

## **AQUITANIA'S COMMANDERS, 1914-1950**

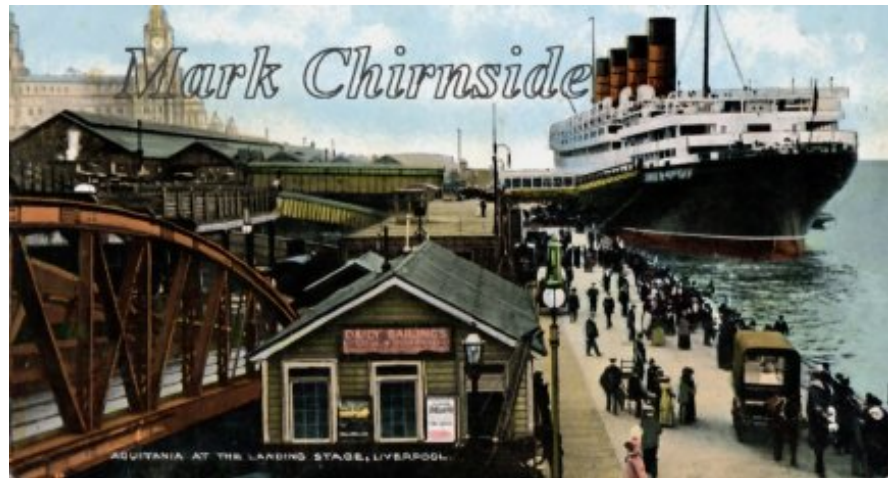
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This document is intended to be read in conjunction with the list of captains and associated documentation published in *RMS Aquitania – The 'Ship Beautiful'*. In one of the book's appendices, the most comprehensive list of *Aquitania's* commanders yet compiled was based on the crew agreements and logs for the 1914-50 period, with considerable archival work from Hilary Thomas. To complement the list, a document entitled 'Detail of Masters, 1943-49' was also included, as it differed somewhat from the crew agreements.

The list of captains given here is taken from the registry papers relating to *Aquitania* which were filed in Liverpool. In that much of it is written in the same handwriting (one person's writing for the period from 1914 to 1940 and then another person's writing for 1941 to 1949), the list was presumably compiled towards the end of *Aquitania's* time in service. It is very similar to that published in the book, yet there are some differences such as dates and the occasional omission of a captain's service (i.e. Captain Loring is not mentioned). It is hoped that the interested reader or researcher can discover the details of an individual

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*Right: An interesting colourised image of Aquitania at Liverpool's Landing Stage, issued during her early career. (Author's Collection.)*



captain's service history by means of comparing the documentation in the book and on this website, and pursue further research.

The register was handed to the Registrar of Shipping in Liverpool on February 24th 1950,<sup>1</sup>[\*] after *Aquitania* had arrived at the scrapper's yard. Compiling a list of the commanders of any of the large liners is troublesome. Even primary source material can be conflicting. Handwriting can be faded or hard to read, sometimes entirely illegible. Errors of omission can creep in, or dates can be written next to the wrong name as the researcher works through a tedious set of documents. In *Aquitania*'s case it is even more awkward owing to the length of her service. Captains' names are written as they were recorded on the original document, as are their certificate numbers; and the dates given are for when each captain signed on – repeat voyages without a change of commander are excluded, as per the original.

PORT	CAPTAIN'S NAME	CERTIFICATE NO.	DATE
Liverpool	W. T. Turner	02168	May 26th 1914
Liverpool	D. Dow	011565	May 17th 1915
Liverpool	C. A. Smith	012114	June 21st 1915
Greenock	E. T. Britten	031493	March 28th 1916
Greenock	C. A. Smith		March 31st 1916
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles	015759	March 5th 1918
Southampton	C. A. Smith		February 12th 1919
Liverpool	J. T. W. Charles		February 19th 1919
Southampton	W. R. D. Irvine	019984	August 11th 1921
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles		August 30th 1921

## Aquitania's Commanders, 1914-1950

PORT	CAPTAIN'S NAME	CERTIFICATE NO.	DATE
Southampton	E. T. Britten		August 13th 1926
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles		September 3rd 1926
Southampton	A. H. Rostron	022747	January 25th 1927
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles		February 15th 1927
Southampton	A. C. Greig	035096	April 8th 1927
Cherbourg	S. G. S. McNeil	022337	April 9th 1927
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles	April 26th 1927	April 26th 1927
Southampton	S. G. S. McNeil		August 9th 1927
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles		August 31st 1927
Southampton	A. H. Rostron		November 2nd 1927
Southampton	E. G. Diggle	025938	January 16th 1928
Southampton	J. T. W. Charles		June 27th 1928
Southampton	E. G. Diggle		July 18th 1928
Southampton	W. Prothero	025281	November 23rd 1928
Southampton	E. G. Diggle		January 22nd 1929
Southampton	W. Prothero		April 5th 1929
Southampton	E. G. Diggle		April 26th 1929
Southampton	W. Prothero		August 8th 1929
Southampton	E. G. Diggle		August 31st 1929
Southampton	W. Prothero		April 23rd 1930
Southampton	E. G. Diggle		June 26th 1930
Southampton	W. Prothero		August 28th 1930
Southampton	E. G. Diggle		September 18th 1930
Southampton	R. B. Irving	002045	August 7th 1931
Southampton	P. A. Murchie	003023	October 21st 1931
Southampton	R. B. Irving		November 4th 1931
Southampton	J. C. Townley	034482	June 16th 1932
Southampton	R. B. Irving		July 8th 1932
Southampton	J. C. Townley		September 7th 1932
Southampton	R. B. Irving		September 30th 1932
Southampton	G. Gibbons	036447	March 8th 1933

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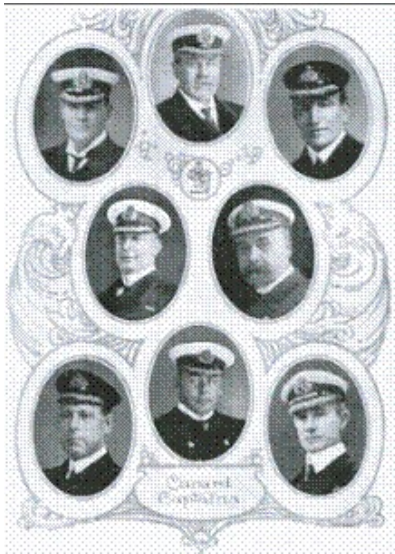
PORT	CAPTAIN'S NAME	CERTIFICATE NO.	DATE
Southampton	R. B. Irving		March 27th 1933
Southampton	G. Gibbons		June 3rd 1933
Southampton	R. B. Irving		June 23rd 1933
Southampton	J. C. Townley		April 20th 1934
Southampton	G. Gibbons		July 6th 1934
Southampton	P. R. Vaughan	030781	January 21st 1935
Southampton	G. Gibbons		April 17th 1935
Southampton	P. R. Vaughan		May 7th 1935
Southampton	R. V. Peel	031038	June 18th 1935
Southampton	G. Gibbons		September 17th 1935
Southampton	R. V. Peel		October 9th 1935
Southampton	R. B. Irving		December 31st 1935
Southampton	A. T. Brown	035106	November 4th 1936
Southampton	R. B. Irving		December 14th 1936
Southampton	G. R. Dolphin	003254	August 25th 1937
Southampton	J. C. Townley		October 5th 1937
Southampton	E. Edkin	035196	November 30th 1937
Southampton	J. C. Townley		January 5th 1938
Southampton	G. Gibbons		April 12th 1938
Southampton	J. C. Townley		May 24th 1938
Southampton	G. Gibbons		July 6th 1938
Southampton	J. C. Townley		July 26th 1938
Southampton	G. Gibbons		January 13th 1939
Southampton	J. C. Townley		January 28th 1939
Southampton	G. Gibbons		February 11th 1939
Southampton	P. A. Murchie		March 24th 1939
Southampton	J. C. Townley		April 8th 1939
Southampton	G. Gibbons		June 20th 1939
Southampton	J. C. Townley		August 9th 1939
Southampton	G. Gibbons		August 23rd 1939
Southampton	A. R. MacDonald	037036	February 14th 1940

## *Aquitania's* Commanders, 1914-1950

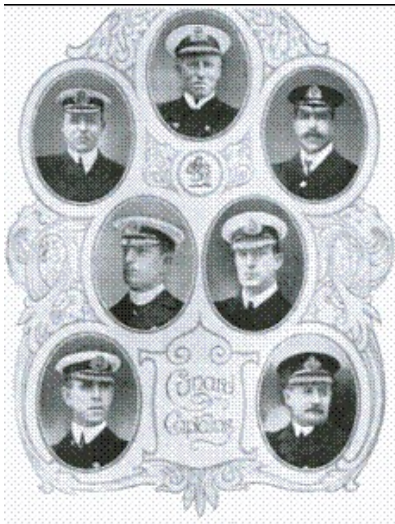
PORT	CAPTAIN'S NAME	CERTIFICATE NO.	DATE
Southampton	G. Gibbons		March 9th 1940
Sydney	W. C. Battle		February 3rd 1941
Singapore	G. Gibbons		April 25th 1941
Sydney	J. D. Snow		January 9th 1942
New York	W. C. Battle		[Undated.]
Glasgow	C. M. Ford		May 1943
Glasgow	R. B. Woolatt		November 29th 1943
Glasgow	C. M. Ford		December 21st 1943
Glasgow	C. G. Illingworth		March 23rd 1944
Glasgow	E. M. Fall		July 1st 1944
Glasgow	R. Spencer		September 13th 1944
Glasgow	W. C. Battle		October 8th 1944
Glasgow	E. M. Fall		February 2nd 1945
Glasgow	G. E. Cove		June 20th 1945
Southampton	C. M. Ford		October 16th 1945
Southampton	J. D. Snow		January 26th 1946
Southampton	A. R. MacDonald		May 14th 1946
Southampton	J. D. Snow		August 6th 1946
Southampton	G. E. Cove		March 8th 1947
Southampton	J. D. Snow		December 11th 1947
Southampton	G. E. Cove		December 29th 1947
Southampton	H. Grattidge		July 22nd 1948
Southampton	R. B. G. Wollatt		November 8th 1948
Southampton	R. G. Thelwell		March 25th 1949
Southampton	R. B. G. Wollatt		April 19th 1949
Southampton	R. G. Thelwell		August 22nd 1949
Southampton	R. B. G. Wollatt		September 29th 1949



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*Left: 'Cunard Captains.' Top row, left to right: Captain J. T. W. Charles; Captain J. C. Barr; Captain W. T. Turner; middle row, left to right: Captain C. A. Smith; Captain D. Dow; bottom row, left to right: Captain D. S. Miller; Captain W. R. D. Irvine; Captain A. H. Rostron. (Courtesy Mike Poirier.)*



*Left: More 'Cunard Captains.' Top row, left to right: Captain E. G. Diggle; Captain H. M. Benison; Captain W. Prothero; middle row, left to right: Captain G. W. Melsom; Captain S. G. S. McNeil; bottom row, left to right: Captain R. Capper; Captain R. G. Malin. (Courtesy Mike Poirier.)*

### **ENDNOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> Maritime Archives & Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum. Cunard collection, reference B/CUN/3/5/1.