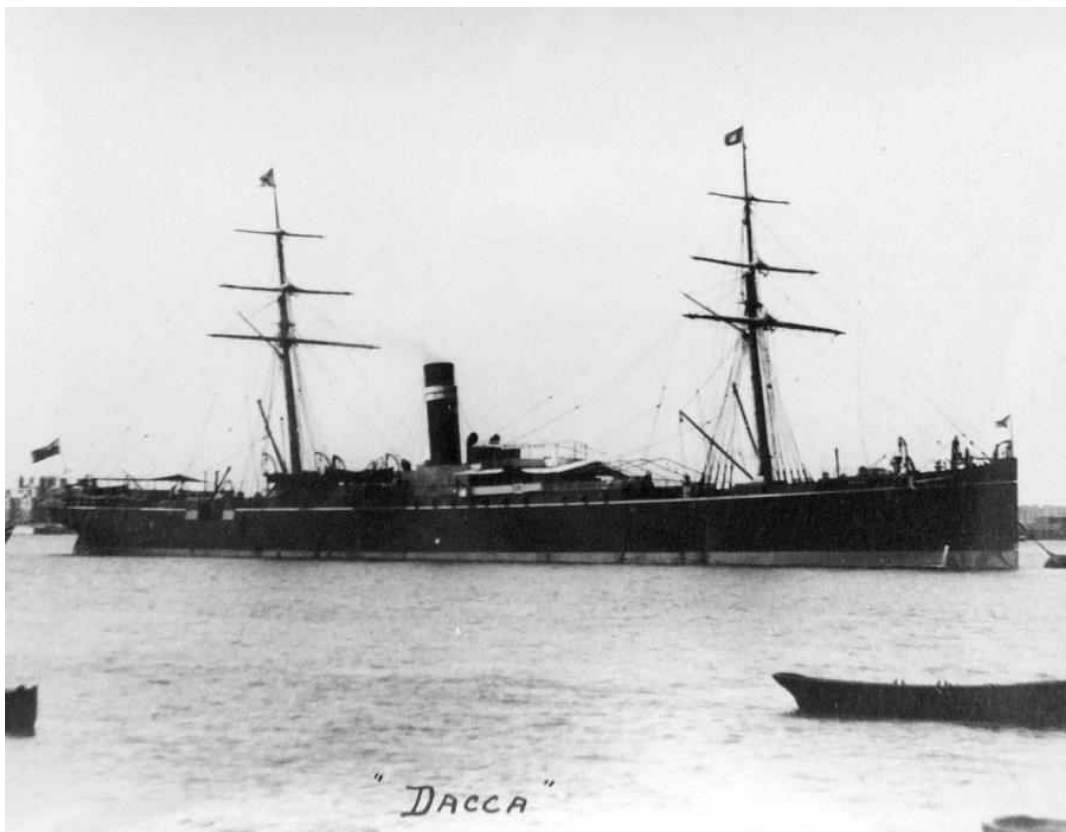


Diary of a Voyage to Australia

by Mr Sampson Edward Lintern

3rd June – 24 July 1886

SS Dacca – British India Steam Navigation Co.



Courtesy Queensland Maritime Museum

DIARY OF MR. SAMPSON EDWARD LINTERN DETAILING HIS JOURNEY, WITH
HIS WIFE AND TWO DAUGHTERS, AS EMIGRANTS BY SHIP FROM ENGLAND
TO AUSTRALIA - 3 JUNE TO 24 JULY 1886.

(Sgd.) S. Edw. Lintern.

JUNE 1886

3 Thursday: (Ascension Day)

Myself, Wife & 2 daughters left our house in London and arrived at the Emigrants' Home, Blackwall. We found it really a home where everything was clean and conducted in a Christian manner. We had dinner of Roast Beef, Potatoes, Bread and Soup. At teatime, Bread & Butter & Tea. At night $1\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 a service was held at which several ladies & gentlemen spoke, also some of the emigrants. All sang Moody & Sankeys hymns. 10 o'clock Bedtime. Slept in bunks like those on board, but quite private.

4 Friday:

I will describe details of home. It is founded by Ladies & Gentlemen, I believe Lord Radstock & Miss Waldegrave &c., so that Emigrants from all parts can assemble and receive all kind Christian attention, be protected from bad characters, and join the ship in a body. The single men sleep in a large open dormitory on iron bedsteads in pairs one above the other. The married couples in wooden berths, some larger than the others for those that had babies. The single Women was in a separate building. All had to pass the Ship surgeon, only 4 rejected. Service at night.

5 Saturday:

Went to Prayer meeting. After had breakfast large steamer was stationed by Blackwall pier. Single men went on first, single women next, Married People last, and steamed away to Gravesend where we joined the S.S. Dacca, British India S.N. Co., 3000 tons Burden, 4500 H-power. Our berths are in the centre of ship and very comfortable. Annie & Martha has a second class cabin. The single women are well off.

6 Sunday: (Sunday after Ascension)

Did not sleep sound at night, engine bumped so much and ship rocked round North Foreland. About 12 o'clock noon sighted I. of Wight and Coast of Mainland Hants and Dorset. They call me Captain of the Mess, a barren honor - get things from the store. Our mess is $10\frac{1}{2}$ statute adults, which means 4 Married Couples, one lad so sick allowed to be with his Mother (1 baby), 3 children. Babies has separate allowance.

7 Monday:

Seagulls are following the ship. Porpoises are seen. Whales also are seen spouting the water. They eat the red jelly fish which looks like blood all about. All this day the dreaded Bay of Biscay, but the Doctor tells us he never saw it smoother. It was all in a ferment though. Lot of our women sick, only Emma well out of our four to do the work. Sight lots of ships & steamers. Our good ship beat all in speed. A drum and fife band is being formed. A boy bugler also.

8 Tuesday:

8 o'clock A.M. sighted Cape Finisterre in Portugal; saw it very plain, also the land with its cliffs & hills. Kept by the Coast all day; saw 4 whales spouting away. School formed - Annie & Martha two of the teachers. The Schoolmaster was in Queensland ten years, has gave Emma addresses of two H. teachers in Brisbane and they will get something of a recommendation for their services. Captain wants me to do work for him in Cabin but have got out of it. I was spoken to about being Constable on ship - pleased to say not heard any more about it. The rest will do me good.

9 Wednesday:

Sighted Cape Rock 6 A.M. & Lisbon Observatory. Vessel signalled to us by means of flags. 8 A.M. saw Lisbon & Estuary of River Tagus. We are steaming 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ knots an hour. We have a great many Scotch families aboard. 4 P.M. sighted Cape St. Vincent where a naval battle was fought, British & French. Signalled to do by means of flags. The coast is very rocky. A large rock stands out with a small passage between it & mainland which a man o'war dashed thru to avoid being wrecked. The sea is lovely. The days are getting shorter. Night at half 7.

10 Thursday: (Oxford Easter Term ends)

Passed Cape Trafalgar at 3 o'clock A.M. 6 A.M. sighted Cape Tarifa with its lighthouse, small town, vineyards, olive groves & orange trees growing in the slopes & hollows with white houses dotted about on the hillsides. It was beautiful to look at, and the Rugged African Cliffs opposite, and on the European side in the distance Gibraltar. 8.15 A.M. opposite Rock of Gibraltar surrounded by sea all but a shingly causeway, neutral ground. There was shipping laying there, a town nestled at the foot. On one side the Rock by nature is impregnable, the other sides Nature & Art combine to the same end. All today the Spanish coasts were clearly seen, the Sierra Nevada with its mountains almost in the snow line.

11 Friday: (Easter Law Sittings end)

We lost the Spanish coast, in its stead the Africa coast appears - Yesterday Morocco, today Algeria. 4 P.M. saw Algiers plainly with its French settlements on the coast, Moorish town in the rear, white houses & brick tile roofs, Mosques & churches, lighthouse and cultivated gardens, olive trees & vineyards. The mountains, Atlas Range, are very high, rugged, and bears an inhospitable look along the coast, but in the hollows and slopes it is generally cultivated. 8 P.M. the ship commencing to roll, causing a slight depression among the passengers. 9 P.M. quietness sets in, people prepares for bed.

12 Saturday: (Oxford Trinity Term begins)

1 A.M. ship rolling dreadful, people frightened, falling sick. All loose things crashing about between decks making a horrid din rendering sleep impossible. Got Breakfast and came up on deck. Emma and a lady friend, Mrs. Charge, with her baby & little boy seated on chairs, while going to see the cause of a child's scream, was thrown like a lightning flash against bulwarks. Emma and her friend was thrown on the decks but gallantly rescued by black sailors. Isle of ~~Selatin~~ (2) seen, small island inhabited by fishermen. Saw Tunisian coast, rugged mountains. Cape Bon 8 P.M.

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13 Sunday: (Whit Sunday)

Church service 11 A.M. 12 A.M. saw Goza Island. 1/2 12 saw the spot at Malta where St. Paul was shipwrecked; a monument is erected there where two seas meet. 1 P.M. saw Valetta plainly with its immense fortifications, harbour, ships. Having a decent achromatic glass could see the houses, cultivated fields &c. 3 to 4 P.M. visiting time spent with Annie & Martha. An extempore service in our part of ship from 7 to 8.

14 Monday: (Bank Holiday, Eng. & Ire.)

We are steaming away beautifully, lovely weather below Greece but no land to be seen nor any seen all day. All passengers well. One steamer seen. We get fairly good food, Plenty of Bread, Butter, Molasses, Jam, Cheese, Pickles, Preserved Meat, Potatoes, Plum pudding.

15 Tuesday:

Very hot all day, perspiration rolling down my face and body. Head aches. 7 P.M. all right again. The evening was cool. 8 P.M. A concert given by First class passengers, Doctor, Crew & Emigrants. The Germans on board sang Watch on the Rhine in German. The Doctor who is a versatile man sang 3 songs. We saw Annie & Martha at concert. They was very pleased to be with us. It was so cool many stayed up on deck till late. We went to bed at night. Very hot in our bunks.

16 Wednesday:

1 P.M. Saw the mouths of the Nile & Damietta lighthouse. 6 P.M. arrived at Port Said, truly an Oriental Scene with its varied population, Egyptian, Arabs, French & English. Several vessels was there of all nations, English predominating. The Arabs came out with their boats selling tobacco, fruit &c., palm leaves for fans. We took in coal and water, sheep. Coaling went on all night long. The natives only wear a loin covering. There was an English barracks but the shops generally were French. The canal is dredged out into the Mediterranean. Dredgers always at work as the sand is so shifty. The canal is very wide at Port Said forming a harbour for ships.

17 Thursday:

The Arab traders almost besieged the ship all round with their boats but our Surgeon cautioned us against buying their fruit, all but those he sanctioned. Still it was great fun, the bartering, as the Arabs ask about 6 times what they will take. Any observer can see what a vast undertaking it was to form the Suez Canal. 1 A.M. Under weigh and proceeding up the canal. It is a strange land. We soon began to see the natives and Arabs on the Banks, but sand everywhere. It is getting hot. Canvass awnings over all the ship.

18 Friday:

We see at intervals the Arabs on their Camels. We anchored at sundown last night and sailed at daylight this morning. The rules of the Canal is no ship to sail at night or go more than 5 miles an hour as the wash of a great steamer disturbs the banks. The sand begins to fly in our eyes. We have to be careful. Saw plenty of Bedouin Arabs & Egyptian fellahs. Arrived at Suez in the afternoon. It is a large town, plenty of shipping. The canal is about 94 miles long.

19 Saturday:

Travelling away through the Gulf of Suez, getting intensely hot. People begin to flag with the heat. No air seem to be blowing. Sickness begins to be prevalent. People cannot eat the diet. Thermometer in our berths 99. I with many others sleep on deck in my trousers. Had our boxes up from below, those Wanted on the Voyage.

20 Sunday: (Trinity Sunday)

Still getting hotter. Got out into the Red Sea. Service on saloon deck. Annie & Martha was there. We also spent an hour together in afternoon. Oh, the heat. There has been a birth on board.

21 Monday:

Red Sea - It ought to be called the Fiery sea. Although the ship has an awning the sun seem to strike right through on your head and the sky seems all mist. The air breathed deadly. It is dark about half 7 and at night it is hotter than day. I have woke up in the night with as it seems hot winds passing over the ship just like taking your breath away. Thermometer over 100 - even that do not represent the deadly heat.

22 Tuesday: (Trinity Law Sittings begin)

Shall be glad to leave the Red Sea. Our children are getting on nicely. They have a second cabin together with two Scotch girls. Annie and Martha assists the Schoolmaster in school on board but there has been no school lately. We have lost by death one woman that gave birth to child. The child alive. Two men by sunstroke and one baby in the Red Sea.

23 Wednesday:

Arrived at Aden 7 A.M. Rocks & Mountains everywhere. Sea like glass. The natives are a muscular race, was employed to empty cargo. They seem a mixed Arab and negro race. The boys are sharp - throw a penny in the water, they dive and get it. The Arab traders came on board. Emma bought some Ostrich Feathers, 4 nice ones at 4d. each. It was terrible hot. The men sing a kind of prayer while working. They are Mahometans. Aden town looks a nice stone-built place but hot. I bought - topsee, viz. a hat quite round, green underneath all round underneath ventilators, and inside lined with pith to prevent sunstroke.

24 Thursday: (Midsummer Day) Cambridge Easter Term ends.

Another man died with the heat, a big strong Irishman, also a baby. Great depression prevalent. A great swell taking place. The ship rocking from side to side, people beginning to feel sick. There are 4 women in our mess. Emma has met with an accident - inhaling liquid smelling salts she got it down her throat, burning it. The other women are down with sea sickness.

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25 Friday:

The ship is right in the Monsoons, rocking fearfully right from side to side. The water coming over the bulwarks, it is a continuous wind, everything moveable floats about causing a horrible din. At night it is unearthly. You have to steady yourself by your elbows. Nearly everyone is sick, but the heat is not so oppressive. It is down below we feel it, between decks. Nobody can eat, but that is not bad as people eat too much in a hot climate.

26 Saturday:

My time has come. The sun has struck my feet. No one has cut about more than I have, but my feet are swollen and inflamed. I cannot walk very well. Emma is getting better. We are still in the Monsoons. Many ill but none dangerous. It seems the survival of the fittest.

27 Sunday: (1st Sunday after Trinity)

My feet getting worse but I still hope they will soon improve. Saw Annie & Martha. They are both well and have been nursing the girls who have been fainting a dozen at a time.

28 Monday:

We are right away now in the Indian Ocean and not so much rocking. People are beginning to come up on deck, but as thin as you like. I am obliged to go to the Doctor. My feet has got as big again as they ought so I have got to tend to them and not stand on them. I sleep on chairs at night. There is nothing particular to record. We go on from day to day. Some days we get Bread, Treacle, Butter, Salt Pork, Tinned Meats &c.

29 Tuesday:

Some more of the babies look poorly but it is better weather now. Hope our troubles will cease. The ship is sailing smoothly, waters looking beautifully blue. We have various performers. The Fife & Drum Band came over and gave us a tune or two. You must know the Girls are in the aft part of the ship, our quarters then come, the Saloon or 1st Class, in centre, and single men next. Married people under Forecastle, chiefly Germans.

30 Wednesday:

Still sailing along to all intents quiet when a Hurricane arose and split the most of the sails to ribbons. There was to be a grand concert in the evening, it was put off. Very little to be seen but flying fish. Sighted ship, signalled by means of rockets. Passengers pulling themselves together. Sorry to say one old Lady, very respectable person, has been taken, possibly with the heat. Emma was with her one night she is moved into the hospital. They think she will be a confirmed invalid as it is paralysis of the brain.

JULY, 1886 - 1 Thursday:

One may well call this the horrors of a tropical voyage in a crowded ship, to see the sickness all round. I watch myself closely and others that I can say a word to. It is so necessary to keep bowels right in these hot countries. At night saw the Southern Cross, a constellation belonging to the Southern Hemisphere. It is dark about half 6 P.M., scarcely any Twilight.

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2 Friday:

We crossed the Equator. We shall be getting into colder latitudes presently. Saw a ship and signalled. Long weary time crossing this Indian Ocean. Being disabled with my feet I while the time away with reading. The Schoolmaster & ship's Carpenter spend an hour with me of an evening. Of course there is plenty to talk to if you felt inclined.

3 Saturday:

Sailing away. Held the concert tonight, it was very successful. Some of the ship's officers sang and the Doctor especially done his best to amuse. People begin to wish themselves on land. Rain came down at night. Saw Annie & Martha.

4 Sunday: (2nd Sunday after Trinity)

No Service. It was rather rough but it do not seem like Sunday. The only thing, people dress as well as they can and seem more sociable. Had an hour with Children.

5 Monday:

Saw an Island called Engano, it is laying off Sumatra. Baby died belonging to a 1st class passenger. Getting storms of rain now and fierce lightning. It is not so hot in our berths now. Emma sleeps in her berth and I from choice sleep outside on the floor. Feet getting all right again now. The Doctor is very active now, about everywhere blowing up people for one thing and another. We clean our berths in turns with sand & holy stone. Baby died in the night, Emigrant's.

6 Tuesday:

Saw the part of Java which was forcibly torn asunder by an Earthquake three years ago and consisting of 3 small islands with the mountain Volcanic called Karaktor (Krakatao). I saw smoke from its top. 12 o'clock saw Dutch Island of Sumatra, went through the Straits of Sunda and steamed round close to the coast of Java. The beautiful green trees and lovely woods, palms and all kinds. The mountain in the distance 12,000 ft. high gave a fine idea of tropical grandeur you can possibly conceive. Took on Pilot. We are steaming 312 miles a day.

7 Wednesday:

Arrived at Batavia capital of Java, viz. the port. City 4 miles inland. It is a densely populated island, 10 1/2 millions, principally Malays, or a distinct portion of the human race. They have a large roadstead and ships are towed in with a tug, breakwater all round, lighthouse at entrance. Coal here, took on 600 tons. The natives quite copper coloured and large knots of hair. You can only seem to tell the woman, they wear a white guernsey up to throat. No fruit was allowed to be bought by emigrants for fear of cholera.

8 Thursday:

All last night & today coaling and getting provisions in. 5 P.M. unloosed ship and got out. Rather warm here. Dutch trade ship came in and cheered us. I never saw such a sunset, all lovely colors. You see the sun go down about 6 and soon dark after. Just seen Southern Cross in sky. We see many kinds of fish, porpoises, flying fish, sometimes the fin of a shark. The seagulls are a darker color.

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9 Friday:

Keeping coasts of Java in sight. The island is nearly 700 miles long with immense mountains. Sighted it all day. Saw native boats of a very buoyant nature. Steamed 262 miles under a head breeze. Saw a large bird called the booby. Getting nice & cool. People eating well and looking better. Had various sports for young men on board.

10 Saturday:

Sighted Sumbawa with its volcanic Mount ^(Tambora) Tambaro, 9000 ft. high. The last eruption 1815 destroyed 12,000 people. The island only just getting inhabited. It is about the size of Wales, very woody. Sighted Flores, another island.

11 Sunday: (3rd Sunday after Trinity)

Service held half 10. Doctor read Service, told us he hoped to get us all passed without quarantine. Nice and cool.

12 Monday:

Finished the sports and prizes distributed. Saw Island of Timor. Baby died.

13 Tuesday:

Sailing away to the Gulf, ship by night pitching and tossing. Head winds against us. Passengers queer.

14 Wednesday:

Sailing through Gulf, rough weather.

(Then followed a name & address - "Mr. W. Charge, a/c Mr. J.H. Morris, Sturt Street, Blackwood Street, Townsville.")

15 Thursday:

Getting calmer, sailing through Torres Straits. Sighted Australia. Last three days only went about 200 miles a day; it could have went 320 if the ocean and winds had been favorable. The Gulf is generally rough, they say.

16 Friday:

Got to Thursday Island. Quite a small colony live there by pearl fishing. It would keep nothing but a few sheep. 2 Girls took places of service there, one on a Steam hulk stationed there, the nearest port to New Guinea. Unloading cargo there.

17 Saturday:

We are sailing away all day, nothing but rocks as barren as possible, only inhabited by blacks who are cannibal.

18 Sunday: (4th Sunday after Trinity)

At Cooktown. Not much like Sunday. Unloading cargo. About a dozen went on shore. There is a railway going on to mines.

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19 Monday:

The scenery has been very grand but rugged all down the coast. Islands everywhere, birds, but no human habitation. Some hills covered with shrubs, others bare as possible. We have splendid weather.

20 Tuesday:

Arrived at Townsville early in the morning, 300 tons of cargo to get out. Australians came on board to shift cargo on barges. They take things cool and do not work too hard. About 50 emigrants got off here, one large family from Reading and a respectable family from our mess from St. Albans. It was very hot. It must be very hot in summer. They went away cheering and waving of pocket handkerchiefs.

21 Wednesday:

8 A.M. Arrived at Bowen. Saw Poole Island where Vagg worked at the meat freezing works and made model for about 20 emigrants; ^(who) got off. Started at 10 A.M. and reached Mackay about 8 P.M. Had electric light. Took out about 10 tons of cargo and about 30 emigrants, some of them engaged for a sugar plantation.

Bowen is a very pretty place to look at; plenty of birds.

22 Thursday:

Arrived at Rockhampton half 5 P.M. Had about 100 tons Cargo and 40 Emigrants to unload. Keppel Bay is a fine harbour. One of the Black sailors caught a young shark with its murderous looking mouth. The climate is beautiful here. They was unloading all night. Started at 12 P.M. for Brisbane, hope to be there on Saturday. Martha had a nice Atlas and other books presented to her for teaching in school. She stood to it well. They say she is the life of the single girls department.

23 Friday:

We are steaming away for Brisbane. A ship has just out out 200 or more yesterday. We have nearly 300 so there is work wanted.

24 Saturday:

Arrived in Brisbane.

Summary of Emigrants mentioned as disembarking in
Queensland from S.S. Dacca, British India S.N. Co.,
(3,000 tons burden, 4,500 h.p.) -

Thursday I.	2
Cooktown	12
Townsville	50
Bowen	20
Mackay	30
Rockhampton	40
Brisbane	300

Total Emigrants on
Board - 454 (about)