

**TRANSCRIPT OF 'DIARY'**  
**JAMES GRANT**

January 13 1854 - June 12 1854



- Jan 13<sup>th</sup> 1854 Memorandum and notes of our passage from Birkenhead (Liverpool, England) to Australia in the Ship Conway.
- 15<sup>th</sup> we embarked on the 15<sup>th</sup> and on the 17<sup>th</sup> the tug came and hauled us out of the Dock into the Mersey River, Liverpool where we lay getting all the things put into order for the voyage
- 19<sup>th</sup> and on the morning of the 19 the inspectors came on board and inspected all the passengers and them being all in good health and the wind being fair they gave orders to get the ship under weigh so the inspectors went away and sent a tug along-side which soon pulled us out of the river. The wind being with us they let loose the flying gib and fore and main top gallants which soon made our ship to outstrip the tug so they let loose the tug and got the pilot on board after we gave three cheers while the sailors let loose the sails, and then the Conway bounded away like a dove we had a fair breeze for only four hours when the wind changed and it blew nearly right a head so we beat about all night
- 20<sup>th</sup> and on 20 we had made very little way and it continued to blow very hard. We were beating about the calf of man (southern Isle of Man in the St George Channel) and waits some time close on in land and on
- 21<sup>st</sup> the 21 the wind increased and a great number of the passengers was sick and when night came on the wind increased and the ship rolled dreadful the sea sometimes breaking over her and the water pouring down among the passengers which alarmed them greatly and the sickness spreading and the doctor drinking
- 22<sup>nd</sup> they turned the ship and tried to get out of the north channel. The wind decreased and we were getting on well until late when the wind changed again and by five o'clock pm it blew very strong and increased as night came on the ship rolled fearfully and they could scarcely keep her off the land. She was under close reefed top sails and about half past twelve pm it carried away the jib boom and sails so they run ship for harbour and put her into Gourock when the captain said that cholera was on board which frightened the passengers very much as there was four deaths from the time we left Birkenhead until we anchored at Gourock (Glasgow, Scotland) we were kept on board for a day or two and then taken to Greenock (Glasgow, Scotland) and we were sent ashore until the sick would get better and get the ship cleaned and repaired. It is true the Cholera was aboard and we lost about twenty four of the passengers and one seaman. The doctor we had was dismissed and we had assistance from Glasgow until we got a doctor from London to go with us, so by the time that the sick got better and the ship put to rights it was the 18<sup>th</sup> of February and then we had to wait for a
- Feb 18<sup>th</sup>

- Mar 18<sup>th</sup> north east wind which we did not get until the 18th March when the wind changed and it blew from the Nor East so we signaled for a tug which soon came along side and we got under weigh at 11 o'clock and by the time that saw the Conway our ship running before the tug so we parted with the pilot and let loose the sails and sped away at 10 knots an hour.
- 19<sup>th</sup> fair wind and sea breeze we cleared the channel by midnight.
- 20<sup>th</sup> fair wind blowing very hard and by 12 o'clock AM. we were off the Bay of Biscay (L45N 5S) the wind increasing and at (?) one of the sailors fell overboard. We hove the ship too and lowered the boat but (?) him and before the boat got back to us our jib boom and two studing (?) cut loose (?) was carried away it was a fearful sight the ship plunging and rolling like a chained eagle but as soon as we got the boat and crew on board they let her away with the wind and away she bounded. We got up new studing (?) sails and the carpenter commenced to make a new jib boom and by four o'clock we met a yankee ship bound for England and spoke her – it was a grand sight to see her at a distance with her canvas spread like mighty wings and her bounding forward like some monster It gave us an idea of the way we were going.
- 21<sup>st</sup> fair wind blowing moderate
- 22<sup>nd</sup> fair wind and moderate the weather getting warm
- 23<sup>rd</sup> fair wind and fine breeze came up to a Danish schooner she had lost her longitude, spoke to her and put her right.
- 24<sup>th</sup> fair wind and a light breeze getting warm
- 25<sup>th</sup> fair wing almost calm got the new jib boom rigged out and spread all sails
- 26<sup>th</sup> fair wind light breeze sighted the island of Porta Santa in the morning and passed it at midday and sighted the Cape of Madeara at night it belongs to Portugual and it lies off the coast of Africa. The sailors is walking about with bare feet the weather is getting very warm
- 27<sup>th</sup> five o'clock AM close on the island of Madeira with very little wind the sea quite calm the passengers all well and glad to see land. It is a fine looking island stands very high out of the sea, saw a ship coming up on us and by six at night she was close on us, we were lying becalmed a slight breeze sprang up at seven and away we went like two rivals. She was a full rigged ship
- 28<sup>th</sup> fine morning with a good breeze. The ship we saw last night keeping us company she was a French ship but by 11 o'clock we had left her about eight miles It was a grand sight to see them with their masts covered with canvas and we passed another brig at twelve o'clock and sighted two sails ahead of us. We are making fast on them.
- 29<sup>th</sup> fair wind and a good breeze we overtake the two sails that was ahead of us yesterday. We spoke one of them it was bound for Australia she had been out 21 days we passed them very quick. We have had all our chests taken up on deck for us today and we have been very busy airing our clothes running at 13 knots an hour
- 30<sup>th</sup> we are into what they call the trades so we expect to have a steady breeze

to we cross the line the passengers all well and dancing and dining almost every night.

31<sup>st</sup> fair brease and fine weather running at eight knots an hour.

April 1<sup>st</sup> fair wind and a good breese

2<sup>nd</sup> fair wind and a fair breese

3<sup>rd</sup> fair wind and sighted Cape Le Verdes (Cape Verde - L16N 25W) we have great pleasure in bathing. There is a place for the males and one for the females we bathe morning and night if we please.

4<sup>th</sup> fair wind and good breeze we are getting fine sport with the flying fish and ? dolphins, porpoises and we have seen two sharks.

5<sup>th</sup> nearly calm. There has been the birth of a child on board this morning and child and mother doing well.

6<sup>th</sup> almost calm and very warm.

7<sup>th</sup> A slight breeze sprang up early in the morning.

8<sup>th</sup> fine breeze very warm. A great many of the passengers sleeping on deck. Birth of child this morning both doing well.

9<sup>th</sup> A slight breeze

10<sup>th</sup> blowing pretty fresh and sudden squalls.

11<sup>th</sup> the wind change nearly ahead of us. Spoke a barque she a swede homeward bound.

12<sup>th</sup> fine brease and we crossed the line at noon and we had two deaths this morning. One a woman the mother of a large family, the other a child belonging to another family. They were both buried at midday.

13<sup>th</sup> a stiff breeze and heavy squalls and heavy rain. We caught a shark and had some sport with it before killing it.

14<sup>th</sup> very squally and sudden rain. we had another death of a child and buried it at midday. The rest of us all well.

15<sup>th</sup> fine brease but squally and rainy.

16<sup>th</sup> fine brease and settled looking.

17<sup>th</sup> fine brease, came up to a barque. She had been out 19 days before us. She was bound for South Brazilia.

18<sup>th</sup> weather squally and heavy showers.

19<sup>th</sup> beautiful day and fine brease.

20<sup>th</sup> fine brease but squally and heavy rain

21<sup>st</sup> slight brease and warm weather.

22<sup>nd</sup> (?)

23<sup>rd</sup> almost calm and very hot.

24<sup>th</sup> dead calm and great sport catching dolphins. There was another death and funeral that of a child.

25<sup>th</sup> good breeze and heavy sea. Passed a barque she was bound for Australia

26<sup>th</sup> slight brease and we all had a busy day as we all had our chests up on deck.

27<sup>th</sup> light brease weather getting a little colder.

28<sup>th</sup> fair wind and a good brease.

29<sup>th</sup> fine brease. Running twelve knots an hour.

30<sup>th</sup> wind changed a head of us and blowing very hard and the sea running very

- high and continued until the next morning.
- May 1<sup>st</sup> the wind was blowing moderately and with us. Our chief mate quarreled with one of the seamen about his duty and ordered him to do a piece of work that that was degrading which he refused to do it being half past twelve PM where upon the mate cried him aft and put him in irons where he remained until four o'clock, when the mate went to bed then he managed to break the irons and throw them away and went forward to his bed.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> when the chief mate turned out to his watch and found his prisoner away he sent forward for him and put him in irons again. This was at eight oc AM, the crew seeing this came aft in a body to the quarter deck and sent for the captain and asked if he allowed such conduct which he said he did and he would keep him in irons as long as he pleased, the crew then said to put them all in irons as they would not work until he would release the man. The captain ordered them to reef the fore topsails, but none obeyed him, so he sent the two mates to ask them singly if they would do their duty, they refused to a man, during this time the man at the wheel came forward his time being up, the mate called another by name, he refused so he came and said the captain wanted to see him, so he went aft but suspecting foul play he was prepared. The captain ordered him to take the wheel, he said he will if he would release the man but not till then. The captain and chief mate seized him to put him in irons but he struggled with them, the rest of the crew came running aft and someone seized the captain and one dragged the man from him the captain threatening to shoot him and the captain cried for the doctor and officers to assist him but the crew was too many for them as the passengers would take nothing to do with it. So the ship was left to ride away as the wind would take her. The captain saying it was needless to hold against them released the prisoner and as soon as he came forward the crew turned out to work and we were glad to see it settled that way as we expected it would turn out serious.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> all right and a good breeze, sighted a ship with the loss of her fore topmast and bowsprit. She seemed in distress but night came on before we could speak her so we lost sight of her.
- 4<sup>th</sup> fine breeze up to two o'clock it looks stormy like and the sea rising very high and increasing all night.
- 5<sup>th</sup> wind and sea very high. The ship rolling dreadfully and the large water casks and grease barrels breaking loose and rolling about the deck and passengers and sailors falling and rolling along with them and the sea rolling fearfully sometimes breaking over the bullwarks and washing all things with it. We had to stove all of the casks and throw them overboard. It continued all day.
- 6<sup>th</sup> sea very high the wind not so strong.
- 7<sup>th</sup> fine steady breeze. We passed the island off cape called Gough island (42S 10W). It is a high table land.
- 8<sup>th</sup> light breeze and calm in the afternoon. We caught two large birds. The one

was an albatross. It measured ten feet seven across the wings the other a Mollyhawk it was eight feet across the wings. The wind rising by ten o'clock pm

9<sup>th</sup> fine breeze but heavy rain and the sea rising high and the ship rolling a great deal. We crossed the Meridian at midday and there was a birth on board of a female.

10<sup>th</sup> showering and a light wind.

11<sup>th</sup> fine day but light wind.

12<sup>th</sup> light breeze and showering. We saw a great number of whales they were about 40 yards from the ship and they appeared to be about thirty feet long. There was a child died and was buried in the afternoon. Latitude 43S an longitude 28 East. A quarrel between four men.

13<sup>th</sup> wind ahead and blowing very hard and wet and very cold.

14<sup>th</sup> very cold and the wind very high and very heavy sea. Clear of the cape wind changed round to the beam.

15<sup>th</sup> fair wind and heavy showers of hail and snow very cold.

16<sup>th</sup> heavy showers of snow and a strong fair wind. Run five hundred and 20 miles in 48 hours. The sea very light.

17<sup>th</sup> fair wind and heavy showers of hail and sleet very cold.

18<sup>th</sup> fair wind and showers of hail. Sighted Prince Edward islands (District of South Africa - L46S 36E) at 11 AM about three miles distant.

19<sup>th</sup> fair wind and strong breeze.

20<sup>th</sup> fair wind and blowing very strong and the sea very high and a good deal of water coming over very disagreeable between decks running 14 knots an hour.

21<sup>st</sup> strong fair wind and the ship rolling very much. Birth of a still? child Mrs Mckay.

22<sup>nd</sup> fair wind but light still very cold. Birth of a Mrs Cumming of a son both doing well.

23<sup>rd</sup> fair wind blowing very hard. We saw a very large whale and sighted Kerguelen island (L49S 70E)

24<sup>th</sup> fair wind sea very high. Died wife of Robert Mckay after a long illness. Heavy showers of snow and rain.

25<sup>th</sup> fair wind but light a heavy swell on high sea.

26<sup>th</sup> nearly calm but showers of snow and very cold. Latitude 49-56 longitude 87 East.

27<sup>th</sup> slight breeze and off the beam.

28<sup>th</sup> heavy rain and in the morning and by nine AM it blew very strong and increased all day the ship rolling dreadful. Everything rolling about and disagreeable between decks.

29<sup>th</sup> the wind not so strong but a heavy sea. Died the youngest child of Richard Cumming.

30<sup>th</sup> wind nearly ahead. Showers of sleet.

31<sup>st</sup> unfavorable and slight showers and cold.

June 1<sup>st</sup> latitude 45-32S longitude 110-37 East light breeze off the beam. Died Thomas Hendry (fleming) age 26 years.

2<sup>nd</sup> light breeze very cold latitude 46-41 S longitude 115 East.  
3<sup>rd</sup> wet and cold and light breeze.  
4<sup>th</sup> wind very strong. Shipped some heavy seas.  
5<sup>th</sup> fair wind fine breeze. Birth Mrs William Edson of a son both doing well.  
6<sup>th</sup> wind off the beam and light. We got the cable chain out and the anchors ready for dropping.  
7<sup>th</sup> light wind a head.  
8<sup>th</sup> light wind a head. Sighted a ship astern at 7 AM and spoke her at three PM. She was the "Hanabul" from London bound for Sundai Strait in the East Indies.  
9<sup>th</sup> light wind in the morning. Sprang up a fine breeze in the evening.  
10<sup>th</sup> A fine breeze fine weather.  
11<sup>th</sup> blowing fresh. Sighted the land at four o'clock PM.  
12<sup>th</sup> 1854 the pilot came aboard and we ran up to Port Phillip heads and got strait in at midday and cast anchor with three cheers.

*Note: These coordinates appear at the end of the 'diary' and don't appear to match with the position of the ship and the date as recorded in the diary.*

April 6 <sup>th</sup>	L11N + 26 W
14 <sup>th</sup>	L1 S + 30 W
21 <sup>st</sup>	L17 S + 30 W
27 <sup>th</sup>	L28 S +29 W
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	L38 S +15 W