

BABOO



HMS Assistance, formerly Baboo, in ice
By Thomas Sewell Robins 1853
National Maritime Museum, England



HMS Assistance, formerly Baboo, breaking through the ice

***Barque rig, 423 tons Old Measure,
Built: 1835 at Howrah India, owned by T Kincaid,
Dimensions: 115' 7" long, 28' 5" wide at her broadest point and 5' 8" 'tween decks***

***1848 voyage: London to Port Adelaide
Sailed London 28 August 1848, Arrived Port Adelaide 5 December 1848 – 99 days at sea
Master: Charles Barker
Passengers in steerage included the Mather family***

The barque *Baboo* that carried immigrants, including the Mather family, to South Australia in 1848, had a varied career as well as three names. Launched in 1835 as *Acorn* at Howrah across the Hooghly River from Calcutta [Kolkata] India, she was built out of teak as a merchant vessel. She first appeared in the Lloyd's Register in the 1838 edition Supplement as *Baboo* owned by T Kincaid, home port as Greenock Scotland with Forrester as master on the Liverpool to South Australia trade. Her early few years were spent trading across the Indian Ocean.

During most of the 1840s, *Baboo* traded from Liverpool to Bombay and back with the same master, owner and home port. In 1845 Captain Charles Barker assumed command and he was in charge of *Baboo* when she left the London docks in mid-May 1847 and she ran aground in the Thames River. Two weeks later after repairs in dry dock, *Baboo* sailed from London to Sydney in New South Wales with passengers and freight before sailing to Shanghai and then on to England.

In August 1848, *Baboo* under the command of Charles Barker sailed from London to Port Adelaide in South Australia with freight, 9 passengers and 214 immigrants including the extended Mather family.

In 1850, the Kincaid sold *Baboo* to the Royal Navy which renamed her *HMS Assistance*. After a refit in Blackwall, she joined the first expedition to the Arctic to find Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition to find the Northwest Passage. After a return to England, *Assistance* sailed in 1852 in another Arctic expedition. She was trapped in ice off Bathurst Island and abandoned there in August 1854.