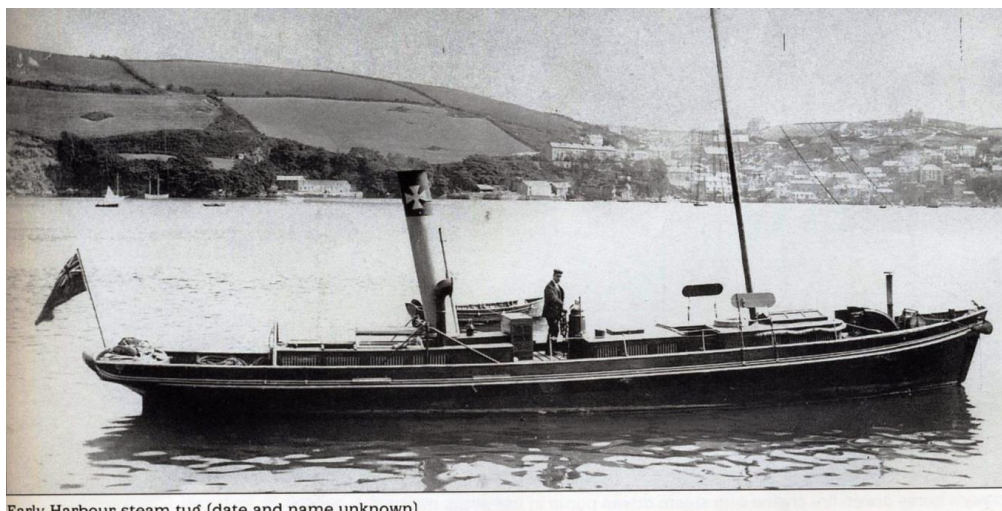
Full details and the history of each tug are recorded separately.

The Port of Fowey's first shipment of China clay was in 1869 when the railway lines into the Harbour opened it to the export of the locally mined china clay. The Jetties were built and operated by the railway companies and the Harbour Commissioners were formed to become the Port Authority in the same year.

The sailing ships using the port in the early days did so with the assistance of small boats and whenever possible the wind. Those who have sailed in Fowey will know that these winds are fickle and together with the river currents, proceeding to the commercial berths situated nearly one mile upstream were fraught with problems. Assistance from a power driven vessel was essential, both for safety and for commercial reasons. This came in the form of tugs. The first of these came to Fowey in 1870 and from that time until the present time a towage service has been provided to the port. There are some records of other vessels which doubled as passenger ships assisting vessels but they probably came from Plymouth



1865 a tug towing a sailing ship to sea



Early Harbour steam tug (date and name unknown).

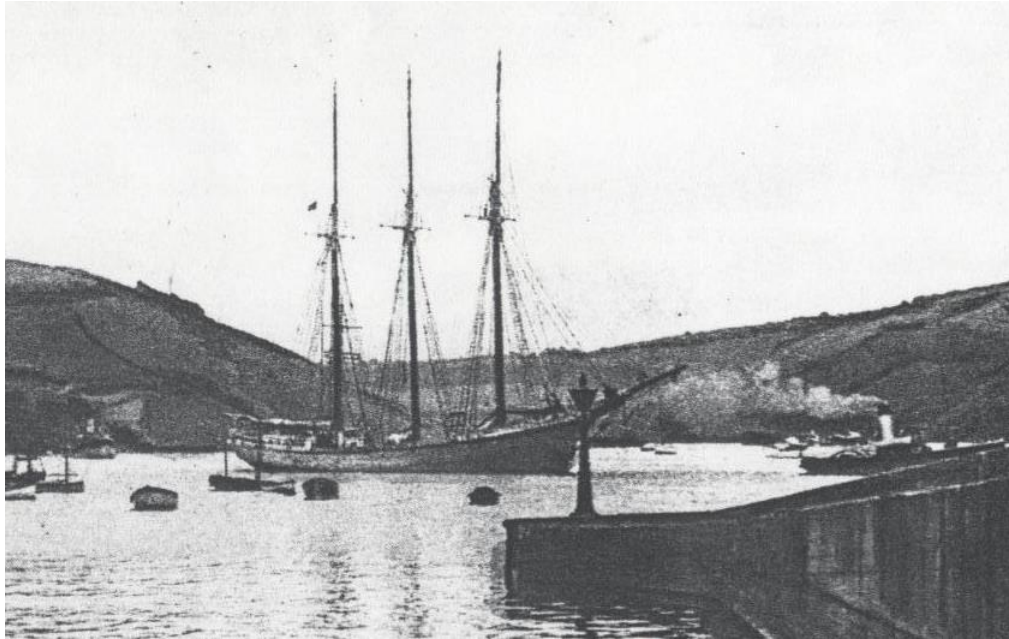
Pictures Jim Matthews collection

This vessel would have been used as a passenger boat as well taking out day trippers



The **Treffry** was probably the first tug acquired for the ports of Par and Fowey. She was built in Paisley, Scotland and operated mainly in the port of Par and when needed in Fowey to assist sailing ships in and out of that port. She was iron built of overlapping rivet plates. She was relatively low powered at 25HP with a single screw. Later on she was re-engined to deal with bigger vessels. She also rigged sail as a smack when operating up and down the coast. Under the command of Samuel Tregaskis she was also used to assist sailing ships into

Fowey. In those days, when sailing ships had no engines, the job of the tug was to go off the harbour and tow the vessel in and similarly to take them to sea.



The same year as the **Treffry** and with the benefits of the **Treffry** known, the **Countess of Jersey** was built for Messrs Bate and Pain in 1880/1 to operate in Fowey. She was built in Swansea and was 90 feet in length with a 34 HP 2 cylinder engine. George Bate and John Pain from London were her original owners but she later transferred to Henry Paull of Fowey who was the principle shareholder in the Fowey Tug and Salvage Company which had been formed to deal with this new business. These early tugs had their tow hooks further aft than later tugs as their job was to tow vessels largely in and out of Ports. They would often go off as far as the Dodman to pick up vessels.

Henry Paull, along with George Bate, then acquired in 1887 a second tug for the Fowey Tug and Salvage Co. Ltd. This was the **Gallant** built by Rother Iron Works of Rye of, as the name implies, iron construction. The coal fired two cylinder steam engine developed 80 NHP. She started life at 77ft in length but was lengthened to 86 feet in 1903. Where this was carried out isn't clear.

In the early years as the tugs were owned by private individuals or companies they were charged harbour dues. In January 1885 "Countess of Jersey" and "Gallant" had to pay 15/- and 20/- pa. The agents refused to pay the following year and correspondence was also exchanged with the Plymouth steam tug owners. The steam tugs from Plymouth used to bring passengers and charges for this were also discussed. These charges were still being made in April 1898 with "Gallant" paying 30/- and "Countess of Jersey" 22/-6 pa. The "Treffry" whose registered owner was W.M.Peter paid the same as "Gallant"

On the 8th April 1897 Gallant towing hopper barges nos 11 and 12 from south Wales had to put into Padstow then Hayle owing to very heavy ground swell. Some damage to barges. The barges had been acquired to commence dredging in the harbour.

The tugs were also used to tow barges with mud and ballast to sea. Fowey Steam Tug Co charged 11/- per barge to tow hoppers to sea .Rising to 18/- in 1898 this was followed by a 15% rise in ship towage due to the rise in the cost of coal in 1900. There followed a dispute in 1902 ending in the Fowey Steam Tug Co refusing to tow barges to sea. A Mr. Westcott of Plymouths tender was accepted and he used his own tug the "Herbert" with the "Gallant", and "Countess of Jersey" supporting.

On 23rd September, 1917, the s.s.Rosehill, built in 1911 as the Minster, was making good time on her voyage from Cardiff to Devonport, carrying 3980 tons of Welsh coal when she was torpedoed by U40. The Gallant and Countess of Jersey were dispatched to tow her in. She broke in two however and went down in Whitsand Bay in deep water.

29th November 17

It is hereby agreed between HENRY PAULL, Managing Owner of the Tugs- "Gallant" and "Countess of Jersey" And Messrs. FURNESS, WITNEY AND COMPANY LIMITED. that the Fowey Steam Tug Co. will assist their Steamers in ... from the first day of January 1918 to the Thirty First day of December 1918, and will continue the Towage contract on the same terms as 1917 (or untill such time as the price of Runker Coal at the port of Fowey exceeds 50/- per ton.) Ordinary assistance in and out of Fowey Harbour, including once berth at the Jetties viz:

Steamers under 2000 tons	19-0	First tug. 18.0.	Second Tug. 8-69.0	Per 100 t
" " 3000 "	18-6	17.6.	7-38.9.	" "
" above 3000 "	17-0	16.0.	6-68.0.	" "
All shifting in Harbour by day.....		11.15.0	per tug. 2-10-	
" " " " " night.....		3. 0.0	" 4-10-	

In case of Tugs being called out before 6am. or after 6pm. to attend on Steamers in harbour or going to sea.....20/- per boat if the steamer does not sail or Shift.

For and on BEHALF of the OWNERS of the Tugs. "Gallant" and "Countess of Jersey" or any other boat that they may hire for the time being.

signed. 4-10-

An agreement on towage charges in 1917

At about this time the Harbour Commissioners started dredging operations to remove the bar in the lower harbour between Penleath Point and Albert Quay and to deepen the harbour, especially off the jetties in Mixtow Reach. They chartered and purchased plant to carry out this operation and the tugs were used to move the dredgers and take barges to sea for dumping.

Then unusually the tug company acquired a steam trawler as their next vessel in 1920. The **Cruden Bay** was a steam trawler built in Scotland at Anstruther, Fife. Her engines were built by Cran of Leith in 1899 and developed 47NHP. She was built for Thomas Davidson of Aberdeen. At 97ft in length she was bigger than the tugs used so far. Presumably this vessel was used for towing ships between ports and in from sea.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, 27 APRIL, 1923. 3073

Fowey Tug and Salvage Company Limited.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, 17 AUGUST, 1923. 5637

Fowey Tug and Salvage Company Limited.

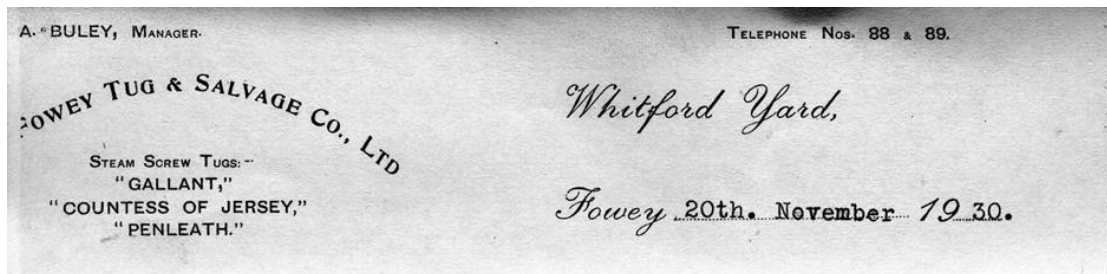
No 8 Jetty was opened by Sir Felix Pole, Chairman of the Great Western Railway, on 27th September 1923 increasing the ports capacity and the size off ships that could be loaded. Tugs and towage became even more important.

The tugs were also necessary to deal with mishaps and during a severe gale on 27th December 1924 the s.s. Bauta broke her moorings and went ashore just below Bodinnick. The tugs took two tides to get her off. Luckily she suffered little damage.



It is interesting to note that like the Fowey Company, many tug companies of the time were called salvage companies. Presumably as sailing ships were frequently in trouble salvage was an important part of the business. One such venture by Henry Paull led to a financial disaster and his suicide in 1924. This was the wreck of the Captaine Remy which he bought but due to local fears that the port could be blocked if she was towed from Par to Fowey, was unable to break her up in the port.

The company continued after his death with the family owning shares and being managed by Capt. S.A.Burley. Under his guidance the company purchased another tug in 1927. This was the first **Penleath**. She was built in South Shields by J.T.Eltringham in 1896 as the Condor for the Gamecock Steam Towing Company of London. She was 88 ft long and 112 GRT. Her steam engine developed 66 NHP. Two years later she was sold to Portugese owners in 1898 and worked in the Azores. There she stayed until 1914 when she was bought by R. James, Dredging Contractor in Southampton. With the first world war over in 1918 she moved to Tilbury Dredging and Contracting Co. and was renamed Ridgeway. In 1920, after two years presumably towing dump barges to sea, the next move took her all the way to Belfast where she was owned by John Cooper. **Penleath** was probably the most travelled tug to operate in Fowey.



The steam tug Gallant

POWEY STEAM TUG COMPANY.

For the guidance of Pilots requiring Tugs during the week-end.
If through bad weather or any other circumstances the Pilot or Pilots think it advisable to have the two larger tugs, kindly order them.

Fowey.
30th June, 1921.

Henry Pacey
Managing Owner.

Otherwise as under:-

Date.	On Duty.	2nd Tug.	Off.
July 3	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.
10	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.
17	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.
24	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.
31	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.
Aug. 7	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.
14	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.
21	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.
28	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.
Sept 4	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.
11	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.
18	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.	Cruden Bay.
25	Cruden Bay.	Countess of Jersey.	Gallant.

A tug duty roster dated 1921

AMENDMENT TO TOWAGE TARIFF DATED 22nd FEBRUARY, 1922.

X The first shift to all Jetties up to and including number four Jetty shall be done free provided the Steamer uses her main engines and that the shift is completed before 6.1 pm. and not started before 6.59 am. The first shift into all berths during the night hours shall be charged at half the quoted night rates viz:- 1/6 per 100 tons, per tug.

Henry Paul

Managing Owner,
Fowey Tug Company.

4-3-22.

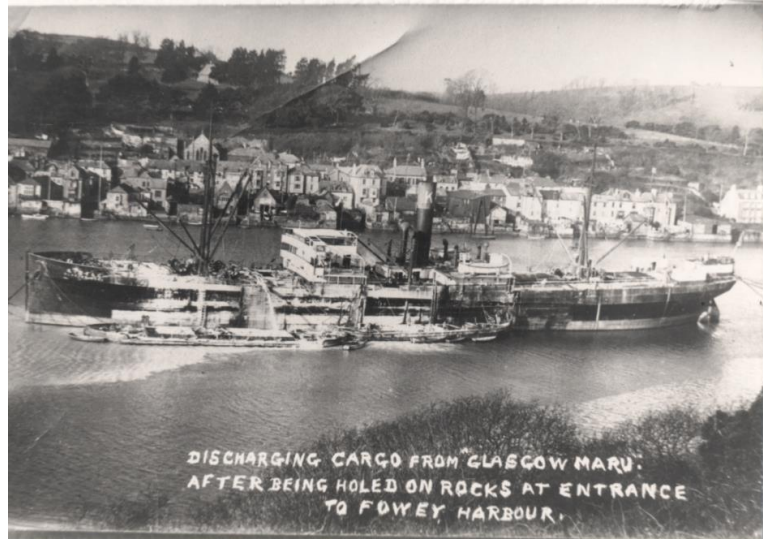
On 21st December 1927 the Glasgow Maru ran aground of St Catherines Point. She was towed in stern first with a 3'6 x 9'7 hole in the fore part. 4000 tons china clay removed into barges and landed ashore and she sailed for Plymouth on 27th January 1928



The Glasgow Maru after being towed in with mooring rope to Fowey shore.

Below

Cargo being discharged into barges



The Glasgow Maru being towed by Countess of Jersey with Cruden Bay and Gallant on moorings

Two years after **Penleath's** arrival, Toyne Carter and Co. Ship Brokers and Agents purchased the Gamecock from Walter S. Masters of Poole bringing her to Fowey in 1930 and renaming her **Pendennick**. That same year she was purchased by the towage company. Built on the Thames at Millwall in 1883 for R.F. Payne of Rotherhithe she was 85ft long and had a G.R.T. of 88 tons. Quite what was the purpose of this arrangement isn't clear. The towage company had had a difficult time financially due to the recession and downturn in trade due to the war.

The **Countess of Jersey** departed in 1930 to Penzance, being sold to the well known shipping family of J.H. Bennett. She was broken up two years later in Newlyn.

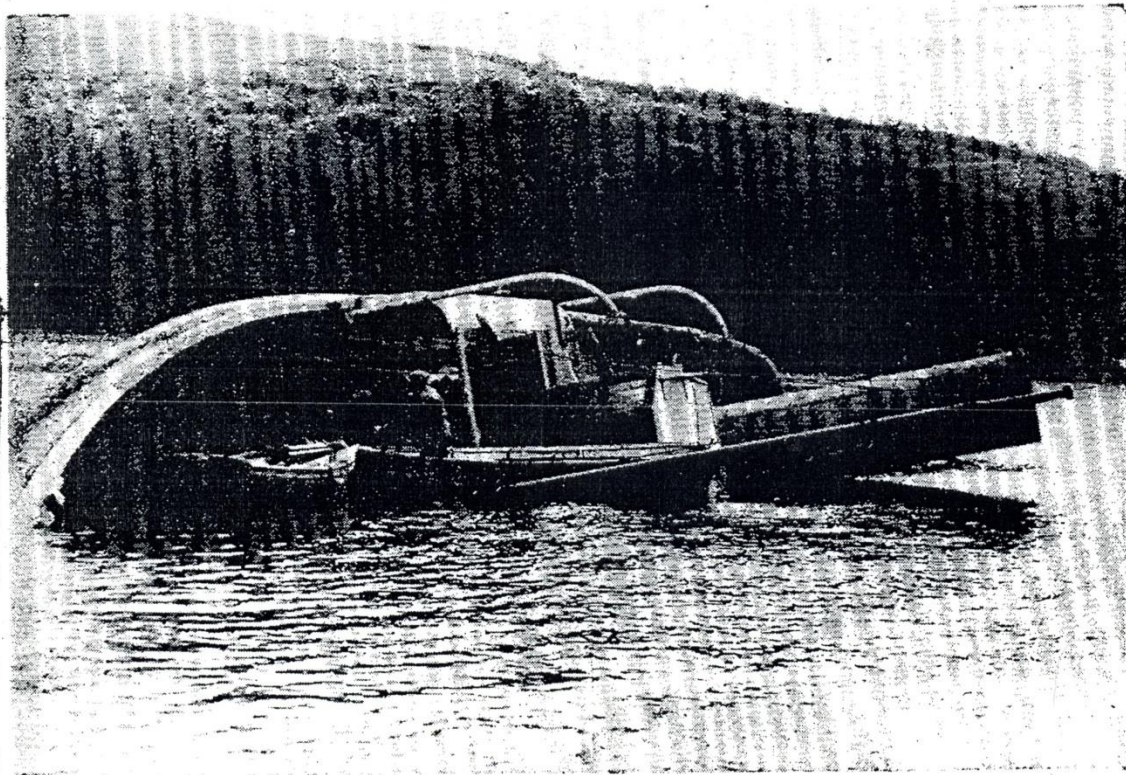


On 23rd November 1932 the schooner “Isabelle” was abandoned outside the harbour going ashore in Readymoney she was towed in by “Gallant”

In 1933 the **Treffry** was disposed of to owners in Portsmouth and she was wrecked the following year off Dunkirk while being used to smuggle tobacco.

On 29th April 1935 the Steam tug Pendennick capsized at Penleath Point .To clean the bottoms of tugs and tar them they were dried out off the Point in Pont. Unfortunately the bottom was not as firm as expected and she went on her side and filled with the incoming tide. Next tide she was righted and was soon back in service. Tugs in those day had no or little electrics and no oil on board. She had an eventful time in Fowey twice being sunk. One as a result of an intentional careening exercise and again after she grounded on the bank at the entrance to Pont. Both these events happened in 1935.

TUG SUNK IN FOWEY HARBOUR.



AT AN ALARMING ANGLE.—The steam tug Pendennis lying in a precarious position on her beam end yesterday in Fowey Harbour. She grounded the previous day on the river bed, and as the tide receded slipped off into deep water.

In September 1935 discussions took place on always having one tug under steam ready for service to cover emergency call outs and in bad weather. In the November it was agreed that the Harbour Commissioners would provide 2 tons of coal a week to the tug company to achieve this.

The first **Penleath** left the port in 1940 bound for Radcliffe Towage in Ilfracombe and then with owners Cargo Fleet Iron Co. Ltd., Middlesbrough who chartered her back briefly.

The Fowey Tug and Salvage company got into financial difficulties in the mid 1940's and went into voluntary winding up with the notice below appearing.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, 5 MARCH, 1946

FOWEY TUG & SALVAGE COMPANY Limited.(Members' Voluntary Winding-up.)The Companies Act, 1929.

AT an Extraordinary General Meeting of the "above named Company" duly convened, and held at the registered office, Whitford Yard, Fowey, on the 25th day of February, 1946, the following Special Resolution was duly passed: " That, the 'Company be wound up voluntarily, and that Mr. Joseph William Shaffery, of St. Austell, be and he is hereby appointed Liquidator for the purposes of such winding up." . •

(113) - WM. FRANCIS, Chairman

At the Commissioners board meeting on the 28th February a proposal for commissioners to purchase Gallant and Pendennick was discussed and they appointed Mr Miller surveyor of Plymstock for condition report on the tugs. Following the survey and further meetings it was decided not to proceed and a new towage company was formed in 1947 being the Fowey Tug Company. The two shipping agents in the Toyne Carter and Co. and Hannan Samuel were the shareholders with their respective senior partners John Loius Toyne and Sydney James Samuel being the directors. The vessels changed hands as part of the deal

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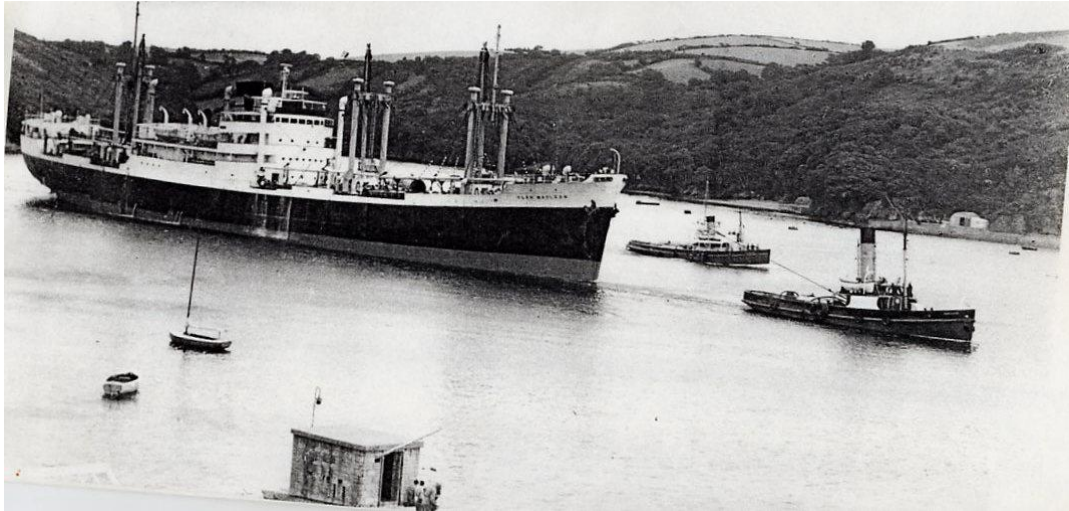
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In June 1946 the Gallant towed the dredger Tregeagle to Newlyn and then some barges. She remained there to tow barges to sea for dumping before bring all the dredging plant back to Fowey. This was one of many occasions when the Tregeagle and barges were hired out.in 1951/2 the plant was towed to Rosslare in Ireland being completed in the July that year. A total of 246486 cu yds of silt was removed. The "Gallant " and the "**St.Winnow**" then towed the dredger Tregeagle and hopper Mixtow to Wexford before towing the hopper No.7 back to Fowey for repairs. After a delay in starting the dredge in that port St Winnow towed Mixtow back to Fowey on 15th September and then barge FHC 6 on 24th September. Meanwhile the "**Tolbenny**" sailed to Wexford and towed the Tregeagle back to Fowey. The FHC 6 was towed to Plymouth shortly afterwards soon to be followed by the Tregeagle to work in Millbay dock. The following year the tugs were to and fro to Newlyn again. Port Talbot, Penzance, Portland, and Weymouth were other ports the tugs towed plant to and from. The Plant was finally towed to Milford Haven in June 1957 having been disposed of to Lord Craigmoyle of London.

The same year, two tugs were acquired to replace the **Pendennick** which was always having boiler problems and **Penleath**. The former went to Stonehouse in Plymouth for scrapping on 3rd October 1947.



Towing the Clan MacLean to sea

The first of the tugs bought was the Liverpool tug Fighting Cock. She was built in 1884 for William Watkins on the Thames. A 97ft in length vessel of 119 GRT with a 600 IHP steam engine, she worked on coastal towage and on the Thames. As the Mona she was sold to the Cowes Steam Tug Co. then the Queenstown Screw Tug and Shipping Co. followed by the Liverpool Screw Towing and Lighterage Co. Here she was renamed Fighting Cock. In 1929 she was sunk in the Mersey in a collision with the dredger G.B. Crow. On entering service in Fowey she was renamed **Trethosa**. She was easily spotted as she sported the famous Cock Tugs weather vane cockerel on her mast head. Her funnel also listed to port. After seven years this elderly lady was retired to W.J. Reynolds in Torpoint in 1954. Here she was given a new lease of life and worked until 1963 being finally scrapped at 79 years of age.

Another Williams Watkins tug The Badia was the second tug acquired. This vessel was built in Devon in 1909 by the famous firm of Phillips and Sons of Dartmouth. She worked with the Admiralty during the first war but for the rest of the time she worked on the Thames. Renamed **Penleath** she became the second tug to bear this name. At 96 ft and 150 GRT her engine developed 500 IHP. Before arriving at Fowey she had a Kort nozzle fitted around her propeller improving towing performance. She was one of the first vessels to be fitted with one.

In 1947 the Toyne Carter and company took a controlling interest in the Fowey Tug Company,

In 1950 The Fowey Harbour Commissioners bought their first tug. The Harbour Master Capt. Mitchell found work for the Commissioners' plant in other ports and the St. Winnow was transferred to them. In 1951 **Gallant** was also transferred for the same purpose.

The same year **Tolbenny** was bought from F.T. Everard of Greenhithe on the Thames. Built as the "F.T.Everard" at Fellow and Co. Ltd. yard at Great Yarmouth in 1928 she was 83ft length 124 GRT and 550 IHP. Whilst she was in Fowey she was used to tow barges to and from the Thames as well as harbour towage.

On 3rd November 1953 the "**Tolbenny**" towed the m.v."Summity" from the Dodman to Fowey after her engines broke down. She later toed in the m.v "Jarrix" bound for Par and also broken down on 22nd January 1954.

In May 1954 the "St. Winnow" was disposed of to James Bennett Contractors of Warrington where she had a new lease of life for seven years in dredging. Before she left she was slipped at Brazen Island and had a sand pump and driving engine fitted. She left the port on 20th August 1954 towing the barge FHC 7 which had also been sold for Fleetwood having previously towed barge FHC 6 earlier to the same port. £11000 was raised from this sale.

The "**Gallant**" was another vessel to head to W.J. Reynolds at Torpoint. At this time chartering out the dredging plant ceased and it worked once again in Fowey with the Fowey Towage Co. tugs.

In 1955 the harbour commissioners' towage committee reconsidered the situation of towage in the port and the requirements to have a tug always manned and with steam up.

On 26th October 1959 Mr Toyne advised the Harbour Commissioners that Fowey Tug Co Ltd wished to give up the towage service in Fowey. The towage sub-committee considered all the options with Mr Meade King, Mr N.S.Cox, Mr J.L.Toyne and Mr R.G.Dean reporting on the advantages and disadvantages of operating the service. At the May meeting the committee reported that maintaining the service was essential to the port and the China Clay industry. The latter and the railway co were consulted and the tug company accounts were made available.

A Meeting with Sir John Keay and Mr Dalton was held on 15th July and it was reported that the tug company had only made a small profit in the last 3 years. It was also agreed that hiring tugs from Falmouth or Plymouth was impracticable and costly. The China clay industry believed it to be the responsibility of the Commissioners to ensure there were tugs available and the railways said it was not their concern.

At their meeting on 25th July 1960 the Board agreed that the sub-committee should negotiate with the Fowey Towage co for their two tugs "Tolbenny" and "Penleath".Messrs Tamplins, surveyors were instructed to value them.

The Harbour Commissioners took over the towage co and its duties in 1961

Continued in Chapter 2

Steamers using their own Steam.		Sailing Vessels. Over 300 Tons.	Overtime when incurred for Sailing Vessels or Lighters to be paid for by Vessel being towed.
Register Tons.	Sound to Docks, Cattewater, Stonehouse or Dockyard.		
150-300	£2 10 0		
301-500	3 5 0	£4 17 6	
501-650	4 0 0	6 0 0	
651-800	4 15 0	7 2 6	
801-1000	5 10 0	8 5 0	
1001-1200	6 5 0	9 7 6	
1201-1400	7 0 0	10 10 0	
1401-1800	7 15 0	11 12 6	
1801-2200	8 10 0	12 15 0	
2201-2600	9 5 0	13 17 6	
2601-3000	10 0 0	15 0 0	
3001-3500	10 15 0	16 2 6	
3501-4000	11 10 0	17 5 0	
4001-4500	12 10 0	18 15 0	

Coal Hulks, 20/- per Hulk, per shift, to Sound or Docks.
 " 30/- " " to Stonehouse.
 " 40/- " " to Dockyard.

N.B.- The Owner of the Tug will not be responsible for any damage occurring to or occasioned by Vessels whilst Towing.

C H A N N E L R A T E S . .

Vessels of D.W. Tonnage - 150-200.

Powey	£12	0	0
St. Austell Bay	15	0	0
Falmouth	22	0	0
Teignmouth	22	0	0
Exmouth	25	0	0

Plus 10/- on every 50 Tons.
 Use of Tow Rope £2 extra.

Overtime when incurred for Sailing Vessels or Lighters to be paid for Vessel being towed.

N.B.- The Owner of the Tug will not be responsible for any damage occurring to or occasioned by Vessels whilst towing.

A charges schedule