



## Introduction

It is likely that many a child in this area was, in the past, threatened with a trip to the naughty children's ship for misbehaving. The name of the ship was the Clío and here is its story.

The Clío arrived in the Menai Straits on Saturday, August 7th, 1877 under Captain Moger RN of Gresford.

## Purpose of The Clío

There were numerous training ships dotted around the coast of Britain in the latter half of the 19th century. The Clío aimed to provide boys of a poorer background with the skills necessary for a life at sea.

Initial monies for the project were raised by both subscription and fund raising schemes such as the Training Ship Concerts. Further financial backing came from both the locality which had sent the boy to the school and the Navy for each individual who joined their ranks on leaving the Clío.

The establishing of the Clío, and other industrial training ships, resulted from the need to provide reformatory schools throughout the country for delinquent boys, initially to enter between the ages of 12 to 16. The second aim was to remedy the shortage of men for both the Royal and Merchant Navy.

Only a small proportion of the Clío's residents were local boys. David Livingstone Evans of Bangor, aged 11½ years, was one such local boy who, having pleaded guilty to the theft of three dolls, a football and a fancy basket from Bangor Market, was sent to the Clío on June 9th 1908 to be detained until the age of 16 years. The 1881 census shows that only 34 of the 246 boys onboard at that time came from Wales.



Some of the boys on the deck of the Clío  
Lessons on board the Clío



Lifebelt from the Clío Training Ship



Clío being towed for dismantling near Bangor pier in March 1920

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## Daily life aboard TS Clio

Life aboard the Clio would have been hard and routine was essential to keep order on a ship which usually accommodated between 200-300 boys. The boys were divided into two Watches, these being Port and Starboard (a red stripe on the left or right sleeve would distinguish the two).

From Monday to Friday, the Clio boy's day would follow a strict routine:

**5.30am** (summer) 6.00am (winter) Bugle call for boys to rise from their beds  
**6.30am** Decks cleaned.  
**7.15am** The cooks appointed to the mess deck to prepare the breakfast  
**7.30am** Breakfast served.  
**8.00am** Boat sent to collect duty officers from the shore, wood and brasswork cleaned.  
**8.15am** Boys divided for inspection followed by a short drill. 9.15am Prayers.  
**9.30am** School assembly for one Watch, the other taking technical instruction to include boat-pulling, knots, signalling, compass, steering model, sail-making, swimming, tailoring, carpentry, shoemaking, gunnery, rifle and band practice.  
**11.00am** Interval for 'stand easy'.  
**11.15am** Back to work.  
**1.00pm** Dinner.  
**2.00pm** Back to divisions with Watches reversed for the afternoon session.

Following school lessons and technical instruction, the boys would take part in games, concerts or woodcarving. Readings and lectures were also provided to pass the time in the evenings. They were also encouraged to take part in sporting activities on the ship, onshore in Bangor and during the time spent in the Llandudno camp.



The onboard tailors and shoemakers among the boys would make all the clothes and boots. Each boy would be issued three suits, one for work, a second best and best. On leaving for the sea, each boy would be handed a full complement of clothing and kit for his life after the Clio and those who had tailored onboard would be paid for each suit produced on leaving.

For the years 1909-11, of the 178 boys who left the Clio, 155 were in regular employment, 9 in casual employment, 3 had died, 2 were of unknown whereabouts and only 9 'discovered to have proved unsatisfactory'. The Roll of Honour for 1914 names 88 as joining the Army.

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Some did not live to see life beyond the Clio. 11 year old James Hemmett died 'after falling from aloft on the evening of 20th August, 1878', and John Herely fell from the rigging to his death on 29th June, 1880. There were many instances of deaths due to illness, which is understandable given the conditions. These included George Tuckey who died aged 14 on 15th February 1881 from acute pneumonia, William Crewe aged 15 on 21st April, 1882 resulting from typhoid fever and 16 year old William Thomas who died at Bangor Infirmary on 18th November, 1882 of cerebral meningitis. There was also the more sinister death of William Crook on January 9th, 1905 due to 'the result of concussion on the brain – the result of violence by other boys'.



Cane made of timber from The Clio



Photo of Captain Bray and buttons from his coat

## Bibliography

'The Clio 1877 – 1920 – A Study of the Functions of an industrial training ship in North Wales' – Emrys Wyn Roberts