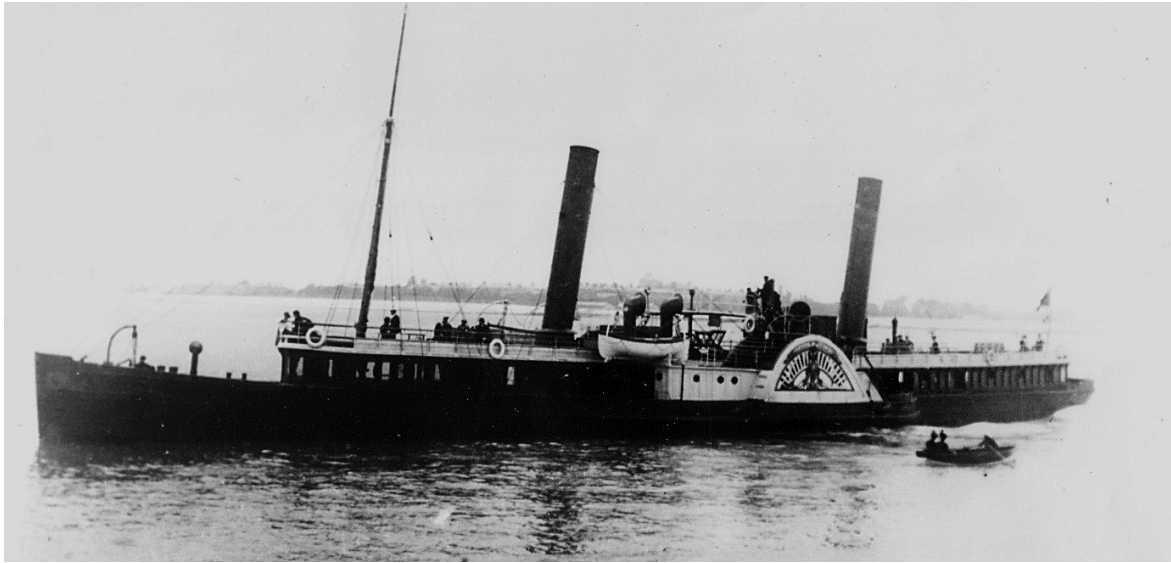




Green with sea-sickness on the 'Dandie Dinmont'



It is Friday 20th September 1889 and the staff of the upstart Ventnor newspaper 'The Gnat' are taking an excursion on the paddle steamer 'Dandie Dinmont' to celebrate the twelfth number to appear since first publication. This is the reporter's story.

Punctually at 11.30 the 'Dandie' steamed alongside Ventnor Pier, and a quarter of an hour afterwards she saucily danced over the waves to the west. A fresh breeze was blowing, and wind and tide were dead against us. Off Woody several passengers began to grow curious and inspected the beautiful blue of the sea, even looking over the bulwarks to obtain a better view. When abreast of St. Catherine's Lighthouse the number of inspectors increased wonderfully, and here evidently the sea is of a greener nature, for that colour was remarkably reflected in the faces of the curious ones who leaned over the side.

How did the 'Dandie' behave? Why, she breasted the seas and laughed at them. It was simply lovely, and those who remained on the top decks thoroughly enjoyed the lively motion. The spray flew about, the sun causing rainbows to appear, and many a laugh was heard as now and again passengers came aft with coats well sprinkled with salt water. From Blackgang we had a sea to test the 'Dandie' as a pleasure steamer indeed; and rounding the Needles, we came to the conclusion that the 'Dandie' is a remarkably safe and pleasant vessel. There was a doubt at first whether she could possibly land us at Alum Bay Pier, but after one furtive trial, and backing out, our skipper succeeded, and we landed.

Here the little group of staff made course for the Hotel and ordered sandwiches. There they found passengers from the 'Rocket' coach (from Ventnor) enjoying dining. After half an hour waiting, the sandwiches failed to appear, so they returned to the ship and all partook of a cold luncheon for two shillings paid for by the publisher. Few other passengers were at table, even though the vessel was motionless beside the pier, most having wished to pass the landing time on terra firma. When the hour came for the 'Dandie' to sail, two passengers decided to take the coach back, while the rest wondered and worried how the ship would behave with sea and wind in her favour. Although the seas came following each other, at times assuming imposing proportions, they were back at Ventnor Pier in two hours. All came to conclude that the 'Dandie' was a good seaworthy boat. This was welcome news for its owners, the 'Southsea, Ventnor, Sandown and Shanklin Steamboat Company', who were desperate for new people to subscribe for shares so that the 'Dandie' could remain solvent, be re-boilered over winter and continue its excursions the following year.



The picture here shows the twin-funnelled 'Dandie Dinmont' departing Ventnor Pier in calm seas. The paddle steamer had been built on Clydeside in 1866, 197 feet in length and 22 feet in beam. She had been acquired by the Company in 1888 for pleasure excursions on the Solent. She was finally laid up after the 1900 season and scrapped in 1902.