

# BYGONES

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## Can you shed any light on trawler parts?



The sidewinder trawler Explorer undergoing restoration at Leith.

### READER WOULD LIKE TO KNOW PURPOSE OF DOUBLE NAVIGATION LIGHTS

BACK at the end of August last year, Viewpoint kindly published pictures and the outline story of the SS Explorer.

Explorer is a large oil burning steam powered sidewinder trawler (probably the very last of the type of vessel so prevalent in Grimsby in the not so distant past), berthed at Leith and undergoing preservation by a restoration society registered as a charitable trust.

Explorer was launched in 1955, so Grimsby's Consolidated Fisheries vessels Arsenal and Grimsby Town, Crampin's Yardley and many other period BUT/Northern's vessels were similar but unlike a lot of the Humber-based ships, Explorer was built in Aberdeen rather than at, say, Cochrane and Sons of Selby or Cook, Welton and Gemmell at Beverley.

A more squat funnel is a distinctive difference on the Scottish ship but in very many ways they are all part of the same general constructional family pertinent to that period.

Since last Summer, large grants for restoration purposes have been applied for up in Leith from funding institutions. Results are awaited.

As an integral part of the grant applications, a coloured ten-page A3 size "prospectus" has just been produced and this is full of pictures of the ship at sea, plans for the future and various detailed descriptions of



The double trawler navigation lights on board the trawler Explorer at Leith. Can you tell us more about them?

the ship's machinery and systems, all fully illustrated.

For details both of this printed prospectus and a wealth of website pictures ranging from the whole ship via video tour right down to collections of nameplate pictures on individual machinery (for the real keen type!) just go to [www.ssexplorer.org](http://www.ssexplorer.org)

So to Grimsby; on a very recent visit to the town, I was talking to a couple of gentlemen who were both trawler repair guys back in the day and the point was raised that if there were even just a limited resurgence of Grimsby's

fishing industry, perhaps due to Brexit fishing agreements or other commercial reasons, where are all the relevant skills nowadays?

This shortage of available relevant skills from another age has been true to an extent in Explorer's restoration. Who understands the detailed workings of a steam powered trawler engine room now?

As well as skilled and brave fishermen, Grimsby was home to every manner of highly skilled marine craftsmen, including shipwrights, boilermakers, tanners, engine fitters, electricians, painters, riggers, assorted

marine technicians etc. Everyone in fact from the compass adjuster through to the heavy gang replacing a rebuilt trawler "door" attached to the galleys on deck.

So I leave this latest update on Explorer, the big steam trawler, with a small question from the ship.

A copy of Bygones from a recent December Grimsby Telegraph, sporting a superb picture and story about the Grimsby trawler Churchill lies on the saloon table in the Explorer up there in Leith.

Trawler pictures as good as this are useful for restorers if only for fixtures and fittings information.

Alongside on the table are some navigation lights (a very rare find these days) that have been procured some time ago secondhand, for attempted replacement of the original masthead set and other sets that disappeared when the ship was originally laid up.

They are "doubles". I have seen many trawler navigation lights on a passing basis but these were all to a unit single lantern types.

Does anybody know what double lanterns are for?

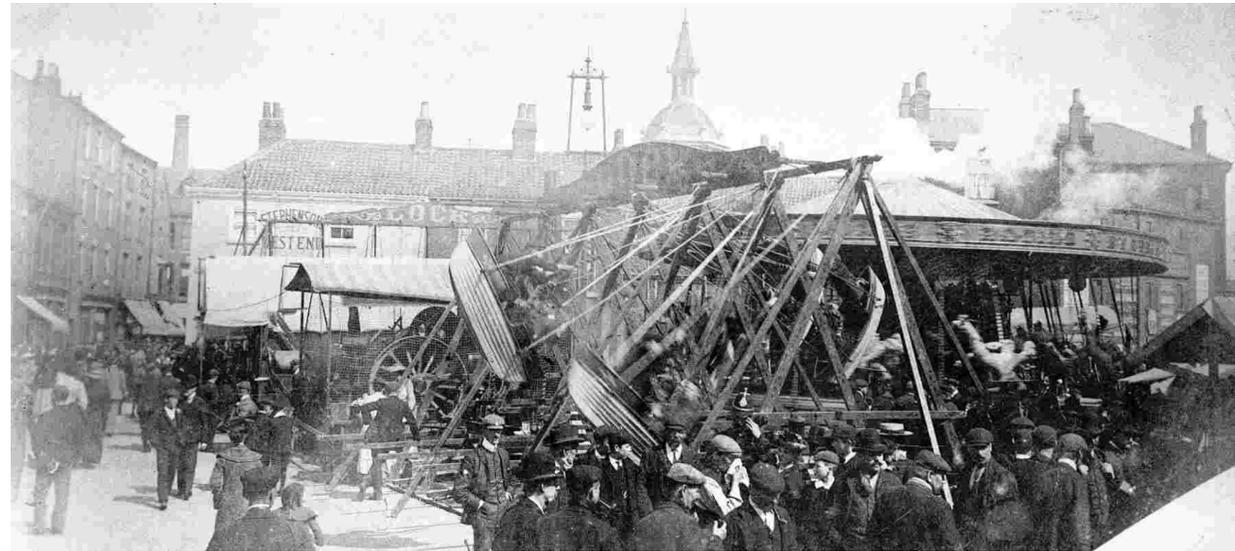
**Phil Harley, Packington, Leicestershire.**

■ If you can help, then please let us know by writing to Bygones, Grimsby Telegraph, First Floor, Heritage House, Fisherman's Wharf, Grimsby, DN31 1SY or e-mailing [bygones@grimsbytelegraph.co.uk](mailto:bygones@grimsbytelegraph.co.uk) and we'll pass on your information to Phil.



### All the fun of the fair

Grimsby's Statute Fair 1905. This picture was taken in the Bull Ring. Bull Ring Lane is in the left background and the spire of the Corn Exchange can be seen in the centre background.



## Great memories - and tunes



MRS June Gunn wrote to us after spotting a picture of the Bay City Rollers in Bygones recently.

Mrs Gunn said: "It was nice to see the picture as two members of the band, Alan and Derek Longmuir, are my husband Alistair's cousins.

"He was proud to know how well they did in the 1970s.

"Their mum was my husband's mother's sister and when Alistair's dad sadly died at the age of 49, their family (seven of them) had to be split up. Alistair went to live with the Longmuirs - aunt Al, uncle Duncan, Alan, Derek and the two girls in Caledonian Road, Edinburgh.

"After a while my husband moved on to play football for York City and it was there that Charlie Butler, Grimsby's Chief Constable, contacted him and asked him to join the Grimsby Police football team.

"He accepted and spent 30 years with the force, eventually becoming a police sergeant.

"When he saw the Bay City Rollers were coming to Cleethorpes, he thought it was a great chance to meet up again.

"However, their manager, Tom Paton, tried to waylay him, thinking he was a fan.

"Eventually though he to see them and got all their autographs from them on a picture from a magazine.

"He still enjoys listening to their music and often hears them on the radio.

"Great memories and tunes you can remember after all this time."

The Bay City Rollers, pictured in 1975. From left, Stuart Wood, Alan Longmuir, Leslie McKeown, Derek Longmuir and Eric Falkner.

### On this day

1959 Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes survived an air crash near London that killed 12 people

1965 The Duke and Duchess of Kent celebrated the end of 300 years of colonial rule in Gambia with 35 chiefs

1979 China sent hundreds of troops into Vietnam after weeks of tension and a military build-up along the border

1992 Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer was jailed for life in the US for murdering and dismembering 15 young men and boys