

Reference code: GB165-0435

Title: Hamish Roberts Collection

Name of creator: Roberts, William Hamish (b.1927)

Dates of creation of material: 1894, 1917-1918, c1940-1959, 2008

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 1 box

Biographical history: Roberts, William Hamish (b.1927)

Born Nov 1927, son of Donald Fraser Roberts of Inverness, Civil Engineer. Educated at Golspie High School, Sutherland, Scotland and the Edinburgh Academy. Sept 1944-Jul 1945 pre-sea training as cadet at Department of Navigation, University College, Southampton. 1945 Joined Ellerman & Bucknall Steamship Co. Ltd as cadet. 1949-1963 Navigating Officer on vessels in world-wide, short-sea and coastal traders, including Great Lakes of Canada 1950, Red Sea (A. Besse & Co.) 1953-1957, Aden Pilot Service Jun 1957-Feb 1960. Qualified Master Mariner (Foreign Going) Jan 1956. 1960-1963 Relief Officer, Cunard S/S Co. Ltd, when reading Law (Council of Legal Education) London. Called to the English Bar at Gray's Inn Nov 1963. 1960 Joined the Inns of Court Regiment T.A. 1961 Commissioned 83rd (Inland Water Transport) Regiment, Army Emergency Reserve, Royal Engineers. 1963 Captain R.E. 1963 In command of survey vessel engaged in early seismic survey in search for natural gas/oil in North Sea. 1964-1976 Marine claims handler, London Steamship Owners Protection and Indemnity Association. Legal Manager, Atlantic Container Line Services Ltd. Director, Fenton Steamship Co. Ltd, London, operating 11 ships and North European agents for parent company, Hellenic Lines Ltd of Piraeus and New York. In-house counsel, Europe, Theriot Off-Shore International Ltd, of Golden Meadow, Louisiana, USA. 1969 Major, Royal Corps of Transport, appointed O.C. 265 (Maritime) Squadron R.C.T. From 1976 until retirement – independent marine consultant and surveyor, acting in U.K. and abroad for ship owners, marine insurers, maritime law firms, banks etc. High court expert witness and occasional maritime arbitrator (Fellow, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators).

Scope and content: Papers relating to Hamish Roberts' life in Aden while employed by the Halal Shipping Company Ltd. between 1953-1957 and the Aden Port Trust 1957-1959. There are a number of photographs of Aden and surrounding areas and material relating to the development and maintenance of Port Aden. There are also copies of the publication

'Little Aden Mercury' documenting the events of the colonial community, as well as Hamish Roberts' memoirs of this period.

System of arrangement:

1 Service in Aden

1/1 Little Aden Mercury 1954

1/2 Official Review of Aden Colony and Aden Protectorate 1953-1954

1/3 Map of Aden 1954

1/4 Contract of Employment 1957

1/5 Photographs c1940s-1958

2 Memoir

2/1 Research into the Development and Maintenance of Aden Harbour, 1894-1958

2/2 Memoir, 2008

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of Hamish Roberts

Immediate source of acquisition: Received as a gift from Hamish Roberts in September 2008.

Related Units of Description:

In MEC Archive

Other collections relating to Aden naval history or the expatriate community in Aden include:

- GB165-0353 Antonin Besse
- GB165-0149 Richard Holmes
- GB165-0411 Helen Mildred Joly de Lotbinère

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist's note: Fonds and file and item level description created by J. Kruz, 26 Nov 2009. Biographical history supplied by Hamish Roberts.

**SERIES, FILE AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE HAMISH ROBERTS
COLLECTION**

1 Service in Aden

1/1 Little Aden Mercury, 1954

Community newsletter documenting colonial life in Aden including the Royal Visit, progress of the oil refinery, local theatrical productions and traffic safety. 17 items

1/1/1	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 42	5 Jan 1954	5 sheets
1/1/2	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 43	12 Jan 1954	6 sheets
1/1/3	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 44	22 Jan 1954	4 sheets
1/1/4	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 45	29 Jan 1954	6 sheets
1/1/5	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 46	5 Feb 1954	6 sheets
1/1/6	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 48 (pages 5-8 not extant)	19 Feb 1954	3 sheets
1/1/7	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 49	26 Feb 1954	6 sheets
1/1/8	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 50	5 March 1954	6 sheets
1/1/9	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 51	12 March 1954	5 sheets
1/1/10	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol 1 No 52	19 March 1954	5 sheets
1/1/11	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 3	9 April 1954	5 sheets
1/1/12	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 4	16 April 1954	5 sheets
1/1/13	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 5	23 April 1954	5 sheets
1/1/14	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 6	30 April 1954	6 sheets
1/1/15	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 7	7 May 1954	5 sheets
1/1/16	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 8	14 May 1954	5 sheets
1/1/17	<i>Little Aden Mercury</i> Vol II No 9	21 May 1954	6 sheets

1/2 'Colonial Office Report on Aden for the Years 1953 and 1954', 1956

Report on Aden Colony and Aden Protectorate including a brief history of the area and information relating to the judicial system, population and employment. 1 item

1/3 Map of Aden 1954

Survey Map of Aden (1953).

1 item

1/4 Contract of Employment 1957

Contract of employment between Aden Port Trust and Hamish Roberts 1957 5 sheets

1/5 Photographs c1940s-1958

Access: Contact sheets are available for viewing the photographs

System of Arrangement:

1/5/1 Photographs of Aden taken by Roberts and sent to his wife

1/5/2 General photos of Aden and surrounding areas and colonial life (including postcards)

1/5/3 Photographs of Halal Shipping Co. vessels with specification information

1/5/4 Negatives and Duplicates

1/5/1 Photographs of Aden taken by Roberts and sent to his wife

1/5/1/1 No caption given

1/5/1/2 “Also from the kitchen door this time looking to the right. The is owned by the P&O Company & occupied by their European staff here.”

1/5/1/3 “Ours will be the flat at the top of the house on the right from the arrow 1 – the other arrow shows what is a roof top but will be a sort of large veranda for us. Windows just going in”

1/5/1/4 No caption given

1/5/1/5 “The flat I may shift to is on the top left corner of the building marked [arrow]”

1/5/1/6 “Another bit of the house – the two windows on left are part of the lounge & the two on right belong to my bedroom” (*with neg.*)

1/5/1/7 No caption given

1/5/1/8 “Hassan – our ‘Jeeves’”

1/5/1/9 “Taken from the front door showing RAF hospital and other service

- places. Also some of the Barren Rocks of Aden”
- 1/5/1/10 “Saeed in the back ‘garden”” (*with 2 negs.*)
- 1/5/1/11 No caption given
- 1/5/1/12 No caption given
- 1/5/1/13 No caption given
- 1/5/1/14 No caption given
- 1/5/1/15 No caption given
- 1/5/1/16 “Front of the shack” (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/1/17 No caption given
- 1/5/1/18 “Two of the lads who have just climbed ashore L. Will [Wilson]
Stuart from Glasgow R. Don Haggart from Dunoon”
- 1/5/1/19 “Sputnik”
- 1/5/1/20 “A view from our house. The large building in the centre is the
Governor’s house”
- 1/5/1/21 “Choose!”
- 1/5/1/22 “Aden Protectorate levies on parade”
- 1/5/1/23 “Hassan – Aden” 1958
- 1/5/1/24 “Looking down on our ‘verandah’ from the roof which will be used
by Will Stuart. You can see that there’s plenty of space. The place
marked 1 is the RAF Sister’s mess where Maisie and co. Live & the
2 is the RAF hospital”
- 1/5/1/25 No caption given
- 1/5/1/26 No caption given
- 1/5/1/27 “Another pilot’s house just behind mine – the chap here is from
Ardnamurchan but lives now in Crieff” (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/1/28 “Back view of my house” (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/1/29 “John and Margaret MacDonald”
- 1/5/1/30 No caption given
- 1/5/1/31 “The door on left is the ? door at the top of the steps. I’m going to
get some boxes laid along ? white wall outside the door & grow
some flowers!”
- 1/5/1/32 “Don Haggart AP Service later Harbour Master at Rothesay”
- 1/5/1/33 “Towing a dhow in the Red Sea”

- 1/5/1/34 "Sell!"
- 1/5/1/35 "The house again from the side. The two shaded windows are ? my sleeping place" (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/1/36 "1- Kitchen, not shown 2-One of the bedroom doors 3- 'Eating place' down the passage & to the left is the bathroom & WC. There's another door from the bedroom leading to them too which we can't see. The place goes on round to the left marked 4 making a sort of L shape"
- 1/5/1/37 "Across the road! RAF Sgts mess!!"
- 1/5/1/38 No caption given
- 1/5/1/39 "APL Band Coldstream Guards Sgt" 1958
- 1/5/1/40 "Taken from the kitchen door looking over the harbour ?"
- 1/5/1/41 "View from my front door" (*with neg*)
- 1/5/1/42 "Joe Beef!"
- 1/5/1/43 "'Sputnik' Our fiat car outside the house"
- 1/5/1/44 No caption given
- 1/5/1/45 "Sheik Othman"
- 1/5/1/46 "Sheik Othman"
- 1/5/1/47 "Sheik Othman Gardens"
- 1/5/1/48 No caption given
- 1/5/1/49 "Gold Mohur"
- 1/5/1/50 "Gold Mohur Beach"
- 1/5/1/51 No caption given
- 1/5/1/52 No caption given
- 1/5/1/53 "Taken from the front window – looking out to sea & over the RAF playing fields"
- 1/5/1/54 "Massawa 1953"

1/5/2 General photos of Aden and surrounding areas and colonial life (including postcards)

- 1/5/2/1 – 1/5/2/20 from envelope entitled 'Last Collection Aden Etc'
- 1/5/2/21 – 1/5/2/41 from envelope entitled 'Various Aden WHRs originals'
- 1/5/2/1 "Gold Mohur Beach"

- 1/5/2/2 “Postcard showing view of the Maalla, Aden
Some of the Barren Rocks. The two blocks of flats in the centre
foreground marked are pilot’s houses”
- 1/5/2/3 “Hamish climbing the steps to our flat while I watch him Port House
Flats Barrack Hill ? ?”
- 1/5/2/4 “Ted & Valerie Worster” 1958
- 1/5/2/5 “On verandah”
- 1/5/2/6 No caption given
- 1/5/2/7 No caption given
- 1/5/2/8 “French liner ‘Pasteur’ late 1940s” Late
1940s
- 1/5/2/9 No caption given
- 1/5/2/10 “Yemen spelling”
- 1/5/2/11 “Saleh Abdo Rabo ‘El Halal’ 1955” 1955
- 1/5/2/12 “It’s a hard life at sea! And we don’t get enough to eat. Looks like it 1954
too! Massawa ‘El Halal’ ‘54”
- 1/5/2/13 “El Halal at Port Sudan”
- 1/5/2/14 “The building is the P. Sudan seaman’s mission. There is a
swimming pool there, the coolest spot in P. Sudan. Somebody’s
mother doesn’t use persil.”
- 1/5/2/15 “Massawa. The other chap is 3rd Eng. a Dane Ex Danish Lifeguards
& heavyweight champ of Danish army. Alex Peterson Ex Jap
POW”
- 1/5/2/16 “El Nasser from El Hak Red Sea”
- 1/5/2/17 Hamish Roberts “El Hak Red Sea 1956” 1956
- 1/5/2/18 “El Halal at Jedda 1953” 1953
- 1/5/2/19 “El Halal’ at Jedda” [same photo as above] 1953
- 1/5/2/20 Postcard
“Anchor Line Twin Screw Motor Ship Cilicia
Anchor Line of Glasgow – Cilicia, Circassia, Caledonia very
popular ships on L’pool to Karachi & Bombay
Don’t forget my address is
Gerry

Gerald Fallon, Office of the Deputy High Commissioner For The
United Kingdom, Mahatma Ghandi Road, Bombay,I.”

- 1/5/2/21 Postcard of The Crescent Hotel
(copyright Dick Ketchian)
- 1/5/2/22 “Port House Aden” 1959
- 1/5/2/23 No caption given
- 1/5/2/24 No caption given
- 1/5/2/25 No caption given
- 1/5/2/26 No caption given
- 1/5/2/27 No caption given
- 1/5/2/28 “1957 Aden same trouble - sun too bright” 1957
- 1/5/2/29 No caption given
- 1/5/2/30 “A.P.L Band”
- 1/5/2/31 “A launch crew on a pilot boat”
- 1/5/2/32 “View from road outside house – Pilots’ pier where we leave from
to pick up ships – you can see our launch alongside” (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/2/33 “My front gate. Harbour office next door” (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/2/34 “Haggart & Stuart returning to the pier having just taken another
ship to sea”
- 1/5/2/35 No caption given January
1959
(developed)
- 1/5/2/36 No caption given January
1959
(developed)
- 1/5/2/37 Postcard showing Post Office Bay, Steamer Point, Aden
(copyright reserved Mr. A Abassi, V)
- 1/5/2/38 Postcard showing the signal station and playing fields, Steamer
Point, Aden
(copyright reserved Mr. A Abassi, V)
- 1/5/2/39 Postcard showing part of The Crescent (shopping centre) Steamer
Point, Aden
(copyright reserved Mr. A Abassi, V)

1/5/2/40 Postcard showing the crater, Aden

1/5/2/41 No caption given

1/5/3 Photographs of Halal Shipping Co. vessels with specification information

1/5/3/1 "M.S. El Nabeel"

Name: M.S. El Nabeel

Flag: British

Owners: Halal Shipping Co. Ltd.

Mngrs:

Built: 1952

Builders: Grangemouth Dockyard Co. Ltd.

Tonnage: 1735 CRT, 770 NRT, 1680 DWT

Speed: 12 KNTS

P of R: London

Remarks:

1963 Sold: Teck Cheonc Enterprises (N.K.) Ltd.

1966 Sold: R/N "Dai Duonc" (South Vietnam)

1974 Sold: R/N "San Francesco Borja" (Panama)

1975 Sold: R/N "Tychonc" (Panama)

1/5/3/2 Postcard

1953

"Beyrut, 1953"

1/5/3/3 No caption given

1/5/3/4 "M.S. El Hak"

Name: M.S. El Hak

Flag: British

Owners: Halal Shipping Co. Ltd. London

Mngrs:

Built: 1929

Builders: Hawthorn Leslie & Co. Ltd Newcastle

Tonnage: 1022 CRT, 511 NRT, 1070 DWT

Speed: 11 KNTS

P of R: London

Remarks:

1/5/3/5 "M.S. El Amin"
Name: M.S. El Amin
Flag: British
Owners: Halal Shipping Co. Ltd. London
Mngrs: P.R. Besse & Co.
Built: 1926
Builders: Bow, McLachlan Paisley
Engines: Atlas Diesel Co. Stockholm
Tonnage: 746 CRT, 334 NRT, 820 DWT
Speed: 11 KNTS
P of R: London
Remarks:

1/5/3/6 Postcard

April 1953

1/5/4 Negatives and Duplicates

1/5/4/1 – 1/5/4/12 are negatives

1/5/4/13 – 1/5/4/41 are duplicates

1/5/4/1 Negative of 1/5/1/6 "Another bit of the house – the two windows on left are part of the lounge & the two on right belong to my bedroom" (*with neg.*)

1/5/4/2 Negative of 1/5/1/10 "Saeed in the back 'garden'" (*with 2 negs.*)

1/5/4/3 Negative of 1/5/1/10 "Saeed in the back 'garden'" (*with 2 negs.*)

1/5/4/4 Negative of 1/5/1/16 "Front of the shack" (*with neg.*)

1/5/4/5 Negative of 1/5/1/27 "Another pilot's house just behind mine – the chap here is from Ardnamurchan but lives now in Crieff" (*with neg.*)

1/5/4/6 Negative of 1/5/1/28 "Back view of my house" (*with neg.*)

1/5/4/7 Negative of 1/5/1/35 "The house again from the side. The two shaded windows are my sleeping place" (*with neg.*)

1/5/4/8 Negative of 1/5/1/41 "View from my front door" (*with neg.*)

1/5/4/9 Negative of 1/5/2/32 "View from road outside house – Pilot's pier where we leave from to pick up ships – you can see our launch alongside" (*with neg.*)

- 1/5/4/10 Negative of 1/5/2/33 “My front gate. Harbour office next door”
(*with neg.*)
- 1/5/4/11 No print provided, no caption given
- 1/5/4/12 No print provided, no caption given
- 1/5/4/13 Aden Protectorate Levies Band
Duplicate of 1/5/2/30 “A.P.L Band”
- 1/5/4/14 Gold Mohur Beach
Duplicate of 1/5/2/27 No caption given
- 1/5/4/15 Highland Regiment at Khormaksar
Duplicate of 1/5/2/26 No caption given
- 1/5/4/16 Port Trust Flats 1959
Duplicate of 1/5/2/22 “Port House Aden”
- 1/5/4/17 Royal Yacht leaves Aden
Duplicate of 1/5/2/23 No caption given
- 1/5/4/18 Pilots Pier
Duplicate of 1/5/2/32 “View from road outside house – Pilot’s
pier where we leave from to pick up ships – you can see our
launch alongside” (*with neg.*)
- 1/5/4/19 Crew of Harbour boat
Duplicate of 1/5/2/25 No caption given
- 1/5/4/20 Crew of Pilot boat
Duplicate of 1/5/2/31 “A launch crew on a pilot boat”
- 1/5/4/21 Aden Harbour Office
Duplicate of 1/5/2/33 “My front gate. Harbour office next door”
(*with neg.*)
- 1/5/4/22 Aden Harbour with Pilots launch
Duplicate of 1/5/2/34 “Haggart & Stuart returning to the pier
having just taken another ship to sea”
- 1/5/4/23 Harbour Pilots Bungalow
Duplicate of 1/5/2/29 No caption given
- 1/5/4/24 No caption given 1957
Duplicate of 1/5/2/28 “1957 Aden Same trouble - sun too bright”
- 1/5/4/25 Gold Mohur Beach

- Duplicate of 1/5/2/41 No caption given
- 1/5/4/26 Zoo in Sheikh Othmen
Duplicate of 1/5/2/24 No caption given
- 1/5/4/27 Owned by Besse
Duplicate of 1/5/2/21 Postcard of The Crescent Hotel
(copyright Dick Ketchian)
- 1/5/4/28 No caption given
Duplicate of 1/5/2/40 Postcard showing the crater, Aden
- 1/5/4/29 No caption given
Duplicate of 1/5/2/35 No caption given
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(developed)
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playing fields, Steamer Point, Aden
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- 1/5/4/32 No caption given
Duplicate of 1/5/2/37 Postcard showing Post Office Bay, Steamer
Point, Aden
(copyright reserved Mr. A Abassi, V)
- 1/5/4/33 No caption given
Duplicate of 1/5/2/39 Postcard showing part of The Crescent
(shopping centre) Steamer Point, Aden
(copyright reserved Mr. A Abassi, V)
- 1/5/4/34 No caption given
Copy print
- 1/5/4/35 Mukalla
Duplicate of 1/5/3/6 Postcard "Mukalla M.S. El Amin"
April 1953
- 1/5/4/36 No caption given
Duplicate of 1/5/3/4 M.S. El Hak
Name: M.S. El Hak

Flag: British

Owners: Halal Shipping Co. Ltd. London

Mngrs:

Built: 1929

Builders: Hawthorn Leslie & Co. Ltd Newcastle

Tonnage: 1022 CRT, 511 NRT, 1070 DWT

Speed: 11 KNTS

P of R: London

Remarks:

1/5/4/37 No caption given

Duplicate of 1/5/3/5 "M.S. El Amin"

Name: M.S. El Amin

Flag: British

Owners: Halal Shipping Co. Ltd. London

Mngrs: P.R. Besse & Co.

Built: 1926

Builders: Bow, McLachlan Paisley

Engines: Atlas Diesel Co. Stockholm

Tonnage: 746 CRT, 334 NRT, 820 DWT

Speed: 11 KNTS

P of R: London

Remarks:

1/5/4/38 "El Nasser"

Duplicate of 1/5/3/3/ No caption given

1/5/4/39 No caption given

Duplicate of 1/5/3/1 "M.S. El Nabeel"

Name: M.S. El Nabeel

Flag: British

Owners: Halal Shipping Co. Ltd.

Mngrs:

Built: 1952

Builders: Grangemouth Dockyard Co. Ltd.

Tonnage: 1735 CRT, 770 NRT, 1680 DWT

Speed: 12 KNTS

P of R: London

Remarks:

1963 Sold: Teck Cheonc Enterprises (N.K.) Ltd.

1966 Sold: R/N "Dai Duonc" (South Vietnam)

1974 Sold: R/N "San Francesco Borja" (Panama)

1975 Sold: R/N "Tychonc" (Panama)

1/5/4/40 "El Halal"

Duplicate of 1/5/3/2 Postcard "Beyrut, 1953"

1/5/4/41 "Lieutenant John R. Brogan RNVR [Royal Navy Volunteer c.1954

Reserve] Hydrographic Surveyor Aden Port Trust"

Photocopy of 1/5/4/34 No caption given

2 Memoir

2/1 Research into the Development and Maintenance of Aden Harbour, 1894-1958

2/1/1 'Aden Harbour' by William Samuel Child from *Minutes of Proceedings Institution of Civil Engineers* Vol 16 1894 9 sheets

2/1/2 'The Development of the Port of Aden' by Harold Berridge from *Minutes of Proceedings Institution of Civil Engineers* Vol ccvi 12 sheets
1917/1918

2/1/3 'The Design and Construction of Aden Oil Harbour' by John Eliot George Palmer and Harold Scrutton from *Minutes of Proceedings Institution of Civil Engineers* Vol 5 1956 35 sheets

2/1/4 'A Report on the requirements for the maintenance of existing moorings in Aden' June 1955 9 sheets

2/1/5 'A second report on the requirements for the maintenance of existing moorings in Aden' October 1957 7 sheets

2/1/6 Memo to The Chief Engineer, Aden Port Trust from Surveyor & Mooring Master, Aden Port Trust 17th October 1958 1 sheet

2/1/7 Letter to The Chief Engineer, Aden Port Trust from Surveyor & Mooring Master, Aden Port Trust 29th October 1958 1 sheet

2/2 Memoir, 2008

2/2/1 Memoir in which Roberts recollects activities during his employment 69 sheets
by the Halal Shipping Co. and then the Aden Port Trust, 1953 - 1959.
Includes information regarding the structure and administration of the
El Amin and El Halal vessels. Also includes descriptions and
histories of ports of call especially Hodeidah, Jeddah, Suakim, Port
Sudan, Mukalla and Shihr; and anecdotes including the loading of
livestock, carriage of pilgrims and the use of Qat. Roberts details
piloting in Aden harbour and the structure of the colonial community.
He also covers the history and development of Aden including the
completion of a BP Refinery in 1954, construction of schools and the
effects of the growing European population. He singles out four
friends who went on to have distinguished careers; Major James
Kennedy McGill, Captain Donald Victor Henderson, Lieutenant Jerrie
Hulme and Flight Officer Barbara Ducat-Amos. He also includes his
Certificate of Competency, Pilot's License and advertisements for A.
Besse and Halal Shipping Co.

The memoir is also available as a Microsoft Word File