

Log of Turret Ship  
Cerberus. by James L. Breaks  
Lun Aug 27

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Built 1869 by Palmer & Co. River Type  
Designed for 4 1/2" draught aft 1/2"  
" leading keelson with 3 months provisions & water  
16ft 2" Fore 16ft 1/2" aft

# Unofficial Log Book for the Delivery Voyage of HMVS Cerberus

By James Lennox Breaks



James Breaks & his wife Alice.

109 of the Subret ship CERBERUS  
England to Australia  
by James Lennox Breakes,  
Junior Engineer

Built 1869 by Palmers Co, River Tyne

Draught- Forward 14 ft-2 in  
" Aft 14 ft 6 in

leaving Chatham with 5 months provisions  
and water

Draught- For'd 16 ft-2 in  
" Aft 16 ft 1/2 in

Capt- W. H. Panter R.N.

Chief Officer - Wigney Capt.

Second " - Marsden "

Third " - Levy "

Chief Engineer - H. Leslie R.N.

1st " - Brodie

2nd " - Christian

3rd " - Elliott

Junior " - Breakes J.L.

" " - Spring

" " - Smith

Ships Maward & Purser - Astin (spelling?)

no of days from leaving Chatham till anchored

off Williamstown  $1\frac{1}{2}$  days.

Plymouth to Melbourne  
153 days.

no of days under steam 113 days.

— — — — —

log commences: —

1870

September 26

Joined ship, signed agreement.

27

Signed with ship master

28

Putting on cylinder covers. Lying off Chatham Dockyard. Received first pay £16. agents for me to insure my life (4)

29

Working on engines

X

30

Working on engines. life insurance agents down by the score

October 1

Working on engines

2

Sunday spent in hondow (Hobbs came down last train)

3

Cleaning up boilers

X

4

Cleaning up boilers. life insurance agents on to me again

5

Packing glands.

- 6 Working on engines, preparing for getting under weigh. Commenced to mess on board.
7. Started watch keeping, laid fires for lighting up. Kept on board first time. men clearing out, swimming to the shore with clothes on their backs, do not like ship
- 8 On leave
- \* 9 Sunday spent at home, trouble with the men.
- 10 10-15 lit fires. 12 noon left moorings and steamed down river Medway. 1pm anchored at Folly Point. I was stationed at telegraph  
x x x Turret engines. 8pm finished with steam, wrote up log, turned in 10-30.
- \* 11 Examining boilers, trying telegraph from conning tower to engine room. Wrote up log. Trouble with men.
- 12 On watch 8pm. writing up log. Raised steam in aft starboard boiler, condensing. off duty 8pm. Took contents of oil tanks.

- 13 On watch in charge of engine room, condensing. Taking average of coals (buckets) 170 lb. per bucket. Dockyard men commenced to work on alteration to magazine.
- 14 On watch. Condensing 4 am to 8 am. steam 15 lb. On from 8 pm to 12 midnight. Beautiful view of Northern light.
- 15 On watch from 8 am till noon. Had all small engines going to try ventilation. Slept on board. Men working on magazine.
- 16 Sunday out 8 am. cleaning up for inspection and Church. Had service on board. Rev. Mr White came down in Government-launch with father and mother, Lizzy and Anny (Amy). The choir of St. Pauls had some beautiful music. Had service on the lower deck. It was a very dirty day, rain and wind which was not very pleasant for mother and the other ladies. They left the ship 2 pm. got home all safely.

- 17 Commenced to coal ship, had charge of coaling party. 12 noon went on shore with Mr Warren, went on board "SULTAN" (HMS) first time of moving engines. Spent the evening at home. Trouble with the men
- 18 Went to Woildham, had dinner then to Maidstone. Fair day left at 8pm for home.
- 19 On board Sam. Coaling ship, 180 tons. Very wet and blowing hard. Mr Middleton dropped down dead. Star Hotel, Rainham Road, burnt down.
- 20 Finding contents of water tanks nearly 14 tons. Contents of coal bunkers 8640 cubic feet. Went to Chatham. Tug Monkey, Capt. Blakely, Elliott engineer, arrived Chatham, 10pm. All hands had gone to bed.
- 21 Arrived on board Sam. Hands cleaning engines and painting engine room.
- 22 Cleaning and painting engine room. Went to Chatham by City of Rochester

23 Sunday, spent day at home, left Sun Pier for ship 8:30, blowing hard. Mr Leslie Smith and Spring on boat. Arrived on board 10pm.

24 Lit-fires 6am. Steam 8am. Left-moorings for Sheerness 11am. Row over a buoy, thought-screw was damaged. Banked fires 1:30. Condensing Steam. H. Smith sick

\* 25 11am inspected by Admiral of Sheerness (Elliott Capt. Chamberlain Mr Earnes Inspector of Machinery, Col. Paisley. Everything working well. At-urret-engines. Condensing.

26 Condensing. Swinging ship

27 Condensing. On watch 8 till 12. Went to Chatham. Altered standard compass.

\* 28 Arrived on board 10am. Swinging ship Condensing. Trouble with men.

\* 29 On watch 4am. Left Sheerness 6am off Dover. 1pm. Rather queer steaming for Portsmouth, dirty weather from West.



30 Sunday. On watch 8 to 12. rather queer head wind. High sea, arrived Spithead 7.30 Anchored. Banked fires, blowing gale

31 Blowing a gale, too rough to proceed. under banked fires. Big lumber ship went down in night - off us on mother-bank. boarded by guard boat - "Valorous"



November 1. on watch 8 till 12. Raised steam 9am Admiral Sir J. Hope came on board.



Inspection 10.30. left Spithead 3pm, off the Needles. Beautiful day, set sails. Harry Smith a little better. Beautiful night 3am passed needles lighthouse



2. Steaming full speed all night. Out of our course off Falmouth, put back. Arrived at Plymouth Sound 6am. A fine view of Eddystone. At telegraph on flying deck a beautiful day and night. Draw fires



3. Cleaning in engine room. Aslin promoted to make out agreements for bonus Admiral Codrington on board.



X 4 Working in engine room, safety valves, glands etc  
men joined ship from London. A rough lot.

5 6 pm. Went on shore, called on Mrv x x  
Went to Plymouth Theatre, slept on George  
Harry Smith with me

X 6. Out 9 am, went to Saetash in Sheerness a  
curious place saw suspension bridge, Brunel's.  
6 pm, on board H. Smith came

X 28 men absent from duty without leave.

7 lit fires 9 am. left Plymouth 10-30, passed  
Eddystone fine night, full speed.

8 8 to 12 watch. Bolts in coupling loose.  
Had to stop twice 12 pm. passed Cape  
Ushant

X 9. Everything working well. Tumbling about  
a great deal. Everybody anxious, do not  
know what she would be like in a  
sea way. Some very nervous after the  
"Captain" disaster.

- 10 High sea, ship rolling a great deal. Sick
- 11 Ship rolling very much. Better.
12. Sighted Cape Finister 3am, wind fresh  
75 hours crossing the Bay of Biscay.
13. 8 to 12 watch. Taking diagrams 50 Rev.  
Fine night, sea smoother. Sail fore and aft.
- 14 Very fine, no wind, going 5 knots. 50 Rev.
- x 15 Rain and strong winds, cleared off at noon off  
Cape St Vincent - large monastery on point -  
near light-house. Very bluff and rugged  
into Trafalgar Bay. 3pm blowing hard,  
passed Cadiz, head wind
- 16 Fine fresh breeze starboard quarter. Going  
about 7 knots. lighthouse in sight. a  
beautiful sunset
- 17 4am arrived at Gibraltar. Coaling ship,  
In charge of coaling on shore in  
Dockyard. Had a look around the Town  
Some of all nations in market-place.

- 18 Coaling ship, natives or Maclere very slow, lakies too much noise at dinner, singing and shouting but no fighting. 4pm, finished coaling returned on board
- 19 Saturday, finished coaling on board 5pm. Took on board 240 tons, drawing stores from yard.
20. Fine weather. Tam, left Gibraltar. Passed an American frigate
- 21 Fine weather, passed large sailing ship. Splendid view of Alps, snow capped. All sail set, going  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots, 2016 steam 60 Rev. 40 buckets of coal a watch.
- 22 Beautiful day, fair wind.
- 23 Beautiful day, going nearly 8 knots
- 24 Fine weather, passed the rock the "Avenger", was wrecked off. on.
- 25 Head wind, nasty sea, took 3 knots off us. Very slow work.

26. Head wind, high sea. Malta lighthouse in sight - 12pm.

x  
27 7:30 arrived Malta, anchored in Grand Harbour No 6 Buoy. Strongly fortified place. On shore after dinner with Mr Williamson and Campbell. Went to St John Church, beautiful place, Governors House, Armoury. Down vault and saw the dead and dried up monks. 5:30 arrived on board. Condensing. Great place for bells, all sizes and tones.

x  
28 Nearly all hands on shore, broke out of ship. On duty in dockyard, and coaling yard. Took in 200 tons of coal, and 600 bags, filled up both waist of ship. Boat coming off to ship full of men upset. Shannon drowned, a good man.

29 On shore about stores. Went to opera with Mr Brodie. Men still on shore breaking leave. Had guard boat rowing round us day and night, great trouble with men & Mr Spring

|| 30 On shore about-stores, 10 men sent to prison

December 1. On shore, dockyard about-stores. 10 men sent to prison. Had a good look around Malta in the evening

2. On shore, dockyard stores etc.

3. On shore at dockyard. Evening went to opera with Mr Williamson, Campbell and Mr Allen-Constructor of Malta dockyard.

4 Sunday, attended church on board. After dinner went to ~~xx~~ de Vxia to the church of St. Pauls cave, into and all over the catacombes, a wonderful place, over the church Florian about 7pm. on board enjoyed ourselves very much

5 Laid fires, run up boilers cleaning. Turned in 8pm.

6. a gale of wind, too bad to go to sea. Cleaning up engine room.

7. Cleaning engine room. Blowing too hard  
to get under weigh

8 Still very bad outside.

9. Very dirty, too bad to proceed. Found that-  
old gentleman purser? listening outside of  
my cabin to Smith and myself, conversation

10 Too dirty to get under weigh

11 6am left maela Grand Harbour,  
beautiful morning.

12 Beautiful weather, going about 7 knots  
50 Rev. 15 lb steam. 25 lbs of 200 lb.  
each watch.

13 Fine weather, regular Mediterranean.

14 1pm. working with one pair of engines,  
disconnected couplings of the other pair.  
one fire out in each boiler. Going 5 knots  
before disconnecting 3 knots after  
with 16 buckets per watch, 16 lb steam,  
50 Rev.

- x 15 Beautiful day passed the island of Andrea?
16. Fine day, tiller rope carried away. Took out escape valves in cylinders. Condensing.
17. Fine weather everything working well
- 18 " " " " " "
19. 3pm anchored off Port-Said. Very flat-  
place, fine lighthouse and breakwater.  
Drawing 15-ft-5 ins For'd 16-ft-3½ ins Aft.
20. Went on shore to order coals. Took in  
210 tons. Examining Port-aft-quadre  
condenser. The Surret-ship ABYSSINIA  
for Bombay arrived at 1pm. Our crew  
gave them a good reception, have a  
black hired crew. English officers paid  
too much for the run out. Not rigged  
like Cerberus. Went on board, she was in  
a very dirty state.
- 21 4am, left Port-Said and proceeded  
through Suez Canal. a poor entrance,  
took on pilot Mr Emanuel, got through

a sister  
ship  
of  
Cerberus  
x



EV  
DANTAKA  
E-BANK?



about 40 miles and made fast for night. At telegraph all day. Had a good look at scenery, all sand. Abreast of the village of E<sup>xx</sup>marra. Banked fires, was kept awake all night through howling of arab dogs. In getting away first the CERBERUS can claim to be the first iron clad to pass through the canal. Towed through by big tug boat, did 30 miles.

\* 22 6:30 under weigh through Lake Tennesia? with the town of S<sup>xxxx</sup> and Pasha Palace on x x x 4:30 run on bank, hard and fast, had to warp off, moored for the night. Pilot Mr Boil Boulter did 20 miles. E<sup>xx</sup> of the sun. Fouled mooring of chain dredge.

23. 6:15 under weigh. 1pm passed through Bitter lakes. 6:30 off Suez, very narrow and marshy, did 32 miles.

24 anchored off Suez, took in 40 tons of coal. Spring a great trouble.

25 Christmas Day

6.30 left Suez, took on board Arab pilot. A fine ~~day~~ big handsome man lived on upper deck. Did all his own cooking a fine fresh breeze behind us. A very pleasant day excepting for the Spring.

Going 50 Rev. 20 lb steam 20 buckets of 200 lbs per watch.

26 Going 50 Rev., disconnected port engine. Passed Mount-Seni, snow capped, passed rock on which CARNATIC was lost. Very bad cold.

27 Going 55 Rev., passed P. & O. Steamer SUMATRA. 2pm, very hot - 112° in Engine room, 138° in stokehold.

28 Going 50 Rev., very hot - 120° in engine room

+ 29 Going 50 Rev., a fine breeze. The immense? sick, took charge of watch.

30 Everything working well. Very hot -

31 Fine breeze. New Years night - a great-ringing of bells.

1871

- January 1. A very hot New Years day,  $125^{\circ}$  in the engine room,  $140^{\circ}$  in the stokehold.
2. Very hot,  $125^{\circ}$  in engine room,  $141^{\circ}$  in stoke hold.
3. Very strong hot winds. Getting very trying can hardly breathe below, can not keep steam  $128^{\circ}$  in engine room  $142^{\circ}$  in stoke hold
4. Strong winds, can not get any sleep.
5. Passed through the Straits of Babel  
Man x x (dead?)
6. 7:30, anchored off Rden a black looking place. Very hot in engine room. Steamed into inner moorings 145
7. Coaling, took on board 450 tons. 6 am commenced, finished 7:30<sup>am</sup> the 8<sup>th</sup>.
8. Very hot, went on shore in the evening, drove out to tanks, the contents are 7,700,000 galls. cut-out of the solid rock.

The sale yard of camels and the native town are very curious places. After coaling ship drew 17ft-4ins aft. 16ft-6ins Forward.

9. Examining Starboard forward condenser. Very hot, not a breath of wind. Ship full of natives sewing feathers etc
- 10 Examining condenser
- 11 Examining condenser, very hot.
- 12 Packing glands.
13. on glands, adjusting counters? Condensing, preparing for getting under weigh
- 14 Sam. left Nden very hot. Had to stop to pack glands. Smith had to ease off bearings, going 50 Rev 15/16 steam.
- 15 ~~From~~ Sunday. Fine day, fore and aft-sails set. 55 Rev.
- 16 Fine day, slight breeze

17 No wind, moved turrets.

18 No wind, moved turrets

19 Steady breeze

20 Steady breeze, everything working well

21 Steady breeze, fine weather.

22 " " "

23 " " "

24 " " "

25 " " "

26 " " "

27 " " "

X 28 Raining, first rain since leaving Gibraltar. Passed a X and through quantity of spawn

29 Sunday 1-pm. went on to 60 Rev. very hot.

30 Very hot, can not get a sleep. Ventilation engines not working to save coal. Can hardly breathe. Paintwork in cabin turning brown colour. Bad air.

31 Arrived at Point-de-Galle Spm, anchored.

February 1. Packing glands and coaling ship, took in 450 tons.

2. Working on engines

3. Working on engines

4. 5.30 am left Point-de-Galle. Smith had his fingers crushed in Port engines. Drawing 16 ft. 4 ins forward, 17 ft. 1 ins aft.

5 Going 55 Rev. Weather fine

6. Going 55 Rev Weather fine

7. Beautiful weather, very hot, 130° in stokehold.

8 Fine weather

- 9 1:15 stopped St. engines. 2:45 Working St. and stopped Pt. 3:15 working both engines, 55 Rev. Fine weather
- 10 Fine weather
- 11 Fine weather
- 12 Fine weather. Smiths very bad.
- 13 Fine weather
- 14 Fine weather. Very trying below hot.
- 15 Noon, passed a large island, Malays in boat came off from shore. Had to shorten sail. Blowing very hard and tropical rain about 5pm.
- 16 Passed small islands, very pretty in the distance. Near the mainland of the Island of Java.
- 17 Passed Dutch dockyard. 5:30 anchored off Batavia in Batavia Roads. Rain small.

- 18 Cleaning up engine room
- 19 On board all day, very hot and quite.
- 20 Working on Port-aft condenser. Coaling 310 tons.
- 21 Working on condenser
- 22 Had a pull in ships dinghy. Went on board B.I. mail boat.
23. Pulled to shore up canal in dinghy with Brodie, Elliott, and Smith, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to entrance of Canal. 4 to 5 miles up canal went on tram drawn by 4 small horses. A most beautiful place. People live on barges along canal. Returned on board tired out and not pleased. Dutch man of war hailed us and sent guard boat to see what ship we belonged to.
- 24 Very hot in engine room, working on engines.
- 25 Left Batavia 6am, fine weather.



26 Blowing fresh, Rev-60 blowing very hard towards night.

27 Blowing a hurricane. Had a narrow escape of being Nonet, they thought I had been washed overboard or crushed by the spare topmast breaking away from the lashings. I was sent to replace a bunker cover the sea had washed away. The sea was pouring down below. It was a very long time before I could get back to the hatchway, had to cling to top of turret.

28 Blowing a gale, very high sea. Ship unmanagable, rolling, everybody in  $\times$  a b e as no safety of ship. Washed 70 to 80 tons of coal off the deck. Had to rig life lines in stokehold.

March 1. Dull morning, blowing very hard

2. Head strong wind and high sea.

3. Head strong wind and high sea.

- 4 Wind hauled round a very high and broken sea
- 5 Strong head wind
- 6 Strong head wind, ship rolling very much
7. Strong head sea wind.
- 8 Same sort- of weather. Going 2, 3 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  knots.
9. Same sort- of weather
10. Same sort- of weather. Skiffing below, all ports and hatchway covered to keep water out of ship
- 11 Very dirty weather
- 12 Same weather, had enough of it-
- 13 " " " " "
- 14 Brodie 1st-engineer Sakow ill. on watch with Chief, Mr Leslie.

15 Sighted the Australian coast having intended to go on to King Georges Sound through having such bad weather and loss of so much coal, made for Swan River, West-Australia.

16 Daylight in sight of Rottnest Island lighthouse. Took on board pilot- 11.20 anchored off Fremantle

17 Employed on telegraph and glands

~~18~~ Coaled ship 80 tons in 24 hours

x 18 Governor Weild, Governor of W. Australia, visited ship, other visitors enquiring for friends. Ship searched by shore police before night.

x 19 7.50 <sup>7.750</sup> left moorings. Pilot left us off Rottnest-Island.

20 Fine weather passed Cape Leeuwin.

21 Fine weather.

- 22 Arrived King Georges Sound. a beautiful harbour. 6.40 am anchored.
- 23 Employed on engines coaling ship, 340 tons.
- 24 Coaling ship
- 25 In engine room, found sailor down ~~store~~ store room, reported same fine xx hing lost lantern
- 26 Sunday. Went on shore with Smith in ship's boat. went to church, walked up hill forgetting about no twilight, had a trouble to get back to Hotel. Saw first native man and women. Smith had arm in sling. I had to make the steering. 8.30 onboard.
- 27 Heavy gale, had to let-go another anchor.
- 28 Blowing hard employed in engine room.
- 29 Stopping leak in boiler.

30 2:40 left the Sound, the Beaumont-  
from Cardiff arrived.

31 Fine day, 60 Rev

April 1 Fine day

2 Fine day, birthday, steaming toward  
Melbourne

3 Fine weather

4 Head wind, light-

5 Head wind, strong

6 Fresh breeze, cleaning ship.

7 Fine weather, light-rain 11 pm, Cape  
Bridgewater in sight

8 Fine head breeze

9 Sunday 2:33 pm passed Light-ship.  
Anchored near "Nelson", boys in rigging  
gave us a great welcome. Afternoon  
ship crowded with visitors. Burnt-fires  
out.

10 to 17 Clean / Cleaning ship, and ship's  
company paid off.

19 Alongside of Breakwater Pier

June 24 Hauled off pier into bay.

Aug 25 Steamed to Geelong

Sept- 15 Left Geelong for Hobsons Bay.

Sept-28 Target practice

Oct-27 Steamed to new moorings

Dec. 1 Joined Colonial Service as *x x oora*  
but had been employed on ship till  
this time.