

= Briton @-@ class corvette =

The Briton class was a group of three wooden screw corvettes built for the Royal Navy in the late 1860s . All three ships of the class only served overseas during their brief service lives . Between them , they were assigned to the China , East Indies , African , North American , and the Pacific Stations . All three were regarded as obsolete 15 years after they were completed , and they were sold in 1886 ? 87 .

= = Design and description = =

The Briton @-@ class corvettes were designed by Sir Edward Reed , the Director of Naval Construction , as lengthened versions of the Eclipse @-@ class sloops . Like the smaller ships , they had a ram @-@ style bow to reduce weight forward by elimination of the knee above the stem . Similarly , he shortened the counter at the stern to save weight .

The ships were 220 feet (67 @. @ 1 m) long between perpendiculars and had a beam of 36 feet (11 @. @ 0 m) . Forward , the ships had a draught of 12 feet 9 inches (3 @. @ 9 m) , but aft they drew 16 ft 3 in (5 @. @ 0 m) . They displaced from 1 @, @ 730 to 1 @, @ 860 long tons (1 @, @ 760 to 1 @, @ 890 t) and had a burthen of 1 @, @ 322 tons . The hull was built entirely from wood except for iron crossbeams . Their crew consisted of 220 officers and enlisted men .

Two different types of engines and boilers were used with this class . HMS Druid , the first ship completed , had a two @-@ cylinder horizontal steam engine driving a single 15 @-@ foot (4 @. @ 6 m) propeller . Four rectangular boilers provided steam to the engine at a working pressure of 30 psi (207 kPa ; 2 kgf / cm²) . The engine produced a total of 2 @, @ 272 indicated horsepower (1 @, @ 694 kW) which gave her a maximum speed of about 13 @. @ 066 knots (24 @. @ 198 km / h ; 15 @. @ 036 mph) during sea trials . In contrast , the two later ships had a two @-@ cylinder horizontal compound expansion steam engine , driving a single 15 @-@ foot or 14 @-@ foot @-@ 9 @-@ inch (4 @. @ 50 m) propeller . Six cylindrical boilers provided steam to the engines at a working pressure of 60 ? 64 psi (414 ? 441 kPa ; 4 ? 4 kgf / cm²) . The engines produced between 2 @, @ 149 and 2 @, @ 275 indicated horsepower (1 @, @ 603 and 1 @, @ 696 kW) which gave the two ships a maximum speed over 13 knots (24 km / h ; 15 mph) . Briton and Thetis carried 255 long tons (259 t) of coal , while Druid carried an additional 30 long tons (30 t) . Although no information is available on their range , Admiral G. A. Ballard estimated that Druid had only about two @-@ thirds the range of her sisters , despite the additional coal that she carried , due to the greater efficiency of the compound expansion engines .

The class was ship rigged and had a sail area of 15 @, @ 000 square feet (1 @, @ 394 m²) . The lower masts were made of iron , but the other masts were wood . The ships were poor sailors and their best speed under sail alone was about 11 knots (20 km / h ; 13 mph) . Ballard attributed their poor performance under sail to the drag of the propeller , which could neither be hoisted out of the water , nor feathered . He also attributed their sluggish steering under sail to interference with the flow of water to the rudder by the fixed propeller . The first two ships were re @-@ rigged as barques after their first commission .

The first two ships were initially armed with a mix of 7 @-@ inch and 64 @-@ pounder 71 cwt rifled muzzle @-@ loading guns . The eight 64 @-@ pounder guns were mounted on the broadside while the two 7 @-@ inch (178 mm) guns were mounted on the forecastle and poop as chase guns . The 16 @-@ calibre 7 @-@ inch gun weighed 6 @. @ 5 long tons (6 @. @ 6 t) and fired a 112 @-@ pound (50 @. @ 8 kg) shell . It was credited with the nominal ability to penetrate 7 @. @ 7 @-@ inch (196 mm) armour . After the completion of their first commissions , the two ships were rearmed with a total of fourteen lighter 64 @-@ cwt 64 @-@ pounder guns , two of which replaced the 7 @-@ inch guns as chase guns . Thetis , the last ship completed , was given this armament from the beginning .

= = Ships = =

Druid was the last ship to be built at Deptford Dockyard . The ship was initially assigned to the Cape of Good Hope Station , where she remained for two years before being transferred to the North America and West Indies Station . Druid was refitted upon her return home in December 1876 , which included rearmament . The ship recommissioned in February 1879 and returned to the North American Station . She returned home in September 1882 and was paid off . Druid was laid up in the Medway until she was sold for scrap in 1886 .

Briton was the first of the trio to be commissioned and was assigned to the East Indies Station in 1871 . She remained there for four and a half years , mostly engaged on the suppression of the slave trade . The ship was refitted and rearmed upon her return home and Briton remained in reserve until recommissioned in 1881 for service on the Cape Station . She was transferred back to the East Indies after two years on the Cape . Her crew was relieved in 1884 by another sent out from Britain and the ship remained on station until she was sold , less her armament , in Bombay in 1887 .

The construction of Thetis followed her sisters after a two @-@ year delay and she was initially assigned to the China Station in 1873 . She was transferred to the East Indies after a year on station and returned home in 1877 where she was refitted . Two years later , the ship was assigned to the Pacific Station until she was ordered home in 1883 . Thetis was paid off after her arrival and was sold in 1887 .