

CO. LTD.

MONS.

rs, Airline,  
orters and  
Produce.

ED KINGDOM:  
is Hedstrom,  
lewick House,  
on Street, LONDON.

for:  
Lufthansa

Industries  
Cameras  
Ltd.  
(U.K.)  
r Ltd.  
es Watches  
Watches  
Watches  
Electrical Co.  
a Radios, etc.  
a Electronics  
Copra Board  
Phosphate Commission  
Philp & Co. Ltd.  
Grant (Real Estate)  
ora

FORMANCE  
SCEIVER

tures  
iability.

ance in solid state  
NESS . . . GREATER

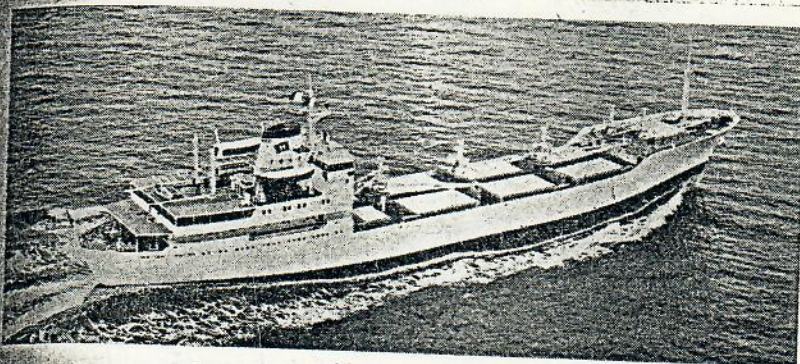
w Styling, too!  
MEL FINISH

watts Aerial Power. Tuning  
of transmitter tuning. 5  
le 2-10 Megacycles and  
ovision on 5 channels. Full

a polarity protection. Low  
et. Fibreglass Whip Aerials  
es restricted to 25 Watts

T. EAST BRISBANE.  
AUSTRALIA.

S MONTHLY



● The new passenger-cargo ship "Milos".

August for the Australia-West Pacific Line.

Her master, Captain G. Paulsson, told PIM in Sydney he hoped the 6,787-ton *Milos* would be calling at New Guinea ports by February to pick up timber for the Australian market.

He said the *Milos* was the last of three ships the Hillerstrom group of companies of Helsingborg, Sweden, ordered in 1965 from a Gothenburg shipyard to replace ships on their Australia-Far East shipping runs.

She is equipped with remote-controlled cranes and cargo space to accommodate 150 ISO containers (8 ft x 8 ft x 20 ft). There are air-conditioned cabins for 12 passengers in four double and four single rooms.

### NEW VENTURE FOR CAPTAIN DARR

American master mariner Captain Omer Darr, who has been knocking around French Polynesia for the past 20 years as skipper of *Nordlys*, *Te Vega* and *Wanderer*, and as a property owner at Moorea, is to start a new venture soon.

Captain Darr is to reopen the coconut plantations on Flint, Caroline and Vostok Islands which he has leased from the British Government.

The three islands, which come under the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, are 600 miles or so north-west of Tahiti. They were formerly leased to Mr. M. P. A. Bambridge, of Tahiti, but they have not been worked for some years.

Captain Darr has acquired the *Topaz*, a 30-year-old Danish sailing ship, to transport copra from the islands to Tahiti.

The *Topaz* was built at Ring Andersen's Shipyard, at Svendborg, Denmark. Captain Darr was in Svendborg in July to take delivery of her.

In a note to PIM from Svendborg,

Captain Darr said the local people were particularly interested in details of the *Topaz's* new career.

He also sent us a clipping from the local paper, *Svendborg Avis*, about his plans.

As far as we can make out from this—our Danish not being too good—some 80,000 coconut palms have been planted on Flint and Caroline Islands, and Captain Darr expects an annual copra production from them of 800 tons.

We also understand from the clipping that Captain Darr plans to call at the Gilbert Islands on his way back to Tahiti from Denmark to hire about 60 labourers for work at Flint, Caroline and Vostok.

### NORFOLK FISHING BOAT SWEPT ON ROCKS

The fishing boat *Maitai*, owned by Norfolk Island Processes Ltd., was swept from the Cascade Pier on the night of August 10 and was found on the adjacent rocks next morning. She was lifted back on to the pier

QUALITY FIRST

10 LBS

LEES BRAND

GABIN  
RESTAURANT  
CRACKERS

GABIN  
STAINLESS  
CRACKER

GABIN  
STAINLESS  
CRACKER

CABIN

OVEN FRESH

CRACKERS

★ QUALITY BAKED BY LEES TRADING COMPANY  
25 NASOKI STREET, LAUTOKA FIJI

A masterly performance! We shall miss a man of his ilk. He was, in more ways than one, larger than life.

DON STEWART  
Sydney NSW  
Australia

### Malden's historian makes an appeal

Eight years ago, on a visit to Fiji, I happened to read an article in a 1933 issue of PIM and it introduced me to the Line Islands, which hitherto I had not heard of, and to Malden Island in particular.

This place struck me right away as unusual, and subsequent research confirmed it as unique. The central lagoon is of terrific depth (probably the cone of an extinct volcano) and on the barren flat surface of Malden are the most extensive Polynesian stone ruins of any uninhabited island in the Pacific.

I am now getting ready to write a book on Malden Island. It is most unlikely that there will be another one, so it will need to be as good as it can be. 'Complete' would not be possible, but it has to read convincingly, at least.

A brief summary of Malden's story might hint at the fascination which has sustained me throughout the often wearisome search for information about this remote and somewhat forbidding spot.

It was officially discovered by HM's frigate *Blonde* in 1825, and named for the surveying officer, Lieutenant Charles Malden, who went ashore with a party. For the next 30 years it was one of the many low islands known to whalers, useless for 'comforts' of any kind, and to be avoided because of strong tidesets. But with the demand for guano as a cheap fertiliser in the late 1850s, these unlovely equatorial coral lumps were occupied, and their immense bird colonies disturbed, by American interests operating from Honolulu — with the exception of Malden, or Independence Island, the most valuable of the lot.

The right to exploit Malden's resources came into the hands of B. B. Nicholson, a shipping agent in Melbourne. Trying to

set the island up broke Nicholson financially (six vessels lost in under two years) and broke his health as well. He died at the age of 34, by which time the firm of Grice, Sumner & Co had inherited the lease — and the problems.

After the loss of a large German ship in bizarre circumstances in 1873, insurance companies refused to underwrite vessels going to Malden. The next year, however, Grice, Sumner had good fortune for a change, when they signed up a 36-year-old Ulsterman, Abraham McCullough, to be manager.

He was to serve on the island for 23 years. He is buried there, near the memorial to his infant son, who according to the inscription, had been 'taken by the wild wave'. Under McCullough's rule — and that is the right word — Malden Island was a going concern, and a well ordered little outpost of the British Empire. The field-labourers and boatmen were recruited from the northern islands of the Cook Group. McCullough fined them for infractions, but would permit no abuse of them by the white overseers or the crews of ships.

By the time of McCullough's death, all the other low islands had long been abandoned, or

**Ancient Polynesian ruins on the uninhabited island of Malden. The extent and nature of the coral slab structures has suggested to researchers that a community of about 200 once lived on the island. This drawing is based on a photograph published by the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Hawaii.**

were being sporadically worked for tailings by the tireless John T. Arundel. Of course the opening up of Ocean Island in 1900, and later Nauru, put Malden in eclipse. But Grice, Sumner held on to the lease, and continued to work the deposits, with only New Zealand remaining as a market. It was not until 1927 that Malden Island ceased to operate as a guano station — and the buildings of the beach-crest and inland settlement were left to become the island's second collection of ruins.

During the late 1930s Malden was one of the islands disputed by Britain and the USA, both in quest of possible seaplane bases between North America and Australasia. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor cancelled all that, and the Cold War brought aircraft of stupendous technological advancement to the mid-Pacific. In 1957, Malden, and Christmas Island, were the sites of 'Operation Grapple', the first British H-Bomb tests. Five years later, the USA made similar use of them.

The most recent chapter (or paragraph) in Malden's story, as reported in PIM, November 1979, is that along with 13 other islands so earnestly staked-out by RN and USN warships 45 years ago, it is now part of the new nation of Kiribati. But two Kiribati Government expeditions had earlier concluded that Malden could not be made suitable for habitation except at prohibitive expense.

So the birds, their numbers depleted by guano mining, imported pigs and cats now run wild, and the flashes of super

bombs, have the island again — with the ocean billows, the westerly trade wind, and the *marae*s and house-sites of the people who lived there centuries before the first grave of European or Cook Islander.

Ordnance huts stand with the coral-stone foundations of the guano storage sheds and staff quarters, succumbing to weather; drums of dieselene are stacked along a section of splitting railway track. The loading pier that proceeded on shear-legs from the beach-crest out over the reef, where the guano sacks, the millions of them, were winched off flatcars into lighters, lies scattered under the sea.

Tracking down information on Malden has been anything but straightforward business, yet worth all the trouble, for the co-operation and trust which I have been given by so many people. It will be my pleasure as much as duty, to acknowledge all who have thus contributed, within Australia and from six other countries, in the credits which will appear in the book.

I would now like to ask of PIM readers whom I do not know and have not reached, if there are any who might have material, however minor, to do with this out-of-the-way island: family letters, diaries, reminiscences, photographs, newspaper items, etc. — anything at all.

Correspondence, from anywhere in the world, will be promptly answered.

JOHN C. ORR

KOA Productions,  
41 Correy Avenue,  
Concord 2137 NSW  
Australia

