

The Windjammer, 1930

The film, released in 1930 and directed by JOC Orton, is based upon the book by A.J.Villiers "By Way of Cape Horn". The book comprised a record of his adventurous 5 month voyage from Wallaroo to Queenstown, via Cape Horn, South America to Queenstown, Ireland and the film adaptation includes A.J.Villier's spectacular photographs taken on that voyage. 'The story deals with the everyday life of the crew at sea. Nothing has been exaggerated, nothing diminished, and the film is thus a true record of a great era of nautical history.' (page 4, © 1930) Prior to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 vessels, small as well as commercial boats such as Windjammers, took the Great Circle Route south of the Cape Horn, venturing into the cold Southern Ocean and attempting to 'thread the eye of the needle', to pass through the narrow entrance into Bass Strait and on to Melbourne and Sydney. The film begins in the small Australian port of Wallaro where lies the three-masted Windjammer "Grace Harwar" - at the time of shooting one of the few ocean-going sailing ships still afloat.....

PRO PATRIA Presents

The Windjammer

One of the All-Talking productions
From the book "BY WAY OF CAPE HORN"
by A.J. Villiers

Directed by JOHN ORTON

Dialogue Sea Pictures
A. P. Herbert A. J. Villiers

Photography
J. Parker

Assistant Directors
A. Woods F. S. Legg E. Baird

Music by Hermann Lohr

Arranged by W. Hodgson

Recorded on Kungfilm by W. Birch

The Windjammer Grace Harwar



A Saga of the Sea

"THE WINDJAMMER" is a saga of the sea in the days of sail and of the glories of the great white-winged ships which, years ago, were to be seen in every port and on every sea up and down the world, but which are now, alas, almost non-existent. The "Grace Harwar," the old sailing ship seen in the film is, in fact, the last of the full-rigged Cape Horn "windjammers."

The story deals with the everyday life of the crew at sea. Nothing has been exaggerated, nothing diminished, and the film is thus a true record of a great era of nautical history.

The Crew of "The Windjammer"

Played by

Tony Bruce	Michael Hogan
Hal Gordon	R. Travers
J. Barker	J. Cunningham
Hal Booth	P. Russell
C. Christie	G. Thomas
H. Hanson	S. Christie
Gordon Craig	C. Levey



The Story of "THE WINDJAMMER"

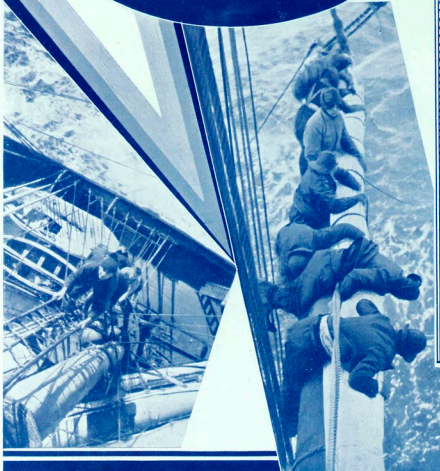
In the small Australian port of Wallaroo lies the three-masted windjammer "Grace Harwar" - one of the few remaining ocean-going sailing ships afloat. Jack Mitchell, a young Englishman, down and out, and wanting badly to get home, sees her at the quayside, goes aboard, and signs on before the mast. Owing to his ability to play the mandoline, he gains a slight prestige with the crew to the disappointment of Bert Hodges, a cockney, who has hitherto been regarded as the "orchestra of the ship" through his prowess on the mouth-organ. Old Ned, the only experienced seaman of a crew of comparatively young men, realises that there are thirteen in the fore-castle, and his superstitious forebodings begin to have their effect on Jack's mind.

Jack, being rather delicate, is unfit for the hazardous life at sea, but his spirits are revived by the thought that every day brings the ship nearer home. As they approach the Horn the weather becomes worse and worse, the sea more and more mountainous, and for days on end there is not a dry spot on board. At length, however, the Horn is past, and as they approach the regions of the Trades, the misery and hardship becomes less intolerable.

In the doldrums the ship is becalmed. The sails flap lazily against the masts, food runs short and the Captain tries unsuccessfully to stop passing steamers. Jealousies and quarrels among the crew have more time to develop. Jack has a photograph of a girl by whom he was turned down in Melbourne, and Bert is always asking for a look at it - the only feminine indulgence. Jack soon tires of this and refuses, thus arousing Bert's hostility. Bert has then to be contented with gazing at the last surviving "Bathing Belle" picture, the property of Alf, an Australian. Before long Alf trades his bathing belle to the negro cook for a flour cake and the picture is transferred to the galley. The fore-castle is thus left with no femininity, an unheard-of catastrophe. Bert, in despair, opens Jack's sea-chest, takes out his picture, and is gazing longingly at it when Jack comes into the fore-castle. He sees what is happening and bitterly resents Bert's interference with his personal belongings. A fight ensues, wherein Bert's right hand is badly cut. He is so surprised, however, at Jack having knocked him down, that they at once reconcile, Bert declaring that he "didn't know Cassie 'ad it in 'im." The reconciliation is further strengthened by the fact that Bert and Jack are the only members of the crew possessing musical instruments.

The ship is now nearing home and the pictures are shuffled up in readiness. Then, one night, not far outside the Channel, there is a terrible storm. Bert, who is sitting in the fore-castle watching Jack carve his name on the table, receives orders to go aloft and attend to a gasket on the fore-topgallant yard. Jack, seeing that Bert's hand is hurting him, volunteers to do the job, and runs from the fore-castle, just after he has gone up on deck the others suddenly realise that the two knives, which he was using to carve his name, are lying crossed on the table. Bert rushes up after him, only to find that Jack is already far above the deck working his way along the heaving rigging, half blinded by the wind and rain. While he is attending to the gasket, the fore-castle suddenly breaks and he falls to the deck, where he is instantly killed.

The next day he is buried at sea, and his belongings, according to the custom of the sea, are auctioned to the crew. Bert buying the mandoline. Three days later the ship docks in London, and the crew are paid off. As Jack leaves, Bert turns to bid the ship farewell, entering into conversation with a solid polisher who, on having the various beauties of the ship pointed out to him, becomes more and more bored, and finally walks off in disgust when Bert exclaims "Good! I believe I'd do again." As Bert turns to go, the "Grace Harwar" is left by the quayside, looking strangely small and graceful with her slender masts and spars among the squat funnels of the steamers which surround her.



"By Way of Cape Horn"

"The Windjammer" is based upon Mr. A. J. Villiers' book, "By Way of Cape Horn," (Geoffrey Bles), a record of his adventurous five month's voyage from Wallaroo, Australia, to Queenstown, via Cape Horn.

The object of the voyage was to make a photographic record of one of the old sailing ships. Proof that this object was achieved is shown by the wonderful sea-pictures in "The Windjammer."



Home!

Old Sea Dogs

An interesting sidelight on "The Windjammer" is the fact that the majority of the "crew" actually have sailed in a "windjammer." Thus their roles are lived rather than acted.

Tony Bruce who plays "Jack Mitchell," was "discovered" by Mr. Anthony Asquith for his current production, "Tell England."

"The Windjammer" marks his first appearance on the screen.

PRO PATRIA presents

The Windjammer

A Story of the Sea in the days of Sail....