

For the attention of the,
Rt, Hon, Winston, Spencer, Churchill.
Prime Minister.

For and on behalf of Boat owners
and waterman of Southend-on-Sea.
Essex.
June, 4th, 1940

Dear, Sir.

This petition is written without prejudice to any one person, but with the sole object of bringing to your notice, the muddle, inefficiency, and chaos, which we the undersigned have witnessed, and as our men, are fighting in our ships on the high seas, and at the battle front, we feel that in the national interest, such authority that was responsible for the following chaotic conditions, are a danger to the state, and that if such conditions exist in this area, it is also possible that they exist in every other area and departments.

The following is a clear statement to you, protesting against the authority responsible for the inefficiency displayed by all concerned; resulting in absolute chaos, when all vessels that were requisitioned from this area by the Naval authority, for the very dangerous mission which had to be undertaken in the Dunkirk operations.

All vessels that were requisitioned from this area on May, 27th, 1940, (For the most part Board of Trade Passenger vessels fully Equipped with life saving appliance, far in excess of their total compliment, and definitely the most suitable type of boat for the work that was to be undertaken) were ordered to be at the Naval Control station, Pier Head at 5 AM. on Tuesday May, 28th, 1940, Fully equipped with Fuel, Food, Water for Three Days, the vessels in question arrived at the Naval Control Station, Pier Head at the appointed time with the necessary crews, who had been with their boats for many years, (some members of the crews, even left good jobs to go back to their boats) they therefore were the most suitable

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men to handle them, yet upon arrival, the crews who were so necessary for the efficient operation of these boats under all conditions, were bluntly ordered to get out of their boats, and told that Naval personnel would take over.

thereupon the civilian crews protested at this treatment, and eagerly volunteered, to take their boats to any place they had to go and work them there, it was later learned that this place was DUNKIRK. needless to say their offer was not accepted, and Naval Personnel was put aboard these boats.

(Now this attitude, is quite understandable in view of the statement issued by the Admiralty on May, 14th, 1940 and requoted by the EDITOR, of the Motor Boat & Yachting Journal, in which they clearly state, that the owners services will not be accepted. YET TWELVE HOURS LATER AFTER ALL BOATS WERE REQUISITIONED, HAVING FOUND THAT THEY WERE IN A HOPELESS MUDDLE, ISSUED APPEALS BY MEANS OF THE B.B.C. NEWS. PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE ORIGINAL CREWS & NEWS PAPERS. NEEDLESS TO SAY THIS WAS TOO LATE TO BE ANY GOOD THE DAMAGE HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE)

After a time we were surprised to see all the life saving appliance, which was so obviously necessary for such a dangerous mission of saving life, was being removed and left on the Pier Head.

The next most shameful exhibition of intelligence was to follow. when it became known, that the personnel who were to be responsible for the running the engines of these boats, had never had sufficient training to be able to run and keep running an internal combustion engine, some of these drivers had never seen any engine of these types in their lives, and the best of them had, had no more than three weeks instruction with internal combustion engines.

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Next the masters or coxswains showed quite clearly, that they did not know how to manage such shallow draught boats, and in addition to this, most of these boats were undermanned.

THEREFORE

We declare that these twelve boats capable of carrying 2,000 persons in peace time, under Board-of-Trade Regulations, were sent to sea, on a dangerous mission with in experienced and insufficient crews.

The nett result of this terrible blunder, must have been, that many of these valuable craft never reached there destination, the boats that did, must ultimately have become sttionary targets for aerial attack, and if they were filled with troops, then it amounts to nothing short of mass murder. The full effect of this type of muddle can only result in tragedy, which will never be known, but only can be gauged by the number of boats that do not return.

we herein declare, being of one mind, that a full inquiry should be made to ascertain what persons of authority were responsible for such chaotic organising conditions.

Such persons have no right to be in authority, and in the national interest should be declared a danger to the state.

Name of Boat.	Signature. & Occupation	Address.
NEW PRINCE OF WALES.	MASTER. A.L. Brand.	117. Kensington Rd.
" " " "	Chief Engineer W.H. Wilson	11 Marlborough Rd.
" " " "	Master Brand H Davis	139 York Rd
" " " "	Mariner W Brand	82 ^c Thornford Hgh
" " " "	Deck Hand: J.P. Porter	Hartington Rd.
" " " "	" " A.C. Hills	22 St Annan Rd.

Name of Boat	Signature & Occupation	Address
Prince of Wales	J.D. Porter,	50 Seavington Rd.
" " " "	Deck Hand: J. Bales	3 Myrtle Rd
Prince of Wales	Deck Hand: J. Anderson	211 Eastern Esch.
Duchess of York	Deck Hand	