Blue Jacket Painting

£465



REF: 84081

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Height: 48.24 cm (19")

Width: 58.4 cm (23")

Description

A watercolour painting of the ketch Blue Jacket in a maple frame.

The cargo ship is shown off the coastline, with a larger ship in the distance behind her to the right and the cliff edge to the left. She is named to her hull and has a name flag to her main mast and a red ensign to her second mast.

The Blue Jacket was a billyboy ketch built in 1860 at Walsoken in Norfolk but spent most of her working life with Blakeney as her home port. She worked for approximately 50 years delivering her cargo (mostly likely coal and grain) along the coastline. It was a relatively long career and she was considered fast when light of cargo but slow and wet when heavily laden. She was larger than most of the Billyboys that were distinctive to the north coast of Norfolk and was carvel built as opposed to clinker built. She had a flat bottom with round ends and straight sides in common with the other Billyboys.

The Blue Jacket first operated out of Boston before she was sold to Benjamin Nichols and then registered to Blakeney in February 1868. Nichols sold her 8 years later to Martin Page to help resolve his financial problems. She then became part of the Page & Turner partnership's fleet. The company were principally merchants, with the ships used to transport their wares. At the end of her career, around 1908, her masts were taken out and she was briefly used as a cargo lighter towed by a tug boat. She was then sold for use as a houseboat near to Morston Creek in 1911.

Research by Sue Gresham on 'Thirteen Ships of Blakeney' notes that between 1869 and 1888 the Blue Jacket's Master was William Otty Grout. This was the period that Nichols owned the ship

Captain J. Wells noted on the painting probably refers to John Wells, a Mariner of Blakeney born in 1819, or possibly his third son John F. Wells born in either 1855 or 1856, who was also a mariner. By 1881 John senior had become a Master Mariner which qualified him to captain a merchant ship. He died in 1900. During Page & Turner's ownership, Captain Robert Pells is the person mostly linked with the Blue Jacket but it is probable that Wells was either her Master before Pells or captained her under his control.

The Blue Jacket was a well-known ship locally and at least 3 painting have been made or her. An article in The Glaven Historian No.11 by Jonathan Hooton on Peter Catling's Ship Models - Part 2 discusses the Blue Jacket and states that one picture is owned by Mr. Wright of Blakeney, dated 1905 and painted by an artist named Middleton. The same artist also painted a picture owned by Anne Massingham, the granddaughter of Arthur 'Bishy' Jarvis, a crew member of the Blue Jacket for 6 years under Captain Pells. This painting might possible be that one or another done at the same time, as it shares the same title 'Blue Jacket of Blakeney Capt J Wells'. However, Anne Massingham's painting is also dated 1902, whereas this one is not dated. Another 'large scale water colour of her passing Flamborough' apparently resides in the Anchor Inn at nearby Morston.

If this painting is not that owned by Anne Massingham, it may well have been done for another unknown crew member of the Blue Jacket. It is not signed or dated but the artist was competent i...

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