

What's the Story?

What can you discover about the history of the ferries from these anecdotes?

Student Introduction

- ▶ An anecdote is a short and amusing but serious account, which may depict a real incident.
- ▶ What can you learn from the following anecdotes and stories?



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In over 140 years, Red Funnel has never lost any vessel in active service, but that's not to say there hasn't been the occasional drama!

One of the most unfortunate incidents happened to the 'Princess of Wales'. This paddler never even entered service. Whilst on trials on the river Clyde, she was sliced in half by the Spanish ship 'Balmoral Castle'. Luckily all the passengers on the 'Balmoral' survived, but 3 painters sadly lost their lives.

The 'Duchess of Yorke' began service in 1896 and served as a minesweeper in World War I. She was handed back in 1921 and had her name changed to the 'Duchess of Cornwall'. At 2045 hrs on the 18th April 1935, the 'Duchess' set off from the Royal Pier to Cowes when she struck a submerged object near Calshot Castle. Unable to contact either Southampton or Cowes she was eventually rescued by a tug the following day - much to the relief of her weary passengers! After a long service, her career ended during a German bombing raid.



One ship destined to have a career full of incident was the 'Prince of Wales'. In 1896 on a foggy morning she rammed Clarence Pier in Southsea at speed. It was reported that the pier came off worse, but luckily no one was hurt. Then in 1903 she came into contact with a submarine at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. The damage to the submarine went unreported, but the 'Prince' was holed below the waterline. In 1927, whilst backing into the fairway at Cowes, the unlucky ship collided with a schooner. In 1934 she collided with sister ship, 'Princess Helena', off Cowes, somehow both ships managed to reach port. In 1935, only 11 months after the last incident, she collided and sunk the 30 foot yacht, 'The Robin', on her maiden voyage.

Questions

1. Which paddler never even entered service, and why?
2. Using your own words, describe what happened near Calshot Castle in April 1935.
3. Which ship sunk 'The Robin'?

The 'Gracie Fields' became as popular as her namesake and was named by the popular entertainer in 1936.



In 1939 her career almost ended when involved in a freak accident with an RAF flying boat.

The plane clipped her mast but miraculously there were no injuries despite pieces of aircraft showering the passengers.

During World War II she was used by the Navy as a minesweeper and was also used in the troop evacuation of Dunkirk.

Having helped evacuate 280 troops from the beaches on the 28th May, she returned the following day for another 750, but was hit by a shell on her return journey.

HMS 'Pangbourne' tried to help and rescued all the troops, but sadly the 'Gracie Fields' later sank.

4. What Curriculum relevant materials supporting school trips to the Isle of Wight Book today with Education Destination and get full access to this and hundreds more quality resources www.edudest.uk
5. What 'showered' passengers in 1939, and why?
6. Using your own words, describe the main events in 'Gracie Fields' career.
7. How many types of sea vessel are mentioned in the text on pages 1 and 2? Write a list.
8. What is the purpose of the type of text featured on page 1 and 2?
9. Who do you think is the audience for this type of text?

