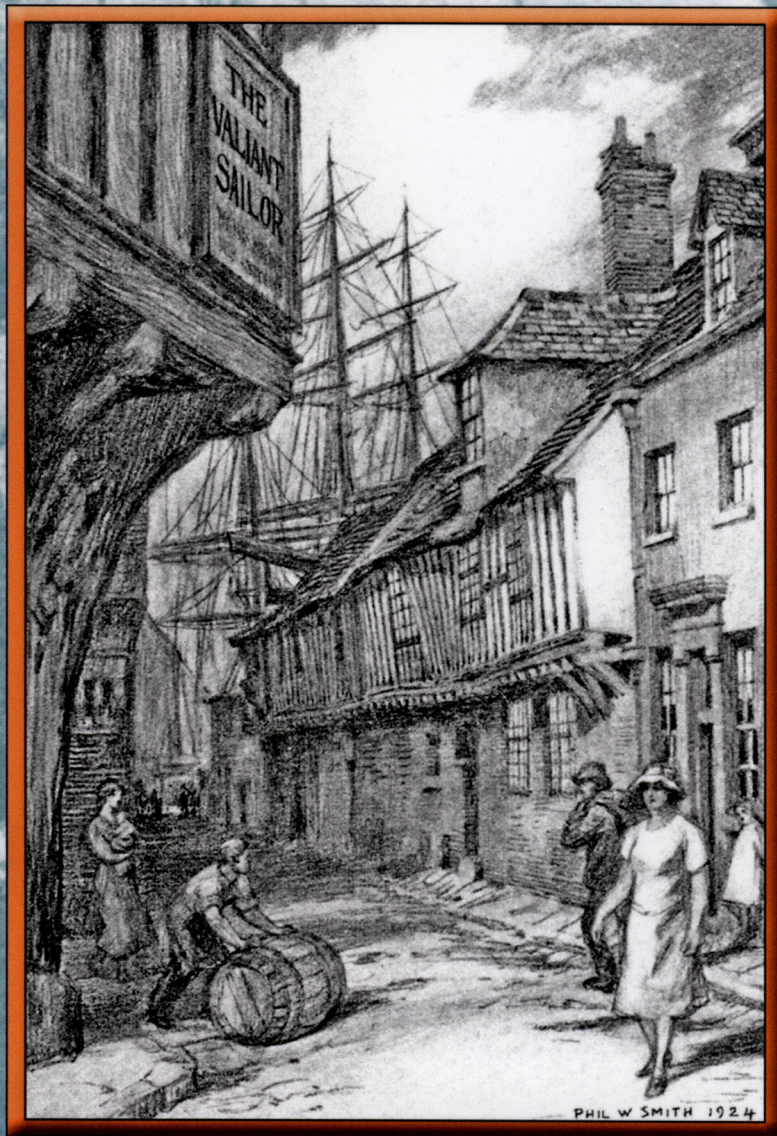


# THE COMPLETE POETRY OF CICELY FOX SMITH



EDITED BY  
CHARLES IPCAR AND JAMES SAVILLE

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## **Book 1 - The Early Poems: 1899 to 1913** 1

Contains poems\* from the following books:

Songs of Greater Britain (1899)  
The Foremost Trail (1899)  
Men of Men (1900)  
Wings of the Morning (1904)  
Lancashire Hunting Songs and Other Moreland Lays (1909)

## **Book 2 - The Major Poems: 1914 to 1931** 207

Contains poems\* from the following books:

Songs in Sail (1914)  
Sailor Town (1914)  
The Naval Crown (1915)  
Fighting Men (1916)  
Small Craft (1917)  
Sailor Town (1919)  
Rhymes of the Red Ensign (1919)  
Ships and Folks (1920)  
Rovings (1921)  
Sea Songs and Ballads 1917-1922 (1923)  
Full Sail (1926)  
Sailor's Delight (1931)  
Miscellaneous Poems in Magazines or Manuscripts

## **Book 3 - The Later Poems: 1932 to 1953.** 607

Contains poems\* from the following books:

True Tales of the Sea (1932)  
All the Other Children (1933)

Anchor Lane (1933)  
Oxford Book for Boys (1938)  
Here and There in England with the Painter Brangwyn (1945)  
Country Days and Country Ways (1947)  
Ship Models (1951)  
Miscellaneous Poems (magazines by date of publication)

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\* See Index of Poem Titles (p 745) at the back for precise location of individual poems.

# BIOGRAPHY OF CICELY FOX SMITH

Cicely Fox Smith was born February 1, 1882, into a middle class family in Lymm, near Warrington, England during the latter half of the reign of Queen Victoria. Her father Richard Smith was a barrister and her mother Alice Wilson Smith was a housewife. Cicely well might have been expected to have a brief education and then to settle down to life as a homemaker either for her family or her marriage partner. Thankfully that did not happen.



Cicely Fox Smith as  
a young girl, circa 1892

Cicely was well-educated at The Manchester High School for Girls from 1894 to 1897, where she described herself later as “something of a rebel,”<sup>1</sup> and started writing poems at a comparatively early age. In an article for the school magazine she later wrote “I have a hazy recollection of epic poems after Pope’s *Iliad*, romantic poems after Marmion stored carefully away in tin tobacco boxes when I was seven or eight.”<sup>2</sup> All of that early work is lost unfortunately. She published her first book of verses when she was 17 and it received favorable press comments.

Wandering the moors near her home she developed a spirit of adventure. She would follow the Holcombe Harriers hunt on foot as a girl, no mean feat. She had a fierce desire to travel to Africa but eventually settled for a voyage to Canada.

She sailed with her mother and sister Madge in 1911 on a steamship to Montreal. They then traveled by train to Lethbridge<sup>4</sup>, Alberta, and stayed for about a year with her older brother Richard Andrew Smith before they continued on to British Columbia (BC).<sup>5</sup> From 1912 to 1913 the three of them resided in the James Bay neighborhood of Victoria, 350 Semco Street<sup>6</sup>, at the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Cicely described herself working as a typist for the BC Lands Department and later for an attorney on the waterfront. Her spare time was spent roaming nearby wharves and alleys, talking to residents and sailors alike. She listened to



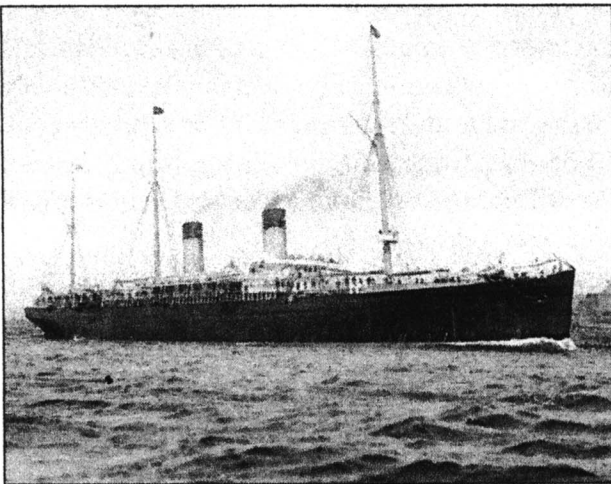
The Manchester High  
School for Girls



Inner Harbour, Victoria, British Columbia, 1889

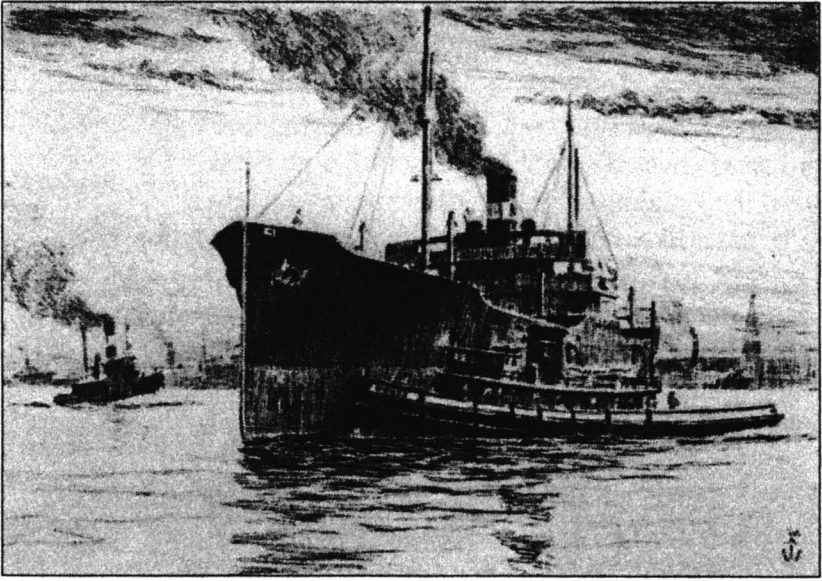
and learned from the sailors' tales until she too was able to speak with that authoritative nautical air that pervades her written work.<sup>7</sup>

On November 23, 1913, Cicely, together with her mother and sister, arrived home in Liverpool aboard the White Star Dominion Line steamer *Teutonic* on the eve of World War I. She and her family then settled in Holcombe Cottage, Boothroyden. The family then shifted to Bury, Lancashire, and after the end of World War I to Hampshire. Her final residence was in West Halse Bow, Crediton, North Devon from about 1950 to 1954.



S. S. *Teutonic*, circa 1900

She soon put her experiences to use in a great outpouring of poetry, some of it clearly focused on supporting England's war efforts. Much of her poetry was from the point of view of the sailor. The detailed nautical content of her poems made it easy to understand why so many readers



Collier Outward Bound

## The Lone Hand

She took her tide and she passed the Bar  
With the first o' the morning light;  
She dipped her flag to the coast patrol  
At the coming on o' the night;  
She has left the lights of the friendly shore  
And the smell o' the English land,  
And she's somewhere South o' the Fastnet now . . .  
God help her . . . South o' the Fastnet now . . .  
Playing her own lone hand.

She is ugly and squat as a ship may be,  
She was new when the *Ark* was new,  
But she runs her risk and she takes her chance  
As well as the best may do,  
And it's little she heeds the lurking death  
And little she gets of fame,  
Out yonder South o' the Fastnet now . . .  
God help her . . . South o' the Fastnet now . . .  
Playing her own lone game.

She has played it once, she has played it twice,  
She has played it times a score,  
Her luck and her pluck are the two trump cards  
That have won her the game before,  
And life is the stake where the tin fish run,  
And Death is the dealer's name

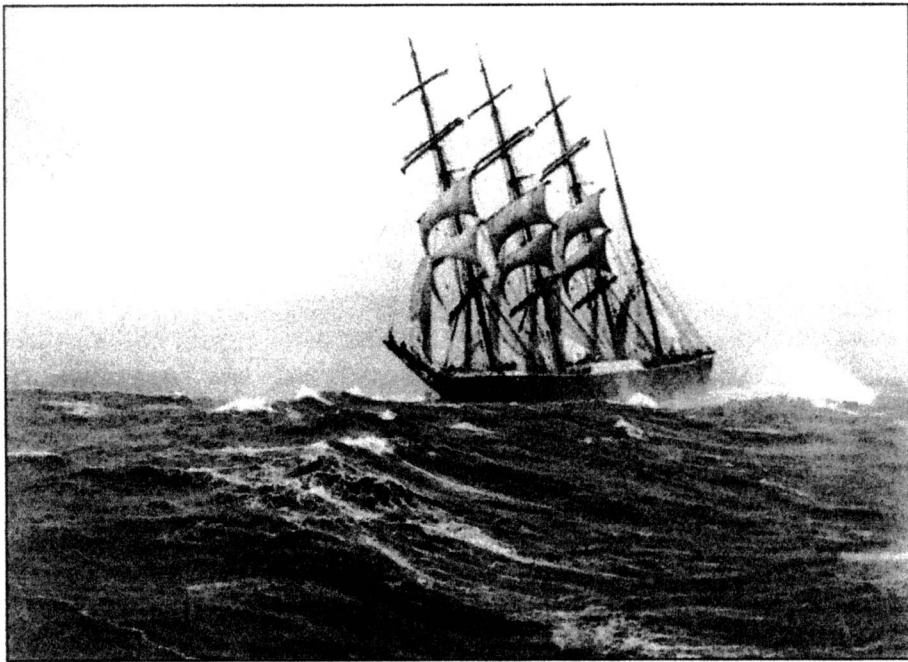
Out yonder South o' the Fastnet now . . .  
God help her . . . South o' the Fastnet now . . .  
Playing her own lone game!



From *Rhymes of the Red Ensign*, edited by Cicely Fox Smith, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, UK, 1919, pp. 13-14. First published in *Punch* magazine, Volume 154, January 2, 1918.

A World War I poem about a merchantman heading out on her own from England, without the added security of being part of a convoy.

The header graphic is an illustration by Charles Wilson showing an old collier outward bound from his book *Ships*, published by Barre Publishers, Barre, Massachusetts, US, 1971, p. 95.



*Pamir* in 1946 after Slipping Her Tow off Cape Flattery

## The Long Road Home

There's a wind up and a sighing along the waterside,  
And we're homeward bound at last on to-night's full tide:  
Round the world and back again is very far to roam . . .  
And San Juan Strait to England, it's a long road home!

We'll tow out to Flattery before the sun is high;  
We'll shake the harbour dust away and give the land good-bye:  
And singing in her topsails, O, the deep-sea wind'll come,  
And lift us through it lively on the long road home.