

Infosheet No. 44

Making a search using the *Lloyd's Register of Ships*

In order to make a search you must know the name of the ship, as the *Lloyd's Register of Ships* lists vessels alphabetically by their names. Those Registers published after 1876, however, contain the List of Ship Owners and can still be useful if the name of the owner is known. Those published after 1886 contain the list of Late Names of Ships, which is very useful if you only know the previous name of the vessel.

Since 1880 all vessels worldwide have been included, irrespective of whether they were inspected by Lloyd's Register, provided they were over 100 ton(nes) gross and sea-going.

A vessel will remain in the Register until something happens to her; for example if she is sunk, wrecked, broken up, hulked, etc.

Once a vessel has been identified in the Register it is simply a case of tracing the vessel through the following editions of the Register, noting any interesting changes to the vessels' particulars i.e. change of ownership, flag, or name. The easiest way to do this is to use "posted" editions of the Register. "Posted" Registers were returned to the Lloyd's Register Printing House on a weekly basis, where a team of "posters" would update the Registers with all of the previous

week's changes to ship details. They also added new ships or ships which had changed their name, to the supplement bound within the Register.

By using "posted" editions of the Register a researcher can research a ship relatively easily. Once a ship has changed name all subsequent records will appear under the new name. The demise of the ship is also recorded.

The Registers prior to 1890 simply state 'wrecked' or 'lost' or 'hulked' next to the name of the ship. After 1890 the posting also includes a month and year of incident so that a researcher may also use the relevant part of the Lloyd's Register Casualty Returns. These were first published for the second quarter of 1890. The "Titanic" for example has the posting 'struck an iceberg 4.12'. If the researcher then looks at the Lloyd's Register Casualty Return for the second quarter of 1912, further details of the tragedy can be found.

If you are unsure of the exact date of build of the vessel it is best to make an educated guess using information which is known to you. Then, by jumping say every 3-4 years through the Registers, you can usually manage to pick up the start of your "vessel trail".

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