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Lloyd's Register sources available to researchers

Lloyd's Register has maintained a library since 1852, the first being founded at the bequest of Augustin Bullock Creuze, principal surveyor.

Resources available to researchers are detailed below. It is worth noting that the *Register Books* have seen many changes over the years and, as such, the fields of information mentioned may not be recorded in every edition of the publication referred to.

For example Masters' names only appear in the *Lloyd's Register of Ships* un-

til 1921 for steamers and from 1764 to 1947 for sailing vessels. For this reason dates have been given in the table below to show when the field first and/or last appeared in the publication.

The Lloyd's Register Foundation also provides an historical research service to enquirers that cannot make it into the library in person. Details can be found at the end of this information sheet, as well as links for accessing most *Register Books* online.

Sources for merchant ships

Lloyd's Register of Ships, 1764 to date

Contents: Call sign or Signal letters (since 1874), Cargo facilities, Classification, Date and Place of build, Destined voyage (1764 to 1873), Dimensions (draught since 1764, all since 1863), Former names (where known), Machinery (since 1874), Manager, Master/Captain's name (until 1921 for steamers, 1764 to 1947 for sailing vessels), Navigational aid, Official number (since 1872), Port of registry and Flag, Rig (for sailing vessels), Shipbuilder (since 1859), Shipowner, Shiptype, Speed (since 1966), Survey dates, separate list of East India Company and licensed vessels.

The Register, published for the years 1764–1766, 1768–1771 and then annually since 1775, records the details of merchant vessels of the world. Since the 1870s Lloyd's Register has tried to include all merchant vessels over 100 gross tonnes, which are self-propelled and sea-going, regardless of classification. Before this time only those vessels classed by Lloyd's Register were listed. Vessels are listed alphabetically by their current name.

It should be noted that there is no general index to the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*, hence an approximate date of build or service of a vessel must be known before a search can be made.

Researchers should also note that the *Lloyd's Register of Ships* is not an official record of the registration of ships. Registration, which today is a requirement of International Maritime Law, is the responsibility of national registration authorities. The official British registration authority is the Registry of Shipping and Seamen in Cardiff.

Universal Register, 1886 to 1889

Contents: Details of sea-going vessels worldwide (including yachts) of 100 gross tons and above (including foreign classification), alphabetical list of shipowners, telegraphic addresses of firms connected with shipping, details of war vessels, particulars of dry and wet docks, statistics.

A short-lived publication published by Lloyd's Register in addition to the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*. The majority of the information held with-

in the *Universal Register*, excluding the details of the ships themselves, passed into the *Appendix* when it was published from 1890.

Subsidiary sections and appendices to the Register Books, 1834 to date

Contents: Signal letters / Call signs indexed to Ship name, dry and wet docks (from 1884), *Index of compound names* (1890–1940, then in vol. II of the *Register Books*), changes of name (until 1940, then in vol. II of the *Register Books*), Lloyd's Register staff and committees (from 1972), maps (from 1984), marine associations (from 1892), marine enginebuilders and boilermakers, marine insurance companies, Masters and Mates supplement (1850–1852), Ports gazetteer (from 1984), *Scale for Anchor sizes* (from 1845), shipbreakers, *Shipbuilders and Existing Ships built by them* (from 1886), shipowners (1876–1955), *Statistical tables, Statistics of Collisions and Casualties* (1845–1849), steamers arranged by flag and tonnage (until 1939), fast steamers and motorships, *Telegraphic addresses of the Subscribers to the Register* (from 1886), telex numbers of shipowners, warships (1886–1939), weight of water per cubic foot in various locations (from 1895).

Supplements, mainly showing new additions and alterations to existing entries were published within the *Register Books* from the very beginning.

The first edition of the *Register Books* contained additional columns for changes to be recorded on each page. Laterly these were bound at the end of City editions (these can be defined as editions owned by those within easy traveling distance of the City and able to have new information posted directly into their *Register Books*)

List of Shipowners, 1876 to date

Contents: Alphabetical list of shipowners, showing their addresses and fleets.

The *List of Shipowners* was first published in 1876 and in its early years was bound with the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*. Between 1890 and 1955

and issued as separate signatures for the country volumes (which can be defined as those owned by those outside of easy reach of the City, who therefore received updates by post).

From 1890 the *Appendix*, a comprehensive volume of supplementary information, was published. This was renamed the *Maritime Guide* in 1984 and ceased publication in 2002.

The paragraphs below list the information that appeared in the subsidiary sections of the *Register Books* as they developed.

List of Shipbuilders and Existing Ships built by them, 1886 to date

Contents: Shipbuilders' addresses and details of the ships built by them and still extant in each year.

This annual list of shipbuilders was first published in 1886. It appeared within the *Universal Register* and included only British shipbuilders. From 1887 the volume was expanded to include the details of shipbuilders worldwide. It listed the

location of the shipbuilder and the names and gross tonnages of ships built by them.

From 1890 the *Shipbuilders List* began to appear in the *Appendix* to the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*. As well as merchant vessels it included

details of some war vessels at the beginning of relevant shipbuilders' yard lists. This practice continued until 1939.

The Shipbuilders section was not published during the Second World War and was not published again until 1947. From this edition on-

Casualty Returns July 1890 to date (now World Casualty Statistics)

Contents: Information on losses of all causes including shipwreck, war losses and demolitions.

Not pertaining to lives lost at sea, as one might expect, but to total losses of ocean-going merchant ships over 100 gross tonnes. The *Returns* were published quarterly and annually, recording losses according to flag and cause of loss. Early *Quarterly Returns* give figures for steam and sailing vessels by flag and cause of loss, and for total tonnage owned in each country. Later editions also show the year of build (since 1928) and ship type (since 1939).

Early *Annual Summaries*, published since 1891, give total number of losses for the year for steam and sailing vessels by flag and cause of loss. Later issues also include analyses by size, principal type and age (since 1967) and world maps showing approximate positions of ships foundered, burnt, wrecked and lost by collision during that year (since 1970). Details of ships not

Reports of Classed Vessels lost, 1892 to 1940 Wreck Books, 1940 to 1977

Contents: Information on losses of all causes including shipwreck, war losses and demolitions.

Manuscript sources for information on losses of all causes including shipwreck, war losses and demolitions, from which the *Casualty Returns* were compiled. Between 1940 and 1945 a system of reference codes links the posted editions of *Lloyd's Register of Ships* to the *Wreck Books*, wherever a ship was lost and whatever the cause.

The Heritage & Education Centre library holds the single set of *Wreck Books* and an incomplete set of *Reports of Losses of LR Classed Vessels* spanning 1892–1940.

wards it was noted if a particular builder built naval vessels, but details of individual warships were not recorded. Since 1984 it has been published as a section of the *Maritime Guide*, which itself ceased publication in 2002.

already included in the quarterly returns were also given. Since 1984 the *Returns* have only been published annually.

An index to ships named in each year's return is available from 1950 to date. The records have been computerised since 1980. An approximate date of loss, therefore, must be known or obtained by tracing the vessel through the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*.

Quarterly and annual casualty returns were published through both world wars. Details of war losses, however, were limited after March 1915 and during the Second World War to name, tonnage and flag only. From 1940 to 1977, the unpublished wreck books gave more detailed information on total losses and on casualties that were expected and became total losses.

Statistical Tables, 1878 to 1992
World Fleet Statistics, since 1992

Contents: Analyses of the world's merchant fleets by number, tonnage, flag, nationality of owner and shiptype.

The *Statistical Tables* are published annually, similarly to *Lloyd's Register of Ships*, and reflect the information contained therein. Prior to 1886, the *Statistical Tables* only covered new ships classed by Lloyd's Register according to material, propulsion and place of build, together with numbers of ships disclassed or never classed by Lloyd's Register.

Between 1886 and 1914 tables include fleets of the world by flag and country of build; new

Merchant Shipbuilding Returns, 1888 to 1995
World Shipbuilding Statistics, 1995 to date

Contents: Analyses of ships according to hull material, propulsion, place of build and port of registry and latterly analyses by country of build, shiptype, tonnage and flag.

Published quarterly, with an annual summary (discontinued as a separate publication since 1991 but tables are included in the fourth quarter of each year), these are statistical returns of ocean-going merchant ships over 100 gross tons, which are on order, under construction, launched or completed, worldwide.

Early *Returns* comprise quarterly analyses of ships built in the UK only, according to material, propulsion, place of build and port of registry.

Underwriters' Registry for Iron Vessels, Liverpool 1862 to 1884

These annual registers contain details of ships classed by the Underwriters' Registry for Iron Vessels, Liverpool, which was established in 1862 owing to dissatisfaction with wooden ship framing rules being applied to iron, resulting in over engineered ships. They also list details of other UK and foreign iron steamers and sailing ships above 50 tons gathered from official sources.

British Corporation Register, 1890 to 1947 (incomplete collection)

The first far-reaching change for Lloyd's Register after 1945 was amalgamation with the British Corporation in 1949, which opened a new chapter in classification history.

ships classed by LR and total LR classed fleet; and ships added from the British flag register. Since 1919 additional tables have been added to include analyses by ship type, size and age, propulsion, dimensions, ships launched and completed, time series, shiptypes, tankers, motorships and ships totally lost and broken up.

Researchers should note that figures for the years 1915 to 1918 and 1940 to 1947 are incomplete or not recorded at all.

Figures for *Foreign shipbuilding* were introduced in 1889 (second quarter) and the first *Annual Summary* appears in 1892. Some early *Returns* include figures for warships under construction in the UK (prior to 1914). Over the years tables have been added to include analyses by country of build, ship type, tonnage and registration.

From 1914 to 1920 and 1939 to 1947, figures are incomplete and in some cases only include ships built in the UK.

Particulars include master, tonnage, dimensions, owner, builder, date of build, rig or machinery, survey dates and class details. Brief details are also given, where known, on vessels totally lost. It is especially useful for researching small iron ships never featured in the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*. In 1884, this Register was amalgamated with Lloyd's Register.

The British Corporation was formed in Glasgow in 1890, due to Scottish shipowners, like the Liverpool Underwriters before them, feeling that Lloyd's Register Rules for steel ships resulted in

over-engineered vessels. Their registers often contained more detail than the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*, including details of boiler-makers. The previous professional rivalry between the two organisations did not affect the amicable pooling of their joint resources and the amalgamation was effected without loss of goodwill from

the shipping community, which realised that the combined technical services could only be of lasting benefit.

The Heritage & Education Centre library holds *British Corporation Register of Ships* volumes from 1893 to 1947 (this collection presents gaps).

Lloyd's Register Rules and Regulations for the Classification of Ships, 1834 to date

Contents: Rules for the classification of ships.

Lloyd's Register has published *Rules and Regulations for the Classification of Ships*, to which all Lloyd's Register classed ships must conform, since 1834. Between 1834 and 1870 the *Rules* were bound within the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*.

Since 1870 they have been published separately.

Enquirers interested in the historic *Rules* should contact hec.info@lrfoundation.org.uk, those interested in the current *Rules* should email rules@lr.org.

Sources for offshore industry

Lloyd's Register of Offshore Units, Submersibles & Diving Systems, 1967 to 2002

Contents: Offshore units (including those under construction) and details of mobile drilling rigs able to operate in at least 50 feet of water, submersibles, diving systems classed by Lloyd's Register and selected work units (ships, barges and platforms used for offshore construction, maintenance, pipelaying, heavy lifting, fire-fighting and submersible and diving support). Details of owners of offshore units.

Published annually, this appeared from 1967 as a supplement to the *Register Books* and from

1977 as a separate register issued free of charge to subscribers to the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*.

Sources for yachts

Lloyd's Register of Yachts, 1878 to 1980

Lloyd's Register of Classed Yachts, 1981 to 1996, 1999, 2000, 2002

Contents: Owners, builders and designers, date of build, yacht type and material, tonnage, principal dimensions, sail area, engines, port of registry, home port, LR classification (if inspected), sailing clubs, owners' and yacht club burgees, list of owners with *Masters' Certificates* (1895 to 1956). From 1981 the *Lloyd's Register of Classed Yachts* only listed those vessels classed by Lloyd's Register.

An annual *Register*, which lists British and Foreign yachts classed by Lloyd's Register, yachts belonging to subscribers to Lloyd's Register publications and certain other yachts above a specified size. It is not a comprehensive source. The *Register of Yachts* is organised alphabetically by name of yacht.

The *List of Yacht Owners*, who have obtained Certificates as Masters of their own Yachts was published as a section of the *Register* between 1895 and 1956, showing the number and date of their certificate. From 1857 until 1994 yacht

owners who had achieved a certificate of competency were indicated by an asterisk but the date and number of their certificate ceased to be listed.

The *Register of Yachts* ceased publication in 1980, to be replaced by the *Lloyd's Register of Classed Yachts*, which includes details of only those yachts surveyed by Lloyd's Register, this was last published in 1996, although some special editions were produced for 1999-2000, 2000/01 and 2002/03.



American yachts

Lloyd's Register also published a register showing details of American yachts. Named *Lloyd's Register of American Yachts* from 1903 to 1977 and renamed *North American Yacht Register* for its last two years of publication in 1978 and 1979.

Yacht plans

Some plans and survey reports of LR classed yachts are held at an external archive. Enquiries should be made to the Heritage & Education Centre.

Other sources available to researchers

The Heritage & Education Centre library holds a number of reference works covering naval architecture, shipwreck, sailing vessels, maritime history from the earliest times to date, shipping company histories, as well as a number of periodicals. We also hold a selection of Lloyd's of London's publications including *Lloyd's War Losses*, for the First and Second World Wars; *Lloyd's Weekly Casualty Returns* (1953–1990, 1998 to date); and bound facsimile copies of *Lloyd's List* (1741–1826).

Early ship plans and survey reports

Staff at the Heritage & Education Centre have worked on an ambitious digitisation project, which has made accessible the entirety of Lloyd's Register plans and survey reports collection with more than 1.1 million documents freely available for researchers and enthusiasts. Find out more [here](#).

Technical Records, Plans, Survey Reports

Certain technical records, such as the plans and survey reports of LR classed vessels, can be made available for public inspection. More recent records are held by Exhibition of Records and viewing is subject to owners' permission and a research/copying fee. Enquiries should be made in writing to Exhibition of Records email eor@lr.org.

New Construction Cards, 1951 to 1996

Prior to the computerisation of Lloyd's Register information systems, details of every merchant ship under construction, of 100 tons gross and above, were recorded in a card index from the time the order was placed. These cards are

useful for tracing the details of the ship whilst under construction and include keel laying, launch and completion dates. They are arranged by year of completion, country of completion and building yard. It is necessary to book an appointment to view these cards.

The IMarEST collection at Lloyd's Register

In June 2011 the Institute of Marine Engineers, Science and Technology (IMarEST) historical library was relocated to Lloyd's Register's Heritage & Education Centre in London. Subjects covered in the conference proceedings, journal series, technical reports and reference titles include: offshore engineering, energy, turbines, hydrogeology, pollution, fishing, ship management, vibration, naval architecture and marine navigation.

RINA's Denny Library collection

In August 2013, much of the Denny Library collection of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects (RINA) found a new home at Lloyd's Register Foundation's Heritage & Education Centre. The collection includes bound volumes covering all aspects of design, construction, maintenance and operation of commercial and naval vessels; plus a wide range of other relevant technical publications, including copies of some technical papers published by RINA, together with those of other organisations.

Research Service

Lloyd's Register has provided an historical enquiry service for a number of years. Please note that this is dependent upon staff availability to complete your request. We encourage people to visit the library in person where possible as they

can freely access the material and get a real feel for the information available.

In the case of yacht enquiries and more detailed historical research, please contact Heritage & Education Centre supplying as much information as you can so that we may offer you advice. Information on vessels that are currently in service is also available. Details are available on application to Heritage & Education Centre.

Lloyd's Register Foundation London Office address:

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The Heritage & Education Centre library is open to the public from Monday to Friday be-

See also

Infosheet No. 34: Researching the early Registers

Infosheet No. 44: Making a search using the Lloyd's Register of Ships

Infosheet No. 17: Collections of the Lloyd's Register of Ships and associated publications – UK and Ireland

Infosheet No. 46: Overseas collections of the Lloyd's Register of Ships

Infosheet No. 53: The IMarEST collection at Lloyd's Register

Researchers should check availability, accessibility and opening times with the repositories listed before making a personal visit.

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tween 09:30–12:00 and 13:00–16:30.

Please note that we close at weekends and during public holidays. We are closed between Christmas and the New Year.

For subscription to the current edition of *Lloyd's Register's Rules and Regulations*, please contact Marine Data Systems by email: rules@lr.org.

For subscription to and details of current Lloyd's Register Publications, CD ROM, Internet and special report services (excluding *Rules and Regulations*) please contact:

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