

The Anglican Historical Society of New Zealand *Te Rōpu Hītori o te Hāhi Mīhinare ki Aotearoa*

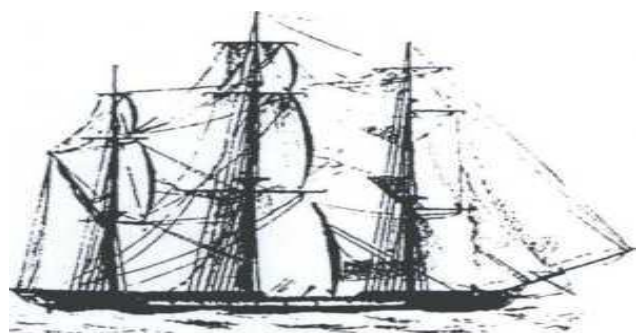
Bound for the Antipodes - A Chaplain's Voyage on the Canterbury, 1851

The Reverend Edward Eade's Voyage to Lyttelton on the Canterbury Association Ship 'Canterbury'

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The **Reverend Edward Eade's** voyage to Lyttelton on the Canterbury Association ship Canterbury came to my notice while researching the family history of my maternal great-great-Grandfather William Vincent who, with his wife and family, travelled on the same ship. William and Elizabeth (nee Crocker), from Bishopsteignton near Teignmouth, Devonshire, also boarded the Canterbury on the Thames with their five children (ranging from two years to eleven) and sailed from Gravesend on 21st June 1851. The passage ended exactly four months later when they anchored in Lyttelton Harbour on 20th October.



The Vincent family settled initially in Papanui and then moved near Rangiora, where William farmed for many years and as 'a staunch Anglican' supported the parish church of St John's, Rangiora.¹

Edward Eade was a Chaplain for the Canterbury Association, and his journal of this voyage is held in the Aotearoa New Zealand Centre of Christchurch City Libraries. Michael Blain's research² informs us that Eade was born in Hitchin (Herts) in 1824 and died, aged 58 years, in Torquay, Devon. A graduate of Oxford (Balliol

College) he was made deacon at St. James, Westminster in 1848, and ordained as priest the following year. He returned to England following the voyage in the Canterbury, and three years later is found ministering as an army chaplain in the Crimean War.

As is well known, the Canterbury Association's colonial plan was under the weighty patronage of the established Church of England. Archbishop Sumner of Canterbury and Archbishop Whately of Dublin, joined with the bishops of Oxford, London, Winchester, Exeter, Ripon, St David's, and other prominent clergy and laity as patrons.

The Association's aim was to provide an Anglican character to the colony with religious provisions to build a balanced and attractive colony. As the Bishop of Norwich, Samuel Hinds, (a member of the Management Committee of the Association) expressed it at a public meeting in Ipswich: '... above all it was an enterprise which sought to infuse a sacred and hallowing spirit into all the other elements of society, by entwining with England's other institutions that which was especially her boast — her dearest Church.'³

While it would be an exaggeration to describe Edward Eade's journal as an exciting document, it gives some picture of life on an emigrant vessel, and the challenges to passengers, chaplain and crew of such a passage under sail. But one should look elsewhere for a fuller description of their daily life and ordeals.

Like the First Four Ships of the 'Canterbury Pilgrims', the Charlotte Jane, Randolph, Sir

George Seymour and the Cressy ten months before, the Canterbury sailed from Gravesend with its complement of emigrants, anchored overnight, and began the voyage from the Thames estuary the following day. It was Sunday, raining heavily, and as the ship got under way Eade reported such 'confusion' that it was 'impossible to celebrate divine service.' But by afternoon he could conduct prayers in the steerage 'with nearly the whole of the passengers of all classes attending' - their presence perhaps encouraged by anticipation of the perceived and real perils of their four-month passage to the antipodes.⁴

General supervision of school classes appears to have been included in the Chaplain's duties in addition to his liturgical and pastoral ministry. A Miss Dyer had been appointed schoolmistress, with an assistant, Mr. Parsons, whose primary role was 'to keep order.' As Eade's journal unfolds, it is clear that the exigencies of the weather caused great difficulties for schooling as well as for worship. The stated intention was to hold classes normally 10:30 to noon, then 2:30 until 4:00 p.m. but the journal notes 'thin' attendance frequently due to weather and seasickness.

Perhaps, assuming that after ten days at sea all would have got their 'sea legs', Eade made bold to announce a service on deck on Sunday 6th July. However, he had not yet learned to consult the deck officers regarding shipboard routines. Captain Edwards had to inform the Chaplain that regulations required 'daily cleaning of the decks', and the time did not suit, a ruling that Eade accepted with good grace for in other respects the skipper had been supportive of his ministry.

Clearly Eade preferred to conduct services on deck so that the whole ship's complement could attend. He did not wish to disadvantage or exclude steerage migrants in favour of cabin passengers or deck officers by holding services under shelter in smaller areas such as the cuddy

or saloon - normally off limits to lesser mortals in steerage.⁵ Occasionally the weather was kind, but on other occasions he would need compromise. But on 20th July all was well - full morning service was conducted on deck, with school held in the afternoon, and evening prayers at 5:00 p.m. The weather broke the following day with heavy rain requiring the hatches to be closed, rendering it 'too dark and close to attempt school.' A few stalwart children had appeared, but it was 'too rough to do much' and classes were cancelled for the next three days, it was 'so rough and rainy.' Below decks, in cramped, humid conditions with restive or seasick young ones, it must have been especially trying: 'For the steerage it has been impossible to do anything owing to the crowd of people below and the darkness occasioned by keeping down the hatches.'

The Sundays, 27th July and 3rd August must have seemed exceptional, for the Chaplain notes with delight that Matins was said on deck, then the 'hymn for the sacrament sung' and Holy Communion celebrated with 22 communicants - an increase of eight he notes with satisfaction.

On Tuesday 5th August, tragedy struck: 'In the afternoon the school assembled but was soon broken up by the occurrence of a most melancholy accident. At abt. three o'clock, the cry of 'a man overboard' was raised. The poor fellow had fallen off the flying jib boom, clean under the bows of the ship. It is thought that he must have been struck as the ship passed him as he never uttered a cry ... This event it may be supposed has cast a gloom over the whole ship. The sailors in particular.'

If a service of commendation or memorial service was held it is not mentioned. But pastoral concern is not absent in Eade's ministry. He records an outbreak of conflict in the steerage, implicating the matron and the surgeon's assistant and, having taken the initiative to bring reconciliation, his journal notes apparent

success. His disposition towards the crew in the fo'c'sle ⁶ improves since he observes 'receiving great civility' from them - perhaps he had misjudged them, he writes. He records his concern for Miss Dyer the schoolmistress who 'took ill on 25 August and a week later is still unwell', causing him some anxiety as he believed her state to be 'rather critical' and even doubted her ability to resume teaching when her condition improved. He attends her daily, reads to her and uses the prayers in the Visitation Offices. Perhaps she has 'done herself harm,' he reflects, by having taken her duties too seriously in the demanding conditions. But by Monday, 8 September, she was on the mend, no doubt a relief for the girls in her care who meantime had been charged with learning the Prayer Book Collects!

A few days after the sailor's fatal fall, an exciting distraction for the children occurred: 'shark alarm!' A large shark had been hooked, and the cry went up just as school gathered. All else was forgotten 'in the excitement of landing him,' by which time it was too late to assemble the school again - the pupils delight can readily be imagined!

Clearly by late August (he notes Saint Bartholomew's Day) - the Canterbury is in higher latitudes. The hatches are now battened down and the weather is colder. In a near gale and considerable seaway, the steerage is in confusion with water below decks after seas were shipped during the night. 'Sunday 31st August: sea very high in the morning and the 'tween decks very wet. In this weather everything is behind hand, and the emigrants cannot get themselves clean, and make their preparations for dinner; no time for morning service ... [but] the greater part of passengers assembled in the steerage [at 2 p.m.] and I performed full service, not without difficulty. I did not announce the sacrament, as it wd. be perfectly impossible to celebrate it during the continuance of these gales.'

Much better he concludes, to await 'more settled

and warmer weather by and by ... to ensure the decent celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.'

But by 7th September he logs three weeks of bad weather. He assembled passengers in steerage for worship on Trinity XII but had just begun when the rain poured down and the main hatch had to be closed. One imagines that with a rolling ship and the hatches closed it was hardly conducive to worship, but he delivered his sermon and decided against shortening the service by omitting the Litany, after all he reasoned, 'this Litany seems to me so peculiarly suited to our case, being so full of home allusions as well as petitions for things most necessary to ourselves that I determined to retain it, and cut out the communion office.' Unfortunately, the passengers' opinions are not recorded!

When the ship's doctor, Dr White, reported that the recently born Metcalfe child's life was in danger, Eade lacked confidence on how to proceed, but on reflection found a conservative answer: 'I forgot before leaving England to enquire what form of Baptism it would be proper to administer on board ship. It seems to me that I have no right to use the form of Public Baptism in a not only unconsecrated but unlicensed place of worship. My opinion tallies with that of those whom I have consulted on the subject, and I have therefore determined to use the office for Private Baptism in all cases, giving instructions to the parents to have the children subsequently received into the congregation and stating the fact in the Register.'

Two little girls were also baptised, Frances Fendal and Alice Winsett whose mother was 'churched'⁷ as were Mrs Metcalfe and Mrs Spills [sic?]. On 8th October Thomas Tassie, sailmaker departed this life and was 'committed to the deep.'

The Canterbury was now hastening to its destination. Land was sighted on Thursday 16th October, probably the coast of Otago. Sunday 19th, the customary 11:00 am service was

conducted in steerage. But then: 'Came in sight of Banks Peninsula about two o'clock. The general excitement & confusion & the noise of getting up the chain cables I thought it advisable not to celebrate divine service in the afternoon ... On Monday 20th evening we anchored in Port Lyttleton, after a very long but prosperous voyage of four calendar months. Edward Eade.'

Although there is no prefatory comment to suggest that this was a formal report, one might infer from its contents and the manner in which it is signed off that it was written for the eyes of those with responsibility for the Canterbury Association's immigration programme. The journal lacks the interest of a more personal diary and is principally concerned with the Chaplain's responsibilities: the conduct of services, the school classes, and the exigencies of weather in relation to both. Eade does not log any navigational details regarding the Canterbury's progress to the southern hemisphere and the reader is at a loss to know whether the vessel is off the Azores, the Cape of Good Hope or in the 'roaring forties.' One may reasonably conclude that it is a straightforward narrative of his liturgical and pastoral duties composed for the eyes of those to whom he was accountable.

Edward Eade's journal hints in a few places that he may carry some influence attributable to the Oxford Movement — which would be understandable given the period he was at Balliol College. He notes the Saints' Days and the Sundays of the Church Calendar. He is concerned that the 'Eucharistic sacrifice' is celebrated decently and in order. He has scruples regarding baptism in an unconsecrated place and chooses to regard that rite as private, to be completed in a 'proper church before a proper congregation.'

Eade was also scrupulous regarding the place in which his services were conducted showing reluctance to be co-opted by those with status or money. Had worship been held in saloon or cuddy it would have excluded the steerage passengers. To his credit he resisted the appeal of more privileged company in a comfortable sheltered venue in order that the services would be accessible to everyone including those in steerage. One would like to think that when a congregation of eighteen communicants produced a generous offertory collection of £5/1/6 - an average of more than 5/- per person - it was a positive endorsement of the Reverend Edward Eade's shipboard ministry to them.

Endnotes

¹ The youngest child, Mary Elizabeth (Bessie) married the Revd Charles John Merton, on 3 Oct 1872. The families were fellow parishioners and personal friends. Merton was Vicar of Woolston, Merivale, then in the north, Kaitaia and Helensville where he died in 1916. (Charles' grand-nephew Thomas Merton was the well-known Trappist monk and author). Bessie died in Otara in 1941. See *G. R. Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies*, Canterbury Museum Library)

² Michael Blain, *Clergy in the Diocese of Christchurch, 1850-1890*. (3rd edition, Feb. 1995)

³ *Canterbury Papers*, No. 4, p.90f. Cited in Colin Amodeo, *The Summer Ships, being an account of the first six ships sent out from England by the Canterbury Association in 1850-1851*, (Christchurch, 2000), p.179.

⁴ To those unfamiliar with the term, 'steerage' passengers were in quarters below decks, inferior accommodation for assisted passengers or those paying lowest rates. Conditions were often crowded

with lines of bunks and cooking facilities provided, but passengers frequently had to cook for themselves.

⁵ The class system of the mother-country seemed simplified to two grades in the earliest days of Canterbury settlement: 'emigrants' came out on assisted or other reduced fares in steerage; 'colonists' could pay for a cabin and even have a little over to purchase some land.

⁶ The 'forecastle' on merchant and emigrant vessels was the sometimes-raised portion of the forward upper deck. The crew's quarters were most often below this deck.

⁷ *The Book of Common Prayer* service entitled '*The Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth commonly called the Churching of Women*'