

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.17

September 2005

CAPTAIN'S LOG

The second quarter of my year in office seems to have flown by, almost certainly because it has been such an enjoyable and interesting few months. I have represented the Club at a number of functions and participated in many Club events.

The good ship Shieldhall was the venue for three events. On 21 May the little grey cells were challenged with a friendly quiz and supper evening on board. The questions covered a variety of topics and there was lots of friendly rivalry between the teams. A tasty supper was provided and a great time was had by all.

It was Shieldhall's Golden Jubilee on 11 June, which found Win and I on board once again. The service at the dockside in Southampton was led by the Revd Bill McCrea, with music provided by Southampton Concert Wind Band and the Bournemouth Male Voice Choir. Shieldhall was rededicated by Cllr Edwina Cooke, Mayor of Southampton. From the quayside, the Hampshire Caledonian Society entertained us to the sound of bagpipes and the Sea Cadets performed Colours. The day continued with a cruise in Southampton Water, escorted by some "classic" vessels, and we were delighted with a water display by one of the tugs. A first-class buffet lunch was served during our cruise.

On 28 June we joined Shieldhall for the evening trip to view the international fleet gathered in the Solent. This celebration, which marked the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, was a truly memorable occasion. We were treated to close-range views of naval, merchant and tall ships from around the world, and a magnificent and truly impressive firework display in Portsmouth. Having sailed from Southampton in heavy rain, we returned in the early hours under starry skies.

On 7 June, Win & I were invited to the annual Southampton Service for Seafarers at St Andrew's URC where the preacher was the Revd Bill McCrea. Then, on 16 June, we had our own annual Shipping Festival Service in Winchester Cathedral where the preacher was the Very Reverend Michael Till, Dean of Winchester, and the Volunteer Band of HMS Nelson very ably assisted with the music. After the

service it was good to meet old friends over a glass of wine in the Dean's delightful garden.

On 26 June, the Storekeeper and I attended the licensing of the Revd Andrew Hockett as the Missions to Seafarers' Southampton Port Chaplain in the Chapel of St Andrew at the Southampton Seafarers' Centre.

Win and I have also attended a number of social events. It was a beautiful summer's day when, on Sunday 19 June, we were guests at the Commodore's Cocktail party at RAF Yacht Club in Hamble. The delightful waterside location and the warm welcome we received ensured that we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

On 14 July, we were invited by Commodore and Mrs Hussain (Naval Base Commander Portsmouth) to a dinner party. It was a balmy summer's evening as we sipped pre-dinner champagne on the lawn of Spithead House. An excellent dinner was accompanied by interesting conversation with fellow guests: the Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, the Chairman of the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the Assistant Chief Constable of the Hampshire Police, and their respective spouses.

More recently, on 29 July, we were guests of the Commodore of the Royal Southern Yacht Club. A beautiful evening and magnificent views over the Hamble set the scene for the Pre Cowes Week Cocktail Party, an event which was graced by the presence of HRH Duke of Edinburgh. The occasion continued in style as we were honoured to dine as guests of Captain and Mrs Frank Murphy. It was a relaxed and friendly end to a perfect evening.

The Club's own special social event in the last few months was the Summer Ball at Botley. A lot of hard work by the Club's Officers ensured that the evening was a resounding success. As always, our ladies looked lovely, the music and the meal couldn't have been better, and the evening was enjoyed by all.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to Judith Peck, who is retiring shortly, for her hard work during the past few years in ensuring that the Club ran smoothly.

Captain Simon Harwood

200th Anniversary of Trafalgar Dinner

Friday, 21 October, 2005

at the

Royal Air Force Yacht Club, Hamble

Cream of Mushroom Carronade Soup

Roast Rib of Beef Victory

With

Red Wine Onion Gravy

Or

Prince of Wales Leek and Goats Cheese Tart

Served with a selection of vegetables and potatoes

Traditional Naval Bread and Butter Pudding

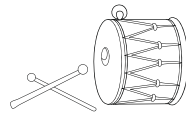
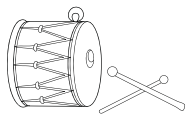
Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

Black Tie

£25 per person

1900 for 1930



TIDWORTH

Tuesday, October 25th

The programme for this years concert is yet to be announced and the price is expected to be around £19 per head, to include coach, concert, supper (incl. a glass of wine) and tip for the driver.

Pick-ups as before:

Old Bowling Club 1700

Kings Court 1745

and at Chilworth roundabout if required.

WINE TASTING & BUFFET



It is hoped that Robin and Jenny Hibberd will give us another talk on viniculture followed by wine-tasting on board S.S. Shieldhall at 48 berth on a Saturday lunch-time in November, date to be confirmed. The actual wine-tasting is free but the wines will be available to purchase.

Cost and date TBA

Watch the notice board or contact the office.

SEA PIE SUPPER

The Guildhall, Southampton

Friday 03 February 2006. 1830 for 1915

Tickets go on sale on Tuesday 15 November in the Club office @ £32.00 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.

Shieldhall Summer Diary

Saturday 11th June My first outing on Shieldhall this year and it's a re-dedication ceremony at 104 berth to celebrate her 50th year, followed by a cruise in the Solent. I'm there as Mate with my Pilotage Exemption Certificate. During the re-dedication ceremony we are entertained by the Bournemouth Male Voice Choir, all smartly dressed in blazers and grey flannels, and I am amused to see one of our engineers, who is actually one of the choir in his other life, sat amongst them in his white boiler suit. It was clean though.

We are also entertained by the pipes and drums of the Hampshire Caledonian Society, in recognition of vessel's antecedents and two of the band sail with the ship. The Mayor of Southampton also sails with us and we give her the obligatory turn on the wheel. We also fly her special flag, Admiral of the Port, from the mast head.

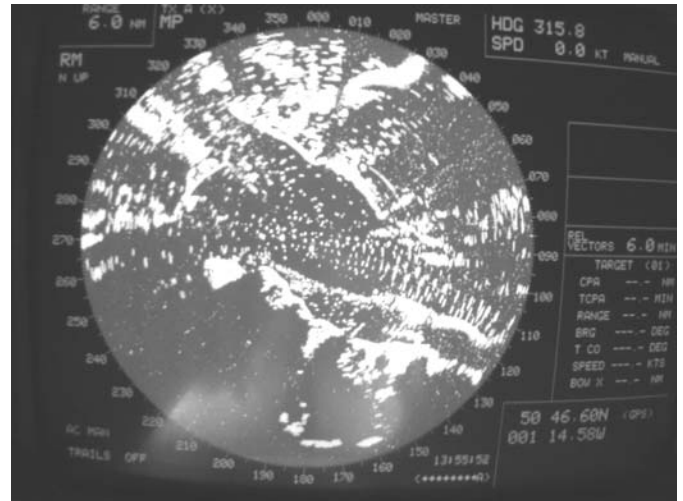
Off the entrance to the Beaulieu River I reduce speed to the minimum and head the ship into the wind while the ashes of Hans Juelsdorf are scattered from the poop, Peter Tambling conducting the small ceremony. Mary and some of their family are with us and as I sound one mournful blast on the whistle I am sure that there are more than just me onboard with a lump in their throat.

Monday 27th June It's the Fleet Review rehearsal day and it falls as my lot to navigate Shieldhall to the position allocated to us by the Navy. We are number 76 of the 168 participating vessels and in a line of mostly mine-hunters just north of the Ryde Middle Bank. COMUKMARFOR, call sign SPITHEAD CONTROL, only require us to anchor to an accuracy of 3 decimal places of a minute, that's 6ft, or 1.8m! That's the hawse-pipe position when we drop and we are expected to lay out 6 shackles and then shorten back to around 4 or when we are in line with the rest of our group. Might be easy-peasy for a multimillion pound warship with all the latest gizmos and a full bridge team but it's a tall order for an ageing, underpowered steamship with a will of its own. Also for an ageing, underpowered ex-Pilot rapidly losing the will to live. (I am reminded here of the Master/Pilot information card of one of the old Tholstrup tankers on which the taciturn Faeroese skipper had written, "The vessel is right handed, but she go which way she want.") Our own Sat.Nav. display gives our position to FOUR decimal places, that's 7.3 inches or 18.5 cm, so there, and of course I trust it implicitly. Trouble is the transponder is mounted above the starboard bridge wing, about 23 ft from the centreline and 80ft from the hawse-pipe. So I've done the trigonometry and worked out the D.Lat and D.Long for various headings and my head is full of confusing figures. It's all academic anyhow, because when we finally get through to Spithead Control and gain permission to enter the lines I observe that there is a small tanker anchored just to the north of our designated spot. It turns out that this tanker is carrying fresh water for any of the fleet that might require it and it has been plonked in our position because the Navy didn't know we were coming! After much confusion regarding where we are supposed to go I give up on the communications and head for the only likely spot, as close to the tanker that I dare. We end up anchored about 100ft south of the given position and nobody complains. or, perhaps, even notices, or, more probably, even cares. So much for their carefully planned swinging circles.

Today is a full rehearsal of tomorrow's Fleet Review, with Mrs. Fagan taking the place of HM The Queen on board HMS Endurance. Some of our passengers are a bit miffed that once we are anchored at 1100 we are stuck in line until we return to Southampton at 1600 and they are unable to see what is happening with the Tall ships down at the Portsmouth end.

What do they think this is? The QE2? They do, however, get to see the Review Fleet, the Fast Steampast and the Flypast and Peter Tambling leads them all in manning and cheering ship, naval style.

Tuesday 28 June Today we do it for real and after Peter Tambling's complaints to the Navy yesterday we find that the water tanker has been removed. But now there is a fresh wind blowing and the tide is starting to run so, in a crowded anchorage, it is no place for the Shieldhall to be dithering over 6ft or even 60! Peter is dispatched to the fo'csle with his own hand held sat. nav. device but again it is academic as I head for a familiar patch of water (X marks the spot) and drop the anchor where we can. She brings up right in line, and only a smidgin to the east, another small triumph for "seat of the pants" over technology.



Shieldhall at the centre of the action

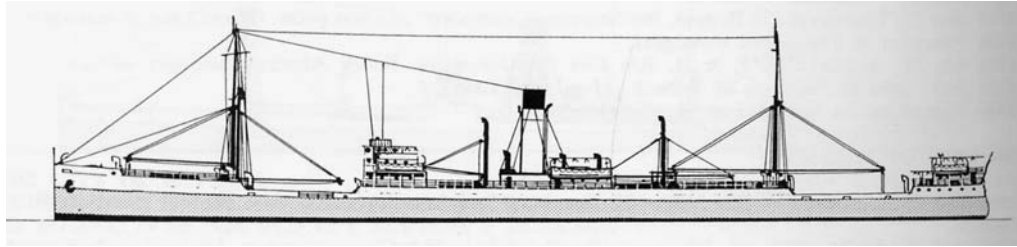
This picture of the radar display, on 6 miles range, taken at about 1500 on the 28th, shows the lines of the participating vessels. The bright line to the north of the I.O.W., stretching from Cowes to the forts, and broadest off Ryde, is the congregation of small spectator craft.

Although not such a nice day as yesterday, our passengers get a good view of the Review Fleet, led by THV Patricia. The Queen comes out of her glass-house on top of the Endurance to give us a wave and we salute her with three cheers and a waving of (Shieldhall) flags rather than "Off Caps". Endurance is followed by HMS Chatham (Admiral Boyce), HMS Scott (the Prince of Wales), RFA Sir Bedivere (Princess Royal), HMS Enterprise (Duke of York) and MY Leander (Terry Wogan, no, that was yesterday). The Grand Turk, the replica of an 18th century man-o-war, which is to feature as Victory in this evenings re-enactment, brings up the rear.

It is a rush, once the review is over and we are released from the lines, to get back to Southampton to change passengers in time for the evening cruise. As I approach the berth the threatening rain catches up with us, the wind backs and blows us away from the berth. We manage to get lines out but a lack of steam pressure for'd and a jammed stopper on the back-spring aft all add up to a very messy berthing. It doesn't help that among the passengers waiting on the quay are a crowd of Cachalots, trying not to smirk.

I am relieved by Ian Stirling but Meryl and myself stay on as extra hands. The weather improves and we enjoy an evening cruise in the Solent with fellow Cachalots. Ian manages to get her through the lines and down to the forts where we are able to get a reasonable view of the fireworks. The assembled fleet, many lit up overall, makes an impressive sight and some of our party are overcome by the excitement of it all. (See Rope Ends)

TerryClark



City of Windsor

This is the final installment of Hamish Roberts' recollections of his life as a "first tripper" on the London River at the end of the war.

Our movements around sailor town were not confined to the immediate vicinity of the Royal Albert Dock.

When on board ship, it was possible to tune in to the 'wireless' and listen to the Merchant Navy Programme which was compered by Doris Hare MBE, a lady whose name was well known throughout the service. This popular radio show continued for some time after the war. Occasionally, for a change from dockland, some people would head 'up west' to the Merchant Navy Club which occupied premises in Rupert Street, off the Tottenham Court Road, or to the Lyceum Dance Hall near the top of the Strand.

Each evening, small groups of two, three or four, all off watch, would congregate in various cabins preparing, to the accompaniment of suitable liquid refreshment and ribaldry, for the evening routine of 'shave, shampoo and shove off ashore'. There followed a trudge to the dock gate and a visit to the 'first and last'. For those able and willing to splash out, a taxi might have been ordered to meet them at the foot of the gangway, whisking them away, full of the joys of spring, to the first and last outside the gate of some other dock. The area around the West India Dock gate for example, provided infinitely more colourful entertainment. There, just outside the dock gate stood two well known public houses. On the right, the 'Blue Posts', and on the left, the 'Railway Tavern', always known as 'Charlie Browns' where the ground floor bars and a form of museum upstairs were cluttered with a variety of relics and mementoes, stuffed monkeys and so forth, brought to London and presented to the original Charlie Brown over a long period by seamen from sailing ship days. It seemed to be a maritime equivalent to 'Dirty Dicks' establishment in Bishopsgate, in the City. Some additional notoriety attached to Charlie Browns as the result of the murder on the premises of an American seaman the previous year, 1944.

Pennyfields, then the heart of London's Chinese community, was close by, and the Eastern atmosphere was obvious. Nowadays, the Chinese have moved from the area.

At the top of West India Dock Road, and well known to students at King Edward VII Nautical College, and to inmates of the drab, brick built Sailors Home, known not

surprisingly, as 'the stack of bricks' stood two more well established hostelries, the 'Great Eastern Hotel', and the 'Star of the East'. I once happened to be standing at a bus stop outside the former, when suddenly, a diminutive, tearful, and highly inebriated Irish gentleman emerged from within, flung his arms round me, and chokingly declared "The Pope is dead". In fact, he was not. Adjacent to the Star of the East was to me, the creepiest bus stop in London. One stepped off the bus and almost into the window of Francis and Chris Walters, East End undertakers, always brightly illuminated to display a selection of coffins, candles, and other morbid accoutrements of their trade.

It was only a short walk along Poplar High Street from the West India Dock gate to one of our favourite centres of culture, the Queens Theatre, Poplar, widely known as the 'Sods Opera', Sailors Own Dramatic Society. Surrounded by a strong Edwardian music hall atmosphere, it is the only theatre I have visited in which one could stand and drink while watching the show. The seats in the stalls were separated from a long bar on the right hand side only by a glass partition, enabling thirsty patrons to prop themselves up and watch events on stage or, perhaps even more exciting, observe the antics of other culture vultures in the stalls seats. Members of the orchestra appeared to me to bear a striking resemblance to the types I had seen working in the ship's holds earlier in the day, notwithstanding their disguise of ill-fitting boiled shirts, twin screw ties, and black jackets.

The star of the show was an actress called Norma Dorne, to whom the audience warmed, giving the impression of having known her for years. In fact, as avid readers of the Sunday papers, they were very familiar with the young lady, and also her mother, with whom she featured in reports of a prominent, rather scandalous court case in London. Implicated also in the real life drama was a gentleman by the name of Earl Hakim, not of course a Peer of the Realm, but I think, a Yank, and the disappearance of a valuable ring. The story and its publicity provided an ideal background for a steady flow of ribald remarks from the quick witted and unsympathetic cockney audience.

One evening, I enjoyed a show at the Stoll Theatre, in

Kingsway, which sadly was demolished years ago.

On Armistice Day 1945, I joined the crowds assembled in Whitehall for the first Remembrance Day service held there since 1938.

In sharp contrast to the Sods Opera came a kind invitation to spend an evening at home with a former fellow cadet at the Department of Navigation, Southampton, Midshipman Martin Attlee of the Blue Funnel Line, to whom home meant 10, Downing Street, the house into which his parents had moved following his fathers appointment as Prime Minister after the 'Khaki' election in July 1945. Invited also was Mike Brace, a former Southampton cadet who was commencing a cadetship in Silver Line Ltd, but completed his career as Master in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service. In training, Martin had been our senior by one term.

Having met Martin Attlee at the corner of Downing Street and Whitehall, we were admitted into the hall of No. 10 with its distinctive black and white check floor, now so frequently seen on TV. Gates or railings across the entrance to Downing Street were not then considered a necessity, and a certain quiet dignity prevailed in Downing Street. Later, in Harold Wilson's Premiership, it was invaded by the beer and sandwich brigade, and nowadays, a setting is provided for a standard comedy act as contemporary politicians, protestors, photographers, and policemen hover around the front door before making a beeline towards the waiting microphones and TV cameras.

A lift took us to the families flat, where we were met by Mrs Attlee. Later, the Prime Minister joined us accompanied by another guest, Monsieur Leon Blum, the Socialist Prime Minister of France 1936/37, a very tall, stooping man who spoke only little English. Shamefully, we, which included Mr Attlee, spoke no French. Mrs Attlee however, was making a determined effort to improve her French.

Following an enjoyable dinner in a small dining room, which was prepared and served by young women in the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service) attached to the No. 10 household, during which any language difficulties seem to have been overcome, we all joined in a game much favoured by the Attlee family. I cannot recall its name, although it was very similar to bagatelle.

Although in May 1945, Mr Attlee was still, under Churchill, Deputy Prime Minister, Martin described the unwanted and to him, embarrassing attention which on VE Day he received from press photographers and news hawks in I think, Halifax, Canada, when it became known that he was in port on board a Blue Funnel vessel.

Most regrettably, an invitation to Chequers, for which the family seemed to hold much affection, could not be accepted. We sailed from London, and I never again met Martin Attlee, who left the sea in 1950. He succeeded to his fathers peerage, and his own son is now the third Earl Attlee.

About himself, Clement Attlee once wrote:

"Some said, a non starter,
Many thought they were smarter,
But, he ended PM, CH, and OM,
An Earl, and a Knight of the Garter".

On my return to the ship, the Chief officer asked where I had been? When I enlightened him, I have no doubt he concluded that I had in reality spent the evening in the Roundhouse, or Sods Opera, and had had one or more too many. Next morning, he related my story to Chippy in order to obtain the opinion of that sage on the alleged departure from the norm.

A constant form of entertainment was provided by the ever changing scene in the docks and on the River Thames, combined with the variety of shore side activities, and a humorous but human element was added by the variety of colourful characters whose livings depended on 'all us big steamers'.

Also available to those who kept their eyes open was a high degree of practical, professional education, providing a sound base for the future.

Many traditional sprit-sail barges with their russet coloured, easily brailed sails, still traded between the Thames and its estuary, and ports in Suffolk, Essex and Kent. In fact, for some years after 1945, the Post Office maintained a postal delivery service for families living on board barges, the delivery postman being provided with his own motor launch in place of a bicycle.

Legend tells us that after one of these craft had made fast alongside a smart, white hulled P&O liner, an altercation took place between the Chief Officer of the liner and the Skipper of the sailing barge, which in coming alongside, had disfigured some of the liners white paint. During the course of the argument, the liners Captain peered over the side, anxious to learn what was going on. The barges Skipper, on sighting the Captain, pointed to the liner's Chief Officer, and asked "Whose that **** ?

"That's my Chief Officer" replied the Captain, who then noticed a fat lady wearing a print dress, sitting on the hatch cover of the barge, knitting, and asked "Whose that woman?"

"That", said the bargee, "is my Chief Officer, and", pointing to the liner's Chief Officer, "Wot I do to 'er, is wot you want to do to 'im". There the argument ended!



Your Own Special Agent

Cachalots who may be thinking of sailing their yachts through the Suez Canal in the near future are reminded that, beforehand, they should contact the Club's "Honorary Agent to the Masters of yachts belonging to members of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club during transits of the Suez Canal", Mr Sherif El-Kassiefy of Messers Billy Thompson, Ship Chandler, Master Contractor and yacht agent, 10 Memphis Street, Port Said, Egypt.

The association with the Club dates back to 27 September 1932 when the then Boatsteerer/Storekeeper, Captain W.V.J. Clarke D.S.C. Barrister-at-Law, wrote to Billy Thompson, Esq., Port Said:-

"Captain Bellingham and several other members of this club who are in command of British yachts, have from time to time reported to us that you have been of invaluable assistance to them when their ships are at Port Said, and it is a pleasure to write informing you that your efforts to ease the burden of a Master Mariner are appreciated here.

We hope that you will continue to prosper and that you will continue to be of service to Shipmasters visiting Port Said, always remembering that "He who serves most, profits best."

After 61 years of excellent service a letter arrived addressed to "Esquire, Secretary of the Master Mariners' Club (The Cachalots), Southampton, UK", which read:-

"We have the great pleasure to write to you in order to avail ourselves of the opportunity asking the renewing of our appointment as your Agents as you have done in the past, 27/8/1932.

The Suez Canal Authorities are requesting us to present a new dated official letter confirming our appointment as your agents in the Suez area.

Hoping, Dear Sir, that you would do your best through this matter.

Thanking you very much in advance, we remain, yours sincerely..."

Anxious to ensure that these valuable services would not be lost, the Club replied on 6 October 1993:-

"Thank you for your letter of the 18 September attaching copy of a letter sent to you, in 1932, by the Boatsteerer/Storekeeper in recognition of your services to Captain Bellingham and other British Yachtmasters.

In recognition of this service and in view of our long association with you we are pleased to confirm your appointment as "Honorary Agent to the Masters of Yachts belonging to members of the Southampton Master Mariners Club during transit of the Suez Canal."

We are pleased that this honorary appointment has

survived for some 61 years and we close with best wishes to you and to your company for many years of sound business and profitable trading.

Yours faithfully,

*R.A.Stephenson, OBE, Captain,
Boatsteerer."*

Twelve years on, and a reply is eagerly awaited.

I personally never sailed through the Canal in my daddy's yacht, although I must admit to having personal purveyors of leather wallets, Turkish delight and small bottles euphemistically labelled "Spanish-Fly", especially dispensed by a local gentleman whose boast it was that his father was two Scotch soldiers.

Hamish Roberts.

Her Judithship

We are sorry to have to announce the retirement of our charming and delightful Chief Boatsteerer's Assistant, Judith Peck. This is entirely due to having been over-worked and underpaid for many years now by the Boatsteerer and also the Storekeeper. In spite of this she has always remained conscientious and cheerful, keeping on smiling and whistling under all difficulties. She has found, however, that work is the curse of the drinking classes, and that she does not have sufficient time to do all the things that she wants to, i.e. gardening and cooking Cordon Bleu meals for her husband, the rightful duties of any loyal wife!

Seriously, her absence will be much missed by all those who had regular dealings with her, and she will be a hard act to follow. We wish her a long and happy retirement, and hope that she will still find time to visit the Club and attend some of our social functions. She has threatened that when she does, she will continue to bully all of us into buying raffle tickets!

The gauntlet has now been taken up by Avis Hunt, who is looking forward to the new challenge of finding items in the Club Office that have been put in a safe place by the Boatsteerer or Storekeeper.

Rope Ends

Diary of a six day cruise.

DEAR DIARY ... DAY ONE

I am all packed and ready to get on the cruise ship. I've packed all my pretty dresses and make-up. I'm really excited.

DEAR DIARY .. DAY TWO

We spent the entire day at sea. It was beautiful and we saw some whales and dolphins. What a wonderful vacation this has started to be. I met the Captain today and he seems like a very nice man.

WANTED

You may have observed that this edition has less pages than the previous two. I need more copy from you. I could regurgitate pieces from other nautical publications or jokes from the internet but I want this newsletter to be BY Cachalots, ABOUT Cachalots, and FOR Cachalots. There is a wealth of experience and experiences out there among our members and I have heard a few tales in the club room that could be cleaned up and made suitable to print here.

The answer is in YOUR hands.

Terry Clark, Editor

By the way, my email address is now te.clark@tiscali.co.uk



Overcome by the excitement of it all!

DEAR DIARY ... DAY THREE

I spent some time in the pool today. I also did some shuffle boarding and hit some golf balls off the deck. The Captain invited me to join him at his table for dinner. I felt honoured and we had a wonderful time. He is a very attractive and attentive gentleman.

DEAR DIARY ... DAY FOUR

Went to the ship's casino ... did OK. won about £80. The Captain invited me to have dinner with him in his state room!. We had a luxurious meal complete with caviar and champagne. He asked me to stay the night but I declined. I told him there was no way I could be unfaithful to my husband.

DEAR DIARY .. DAY FIVE

Went back to the pool today and got a little sunburned. I decided to go to the piano bar and spend the rest of the day inside. The Captain saw me and bought me a couple of drinks. He really is a charming gentleman. He again asked me to visit him for the night and again I declined. He told me that if I didn't let him have his way with me he would sink the ship. I was appalled.

DEAR DIARY ... DAY SIX

I saved 1600 lives today twice !!!!

\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
\$	250 Club								\$
\$	June	R.Anteny							\$
\$	July	C.Coote							\$
\$	Aug	L.Morris							\$
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Captain William Robertson, FNI

*When Robbie died, in May, the last edition of **The Cachalot** was just about to go to press and the Boats- teerer did a sterling job to provide an obituary at such short notice. Since then another has appeared in the Oban Times and in view of the affection and respect that Robbie commanded within the Club I make no apologies for repeating it here. I am sure that Robbie would have appreciated the fact that this cutting from that newspaper made its way back to Southampton on board the S.S. Shieldhall, the last working example of a merchant steam ship, when she returned from her 50th anniversary celebrations on the Clyde.*

CAPTAIN William Robertson FNI who died suddenly at Oban on 23 May 2005, aged 86, personified the widely respected type of Hebridean seafarer who sailed in British ships and so often rose to command them.

Willie was a Gaelic speaker from an old Mull family of fishermen and crofters and justly proud of his Highland heritage and values. On leaving school in Tobermory in 1933, he joined MacBraynes local agency as an office boy but the sea called and he soon secured a berth on deck, including some years in that school for 'blue water men' the famous *SS Hebrides*. It was only a step from there to deep-sea trading and experience in the prestigious Port Line to Australia and New Zealand, where the outbreak of World War Two found him in the *Port Nicholson*.

Qualifying as a Navigating Officer, Willie saw varied and distinguished war service at sea. As Third Officer of the *Empire Mordred* he survived the sinking of the vessel with heavy loss of life off North Africa. Later, he served for a lengthy and dangerous period as Rescue Officer in the *Copeland*, a dedicated rescue ship which supported convoys to Halifax Nova Scotia, Murmansk and Gibraltar at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic. Post-war, having obtained a Master's Certificate, he sailed in the Burns Laird services from the Clyde to Northern Ireland and in the Robertsons of Glasgow line.

After a period of ill health in 1947, he secured employment in the Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service (RMAS) in which he was to serve until his retirement 37 years later.

The Service provides vessels in support of the Royal Navy and Willie rose to command a variety of RMAS ships, including the ammunition carrier *Kinterbury*.

During this period, he also served as Pilot for the Admiralty at Loch Ewe, Sheer-ness, Gibraltar, Rosyth and Portsmouth, gaining respect for his attention to detail and his considerable ship-handling ability. In 1977, he was awarded the Queens Jubilee Medal.

Enjoyable

As Assistant Queen's Harbour Master at Portsmouth, he made his home in Fareham Hampshire, where he and his devoted wife, Jane, enjoyed many years of enjoyable retirement, near their son, Malcolm.

Robbie, as he was affectionately known in Royal Navy and Merchant Navy circles, continued his keen interest in Freemasonry and was a respected member of Southampton Master Mariners Club ('The Cachalots') where he served as Captain in 1983, supporting their business and social activities loyally as a Life Member till his death.

A Founder Member of the Solent Branch of the Nautical Institute, he was elected a Fellow of the Nautical Institute for his significant contribution to his profession.

Doughty

He also served as Chairman of the Civil Service Pensioners Association Fareham Branch and was a doughty fighter in defence of his members.

Robbie did not suffer fools at all, but he was the kindest and most genial of men.

A true Highland gentleman, his loyalty and his approach to all won him friends in every walk of life. He is now at rest in his beloved Tobermory.

A chuid de Pharras dha!

JMM&HR

Hamish Roberts, the HR above, tells me that the Gaelic can be translated as " May he enjoy his share of Paradise." Ed.

The Club is routinely open four days a week, Tuesday to Friday, at lunch time. Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink and on Thursdays and Fridays she can take your orders for:- Homemade Soup of the Day, freshly made sandwiches, (which can be toasted,) filled Jacket Potatoes, Ploughman's lunches and other snacks. It is hoped to extend this service as custom demands.

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 (NEWISH) address is:

**The Southampton Master Mariners' Club,
(The CACHALOTS)
c/o Southampton Royal British Legion Club,
Eastgate Street,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3HB**

Tel/Fax: 023 8022 6155

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

Editor: te.clark@tiscali.co.uk

<http://homepages.tcp.co.uk/~glang/smmc.html>

Note that in the e.mail address, "cachalots" is in the plural and not the singular as erroneously shown in the article in edition 15.

Dates for your Diary

Sat	SEP	3	Curry Lunch.
Fri	OCT	21	Trafalgar Dinner, R.A.F.Y.C. Hamble.
Tue	OCT	25	Last Night of the Proms, Tidworth.
Tue	NOV	15	Sale of SeaPie Supper tickets.
Sat	NOV	tba	Winetasting o.b. s.s. Shieldhall
Sat	DEC	3	Christmas Dinner, Kings Court. *
Sat	DEC	10	Christmas Lunch, Kings Court. *

* Please note that the dates of the above two festive functions have been changed around. I could try and explain the reasons but we would all end up even more confused. Remember, Dinner first, followed by Lunch.

NEW CACHALOTS

R.Emtage

P.Greenhow

A.King

Gone Aloft

E.R.Divett

J.F.Vaughan