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CHANGES TO THE MANNING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN STATIONS

No sightings were made from the *Benguela* during research cruises in the same area of the current during the winters of 1979 and 1980. It may be therefore that the species does not occur there throughout the year but only during the summer and autumn months.

The author wishes to thank Captain Struthers for sending him this new sighting record and supporting photographs. He is much indebted to him for his interest in providing additional information and for allowing the record to be published.

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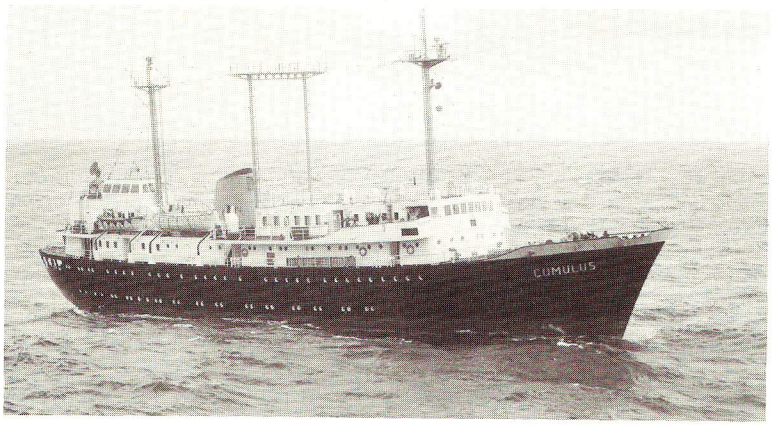
CHANGES TO THE MANNING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN STATIONS

On 11 January 1982 the British ocean weather ship *Admiral FitzRoy* will be relieved on North Atlantic Ocean Station 'Lima' at 57° 00′N, 20° 00′W by the Dutch ocean weather ship *Cumulus*. On her arrival at the British Ocean Weather Ship Base at Greenock, the *Admiral FitzRoy* (ex *Weather Adviser*, ex H.M.S. *Amberley Castle*, will join her sister ship *Admiral Beaufort* (ex *Weather Monitor*, ex H.M.S. *Pevensey Castle*) on the 'For Sale' market and this will end the ocean weather service of the former 'Castle' class frigates after almost 24 years.

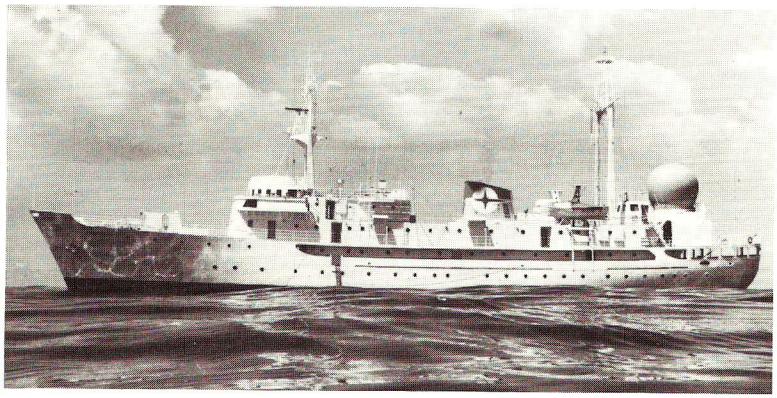
H.M.S. *Amberley Castle* and *Pevensey Castle* were both built in 1944, the former by S. P. Austin & Son of Sunderland and the latter by Harland and Wolff of Belfast. In November 1959 *Amberley Castle* was taken over by the Air Ministry for conversion to a weather ship at Blyth Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company. She was commissioned and renamed *Weather Adviser* by Lady Sutton, wife of the then Director-General of the Meteorological Office, on 22 September 1960 at Greenock. *Pevensey Castle* was also converted to a weather ship by Blyth Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company and she was commissioned and renamed *Weather Monitor* by Mrs A. C. Best, wife of the then Director of Services of the Meteorological Office, on 12 May 1961.

At that time, under the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Joint Financing Agreement on North Atlantic Ocean Stations (NAOS), the United Kingdom operated 4 ocean weather ships on two ocean stations named 'India' and 'Juliett'. This Agreement was terminated at the end of June 1975 and was replaced by a new Agreement under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The United Kingdom then ceased to operate weather ships on stations 'India' and 'Juliett' and instead manned the new ocean weather station 'Lima'. The reduction in the UK operating commitment to the NAOS network from two stations to one reduced the UK requirement for weather ships from four to two vessels and the opportunity was taken to refurbish two of the ships to extend their service. The vessels chosen were *Weather Adviser* and *Weather Monitor* and in July 1976 they proceeded to Manchester Dry Docks Company. The refurbishment consisted of improvement to accommodation, provision of a new, fully equipped modern bridge structure, the fitting of a completely new galley, conversion of the ship's electrical power supply from d.c. to a.c., automation of the boiler controls, installation



Photograph by Royal Netherlands Navy Audio-visual Services

Cumulus (Netherlands)

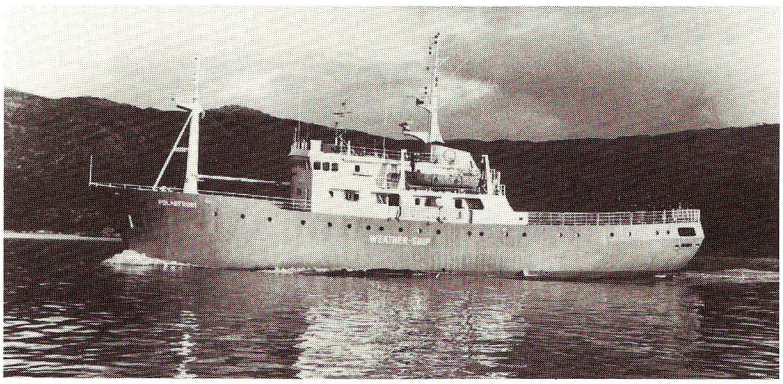


Photograph by La Météorologie Nationale

France II (France)

Photograph by USSR State Oceanographic Institute, Odessa Branch

Ernst Krenkel (USSR)



Photograph by K. Misje & Co., Bergen

Polarfront (Norway)

Photograph by Walter Pussey & Son

Starella (United Kingdom) (see page 36)

of new upper-wind-finding equipment and the complete re-equipping of the communications installation, all of which led to a substantial crew reduction.

On 14 March 1977 *Weather Adviser* was recommissioned and named *Admiral FitzRoy* by Mrs J. Walsh, wife of the Provost of Greenock and, on 25 May 1977, *Weather Monitor* was recommissioned and named *Admiral Beaufort* by Mrs M. Fletcher, wife of the new Provost of Greenock.

Until 31 December 1981 when the Joint Financing Agreement was due to expire, four Ocean Stations were manned by nine ships from five operating countries according to the following dispositions:

Ocean Station	Location	Operated by
C	52° 45′N, 35° 30′W	USSR (with three ships)
L	57° 00′N, 20° 00′W	United Kingdom (with two ships)
M	66° 00′N, 02° 00′E	Norway and The Netherlands (each with one ship)
R	47° 00′N, 17° 00′W	France (with two ships)

The following 16 countries are contracting parties to the Agreement: Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, United Kingdom, USSR and Yugoslavia. A further five countries make voluntary annual contributions to the system.

At a meeting in 1980 of the Board which administers the Agreement, the main problem was to ensure the continuation of the Ocean Station network after 31 December 1981. It had already been agreed that the network was mainly needed for:

(*a*) Provision of reference-level or calibration observations;
(*b*) Use in short-range forecasting;
(*c*) Use in numerical weather prediction for several days ahead;
(*d*) Use in climatological studies for both atmospheric and marine purposes;
(*e*) Use for marine meteorological and oceanographic services, including marine pollution monitoring programmes.

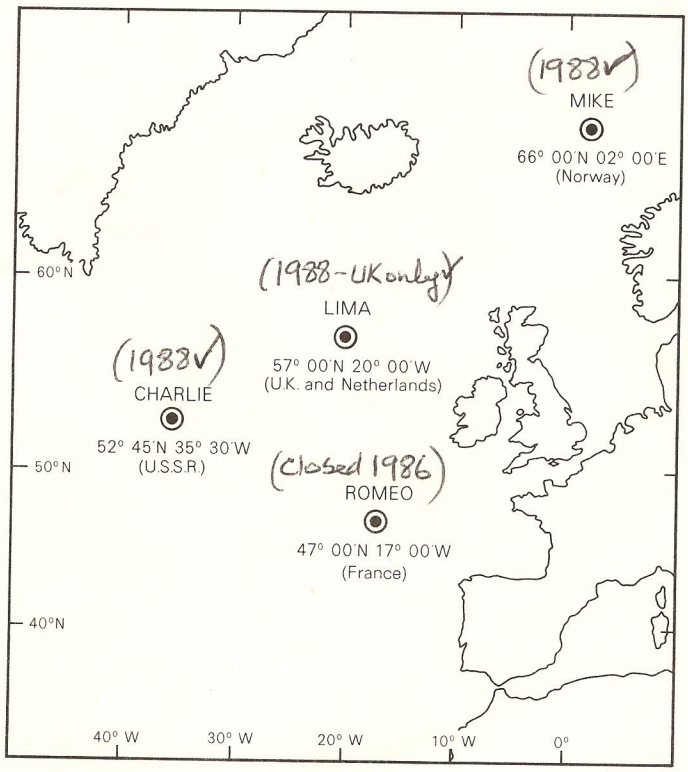
Among the many practical considerations that had to be taken into account were the cost of operating the network and the fact that both the British ocean weather ships would have to be withdrawn from service at the end of 1981 owing to their age and the resultant condition of their shell and weather-deck plating.

Earlier, the Board had considered a number of alternative ways of manning the stations but had agreed that in the next few years no alternative observing systems were likely to become operational that could adequately replace the primary services provided by the NAOS network. Therefore, it concluded that for meteorological reasons the present network of four ocean stations should be maintained at least until the end of 1985.

In order to do this and having regard to the withdrawal of the *Admiral FitzRoy* and *Admiral Beaufort* and the necessity to reduce overall costs, the Board agreed to a proposal whereby the United Kingdom would charter a ship for a period of up to four years commencing January 1982 and a reorganization of the manning of the NAOS network as follows:

Ocean Station 'C' will continue to be operated by the USSR.
Ocean Station 'L' will be operated jointly by The Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
Ocean Station 'M' will be operated by Norway alone.
Ocean Station 'R' will continue to be operated by France.

(Photographs of some of the ships which man these stations are shown between pages 32 and 33).



Map showing the location of the four stations in the NAOS network

As a consequence of this Agreement, the Meteorological Office has made arrangements to charter the diesel-electric motor vessel *Starella* owned by J. Marr & Son Ltd of Fleetwood (see photograph opposite page 33). This ship was built in 1965 in Venice as a stern trawler but in 1969 she was converted to an offshore support vessel equipped to carry submersibles. Of 1161 gross tons, she is 73 metres in length, has a beam of 11·03 metres, and a draught of 4·6 metres. Her three diesel engines drive three alternators which are connected to two electric motors which, in turn, are connected by single-reduction gearing to a single shaft on which there is a controllable-pitch propeller. She is also fitted with a bow thrust propeller. She will be manned by owner's officers and crew supplemented by meteorological and communications officers employed by the Meteorological Office. Certain modifications are being made to the vessel to equip her as an ocean weather ship and they will include the installation of a telex-over-radio communication system with which the NAOS Board has agreed to replace Morse code transmissions on all weather ships in 1982.

The *Starella* will sail on her first voyage as an ocean weather ship from Hull on about 1 February and will take over on Station 'Lima' from the *Cumulus* on 6 February. Thereafter, the *Starella* will operate out of Fleetwood where a small ocean weather ship support office has been established. When the disposal of *Admiral FitzRoy* and *Admiral Beaufort* has been effected, the Ocean Weather Ship Base at Greenock will be disbanded.

C. R. D.