

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.13

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CAPTAIN'S LOG

Already my year as your Captain has passed the halfway mark - how time flies when you are having fun! Numerous invitations have resulted in enjoyable functions and meeting interesting people sometimes at hitherto unknown venues. Most enjoyable of all are the times Margaret and I spend with the Cachalots and their ladies.

We entertained the Watch Ashore at the Club on 19 May and although there was not a particularly large attendance those present enjoyed convivial company and a tasty buffet lunch.

On 5 June over 60 Cachalots and guests attended the D-Day Anniversary Dinner at the RAF Yacht Club at Hamble. A perfect Summer evening enabled us all to enjoy a tippie outdoors prior to sitting down to an excellent dinner. Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles who has been a Stowaway since 1990 was our Guest Speaker and, as always, delivered a most entertaining and amusing speech.

The Annual BISS Service for Seafarers at St. Andrew's Church in The Avenue on 8 June was conducted by Rev. Bill McCrea. In his sermon Rev. David Potterton, Principal Chaplain of the BISS, spoke of the work of the BISS abroad particularly in Indonesia.

The Annual Shipping Festival at Winchester Cathedral on 17 June was attended by a large number of Cachalots and their Ladies, guests from all walks of life and even a few Australians! The Preacher was The Ven. B. K. Hammett, Chaplain of The Fleet. As in previous years we enjoyed the music of the Hampshire Youth Band not only in the Cathedral but also in the Deanery Garden whilst we partook of a glass of wine (or two) together with delicious eats prepared by our Ladies. Many thanks to them for preparing and serving such an excellent spread.

I was honoured and privileged to be invited by the daughters of Admiral Sir Morgan-Giles to represent the Club at the celebration of his 90 Birthday on board HMS Belfast on 22 June. Margaret was unable to attend due to work commitments in Plymouth - to say she was "green" is an understatement. As many of you may know, Admiral Sir Morgan was the last seagoing Captain of the Belfast and was instrumental in preserving this vessel for the Nation. The Reception was held on the Quarterdeck and was most enjoyable, despite the somewhat inclement weather.

On 26 June Margaret and I, together with the Storekeeper, attended the closing ceremony of the D-Day Exhibition at The

British Military Powerboat Trust at Marchwood. A most interesting and nostalgic exhibition and we hope new premises will be found to enable this dedicated group to continue their restoration work. After a buffet lunch and a Sunset Ceremony conducted by Rev. Ray Hubble, we sailed on the Tahilla for a symbolic trip and wreath laying from HMS Medusa.

The AGM of the Mission to Seafarers was held on 28 June on board MV Oceana berthed at The Mayflower Cruise Terminal. Several Club members and wives attended and we were given an interesting update on the current projects of the Mission and increased co-operation between the various organisations administering to the needs of International Seafarers. It was interesting to have a look around the ship - how things have changed since Margaret and I met on Orcades in 1967.

A party of 30 Cachalots and their Ladies were invited to visit Queen Mary 2 on 11 July. Our tour was conducted by the Captain's Secretary who was delightful and coped admirably with all the "old salts". We visited the public rooms and the decor was most impressive - she really is a "proper" ship with lots of deck space. Despite the very tight schedule Captain Wright and his Senior Officers kindly entertained us for drinks and canapes before we were let loose on the Bridge. Our special thanks to Captain David Carr for arranging this visit. I have heard whispers about wives arranging a Club trip to New York, so Cachalots beware!

On 27 July I represented the Club at an informal lunch on board HMS Southampton in Portsmouth and was most pleased to have as fellow guests Mrs Mary Pagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and The Mayor of Southampton. Commander Hodgkinson and his Officers gave us a warm welcome and I am now looking forward to a "Sea Day" early in September.

Margaret and I represented the Club at the Commodore's Cocktail party at The Royal Southern Yacht Club, Hamble, on 5 August. In perfect weather and delightful surroundings we were made most welcome by Commodore Colin Hall and his Officers. Captain and Mrs. Frank Murphy kindly invited us to be their guests for dinner which was a perfect end to the evening. Frank is one of our Past Captains and also a Past Commodore of the Royal Southern Yacht Club.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Club Officers, Harpooners and Committee Members for all their hard work and support as I look forward to the second half of my year.

Captain Andrew Tinsley

NON HARBOUR MARINE PILOTAGE

Harbour pilots have been encountered by all seafarers in the approaches to nearly every port in the world. In the UK and many other countries they have largely tended to be recruited from previously qualified master mariners but in some parts of the world they may be trained for pilotage right from their schooldays. This is the normal pattern in such major harbour areas as New York and Chesapeake Bay. There also exists however, a quite different type of pilotage which operates out of sight of the average British mariner. This can best be described as Deep Sea or Long Distance Pilotage.

The reason that such pilotages tend to be unnoticed is the fact that in most cases their services are taken voluntarily. Those whose members operate in the waters surrounding the UK are generally, though not exclusively, engaged aboard ships commanded and managed from the Far East.

Nowadays the most famous of the long distance pilot services is probably that which operates along the Queensland coast. It is generally referred to as the Barrier Reef Pilotage although actually three different agencies have been working the area since the Australian federal government ruled that there must be competition in order to reduce the level of fees so that more ships would avail themselves of the service. The whole subject of pilotage in that part of the world is highly emotive because, while the pilots are engaged to protect the ships from damage on the shoals and corals, government and public are more interested in protecting the coral from the ships in a World Heritage Site.

The Malacca Strait is another dangerous stretch of water heavily used by international shipping. It shortens the distance from the Persian Gulf to Japan or Korea by about three days for VLCCs but their draught makes them vulnerable to some of the shoals. This in turn makes their tracks very predictable so that there have been some spectacular collisions over the last few years. Predictability has also made ships in the Strait increasingly vulnerable to attack by heavily armed pirates lying in wait for them. Some ships have at times engaged unofficial pilots to conduct them through this part of the world.

Another famous pilotage in the Far East is that which operates through the Inland Sea of Japan between the Islands of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. Those who have traded in these waters will remember how the area is obstructed by innumerable islets as well as a proliferation of small fishing craft. No stranger would have risked passing through without a local pilot. At one time the Japanese government even introduced a rule that no vessel over 200 metres long was permitted to transit the Inland Sea during the hours of darkness. This produced the knock-on effect of a whole generation of Japanese car carriers, such as can be seen in Southampton Docks, being built with an overall length of 199 metres!

Historically, the most famous long distance pilotage must have been that on the Mississippi River. Steam sternwheel passenger vessels were built in their hundreds from early in the nineteenth century and were responsible for the population and development explosion throughout the entire drainage area between the Rockies and the Appalachians. Their heyday occurred in the 50's and early 60's of the nineteenth century. Disaster came with the American Civil War and by 1865 the boom was over. The passenger trade never recovered after the resulting devastation because a huge network of railways absorbed the evolving trade. While it lasted, the passenger ship traffic was guided by pilots who were the doyens of the river, earning far more even than the captains of the ships. There were always two pilots on each ship because the express routes such as St. Louis to New Orleans were over 1200 miles long and took many days. The return upstream obviously took longer. The pilots needed to confer with one another at every opportunity owing to the frequent changes in the river's course. There were almost no navigation lights owing to the remoteness of many reaches, bends and islands. The river's level could change by as much as 40 feet according to season.

Subsequently, the trade changed and by the twentieth century the traffic largely comprised huge barge trains and the pilots had given way to the tug skippers. Nevertheless, we can savour the atmosphere on the river in the early 1860's from a book written by the most famous pilot of all time: Samuel Clemens. Mr. Clemens wrote 'A Life on the Mississippi in 1882 describing his training and experiences. He did so as a result of making a nostalgic return to the river after he had become rich, famous and world travelled as an author and journalist. He wrote under the pen name of 'Mark Twain'.

It is not well known that the New York pilots (or Sandy Hook pilots as they are often known) can also be licensed to conduct cruise liners around the treacherous coastal waters around Long Island, Martha's Vineyard etc. On one occasion the QE2 ran on to rocks in Vineyard Sound while under the con of one of these pilots. The United States government breathalysed and criticised everyone in sight for careless navigation and going too fast. However, it subsequently became obvious that the culprit was not the pilot or the captain but the lines of soundings on the chart. They were 50 years old, dispersed 1100 feet apart and showed a minimum depth 20% greater than actually existed.

In Europe there are two main groups of Deep Sea Pilots who operate internationally. These are those licensed for the Baltic and those for the North Sea and its adjacent waters. At one time the two groups tended to compete and each to invade the other's stamping ground. Nowadays there is strict demarcation with Skagen, at the tip of Jutland in Denmark, as the handover point.

The Baltic pilotage in the west is evolving rapidly and may soon become a compulsory service owing to the building of a bridge linking Sweden and Denmark across the Sound. The consequences of navigational error could now be that much more serious.

North Sea Pilotage has two main cornerstones. These are a point just to the east of Berry Head, off Brixham, and CH1 Buoy about 7 miles north of Cherbourg pilot station. Since most of the ships using North Sea pilots are not locally based, they normally embark their pilots at either of these two stations and keep them on board throughout their European coastal stay. Virtually, all the returning pilots disembark at Brixham as it lies closer to the median line issuing from the Dover Straits South West Traffic Lane and avoids crossing over the eastbound traffic. Some ships also like to embark their pilots at Brixham too. However, this does involve making a crossing of the South West lane at 90° to the down Channel traffic and then making a shallow angled approach to the North East lane to fit in to the traffic pattern. This whole manoeuvre can be a little nail biting at times, usually owing to the unpredictability of the French fishing fleet. The whole idea is to be slotted in with the rest of the traffic while still to the west of the Greenwich Buoy. This marks the actual western end of the mandatory Dover Strait Traffic Separation Scheme.

The Dover Straits are kept under surveillance by Vessel Traffic Services. Ships heading for the North Sea must report their arrival into the scheme to 'Gris Nez Traffic' before reaching the Bassurelle Light Buoy. Thereafter they have to listen to traffic and navigational aid information throughout their passage until they have cleared north of the Sandettie Light Vessel. Since the scheme started the French operators' English has greatly improved but in the earlier days their pronunciation was rather 'Gallic' to say the

least. Certainly Japanese captains found them quite unintelligible! This was a great incentive for the North Sea Pilots to master 'franglais' and make themselves indispensable. Vessels returning from the North Sea must keep to the South West Lane and report in to Dover Coastguard's Channel Navigation Service, maintaining watch on their channel from the Falls off the Thames Estuary right through to CS1 Buoy which is situated on the Greenwich Meridian.

The North Sea pilots all carry pilotage certificates issued by the internationally agreed issuing authorities in the countries bordering the area, namely UK, France Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. Their certificates describe them as Deep Sea Pilots because they are not allowed to operate within the compulsory pilotage limits of the ports to which they deliver ships. Germany usually has around 10 part time pilots. They are actually Elbe Pilots who are dual qualified. They tend to pick up ships outward from German ports. France has around the same number but they are full time and their service is known as the Pilotage Hauturier. Their major customer used to be and probably still is Evergreen Lines, the enormous Taiwanese container fleet. Belgium used to have four Antwerp Deep Sea Pilots but they no longer appear in any web site. The largest number of Continentals are the Dutch who normally field about 35 ex shipmasters. Some of these retired from The big container ship operators at the early age of 55 on full pensions, thus giving them a very competitive edge. Finally, the British still have the majority of North Sea Pilots. They are retained by two agencies, Hammonds in Dover who are the bigger and Deep Sea & Coastal Pilots at Greenhithe who currently have 21 on their books.

All the North Sea pilots are self employed but pool their earnings within their agency. The fees they charge are based on the mileage of each leg of any assignment boosted by draught or gross tonnage bonuses for larger ships. If a pilot boards a ship off Cherbourg bound for Antwerp, Rotterdam and Hamburg he goes off pay at the Wandelaar Pilot Station when he hands over to the Belgian Schelde Pilot. He then remains off pay for until 24 hours has passed. Even then, he only receives a token rate until he picks up the reins again when he relieves the local pilot outward bound. Obviously, the fastest ship with the shortest turn around in port and the highest speed is the most profitable. There is an exception to this, though - taking a tanker from Brixham to a Norwegian terminal to load and then returning to Brixham at a draught of 22 metres tends to be a quite a bonanza - albeit a very tiring and worrying one.

A career as a North Sea pilot can be very satisfying but is no easy option.

Ian Stirling

Visit to Queen Mary 2

The highlight of the month of July was a visit to Queen Mary 2 arranged by Captain Carr for Club Members.

The lucky members and wives were shown round the ship by the Captain's technical secretary.

The general impression was most favourable and gave a Cunard touch of luxury which seemed to blend both the old Queens atmosphere and the modern outlook.

The internal space was beautifully designed to accommodate well planned public rooms, cinemas and theatres, shops, casino, a well stocked library. Everything had the Cunard touch of luxury, computer buffs had their own special room with all the latest internet programs available.

A particularly interesting room was the Gallery of fine art where modern paintings and sculptures were on view and for sale.

The ladies were impressed by the luxurious carpets which gave a feeling of rich opulence.

We were very privileged to visit the Bridge where the latest satellite systems together with a sophisticated communication system was explained by a navigating officer. The Bridge Control was state of the art, utilising propeller and thrust control with no rudder. Digital screen charts were very fine and intrigued the Master Mariners in the party.

We were regally entertained by the Captain in the Commodore Club, an elegant room overlooking the bow where fine champagne and canapés were served.

Our thanks go to the Cunard and the Captain and his staff for their Hospitality and time on such a busy embarkation and to David Carr for making it possible.

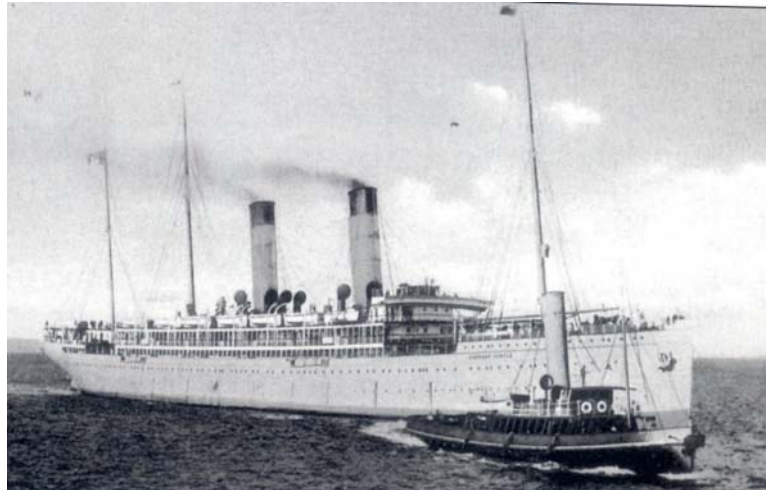
Eric Plowman



The Cruise of H.M. Armed Merchantman "KINFAUNS CASTLE"

From 4th Aug.1914 to 20th Aug.1915

Continuing the account by Mr. **LEONARD ROGERS**,1888-1937



While the Kinfauns Castle is engaged in blockading the mouth of the Rufidji River their seaplane is shot down and the Pilot taken prisoner. The motor boat from the Kinfauns manages to recover the seaplane while under heavy fire from the Germans.

Dec. II. *H.M.S.Fox* left at midday, out to sea, and the tugs were alongside all day. The cruiser returned at 5 p.m. and we turned over the tug manning to her, our crews returning to us. We sailed then for Mombasa.

Dec.12. Arrived at Mombasa, or rather Kilindini, which is on the other side of the river. *H.M.S.Chatham* here, and we are to coal and provision and sail probably on Friday next back to the Rufidji River.

Dec. 13. Martial law in force here, so we cannot go over to the Mombasa side. A large number of Indian troops here, and the enemy not far away.

Dec. 14. Rumour very prevalent that a German cruiser is off Dar-es-Salaam, and the *Chatham* has gone out to sea. (As a matter of fact, the *Emden* was about at this time, and we constantly had rumours of the activity of a German cruiser.) .Weather very hot and rainy.

Dec.15-16. Completing coaling, and preparing for sea.

Dec. 17. Go to sea tomorrow. Probably bound for Tanga,down the coast, where the disaster occurred. Likely to do some shelling of the place, big movements of troops taking place.

Dec. 18. Weighed anchor at 5 a.m. Several troopers in company with us. We arrived at Tanga at noon. *H.M.S.Fox* already there. Hung about all day, and at sundown the *Fox* opened fire on the shore batteries. The troopers and ourselves made a pretended landing, boats were swung out and the 'abandon ship' call was sounded, and by this time darkness had fallen, when we returned to ship. (Afterwards we heard that this evolution was carried out to deceive the Germans that a landing was to take place, and the idea was to bring down a German column that was operating on the border to the defence of Tanga, and allow a certain movement of British troops to take place which was being hindered by this column. The evolution had the desired effect, and the movement was carried out. Sailed at 8 p.m. for Zanzibar. Stopped 2 dhows during the night, and examined them, but they were not enemy.

Dec. 19 Arrived early in the morning. Took in water and stores and sailed at 9-30 a.m. for the Rufidji River. Arrived at the mouth at 5 p.m. and took the northern channel, *H.M.S. Chatham* and the two tugs being at the other channel. During the night signals seen on shore very frequently.

Dec. 20. *H.M.S. Dupleix* arrived here . This ship was a cable ship, and was taken over by the Indian Marine, they manned her, and armed her with a nine pounder and several smaller guns, she was of shallow draught, and was very useful at that time in getting in close to the enemy entrenched on both banks of the Rufidji, and giving them a hot time. Hear that we are to land a party tomorrow on the two or three islands handy to search for Germans. *H.M.S. Fox* arrived this evening. Picked up a message from the *Konigsberg* informing us that they knew all that we were doing, and the strength of the British force. This is quite likely, as smoke signals by day, and fire signals by night are never ceasing to be shown. *H.M.S. Chatham* sailed this evening. We have constantly moved position during the night.

Dec.21. Landed a party on one of the islands, and then the *Dupleix* went aground on another island close by, near the mainland. Germans seen on the mainland and threatening the *Dupleix*, so, as her guns would not quite reach, we edged in and opened fire at four miles range. Armed tug *Adjutant* arrived, and we landed more marines on the other island for all night stay. Commenced firing again on German troops on the mainland. We are about 24 miles from the river's mouth, and the big island is called Mafia, which we afterwards captured with the help of Native troops. Landed more marines this afternoon. During the night, signals were constantly seen, and we shelled these repeatedly. *H.M.S. Dupleix* reports that a number of Germans were killed this morning by the shell fire.

Dec.22. *Dupleix* came off the sandbank this morning early, and we left for the Rufidji at 5 a.m. in company. All the commanders repaired aboard the *Fox* this morning as to future movements. There is great talk of a combined force from all the ships going up the river after the *Konigsberg*. Native spies brought in news that the German intends to try and blow up the colliers sunk at the mouth of the river. We have to send up our 1st. Lieutenant and party in the *Adjutant* to scout around. We are to proceed to Zanzibar tomorrow for several days. Left, at 2 p.m. to pick up our marines on the island of Bijou, close to Mafia. They found much evidence of German occupation, amongst other things, eight natives hung to trees for giving information to the British. Steamed for the river, and took up position in the north Channel. Patrolled all night.

Dec.23. Tug *Adjutant* and Armed ship *Dupleix* went up the river this morning to see if the sunken colliers were still in position. They were subjected to a very hot fire from both sides of the river, the Germans having entrenched themselves in fairly solidly. The ships did not get up far enough to see the *Konigsberg*, but the colliers were still in their sunken position. When the *Dupleix* came alongside she showed signs of a terrible raking with machine guns, the Commander's room under the bridge having at least 50 bullets in it, where the door had been left open, and the cabin

had caught the sweep of the guns. But the luck still held good, and her only casualties were two marines wounded, although somewhat badly. These two were brought on board, and operated on by our surgeons. Ordered to Kilwa down the coast, in order to destroy some Arab dhows there helping the Germans. The badly wounded marine died at 4 p.m., he had 5 bullets in his stomach, and there was no hope from the first. We arrived at Kilwa at 5 p.m. and opened fire at once. They had some small batteries of some description on the hills, but their shots fell short, and we soon silenced these. Very rapid firing was maintained here by the ship, 108 shells being fired in 55 minutes, and good results were got, several of the official buildings being entirely destroyed. One very fine hit was made by a seaman gunner, from No.3 starboard gun, the German flag was flying from the front of the buildings, and an order was telephoned to No.3 gun to bring it down, this the gun captain succeeded in doing with his first shot, the flag staff being broken off like a carrot. We sailed just after 6 p.m. for Zanzibar. The marine who was killed this morning was buried at sunset, the 'Last Post' was sounded by the marine buglers, and three volleys fired by a party of marines. This was the first death so far we had suffered on board, and we considered ourselves very lucky.

Dec. 24. Arrived at Zanzibar at 7 a.m. Topmasts of the *Pegasus* still showing, a gruesome reminder of the *Konigsberg*, the ship we're after. Hear that the *Chatham* was here recently. We are staying here until the 28th.

Dec. 25. Xmas Day. As much routine as possible was omitted today, and the day given over to enjoyment. The heat is now terrific.

Dec. 26. Coaling and storing ship. *H.M.S. Dupleix* arrived and left today. The heat is now getting almost unbearable.

Dec. 27. Leaving here tomorrow for Dar-es-Salaam.

Dec. 28. Sailed at 5 a.m., and arrived at 8 a.m. off Dar-es-Salaam. Cruised up and down, but no sign of any activity. Left at 9 a.m. for the Rufidji River. Passed the *Weymouth* who was bound for Dar-es-Salaam. Arrived at the river's mouth about 3-30 p.m. *H.M.S. Fox* still there but she is shortly going to Bombay for a refit. Steamed over to the north channel this sun-down to take up our station.

Dec. 29. Tug *Adjutant* came alongside this morning. She had been attacked on Xmas Day off Mafia Island, but had suffered no casualties. We Sailed across to Mafia this morning, and the place shows signs of occupation, and the German flag is still flying. There is a lot of talk of capturing this island, as it is just close enough to be a menace. We patrolled off the island all night.

Dec. 30. Steamed right round the island this morning, German flag still flying. *H.M.S. Fox* and *Adjutant* arrived. The *Weymouth* now at Rufidji, and there is some operation shortly taking place. Mail for us on board the *Fox*, also a Military Officer came on board immediately. Hear that we are to go to Mombasa for troops and to effect a landing on this island. Steamed out to sea this evening, and patrolled all night.

Dec.31. Steamed across to the *Weymouth* at Rufidji. Hear that the *Fox* has left the station. At midday took the tug *Helmuth* in tow for Zanzibar. Ship's company warned not say anything of matters which has come to their knowledge to any of the natives, as Zanzibar is a hot bed of spies.

To be continued

A Very Des-Res

Hamish Roberts continues his reminiscences of life aboard the City of Windsor in the immediate post-war years.

"Little boxes made of ticky tacky
and they all look just the same".

The words of the popular song describing many shoreside housing schemes might be applied to the living areas provided on board ships similar to the 'City of Windsor', in which European officers and ratings spent most of their leisure time on lengthy voyages in weather conditions as varied as high summer in Calcutta docks to midwinter in Eastern Canada.

The steel pens in which mariners lived were not structured by floors, surrounded by walls, and covered by a ceiling, nor did they always have windows. They were instead held together by a deck, surrounded by bulkheads, topped by a deckhead. Natural light was admitted, and natural stench emitted through a porthole, a skylight, or a ventilator. The various rival factions into which the inhabitants were divided were interconnected by means of alleyways, and companionways, the equivalent of corridors and stairways ashore.

Similar, however, to houses on land, these dwellings differed in location, fixtures and fittings, only a few qualifying for the description 'des res'. Some, for example the spacious room sited on the lower bridge and occupied by the Captain in solitary splendour, were indeed well situated in a quiet cul-de-sac, ensuring a degree of seclusion and guaranteeing stunning sea views. Others, more down market, were in built up areas or even busy thoroughfares frequented, when in port, by thieves and other unwelcome types, thus requiring the port hole curtain to be kept drawn in order to avoid eyeball to eyeball confrontations between the inmates and peeping toms exhibiting, under the guise of 'shore labour', lewd and criminal expressions in keeping with their kleptomaniac propensities.

Most seafarers respected the privacy of their shipmates, and one's cabin became one's home. Many seamen can recall with with astonishing clarity, fifty years or more after leaving a ship, where they lived, who lived next door, and so forth. Some ships carried a higher proportion than others of 'old women', for whom the gossip relating to everyday doings or non-doings provided an ideal setting for a maritime 'soap'.

For the Master, officers, and European ratings, the accommodation, or living area, was, although basic, adequate and comfortable, and I cannot remember hearing any complaints about living conditions.

The dining room, known as the saloon, was for the officers, the only communal area in the ship. In no way however, could it be described as similar to a Royal Naval Wardroom, or an Army Officers' Mess. Nobody would have considered the saloon as 'home'. Essentially, it was a dining room. It was not a venue where the officers gathered socially to share drinks or jokes, play games, enjoy conversation, and generally relax. Christmas Day might have been an exception.

Everyone, except the five Europeans who failed to qualify for officer status, to which in any event they did not aspire, took meals in this Holy of Holies, dressed in some semblance of uniform, but between meals, the saloon remained empty, rather like a public house between 'hours', the two long tables being covered by large dark green tablecloths. Enhanced by heavy teak doors, and brass lamps, the tables, chairs and elegant large mirrored sideboard always looked inviting and I often wondered why this fine room was not utilised and enjoyed for purposes other than messing.

The saloon was situated in the centre of the bridge block of accommodation at main deck level, its heavy, brass rimmed portholes facing forward. Close by, on the starboard side, was the Chief Officers room, which served as his home, office, and unofficial store room for items such as torch batteries, small shackles, skeins of sewing twine, and other sought after goodies, which, as he knew from experience, had a habit of 'walking'.

The Chief Officers neighbours, sharing a much smaller cabin, or room as it was usually called, were two cadets, Judd and the writer. Continuing aft along the alleyway, were a small ships office, a bathroom and w.c.

On the port side, adjacent to the saloon, lived the Purser/chief steward, and off the port side alleyway were three small, double berthed cabins in which passengers could be carried. Spare rooms of that type, in good quality cargo liners, were at a premium in the immediate post-war years when most passenger liners were still engaged in Government, rather than owners' service. Cadet Humphries occupied a small 'inside' cabin opposite these passengers cabins.

Abaft the saloon was the officers' pantry, not meant to be raided by the officers, but only to serve the saloon. It was absurdly small, but contained a domestic refrigerator, of equally absurd dimensions in which could be stored about six cans of beer, kept chilled for the exclusive benefit of our Commander. For visiting nabobs from the shore, to be of such standing as to qualify for a can of cold beer in the Captain's room was, without doubt, a status symbol beyond the wildest aspirations of anybody who actually sailed in the ship.

Further aft, around the funnel and under the boat deck, were two alleyways, port and starboard. On the port side, the forward room housed 'Nicky Hai', chief of all the engineers, followed by the third, fourth, and fifth of that ilk, and their communal wash house. In the starboard alleyway, from forward, lived the second engineer, second officer, third officer, and carpenter. From these alleyways, steel doors allowed access to the engine room.

At the after end of this block of accommodation, between the two alleyways, was a four berth room inhabited by the Quartermasters. Its door, and one small porthole faced aft, but in fine or hot weather, they could open a skylight in the deckhead opening onto the boat deck. The room was sparsely furnished, having four metal lockers screwed to the bulkhead, beneath which was one long settee. Alongside the opposite bulkhead were four bunks, two up, two down. To provide basic privacy, the bunks were separated at their head or feet by a canvas partition. In warmer climes, a small fan served their needs and, for cold weather use, a large steam radiator was fitted.

This provided, for four men, a type of mobile home which moved slowly but steadily through constantly changing scenes, from calm to storm conditions, from tropical to sub-zero temperatures, from Eastern to Western and Northern to Southern hemispheres until the expiry of their two year lease.

To one side of their living room, the QM's had a separate, small messroom fitted with a table, two wooden benches, and a deep, old fashioned, porcelain sink. On the other side was a small single lavatory. The Quartermasters had no bathing facilities nor access to a bathroom. This slight problem was, however, overcome by means of a small hose pipe, a bucket, and a stirrup pump of the type used to extinguish incendiary bombs. The hose end, fitted with a spray rose, was led through the metal cage protecting the deck head light glass, and for showering purposes, water was pumped through this Heath Robinson contraption from the bucket. Each QM, on joining the ship was issued with a personal bucket, and sweat rag.

The Radio Officer lived in solitary splendour in a small deckhouse perched on the after end of the boat deck, adjacent to the radio room. Although somewhat remote, this was a pleasant situation.

The most des res, however, situated in a high altitude, much sought after area, was that occupied by the Master of the vessel, Captain 'Daddy' Mathias; comprising one large square room in its own grounds on the exclusive lower bridge estate, through which, although there was a right of way towards the bridge and wheelhouse, loitering was not encouraged.

None of the cabins were what, today, would be called 'en-suite', and in this respect the Captain was less fortunate than anyone on board. Years after the ship entered service in 1923, as a result of some brilliant afterthought, a small bathroom/w.c had been built on the port side of the lower bridge or 'Captain's deck'. Whenever therefore, the need arose, whether by day or night, in fair weather or foul, the great man had to brave the elements and head across an unprotected stretch of deck from his living room to his bathroom, unless, unknown by the lower orders, he made some alternative arrangement. He too, qualified for a company bucket. His, or, more precisely, his bathroom's waterworks, plumbed as they were into a tank under the bridge, were serviced daily by one of the 'Jackies' by means of buckets of water decanted through a filling or sounding pipe on the port wing of the navigating bridge above. Nevertheless, the Captain was the only person on board who could enjoy the luxury of a private bathroom.

In each officer's cabin, carved somewhere into the steelwork, was the statutory legend "Certified to accommodate one seaman".

Only cold running salt water was dispensed through the taps in the communal bathrooms around the officer's quarters and it was, therefore, necessary to carry salt water soap. No hot running fresh water was available. To obtain hot water, the procedure was, first, to take a bucket or other receptacle along the deck to the after end of the midships accommodation, outside the QM's quarters, where a fresh water pump was situated. Secondly, fill the bucket. Thirdly, carry the bucket forward to the galley, and pour the cold water into the steam heated boiler.

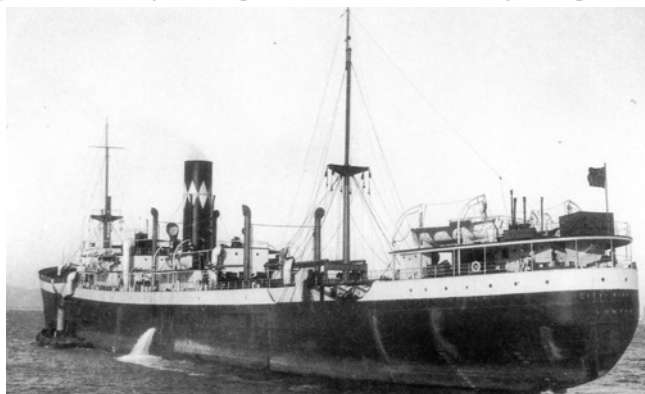
Finally, extract from the boiler the amount of water put in cold, and carry the boiling water to one's cabin. There was however, attached to this time consuming, but simple exercise, an inevitable embuggerance factor. Frequently, the pump was useless, drawing only air, and in need of priming. This meant roaming around and cadging some fresh water with which to prime the pump, after removing the large nut leading to it's gizzards. The borrowed water, had of course, to be returned, and when water was being taken from the galley boiler, the chief cook and his assistants watched closely to ensure that no more water was removed than had been put in. On reaching one's cabin, it was usually found that the water was too hot to use, and a second trip to the pump was required which meant that another bucket was needed.

Every cabin was equipped with a 'compactum', a vital piece of furniture for washing purposes; it was a wooden creation, about six feet tall and two feet in width, securely screwed to the bulkhead. At face level it held a square mirror, hinged, so as to provide behind it a cupboard for shaving gear and so forth. Below the mirror was a hinged door which, when pulled downwards lay flat and at right angles to the user, and exhibited a bowl for washing purposes. After use, the door was simply pulled up once more and, hey-ho, the water was decanted into a tin which reposed in the lowest compartment of the compactum. The system was adequate, although people frequently tipped up the bowl having failed to ensure beforehand that the tin underneath was empty. This omission led to the cabin's deck being flooded with slimy, soapy water, on top of which had often been floating lumps of soap, fag ends, or orange peel. In order to avoid this catastrophe, the can, when almost full, had to be carried out onto the open deck from where it's contents could be tipped into the 'big locker', in other words, overboard. It was imperative, in order to avoid getting ones 'own back', to ensure that the can was emptied over the lee side, and not to windward. The cadets water waste cans were scrutinised by the Captain on his routine Sunday morning inspection of the ship, thus eliminating the real risk of the can becoming encrusted with slime and emitting odours even more foul than usual.

Throughout the accommodation, the doors were made of teak wood, and could be secured in the open position by means of sturdy brass hooks. They were also fitted with strong brass locks, and, in the upper sections, round, revolving brass ventilators were fitted. The lower panels had been mutilated when, as a war-time measure, teak panels had been replaced by a type of plywood in order to create an emergency 'crash panel'. Together with large, pointed quick release rafts, attached to the fore and main mast shrouds, the crash panels were retained in place for some time after the end of hostilities.

Other basic cabin fittings included a small fan, a settee fitted to one bulkhead, water bottle and tumbler in a wooden frame, and a metal wind-shute. The latter was so constructed as to fit snugly into the open porthole aperture, hopefully to scoop in cool, fresh air as the ship steamed through tropical seas at 10 or 11 knots. Air conditioning was unheard of, and anyway, who would need it when we already had a wind-shute? Similarly, washing machines were surplus to requirements when everyone already had a company bucket.

Also non-existent was refrigerated space for the storage of sea-stocks of fresh meat, fish, or vegetables. These were all carried in an ice-box erected on deck at the break of the poop, abaft all the cargo hatches. Once daily, the ice-box was opened by the Chief Steward who, with the Chief Cook extracted the stores immediately required. The huge chunks of ice inside the box seemed always to possess a dirty brown tint, and traces of old vegetables, fish scales, and soot from the ship's "woodbine" funnel floated in the melted ice at the bottom of the box. This system seemed again, adequate, and we suffered no digestive problems.



Rope Ends

THE SHIPPING FESTIVAL, 2004

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club thanks the following sponsors for their kind support:

1. HMS Mastadon (Exbury House) & Arromanches
2. The Salvage Association
3. Southampton Container Terminals Ltd.
4. Wainwright Bros. & Co Ltd
5. South Coast Port Services
6. Cunard Line & Seabourn Cruise Line
7. John H. Whitaker Tankers Ltd.
8. Blue Funnel Cruises Ltd
9. Associated British Ports - Southampton

Donations may still be sent if you were unable to do so at the time of the service at Winchester Cathedral and will be gratefully received to assist with the costs and to add to the donations to The Cathedral and to The Mission to Seafarers.

Arthur Taylor

You will notice from the "Gone Aloft" box on the back page that the well known Shipping Correspondent for the Evening Echo, Mr. Arthur Taylor, died, on 13th July. He was a long-standing member of the Club and served as a very good friend, always giving us generous space in his column. Local Shipping Agents were often surprised at the information he provided ahead of other sources. He was always keeping a bright lookout for "Round the Port" and shared his wealth of knowledge, both historical and commercial, with his regular followers who regarded him as something of a nautical guru. He is sadly missed.

Boatsteerer



The Curry Lunch
in September
will now be held on
Saturday 11th Sep-
tember
In the Club-room
1200 for 1245

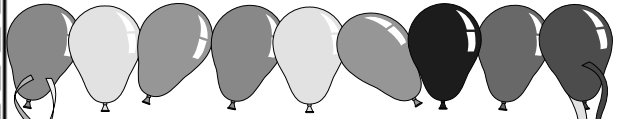


SEA PIE SUPPER

The Guildhall, Southampton
Friday 04 February 2005. 1830 for 1915
Tickets go on sale on Tuesday 16 November in
the Club office @ £30.00 each

First come, first served: 4 per member.

If you are unable to attend the Club on this day, tickets can be sent to you by post on receipt of your cheque (payable to "The Cachalots") and an SAE. A pre-order wine list will be enclosed with your tickets. The latest date for return of this, with your cheque for your wine order, will be stated on the form.



AUTUMN DINNER DANCE

Saturday 2nd October
Brook House Masonic Centre, Botley

*Salmon & Avocado Mousse
on a Bed of Mixed Lettuce
with a Lemon & Dill Dressing*

*Chicken Breast
Stuffed with Pate, Wrapped with
Parma Ham, in Filo Pastry
Seasonal Vegetables & Potatoes*

*Gateau Cortina
Chocolate Sponge Soaked in Rum
Filled & Coated with a
Sweet Cream and White Chocolate*

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

The Dinner Dance will follow the format of last year's successful function, with a non-alcoholic fruit punch served on arrival, drinks at sensible prices, and music by *Harmony House*.

Black Tie,
1915 for 2000.
Price retained at **£25** per person.

There is no restriction on numbers so why not make up a table of family and friends?
List now on the notice board,
or book through the office.

Don't forget; your Club is routinely open four days a week at lunch time. It serves sandwiches, snacks, salads or cooked meals. There is a cooked special each day and the price has recently only been £2.75. Don't forget that, when dining, a bottle of house wine can be bought for only £5 - a far cry from the usual hotel or restaurant prices. If you are in town at lunch time, Tuesday to Friday, Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink and take your food orders. Suggestions for events, for improvements, offers of help, articles and anecdotes for inclusion in this newsletter will all be received with pleasure. We are even prepared to receive complaints if they are constructive.

The Club's address is:

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club,
The Southampton Seafarers' Centre,
2/3 Orchard Place,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3BR

Tel/Fax: 023 8022 6155

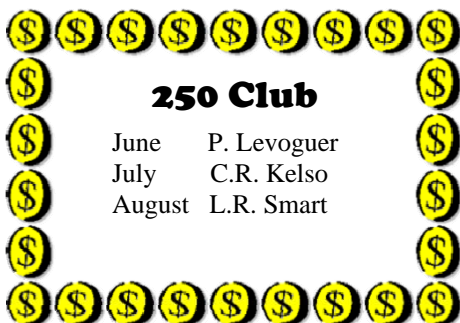
E.mail: cachalots@smmclub.fsnet.co.uk

Editor: t.e.clark@which.net

Dates for your Diary

- Sat SEP 11 Curry Lunch, Club room.***
- Sat OCT 02 Autumn Dinner Dance
Brook House Masonic Centre.
- Tue OCT 26 Last Night of the Proms, Tidworth.
- Tue NOV 16 Sea Pie Supper tickets on sale.
- Sat DEC 04 Christmas Dinner.
Kings Court Masonic Centre.
- Sat DEC 11 Christmas Lunch.
Kings Court Masonic Centre.
- Thu JAN 13 A.G.M.
- Sat JAN 22 Burns Night Supper.
Kings Court Masonic Centre.
- Fri FEB 04 Sea Pie Supper

*** Revised Date.



250 Club

June P. Levoguer
July C.R. Kelso
August L.R. Smart

Gone Aloft

**D.G. Brackenbury
H.A. Taylor
C.G. Webb**