

THE VOYAGE OF THE MFV BONNIE ETHEL

My name is Wilfred Cromie and I am looking for crew friends from this voyage in 1954

We sailed from Kilkeel to Hoath then Vigo in Spain and got her bottom coppered our next stop Casablanca, then Agadir, Canary Islands and Safi. Our last call was Cape Verdi Islands for our last refuel before crossing Atlantic to Trinidad. I stayed and crewed her for about 9 months,



Left to right: WILFRED CROMIE, LEONARD SZYUTKOWSKI, MRS JUNE ZAKRZEWSKI, (nee CONSTABLE), MR ZAKRZEWSKI
In foreground the CAPTAIN ZIGMOND STARZYNSKI.

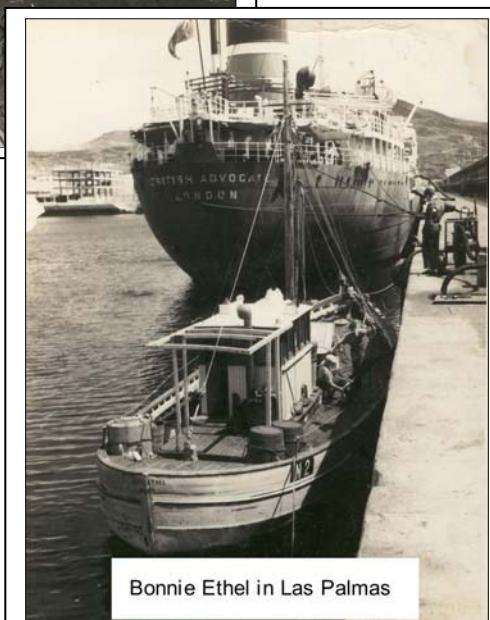
Right: BONNIE ETHEL
Transformed to look
like a Grimsby Fishing
boat. Nearly ready for
sea 1954.



Below: Day of arrival
in PORT OF SPAIN,
TRINIDAD, tied up
ahead is the
converted
minesweeper HMS
PRIVATEER, Out in
the bay is French



Bonnie Ethel in Port of Spain



Bonnie Ethel in Las Palmas

Extract from local paper 1954

FISHERMAN WILL LEAVE HIS BRIDE BEHIND

**When Smack leaves Kilkeel
On 5,000 miles trip**

Mrs. Zbigniew Zakrzewski, 23 year-old, bride of a fisherman. She was Miss June Constable, a Grimsby typist. She is keenly disappointed to cause she is not to spend a honeymoon as cook of a fishing, smack on a 5,000-mile voyage to the West Indies from Kilkeel, Co. Down.

The reason for this is that her husband, 26-year-old son of an exiled Polish colonel, will not allow his bride

to expose herself to such a hazardous journey in so small a boat as the 45ft fishing vessel, the Bonnie Ethel.

June arrived in Kilkeel and said she would stay at .Kilkeel until the boat was ready to put to sea, and would follow her husband to the West Indies later by passenger steamer.

She met her husband two years ago at a dance at Grimsby to which she was accompanied by a young couple who introduced her to Zbigniew.

"I am terribly disappointed not to be sailing with him," she said.

The Bonnie Ethel will carry a crew of four in addition to the skipper. The youngest member aboard will be Wilfred Cromie, who is 20 and comes from Harbour Road, Kilkeel. The boat is being given a complete overhaul and it is hoped will sail the first week in June. If the vessel is not completed by that time it is

proposed to take the vessel to Arklow to apply the finishing touches.

Mr and Mrs Zakrzewski hope to find a new life in Trinidad fishing for "moonshine" a sort of mackerel. The husband expects the voyage to last six weeks.

Wilfred Cromie can be contacted at mnrt@aol.com or through Tom Harrison at tom8848@ntlworld.com