

The MV Olive arrived into Newry in December 1963 with a cargo of coal from Ayr. She was the biggest ship that Fishers had brought to Newry. Her gross weight was 1050 tons almost 3 times that of the steamer which she replaced, SS Palm. This little steamer had served Fishers well, having been built some 36 years earlier in 1927.

The Olive was built by Scotts of Bowling on the Clyde. They had been the preferred builder of ships for Fishers since the demise of John Fullerton and Sons in 1929. **The crew on the maiden voyage were under the command of one of the icons of Newry Maritime History, Captain Brian O Keefe, the youngest of 6 brothers who all became Captains in the Merchant Navy.**



The Crew were

Mate	Mick O Rourke, Carlingford
Lamp trimmer	Paddy Mc Keown, Newry
ABs	Paddy Mc Cann, Newry
	Peter Campbell, Newry
O/S	Vincie Mc Shane, Newry
Cook	Pat Quinn, Killeavy
Chief Engineer.	John Mc Ilroy, Belfast
2nd engineer	Paddy Mc Laughlin, Newry
Greaser	Mick Hegarty, Mourne

The Olive became a familiar sight on the Ship Canal and many local folk have fond memories of her. One of her ports of call was Blyth in Northumberland. This week long trip meant circumnavigating Scotland and sailing through the Pentland Firth where the run of the tide was almost a match for the speed of the ship. **In September 1967 on the return leg of a trip to Blyth, the "Olive", laden with coal, was involved in a collision with a trawler off Duncansby Head in Northern Scotland in thick fog. The trawler, "Arctic Corsair", was returning to her home port of Hull having been in the fishing grounds of Greenland. Damage to the trawler was extensive and she had to be beached in Sinclair Bay. The Olive put into Wick for running repairs to her bow and then carried on to Newry.**

Mickey Fearon who was mate on the Olive at the time says they were very fortunate that the consequences were not a lot worse. **Cawoods became the owners of the Olive when they acquired Fishers and they sold her in 1981. Renamed "Omega Lady", she sank after springing leaks in heavy seas off Honduras in 1984. Sadly, the sisters she had on her arrival in Newry suffered similar fates in new ownership. In 1972 the Oak, now Saint Brigid, was deliberately blown up off Cornwall after her cargo of Nitro Glycerine began to leak. Then in 1981 the Costas A, formerly Walnut, sank off the coast of Albania. All the Newry ships have gone and all but a handful of those who sailed them have, sadly, gone too.**

We wish to thank,

Mrs Susan Fisher and family.

Chris Cassidy, Newry City Library.

Kerri Morrow, Newry DEA Coordinator.

Rev John Purcell.

Rev Louise Donald

Father Tumilty, O.P

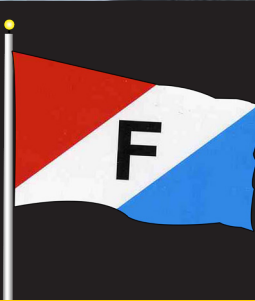


For their help and support of this project.

**MV Olive Built 1963
Lost 1984**



**"MV OLIVE".
Dublin Bridge Newry.
Saturday 16th December 2023.**



OUR SHARED HISTORY PROJECT

Joseph Fisher & Sons was a highly successful business which traded at the Albert Basin Newry for over a century. The firm was a coal and timber importer and also operated a fleet of coasters which were a very familiar sight in ports across Ireland, Britain and North-West Europe.

In December 1963 the last newly built ship for Fishers arrived in Newry with a cargo of coal from Ayr. The new ship had been built by Scotts of Bowling, Glasgow who had been the preferred builder of the firm since 1932.

The ship, named "MV Olive", was the largest yet built by Fishers with a capacity to carry just over 1,000 tons. Barely 3 years later, on 10th November 1966, Joseph Fisher & Sons was sold to Cawood's Holdings Ltd but remained in Fishers colours until 1979. The ship was sold to the Ulster Steamship Company on 1st May 1981 and in 1983 "MV Olive" was sold to Omega Maritime Corporation, Panama and renamed "Omega Lady".

On 12th February 1984, "Omega Lady" sank after developing leaks 70 miles off Puerto Cortes, Honduras. The ship had been on a voyage from Aruba to Puerto Cortes with a cargo of sulphur. There were no casualties.



**Supported by
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.**



Compiled by James Mc Arevey.



BACK IN THE DAY.

Before the arrival of their new ship, "MV Olive" Fishers owned 3 ships, 1 steamer and 2 motor vessels (MV). However, the "Palm" was scrapped in July 1963 and just months after "Olive" came into service, the "Oak" was sold off and deliberately sunk. Fishers were now running just 2 ships "Olive" and "Walnut".

In 1973 the "MV Walnut" was also disposed off to Greek owners. In March the following year the Port of Newry closed to commercial traffic and business was transferred to Warrenpoint. "Olive" was the only Fisher branded ship to make the transition. In 1981, the "Walnut" which was renamed "Costa A" sank off the coast of Albania and 3 years later, the former flagship of the Fisher fleet "Olive", now "Omega Lady", sank off Honduras.

Sadly.. the men who owned and crewed these Newry registered ships have passed away also and with them goes a massive chunk of our maritime history.

"SS Palm"



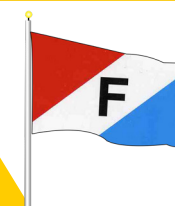
This ship was the last of the coal-fired steamers in the Fisher fleet and the little vessel had been a faithful servant to her owners.

"SS Palm" had been built by John Fullerton & Co of Paisley on the Clyde. Fullerton had been Fisher's preferred builder until their demise in 1929. Thereafter, the new ships were built by Scotts of Bowling, Glasgow.

"SS Palm" was launched in August 1927 and was later converted to carry tar from Ardrossan and Partington to Belfast and Dublin. On 9th July 1963, she arrived in Preston to be scrapped by TW Ward after 36 years in service.



"MV Oak"

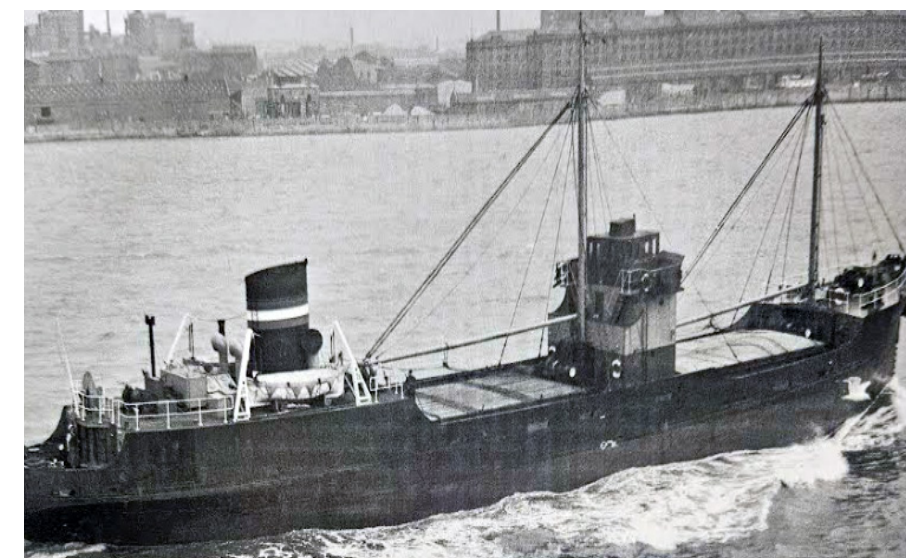


This ship was launched from Scotts in February 1953 and made her maiden voyage from Ayr to Warrenpoint under the command of Captain Mc Kee.

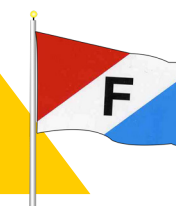
She had a bad reputation amongst the Newry seamen for "Rolling" in heavy weather.

In 1964, shortly after the arrival of "Olive", the ship was sold to the Glasgow shipowners J & A Gardner and renamed Saint Brigid. Disaster struck on 6th December 1972 during the transshipping of a cargo of nitroglycerine it was discovered that some of the cases were leaking.

On 14th December 1972, the vessel was taken out to a point 40 miles South of The Lizard where she was blown up and sunk.



"MV Walnut"



This sleek Dutch-built coaster was launched in September 1955 for the Whitehaven Shipping Company.

The following year Fishers bought the vessel and along with carrying coal she made trips to the Baltic in the summer months and brought back timber for JS Fisher Timber Merchants.

Occasional cargo of salt and China clay were also carried. In 1973, the "Walnut" was sold to Greek owners and renamed "Costas A" In 1981 she was resold to another Greek firm and on 1st April 1981 she sank at Dirachion, off the coast of Albania.

