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## Stan Mayes

### 5. Adula

*From June 1941 I went "deep sea" sailing as AB and bosun in cargo ships and tankers owned by various shipping companies. Following 4½ years service in coastal sailing barges owned by Goldsmith's of Grays Essex, 15 June 1941 found me at anchor off Grays in **Celtic** and awaiting orders.*

*Two large tankers were also at anchor off Grays—**Adula** and **Acavus** of Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co. A crowd of seamen were awaiting a launch to take them of the ships and on hearing that an OS was missing, I told the accompanying B.O.T. shipping master I was mate on barges and could I have the job. He gave me half an hour to get my gear and return.*

*I boarded **Celtic** for my gear—then ran to my home nearby and told my parents I was going "deep sea". My father pressed a £1 note into my hand and I ran back to the beach and joined ship. I signed on **Adula**; both ships had discharged high octane at Purfleet and the Chinese crews had refused to sail with hazardous cargoes.*

*Designed for Chinese crews, the accommodation was for'ard—a large cabin for ten seamen in the starboard bow and a cabin for six firemen/greasers in the port bow with a communal messroom.*

*We sailed that evening and from Southend we joined convoy EC34 for Loch Ewe. The channel was closed to shipping so we sailed up the East coast. From the large convoy port of Loch Ewe in Northwest Scotland we sailed in convoy for Canada.*

*During this period it was a time of intense activity by packs of U-boats. Our convoy was attacked but suffered no casualties. Arriving at Halifax Nova Scotia another large convoy port, all ships anchored in Bedford Basin. Later we sailed in convoy but after 24 hours all ships dispersed and sailed on independently for various destinations—ours being Trinidad where we arrived at Pointe Fortin on 11 July 1941. It was a 10 day uneventful voyage from Halifax. We loaded 12,000 tons of aviation spirit and sailed on 18 July for Halifax arriving there on 28 July. (One memory of Trinidad was that there was much Victorian coinage in circulation.)*

*On 1 August 1941 we sailed from Halifax in convoy HX142. This convoy had 72 merchant ships and 31 escorts including an Armed Merchant Cruiser - **AMC Ausonia** - ex Cunard liner. A few days into the voyage, a DEMS gunner on our ship accidentally shot himself while he was cleaning a machine gun. A message to **Ausonia** brought a doctor to our ship in a launch and the lad was taken to **Ausonia**. Sadly the gunner died and a burial service was conducted from **Ausonia** next morning.*

*Another ship in the convoy was Northumberland of Federal Line and in service as a troopship - she was carrying units of the Canadian Army to the UK including a Drum and Pipe band. **Ausonia**, **Northumberland** and **Adula** reduced speed for the burial service. "The Last Post" was played by the band and with the service quickly over it was full speed ahead to rejoin the convoy.*

*There was little activity by U-boats and we all arrived safely - **Adula** in the Mersey on 18 August 1941 and we discharged our cargo at Stanlow. In the Mersey I recall seeing the wrecks of two ships which had been sunk by parachute mines on 13 March 1941. They were between Liverpool and Birkenhead. Tacoma City of Reardon Smith (four dead) and Ullapool of Ropner & Sons (15 dead).*

*When joining the ship at Grays in June we had signed 6 months Running Agreement Articles so could not pay off ship until articles expired. Arriving at Stanlow and ailing time fixed for noon next day, a shipmate and I went over to Liverpool for my first visit to that city. A few beers and we stayed overnight in a Seaman's Club called Ocean House. Returning to Stanlow at 10 AM we found our ship had sailed so we had broken our contract. The Essential Works Order was in force and we were liable to be fined or get a prison sentence. On reporting to the Shipping Office in Liverpool we were told no charges would be made against us and to report to Tilbury Shipping Office. This of course surprised us but maybe were let off because the ship had sailed before its scheduled time - either that or the official had some sympathy with us in knowing we had made a voyage of several thousands of miles with such a hazardous cargo.*

*A sour note to this story is that when my shipmate and I were in a pug near Lime Street Station, two girls began abusing us and calling us "Army dodgers". Later they came back to us and tried to feed us white feathers. This in a great port like Liverpool where many of their seamen became casualties of war! A few RN matelots were in the pub and, seeing our MN badges, took the girls by their arms and ejected them. I had already experienced this in Ipswich. Many of my pals experienced similar shameful incidents simply because they were not wearing uniform. Some of them bought navy blue battledresses to wear in a port where they were not known - it avoided confrontation. We had a small badge with the letters MN and we had as much pride in wearing it as did men and women in the Services in wearing their uniforms.*

*Tilbury Reserve Pool seamen on **Adula** were - Mayes., Austin, Griffin, Bibby, Hurdle, Colyer, Brett F, Brett J, Tindale and Billinghurst.*

#### Basic Data: Adula

Type: Tanker  
 Registered owners, managers and operators:  
 Anglo Saxon Petroleum Co.  
 Builders: Blythwood  
 Yard: Scotstoun  
 Country: UK  
 Yard number: 44  
 Registry: N/K  
 Official number: 165435  
 Signal letters: N/K  
 Call sign: GLCJ  
 Classification society: N/K  
 Gross tonnage: 8,040  
 Net tonnage: N/K  
 Deadweight: N/K  
 Length: 141.7 metres  
 Breadth: 18.1 metres  
 Draft: N/K  
 Draught: N/K  
 Engines: Diesel engine  
 Engine builders: N/K  
 Works: N/K  
 Country: UK  
 Power: N/K  
 Propulsion: Single screw  
 Speed: 12 knots  
 Cargo capacity: N/K  
 Crew: N/K

Image 1 shows **Adula** in the foreground with behind her T2 tanker **Seatiger** and an unknown passenger ship.

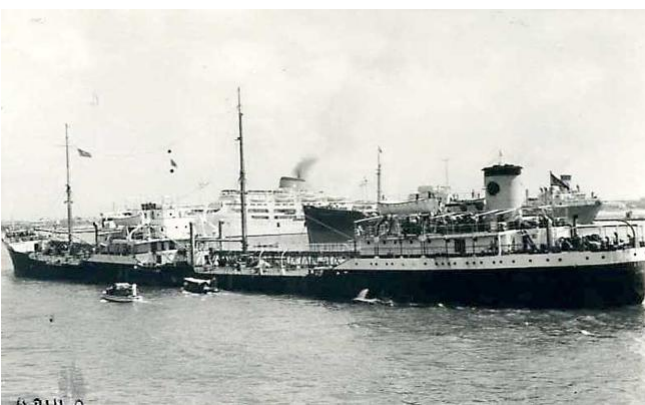


Image 1

Image 2 is a portrait of Stan taken at Radio Station, 47A Lime Street Liverpool while he was on **Adula**.

Image 2

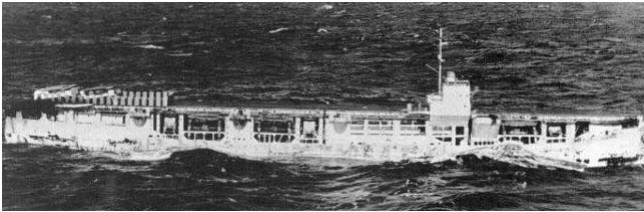


*During 1943 Adula was converted into a convoy escort aircraft carrier for service in escorting North Atlantic convoys. During this service she escorted 18 convoys - Clyde to Halifax and Halifax to Clyde. She loaded fuel oil in Halifax and was also an escort oiler to other convoy escort ships.*

**Adula** was launched on 28 January 1937 and completed in March of the same year. She was converted into a Merchant Aircraft Carrier (MAC) in February 1944 by Silley Cox at Falmouth, and was equipped with four aircraft - believed to have been Fairey Swordfish. After the war she was converted back to a tanker and was taken to be broken up at Briton Ferry on 15 May 1953.

**Image 3** shows **Adula** under way after conversion to an aircraft carrier. Two aircraft can be seen to the left of the image which I believe to be the stern of the ship.

Image 3



**Image 4** shows a Fairey Swordfish armed with a single torpedo. The technique used was to dive from 1,500 metres and release the torpedo at 15.5 metres. Although the aircraft was outdated its short take-off speed made it highly suitable for this purpose.

Image 4



*In May 1946 I was in **Dallington Court** in drydock in South Bank Middlesbrough. In an adjacent drydock I saw **Adula** undergoing reconversion to a return to commercial service. **Adula** was broken up at Briton Ferry in 1953.*

**Image 5** shows **Adula** at Haverton Hill for reconversion from a military aircraft carrier to a tanker in 1946 and has kindly been made available by courtesy of Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Image 5



**Adula** made a significant contribution to the Allied war effort by participating in 74 convoys according to information shown in the table below which has been which is provided courtesy of [Convoyweb](#) - see [Ext.Ref.#5](#).

Convoy No.	Route	Convoy No.	Route
OB.10	Sep 1939: Liverpool - Dispersed	BB.157	Apr 1942: Belfast Lough - Milford Haven
HG.7	Nov 1939: Port Said - Liverpool	ON.93	May 1942: Liverpool - Dispersed 38.55N 42.43W
OA.50G	Dec 1939: Southend - Formed OG.10	TO.2	May 1942: Trinidad - Curacao
OG.10	Dec 1939: Formed at sea - Gibraltar	SL/MKS.113	Jun 1942: Freetown - Liverpool
HG.15	Jan 1940: Gibraltar - Liverpool	OT.5	Jun 1942: Curacao - Trinidad
OG.18F	Feb 1940: Formed at sea - Gibraltar	KS.526	Jul 1942: Hampton Roads - Key West
OA.88GF	Feb 1940: Southend - Formed OG.18F	ON.111	Jul 1942: Liverpool - Dispersed 41.15N 71.25W
HX.29	Mar 1940: Halifax - Liverpool	WAT.13	Aug 1942: Key West - Trinidad
OA.124	Apr 1940: Southend - Dispersed	AP.7	Nov 1942: Aden - Bandar Abbas
HX.46	May 1940: Halifax - Liverpool	PA.14	Dec 1942: Bandar abbas - Aden
BHX.46	May 1940: Bermuda - Joined HX.46	AP.14	Jan 1943: Aden - Bandar abbas
OA.140G	May 1940: Southend - Formed OG.28	BP.70	Feb 1943: Bombay - Bandar abbas
OB.171	Jun 1940: Liverpool - Formed OG.34	PB.25	Feb 1943: Bandar abbas - Bombay
OG.34	Jun 1940: Formed at sea - Gibraltar	PB.31	Mar 1943: Bandar abbas - Bombay
HX.62	Jul 1940: Halifax - Liverpool	ME.22	Apr 1943: Malta - Alexandria
OB.204	Aug 1940: Liverpool - Dispersed	HX.245	Jun 1943: NYC - Liverpool
HX.76	Sep 1940: Halifax - Liverpool	GN.64	Jun 1943: Guantanamo - NYC)
BHX.76	Sep 1940: Bermuda - Joined HX.76	ZG.33	Jun 1943: Cristobal - Guantanamo
BHX.93	Dec 1940: Bermuda - Joined HX.93	WP.369	Jul 1943: Milford Haven - Portsmouth
OB.235	Oct 1940: Liverpool - Dispersed	ON.228	Mar 1944: Liverpool - NYC
HX.93	Dec 1940: Halifax - Liverpool	HX.286	Apr 1944: NYC - Liverpool
OB.268	Jan 1941: Liverpool - Dispersed	HX.292	May 1944: NYC - Liverpool
BHX.108	Feb 1941: Bermuda - Joined HX.108	ON.235	May 1944: Liverpool - NYC
HX.108	Feb 1941: Halifax - Liverpool	ON.241	Jun 1944: Liverpool - NYC
OB.305	Apr 1941: Liverpool - Dispersed 54.30N 22.22W	HX.299	Jul 1944: NYC - Liverpool
HX.127	May 1941: Halifax - Liverpool	ON.247	Aug 1944: Liverpool - NYC
BHX.127	May 1941: Bermuda - Joined HX.127	HX.304	Aug 1944: NYC - Liverpool
OB.338	Jun 1941: Liverpool - Dispersed	ON.253	Sep 1944: Liverpool - NYC
EC.34	Jun 1941: Southend - Clyde	ONS.35	Oct 1944: Liverpool - Halifax
FS.508	Jun 1941: Methil - Southend	SC.158	Oct 1944: Halifax - Liverpool
WN.135	Jun 1941: Clyde - Methil	HX.321	Nov 1944: NYC - Liverpool
HX.142	Aug 1941: Halifax - Liverpool	ON.274	Dec 1944: Southend - NYC
ON.11	Aug 1941: Liverpool - Dispersed	SC.165	Jan 1945: Halifax - Liverpool
HX.151	Sep 1941: Halifax - Liverpool	ON.286	Feb 1945: Liverpool - NYC
BB.85	Oct 1941: Belfast Lough - Milford Haven	SC.170	Mar 1945: Halifax - Liverpool
ON.28	Oct 1941: Liverpool - Dispersed 42.23N 58.44W	ON.296	Apr 1945: Liverpool - NYC

### Images

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- Image 3 is from a newspaper cutting but the origin is not known
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