

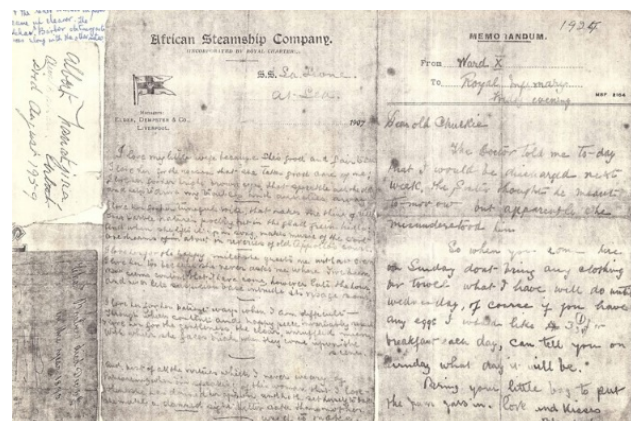
## Richard Rigg's Story



Len Rigg contacted the Homeward Bound Project to tell us about his grandfather, Richard Rigg, who was also known as Richard Salisbury Rigg. Richard was an engineer with Elder Dempster in the early years of the twentieth century and sailed on the *SALAGA* and *SIERRA LEONE*. Later, Richard became a deep sea diver and used his skills to dive on torpedo ships in 1918.

Many of the volunteers on the project told us about the wonderful qualities and particular strengths of seafarers' wives; Richard's poem to his wife, dated June 1907, certainly shows this to great effect.

A transcription of the poem can be read below.



Len told also us of an encounter between his grandfather and a local African chieftain in which Richard was asked how many children he and his wife had. Not having any children at the time, the chieftain made Richard a gift of a "voodoo" doll. Richard and his wife were then blessed with 10 children, beginning with Len's father in December 1909. The doll lay dormant - locked away in a trunk in the attic until it was inherited by Len. More recently, the female doll has been passed down to Len's eldest son. Len's son did not have any children with his first wife, but he went on to have 4 girls with his second wife after he had inherited the doll. The family's legend has it that there were initially two dolls, a male and a female, but only the female remains and so perhaps this explains the birth of 4 daughters but no sons.

POEM WRITTEN BY RICHARD RIGG TO HIS WIFE PHOEBE WHILE HE  
WAS AT SEA ON THE S.S. LA LEONE, 1907

I love my little wife because she's good and fair to me  
I love her for the reason that she takes good care of me  
I love her for the bright brown eyes that sparkle all the daY  
And they drive my troubles and anxieties away

I love her for her tuneful voice that makes me think of \_\_\_\_  
that babble nature's peetry out in the glad green hills  
And when she lifts it up in song makes music of the sort  
One dreams about in reveries of old Apollo's Court.

I love her for the happy smile she greets me with at evening  
I love her to because she never asks me where I've been  
Now seems content that I have come however late the hour  
And never lets suspicion base intrude it's visage sour

I love her for herpatient ways when I am difficult  
Through which content and happy peace invariably result  
I love her for the gentleness, the clean, unruffled mien  
With which she faces trials when they come upon the scene.

And best of all the virtues which I never weary of  
Rehearsing when I'm speaking of this woman that I love  
When she has donned her apron and set herself to bake  
She makes a damned sight better cake than mother used to make.

Written on the back of the poem was:-

To Phoebe

from Dick

Tribute to Perfection.