

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.18

December 2005

CAPTAIN'S LOG

As I write this log, there are just five weeks to Christmas and I am entering the final phase of my year in office. The time is passing so quickly but I continue to enjoy meeting lots of interesting people, making new friends and renewing old friendships. Despite the physical limitations of the present Club Room, the atmosphere continues to be warm and friendly, and lively conversation, wit and good humour abound!

Since I last wrote, I have again represented the Club at various functions. August promised to be a quiet month, so Win and I took the opportunity to have a holiday and, therefore, were unable to join members at the Cowes Week firework display, which I gather was a great success.

September started with a well-attended curry lunch. This is always a popular event, and was all the more special this time because it provided the occasion for us to make a presentation to Judith in recognition of all the hard work she has undertaken on behalf of the Club over the past few years. Avis Hunt, who takes over from Judith, was welcomed on board.

In the middle of September, an intrepid group of travellers set off from Southampton to board one of the last P and O ferries to sail from Portsmouth to Le Havre. This was our second Club holiday in France this year and, like the first, it was very well attended and much enjoyed by all. The weather was particularly kind to us, our hotel was superb and our itinerary particularly interesting, Monet's Garden in Giverny, Paris with a trip on the Seine, and Chantilly Chateau. As ever, the trip was well organised, and I am already looking forward next year's Continental trip.

At the beginning of October, Win and I attended a dinner at the RAF Yacht Club at Hamble where I had been invited to give the after-dinner speech. It was another splendid occasion. Two weeks later we were back at the same venue for our own Southampton Master Mariners' Club Trafalgar Day Dinner. This was a memorable night and it was a great pleasure to welcome Mr. and Mrs. De Rothschild as our special guests. The Boatsteerer delivered an excellent "Immortal Memory". It was also wonderful that so many Cachalots and their guests, nearly a hundred, were present to join in this

very special celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

On Tuesday 27 October, some of our members and their guests attended the Last Night of the Proms Concert at Tidworth. Win and I did not go with the main party because, on the following Thursday, we had been invited to the concert and to have supper afterwards as the guests of Lt Col Stuart McLean. The music provided by the Lucknow Band of the Prince of Wales's Division was exhilarating and ranged from Verdi to Glenn Miller. It was a really good evening.

On Friday 11 November, the annual Harpooners' Dinner took place in the Tudor Merchant's Hall. As always, the food, wine and the company were excellent; and the jokes and anecdotes told after dinner were very amusing.

On Remembrance Sunday, at the invitation of the Mayor of Southampton, Cllr Edwina Cooke, I laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in the city centre. It was a cold but sunny morning, and it was a great honour for me to represent our Club at this very moving ceremony.

Once again, I would like to thank the Club Officers, Harpooners and Committee Members for all their efforts and for making my time in office run so smoothly, leaving me to enjoy all the social occasions!

Most of you will be reading *The Cachalot* in the few weeks before Christmas, and, although I am sure that I will be seeing many during that time, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Captain Simon Harwood

Postscript from the Captain's Lady!

I must reiterate what Simon has already said about the Trafalgar Night Dinner – it was an evening to remember and I was particularly thrilled to be given one of the commemorative Trafalgar coins, a very special memento. I feel sure that all those ladies who attended would like to join me in saying a very big 'thank you' to the organisers for their very generous gift.

Welcome to another bumper edition of **The CACHALOT**. My plea for more copy from you bore fruit in the shape of contributions from, among others, Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir M. Morgan-Giles. His tale of gun-boat diplomacy, from seventy years ago when he was a "middy" in the China Fleet, comes from his privately published autobiography "*The Unforgiving Minute*". Sir Morgan, "a proud and happy Stowaway", has now generously donated two copies of his book to the club and I hope to be able, with his permission, to include further extracts in future editions.

Other contributions have come from Captain John Bowden, Master with Red Funnel for many years, and from Ron Hancock comes some local docks history which first appeared in an ABP internal magazine, "*QuayPoints*".

Some amusing stories have been forwarded by an ex Purser with Orient Line/P&O who prefers to remain anonymous. I told him that he will soon get sussed out by our astute readers but will accede to his request in the anticipation of more of the same.

These are just the sort of thing I was hoping for and I am sure that there is plenty more like it out there just waiting for you to put pen to paper or finger to key-board.

Don't forget that there are some more lengthy recollections from Cachalots to be found in "**The Master Mariners of Southampton**" by Simon Daniels. This book, an ideal stocking filler and gift for family and friends, is available at only £6.50 to club members (£9.99 for non-members) from the Boat-steerers office.

To start with, and to round off this year's Trafalgar celebrations, is a contribution from Gerry Draysey about his recent trip to the scene of the Battle, followed by the French version of the events, evidently written by Napoleonic spin-doctors.

A very

**Merry
Christmas**

to you all, Ed.

A Voyage of Nostalgia **1805 – 2005**

I have always had an ambition to visit Trafalgar or at least to sail over the site of the battle.

When "Saga" advertised a commemorative voyage to celebrate the 200th anniversary I jumped at the chance.

We sailed on the 9th October from 101 berth, after a very well conducted boat drill. Most of my fellow passengers seemed older than I, with a fair proportion on sticks, a frame or in chairs. Had I done the right thing?

The weather was kind in the Western Approaches and the Bay, a heavy WNW swell giving an easy roll, and reasonably warm.

The talks on Nelson were well attended and I learned a few "new" facts on his family life, (a son-in-law – one Josiah Nisbett – who followed Nelson into the Navy).

After a run ashore in Gibraltar with the "duty" visit to the Trafalgar Cemetery, top up the Duty Frees and today's paper we entered the Mediterranean leaving behind fog in the Western Strait and heavy rain on the cold front. Once that had cleared the weather was warm, low 80's, and fine.

The intention was to visit ports with a connection with Nelson and the Mediterranean Fleet of the early 19th Century. So, Palma, Majorca, then Barcelona where I achieved another ambition – to stroll along Las Ramblas in the sun, sit and read my newspaper with an aperitif – I never achieved this during my career at sea.

This was followed by a visit to Toulon, where one could see how a young Napoleon was able to force the Royalist Navy, and ours, to evacuate the port and the anchorage. It is still an important Naval port with the fleet much in evidence.

Next a call to Manon, Minorca, a major British Naval base for nearly a century. The original defences are still occupied but it would seem on a maintenance basis by the Spanish Services. However, the gin distillery set up for the wardrooms of the 19th century is still producing a form of "Plymouth Gin".

After a visit to Malaga we headed back towards Cadiz where we berthed on the 20th October. H.M.S. Chatham was berthed alongside a Spanish frigate and later in the day a

French destroyer berthed outside her. Shades of Trafalgar!

We sailed at 0900 on the 21st and slowly steamed Southward to arrive at the position of the Battle at noon. This is some twelve miles off Cape Trafalgar and at the time of the opening shots.

As Capt. Philip Rentell commenced the Service of Remembrance, the distant sound of canon fire could be heard from Cadiz where an official parade was being held. In the vicinity S.T.V. LORD NELSON and the Oyster fleet of yachts were re-enacting the Battle, with "Victory" breaking the line. It was a most moving experience.

The readings in the opening address to the service were given by Rear Adm Mike Wood, Cdr Andrew Thompson RNR, Lt Cdr Simon Goodes RNR and Lt Nick Tate RN.

After the service wreathes were cast onto the sea. Three in the colours of the combatants; red, white and blue; red and gold; blue, white and red; one from the K.G.V Fund for sailors which was red and white and finally a plain laurel wreath from the Royal Naval Association. (see photo)

In the evening a Trafalgar Night Dinner was held. The Loyal Toast was given by Capt. Rentell and the "immortal Memory" by Rear Adm. Wood. I can still get into my mess undress – just!

All in all it was a voyage to remember and I am so glad I realised my wish. Back to reality on the 25th October as we disembarked where we started, 101 berth, Southampton.

Capt. G.H.Draysey RD.



**NELSON KILLED IN DUEL WITH VILLENEUVE!
ENGLISH FLEET DESTROYED AT TRAFALGAR.**

Anyone who thought that Nelson won the Battle of Trafalgar should read this contemporary French account published in the newspaper Le Moniteur.

Head Quarters, Cadiz, Oct. 25

The operations of the Imperial Navy mirror in the Atlantic those of the grand Imperial Army in Germany.

The English fleet is annihilated - Nelson is no more. Indignant at being inactive in Port, while our brave brothers in arms were gaining laurels in Germany, Admirals Villeneuve and Gravina resolved to put to sea and give the English a fight. They were superior in number, 45 to our 33, but what is that, to men determined to fight and win. Nelson did everything to avoid a battle, he attempted to enter the Mediterranean, but we chased him, and caught him off Trafalgar. The French and Spaniards vied with each other to get into action first. Admiral's Villeneuve and Gravina were both anxious to lay their ships alongside the Victory, the English Admiral's ship. Fortune, so constant always to the Emperor, did not favour either of them - the Santissima Trinidad was the fortunate ship. In vain did the English Admiral try to avoid action but the Spanish Admiral Oliva prevented his escape, and lashed his vessel to the English flagship. The English ship was one of 186 guns; the Santissima Trinidad was but a 74. Lord Nelson adopted a new system, afraid of meeting us in the old way, in which he knows we have superiority of skill, as we proved by our victory over Sir Robert Calder. He attempted a new mode of fighting. For a short time he confused us, but what can confuse his Imperial Majesty's navy for long? We fought yard-arm to yard-arm, gun to gun. Three hours did we fight in this manner, the English began to be dismayed: they found it impossible to resist us, but our brave sailors were tired of this slow means of gaining a victory and decided to board her, their cry was "al'abordage." Their courage was irresistible. At that moment two ships, one French and one Spanish, boarded the Temeraire. The English fell back in astonishment and fright. We rushed to the flag-staff and struck their colours. All were so anxious to be the bearers of the news to their own ship, that they jumped overboard and the English ship, by this unfortunate act by our brave sailors and their allies, was able, by the assistance of two more ships that came to her assistance, to make her escape only to sink later.

Meanwhile Nelson still resisted. It was now a race to see who should first board and have the honour of taking him; French or Spanish. Two Admirals on each side disputed the honour and boarded his ship at the same moment.

Villeneuve flew on to the quarter-deck and with the usual generosity of the French, he carried a brace of pistols in his hands. He knew the Admiral had lost his arm, and could not use his sword so he offered a pistol to Nelson, they fought, and at the second shot Nelson fell. He was immediately carried below. Oliva, Gravina, and Villeneuve attended him with the accustomed French humanity. Meanwhile 15 English ships of the line had struck, four more were obliged to follow their example and another blew up. - Our victory was now complete, and we prepared to take possession of our prizes, but the elements were by this time unfavourable to us and a dreadful storm came on.

Gravina made his escape to his own ship at the beginning of it but the Commander in Chief, Villeneuve, and the Spanish Admiral, were unable to do this and remained on board the Victory. The storm was long and dreadful but our ships being so well manoeuvred, rode out the gale. The English, being so much more damaged, were driven ashore, and many of them were wrecked. At length when the gale ceased, 13 of the French & Spanish line returned safely to Cadiz; the other 20 have, no doubt, gone to some other ports and will soon be reported. We shall repair our damage as speedily as possible and then go again in pursuit of the enemy, and afford them more proof of our determination to wrest from them the Empire of the Seas, and to comply with his Imperial Majesty's demand of Ships, Colonies and Commerce.

Our loss was trifling while that of the English was immense. We have, however, to lament the absence of Admiral Villeneuve, whose courage carried him beyond the strict bounds of prudence, and, by boarding the English Admiral's ship, prevented him from returning to his own.

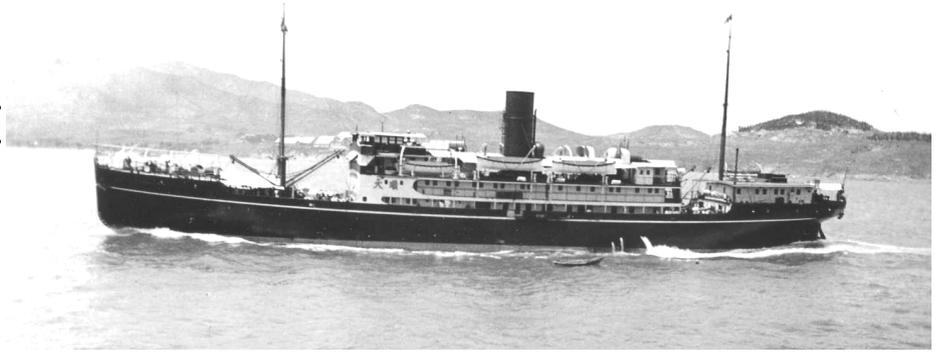
Having acquired so decisive a victory we wait with impatience the Emperor's order to sail to the enemies shore, destroy the rest of his navy, and thus complete the triumphant work we have so brilliantly begun.

And you all thought you knew the story of Trafalgar.

THE SHUNTIEN INCIDENT

17 JUNE 1934

We are indebted to Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir M.Morgan-Giles for this tale from his autobiography, "The Unforgiving Minute"



One day a small British coaster called SS Shuntien left from Dairen for the 24-hour passage to Wei-Hai-Wei. Piracy was endemic on the China coast so most of those little ships had a huge grille amidships 'so that the steerage passengers crowded in the stern could not attack the bridge and take control of the ship. But during the night some pirates found their way forward through the coal bunkers, came up on the bridge, knocked the officer of the watch on the head and took the ship away to the mouth of the Yellow River.

While they were looting the ship they came upon two Englishmen in striped pyjamas who were Royal Navy officers on their way to join the submarines in Wei-Hai-Wei. Their names were Lieutenants Luce and Field. (David Luce eventually became First Sea Lord 30 years later.)

The pirates left the ship, which then raised steam and continued to Wei-Hai-Wei. There the Captain reported to the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Frederick Dreyer "We have been pirated Sir". "Bad luck, it's always happening isn't it?" "Yes but this time they have taken away two of your Lieutenants as hostages" "Oh, that's different" said the C-in-C. Swift action followed.

A destroyer which was at immediate notice for steam was sent along the north coast to investigate,

followed by HMS Eagle and a number of other ships. HMS 'Eagle flew off her aircraft and searched the mudflats at the mouth of the Yellow River; This aircraft spotted two white men waving from the deck of a junk. The pilot landed back in the Eagle and reported what he had seen, so the Captain sent for the Chinese wardroom messman and got him to write blood-curdling threats saying "Fire will come from heaven and destroy you unless you release your captives" on the back of a wardroom menu card. This was put in a small bag with streamers and a second aircraft flew out, came down low and dropped it on the deck of the junk. To add strength to his words, a couple of small bombs were dropped in the mud nearby.

This was altogether too much for the pirates, who in any case had never before seen foreign devils flying through the sky. So the two Lieutenants were quickly put into a small sampan and pushed out into the river. The tide took them down and eventually they were picked up by a seaplane from HMS Eagle.

All this seemed very dramatic to us Midshipmen. A great many ships were involved and it was all very exciting. I have often thought since that if it happened nowadays the C-in-C would have reported to London by radio, the Foreign Office would have advised caution, and the event would have taken weeks or months to resolve. In fact, in those distant days, I feel sure that the C-in-C took action first and only reported to London when it was all over.

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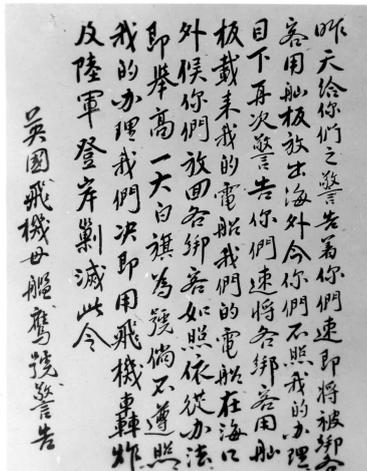
I was intrigued, when studying the photograph of the Butterfield & Swire steamer, to see a small open boat close to the port beam. It appears to be empty and there is something in the water a little further aft, just for'd of the main mast. There seems to be little interest from the bridge at such a close quarters situation, perhaps it was just another common "incident" on the China coast. Ed.

"The Threat"

Written on the back of a wardroom menu card. The typed instructions beneath read:

From H.M.S. "Eagle"

You have not yet obeyed the order I gave you yesterday. Put all the prisoners in sampans and send them to my boat which is waiting at the mouth of the creek. Display a large white flag to show that you are doing this. If you do not obey the British soldiers and aircraft which are watching you will attack.



YOU HAVE NOT YET OBEYED THE ORDER I GAVE YOU YESTERDAY. PUT ALL THE PRISONERS IN SAMPANS AND SEND THEM TO MY BOAT WHICH IS WAITING AT THE MOUTH OF THE CREEK. DISPLAY A LARGE WHITE FLAG TO SHOW THAT YOU ARE DOING THIS. IF YOU DO NOT OBEY THE BRITISH SOLDIERS AND AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE WATCHING YOU WILL ATTACK.

昨天給你們之警告若你們連即將被綁架
不用船板放出海外你們不照我的辦理
目下再次警告若你們速將各船若用船
板載來我的電報我們的電報在海面
外候你們放回各船若如照依從辦法
即舉高一白旗為號倘不遵照
我的辦理我們決即用飛機車轉炸
及陸軍登岸剿滅此令

吳國飛機母艦鷹號警告

Paris Weekend

On Friday evening, 16 September, a party totalling forty members including wives/sweethearts joined the overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Le Havre. The following morning the selfsame bleary-eyed forty staggered ashore to find the coach ready and waiting in the terminal car park. After about an hour we stopped at a motorway service area for coffee and croissants (those of us who had not risen early enough to have breakfast on board). Then on to Giverny for a visit to Monet's garden and house, where many photographs were taken. The garden was still quite beautiful in spite of the lateness of the season, and some members were observed taking advantage of this by pocketing some of the seed pods. Do French seeds grow in England? And if they do, does one have to talk to them in French? No doubt we will hear in due course.

After lunch at various establishments we reboarded the coach for a sleepy ride to the Château de Montvillargenne situated about an hour's drive from Paris. It was built in 1900 for Baroness Jeanne de Rothschild. During the Second World War it was occupied by German troops. After the war the nuns of the Sacred Heart transformed the Château into a noviciate and a boarding school for young women. In 1969 it became a hotel school and lastly in 1985 it became a luxury hotel.

A few of us managed a quick swim before dinner, but nobody was noticed taking advantage of the mountain bikes to ride around the extensive grounds. In spite of two wedding receptions that same evening our private dining room was well looked after and we were well fed up, and the beds were much more comfortable than the bunks on the ferry, and so large that it was half a day's camel ride to find your wife/girlfriend!

On Sunday morning we were all up bright and early (for us) and after a superb breakfast buffet rejoined our coach for a tour of Paris. Mike, our driver, knows Paris well and pointed out many points of interest and at lunchtime dropped us off near the Place de la Concorde with directions to the nearest restaurants. A certain Club Member was observed eating his customary fare of a large plate of pommes frites. In the

evening after a few sundowners it was back to our private dining room for yet another gourmet meal.

On Monday morning it was time to bid a fond farewell to the Château and embark once more on our coach for a visit to the nearby Château de Chantilly, close by the racecourse. Unfortunately, it was not a race day so we were unable to try and win back the cost of our weekend. Some visited the Château to wonder at the various treasures and objets d'art therein, whilst others wandered in the extensive grounds and gardens. Then it was back on the road to the small town of Vernon for lunch. Being Monday in France many places were closed but our intrepid band managed to find sustenance. One waiter was noticed crossing the street having borrowed a few heads of lettuce from another establishment. After lunch we travelled to Rouen for a visit to the site where Sainte Jeanne d'Arc was burnt for heresy in 1431, and a brief visit to the nearby modern church built in the traditional upturned boat shape of many old French churches. The stained-glass windows, however, date from the Renaissance period (1520-1530) and came from the ancient church, the ruins of which may also be seen in the square. These windows had, fortunately, been taken down before the bombings of the last war and were reset in the new church. The image of the sea is continued on the outside where the slate and copper roof represents waves.

Having spent so much time in Rouen there was insufficient time left before check-in at the ferry terminal for the planned stop in Honfleur for an evening meal. We did, however, manage to find some pleasant eating establishments on the beachfront in Le Havre for our final French meal of the weekend.

We were extremely fortunate throughout the weekend as there was brilliant sunshine and completely smooth crossings. None of our party was sea-sick to the best of your correspondent's knowledge and we arrived safely back at Portsmouth on Tuesday morning with just about enough strength to go home to bed to recover from yet another most enjoyable Master Mariners' Weekend. It is a great pity that P & O have decided to cease trading on the Le Havre route, and we now await to see what suggestions our coach driver can come up with for our next outing.

Gerry Cartwright

TROPICAL NIGHTS:

On one very old ship (laid down 1913) we had no punkah system except on the 2 lowest decks (known respectively as 'H' for Hell Deck and 'G' for Godam near it), the cabins each had 10 bunks, 10 coat hooks and nothing else. The higher deck cabins were a little better but the only ventilation was by (very) ancient fans that must have been a part of the ship's maiden voyage outfit.

In the very hot weather, Red Sea in August, stretcher beds were issued for sleeping on deck. On one voyage the Purser, who incidentally had recently spent 5 years in a German POW camp, took it upon himself to produce the announcement of this momentous happening instead of leaving it to one of his minions.

The resulting allocation of sleeping spaces gave ladies C Deck port side, Gentlemen C Deck starboard side and married couples the poop.

Result: 2 empty decks and the Poop heaving with enthusiasm.

The Staff Commander was not amused.

Day Tripping

Captain John Bowden recollects the popular round the Island trips with Red Funnel in the sixties

In the early to late 60's, Red Funnel was still engaged in the excursion trade, carried out by their two ships "Balmoral" & "Vecta". These two ships were later superseded due to the advent of the massive increase in car ownership, and the arrival of more specialised car ferries on the scene. There had been a previous "Balmoral", acquired in 1900 and scrapped in 1949. She was a ship of 471 GT, and capable of 20 knots. This speed allowed her to preserve the record of fastest cross-channel trip across to France for many years from then up to the between war years.

The 60's marked the end of an era. I had the good fortune to spend the last few years of the later Balmoral's career with Red Funnel, employed in the various excursions in local waters, notably in the highly popular around the Island trips; a twice weekly affair in the Summer months. The contrast with my previous voyages world-wide was at times quite startling, but in common with numerous friends at sea, the venture into married life dictated a change of scene! It was, however, a busy and interesting life.

A brief description of a day in the trade may be of interest, which would commence at seven in the morning with two hours of washing down and cleaning, plus the loading of quantities of stores and sufficient fresh water to provide for several hundred people over the next twelve to thirteen hours. At 0900 we would depart for Ryde, usually heavily laden with some hundreds of eager sun-seeking passengers. The itinerary on a "Round the Island" day (fare in the early 60's, 15 shillings/ 75 pence), took us firstly to Ryde, where some people would disembark, others boarding. Then it was across to the two Southsea piers at South Parade and Clarence pier and a further exchange of people. Passenger figures were much enhanced in those days by the dreaded landladies of the various hotels desiring to have their guests absent for the whole day!

Leaving Southsea, we would proceed to Sandown, a place needing great care at times near low water, the depth allowing us mere few inches beneath our keel. This meant the occasional cancellation of our visit to

the town. It was then on to Shanklin and Ventnor. On rare occasions adverse weather made it necessary to proceed carefully after leaving Ventnor, running down towards St. Catherines Point to observe the sea state and decide upon the wisdom of carrying on round the Island. Should we decide to cancel, the possibly disappointed passengers became convinced of the wisdom of our decision after a few heavy lurches in the increasingly nasty sea. Some passengers, perhaps hardier than the rest, would express displeasure at our obvious cowardice, but the possibility of injury to people and ship outweighed their opinion. Once having decided to go on, it was press on regardless, as re-crossing the heavy sea was not a good option. All



being well then, we would proceed up the Western Solent, arriving back at Ryde at around 1600. We would then recommence the shuttle to Southsea and thence the back of the Island again. As the evening advanced we would be back in Ryde for our last call, picking up those of our charges who had opted for the whole day on the Island.

At 2030 or shortly after, it was off on the final leg to Southampton. On a good day, this trip, complete with sparks flying from the funnel, and having achieved a good seventeen knots (speed restrictions permitting), we would arrive at the Royal Pier, disembark our many hundreds of passengers, and secure the ship for the night. For most of our people, it would have been a memorable day, and worthy of remembrance. Some, no doubt, would have hair-raising tales to tell of their hazardous voyage across the previously imagined calm waters of the Solent and the seas around the Isle of Wight. Whatever their thoughts, there is no doubt that those somewhat less sophisticated days produced a great deal of enjoyment and good memories.

A final note: in 1999, I joined "Balmoral" for her fiftieth anniversary cruise. The old girl was as good as new, a tribute to the builders and the men who sailed in her for all those years. I was extremely lucky to have participated in what is now a by-gone era.

JOHN BOWDEN

1835 and all that.....

170 years ago this year, a group of London and local businessmen, having noted the rapid growth of trade passing through the Town Quay and The Platform - and the attempts by both the London & South Western Railway Company and the Great Western Railway Company to connect Southampton with London - formed themselves into the Southampton Dock Company.

They engaged an Engineer by the name of Francis Giles to undertake a survey of the Western Mudlands (the coastline between Town Quay and Ocean Village) with a view to constructing a commercial dock. He dutifully reported it "expedient to construct a Dock, Wharves and Sheds for the accommodation of trade and shipping."

Francis Giles was immediately appointed Company Engineer by the Dock Company Provisional London Sub-Committee and began to prepare a series of plans. At the same time, the Company promoted a Bill in Parliament to obtain the necessary powers to develop the mudlands and on 19th May 1836 His Majesty King George III gave Royal Assent to "an Act for making and maintaining a Dock or Docks at Southampton."

The preamble to the 1836 Act noted that the commercial activity of Southampton had significantly increased since the London & South Western Railway Company had completed a direct rail link from London and that it "would be of great public utility if a Dock or Docks were made, constructed and maintained on the mudlands at the confluence of the Southampton Water and the River Itchen."

The 1836 Act recognised the Southampton Dock Company as a "Body Corporate" and empowered them to raise a Capital of £350,000 in shares of £50 each. Interestingly, the Town Council cut a deal to permit the compulsory purchase of the Canute Road and Platform Road water frontages in their ownership, in lieu of shares in the new Company.

The first General Meeting of the Proprietors of the Southampton Dock Company took place at the George & Vulture Tavern, Lombard Street, London on Tuesday 16th August 1836.

Nine nominated Directors and 37 seven Proprietors were present. Francis Giles was also present at the meeting and was formally appointed Docks Engineer. Acting Chairman Richard Heathfield opened the meeting but the Directors subsequently resolved to appoint one Joseph Liggins Esquire as the Company's first Chairman. There is an oil painting of the said Mr Liggins on the 3rd Floor of Ocean Gate, ABP Southampton's Port Office.

As mentioned above, in 1835 the Southampton Dock Company appointed Francis Giles as their first Company Engineer. Having been confirmed in post at the 1836 General Meeting, he immediately began preparations to construct the Outer Dock (now Ocean Village). Amid much Masonic pomp and pageantry, the foundation stone was laid in 1838. The original location is open to question but as far as can be ascertained, the stone was laid approximately 50 metres west of Admiralty House (the old Post Office building adjacent to Dock Gate 4. It was recovered many years ago and is now on display in the Eastern Docks.

This event coincided with Francis appointing his son, Alfred as his apprentice. Later, Francis was asked to relocate to the Company's London Office, while Alfred took over as Resident Engineer at Southampton.

Sadly, Francis died in 1846 and Alfred became Company Engineer. Alfred rather reluctantly had to relocate to London but he nevertheless worked tirelessly for the Dock Company and oversaw the formal opening of the Outer Dock (1843), the Inner Dock (1851), the first four dry docks, the upper Itchen Quays (1875) and the opening of the Empress Dock in 1890.

Despite his best efforts to relocate back to Southampton, the Board insisted that Alfred should remain in London so in order to maintain continuity in 1870 he apprenticed his son, George. By 1890, George was well versed in all the Docks' activities and as Alfred was by this time well over 70, he wrote to the Directors asking if George could act as joint Company Engineer. This was agreed.

However, the next two or three years proved to be traumatic. Following the significant cost of constructing the Empress Dock, the Southampton Dock Company found itself short of working capital and the London & South Western Railway made strong overtures to take over the Dock Company (by this time several SDC Directors were also Directors of the L&SWR so were well aware of their financial situation) and in 1891 a Parliamentary Bill was raised to complete the takeover. The resultant Southampton Docks Act took effect on 31st October 1892 - the day old Alfred retired. The Docks had been acquired by the L&SWR for the princely sum of £1,360,000.

The small print of the Act was rather unfortunate because Alfred was obliged to appeal to the new Board, to agree his retirement package – indeed, there was no guarantee that a pension of any description would be forthcoming. His letter to the L&SWR Board was recorded in the Minutes. Alfred stated he had worked diligently for the Southampton Dock Company for over 54 years and he felt justified in asking for a retirement annuity of £10,000. The 2nd March 1893 Minutes recorded that the matter of his annuity was fully discussed and it was resolved that "after full consideration of the foregoing claim, the sum of £3,000 be awarded" to him. Not quite what he wanted but then again, he was 76 and he was, after all, dealing with the Directors of a port undertaking!

Grandson George was asked to remain in his post and he continued his career with the L&SWR for many years to come, overseeing the construction of the lower Itchen Quays, the fifth (Prince of Wales) dry dock, the Test Quays and last but not least, the opening of the White Star (Ocean) Dock in 1911.

That represented a combined unbroken service of well over a century, by three generations of the same family – quite a legacy.

(Ron Hancock)

Thursday 30th June

Following the Fleet Review, *Shieldhall* is booked to join over 250 other classic and traditional craft, large and small, at the International Festival of the Sea in Portsmouth. We sail at 1000 with a jolly crowd of passengers and pick up an Admiralty Pilot at Spithead at noon. On the way to our berth on the North Wall we pass all the tall ships and Captain Toot-toot lives up to his name as we announce our arrival in some style with a whoop-whoop-whooooo on the steam whistle. The berth is well tucked away but the Pilot summons up a couple of Admiralty tugs and makes it all look very easy. He is very pleased to have had his go on the old steamship and has to be hauled out of the engine room when his boat comes alongside to take him to his next job. Most of the crew are staying on board for the weekend but I join the passengers for a coach trip back to Southampton. There is a light rain falling but it doesn't dampen the spirits of the crowds in the Dockyard, which is really humming with excitement. I manage to grab a plate of sea-food special and a pint from one of the many food outlets there before squeezing into a seat on a 1950's Royal Blue coach for the return journey. Nostalgia...maybe, comfort...no!

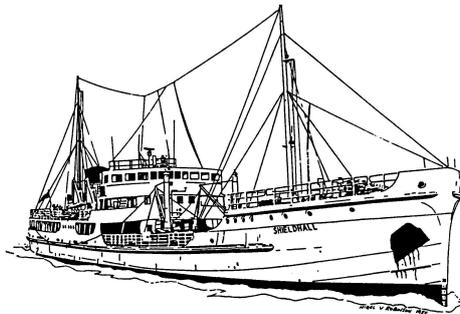
Monday 4th July

My wife kindly drives me back to Portsmouth to join the ship for the return to Southampton. The Dockyard has been returned to RN security control and I do not have the required clearance to enter on foot. I just board the coach, not Royal Blue this time, in the public bus station and am bussed through to somewhere near the ship and then complete the journey on foot anyway! There are only four passengers for this leg and they will have to be returned to Pompey by coach. No profit in that for the ship but everyone has had a great time over the weekend and the ship has taken lots of donations from the visiting public. The same Pilot takes us out to the Outer Spit Buoy and we make for home in some very squally weather indeed. True to form the heavens open and the wind pipes up just as we approach the berth and I have to drop the offshore anchor and screw the stern off to make our controlled (?) collision with the quay as gentle as possible. Oh, for a couple of Admiralty tugs now! Ten minutes later, when we are putting the gangway out, the wind dies away and the sun reappears.

(The *Shieldhall* returned to the Clyde from 11th July to 1st August for her 50th anniversary celebrations but sadly I was unable to participate.)

Wednesday 3rd August

It is Cowes Week and I am here with Reg Pretty for the first of two day trips cruising the Solent and giving our passengers a flavour of the racing. Some of the yachting fraternity object to our presence in "their" water and although I try not to interfere too much in their games sometimes I have no alternative, due to the number of small craft around me, but to stand on and claim "might is right". Nothing happens very fast on this ship, neither alterations of course nor changes in speed, and I think that perhaps they expect me to levitate out of their way. The last minute "Lee Ho's" and flapping of canvas all add to the excitement. It's another stiff on-berth breeze as we return and we are set down sharply inside the entrance of the Ocean Terminal. Amid much shouting and hollering, full asterns and what-have-you we manage to extricate ourselves and make a reasonable second go of it.



Shieldhall Summer Diary

Thursday 4th August

An afternoon/early evening cruise today and it is advertised as a chance to view the Red Arrows off Cowes. Things have obviously changed since our programme was drawn up but nobody complains when they fail to appear. The wind is less tiresome today and the day passes without incident.

(Many Cachalots were among the full crowd of passengers who enjoyed the Fireworks cruise on the Friday, Capt. Ian Stirling in command. *Shieldhall* then went on her annual trip to Weymouth on 13th)

Sunday 21st August

A PEC holder is required for the trip back from Weymouth so I find myself on the platform at Southampton Central at 0830 waiting for a train that turns up 15mins late. That 15 mins is all that is allowed for the connection at Bournemouth but luckily they hold that train until we arrive and I manage to make it to the ship one minute before

sailing time. It is a lovely day and Peter Tambling takes her in close to the beautiful Dorset coast, giving anybody on the coastal paths that shows an interest a friendly toot. Unfortunately the spring tide is against us and when we get up to the Needles we are down to three knots and it takes us an hour just to make it up to Hurst. As we pass the Bramble Bank it is right on low water and there are about three dozen small craft there and about one hundred people on the bank engaged in a game of cricket. We can't discern what rules they might be playing to or what the score is but they seem to be enjoying the occasion. It is not the lowest of spring tides but in my thirty five years up and down the Solent I have never seen so many people able to partake in this event. We are about an hour late alongside and some of the passengers, who have to return to Weymouth by coach, are getting a bit restive, but we've had a good day of it really.

Saturday 3rd September

I miss the Club's curry lunch today because *Shieldhall* has been hired for a wedding celebration. Not an actual wedding, which has already taken place in Gretna Green or somewhere, but a blessing with all the trimmings for Mum and others of the family who missed the original. The bride is in white, there are two bridesmaids, the groom and his gang are in morning jackets and the ceremony is conducted on the fore-deck in the sunshine by the Revd Bill McCrea. There are about sixty in the wedding party and after the ceremony I give them a celebratory toot on the whistle and we set off for a cruise in the Solent. I pull off the berth by going astern on the starboard engine and as she starts to pull clear I come full astern on the port too. Looking astern I am pleased with the swing that she is making but when I look ahead again I realise that she is not coming astern any more. A glance at the engine indicators in the wheelhouse reveals that we are actually going full ahead on the port, not full astern. I quickly ring double full astern port to wake them up but what do I get?.. yes.. double full ahead! Ring Stop, then double full astern again but by this time she is end on to the quay and brings up against it with a bump. Hopefully no damage done but my resolve of the day is to always go to stop before reversing the engines; my normal routine in fact, but something I overlooked in the heat of the moment. The rest of the day passes smoothly and everyone enjoys the happy occasion. We return to the berth at 1900 where the partying will continue alongside. I am pleased to be able to leave for home just as the disco starts.

Saturday 22nd October

A short notice booking for a film job and it's an early 0700 start from the berth. They are filming for a programme called "Oceans" I think, on the Discovery channel. In 1929 there was a big underwater earthquake off the Newfoundland coast and the transatlantic cables were broken or damaged. *Shieldhall* is to play the part of a cable repair ship and although there are some bona-fide luvvies on board some of our crew are being dressed up in "period" gear and will act as extras. A couple of them don't need any costumes, they look the part already. The Director wants a clear horizon so we make our way out to the Nab and spend the day filming on the fo'csle, on the fore deck, over the side. They have made up this long length of pipe to represent the cable and filled it with gravel so that it appears to be heavy. When it is hauled up over the side it is draped with seaweed. Unfortunately, the fresh seaweed that they have brought along is bladderwrack, an inter-tidal species. Us idle onlookers can be terribly critical. Another thing they are trying to film is pieces of steaming pumice. I thought it was supposed to be a physical slump rather than a volcanic event but perhaps I am being picky again. They have fashioned chunks of polystyrene, painted grey, into the bottom of which they fit a can filled with dry-ice. As it floats past the ship it gives off lots of authentic looking "steam" but to get it on film takes many takes. I try to ease us back towards Southampton while all this filming from a RIB is going on, trying to maintain a decent lee for them, keep the vessel moving through the water, but not too fast. They are finally satisfied but it is nearly 2000 before we are back alongside. And to think that I forwent the pleasures of alcohol at last night's Trafalgar Dinner for this; things we get lumbered with in retirement!

Terry Clark

Those of us who have had the dubious pleasure of being tasked with taking the minutes at committee meetings know just how hard it is to précis what has been said in all seriousness and still convey the essence and flavour of it all. How these notes are likely to stand up to scrutiny some 10-12 years later is illustrated here by our mischievous Hon. Archivist, Hamish Roberts.

The images evoked of drunken Captains, a fractious congregation awash with drugs or explosives, and of juvenile shenanigans in the toilets are almost surreal. Definitely no offence intended to our hard working Church committees, past or present. Ed.

Holy Commotion

Extracts from Church Committee minutes

1993

Canon Roberts asked if more than two corkscrews could be provided next time. This caused annoyance and delay in the issue of wine after the service, particularly as one instrument broke after ten minutes.

Captain Moore said that by the time he had appeared at the wine table after collecting his stickers and bits and pieces, about half an hour after the service, he was looked on with grave suspicion as if he had already quaffed half a dozen glasses and was trying to make a night of it.

1994

The corkscrew situation is now in hand. Canon Job assured the meeting adequate supplies would be available. All sorts of problems arose last year because of the late opening of the West door. Something consisting of a small crowd poured in, overwhelming the ushers, who were subsequently late themselves attending. Blue ticket holders jostled with white ticket holders and consequently a considerable number of the former were relegated to the latter seats.

Captain Moore promised that strict control of blue tickets would be exercised this year. Captain Gilbert-Wood advised that the Assistant Chief Constable (Operations), Winchester, should be contacted in respect of sniffer dogs.

1995

The Youth Band turned up in the Cathedral at 4 p.m. straight from school for their final rehearsal, and afterwards changed from their school uniforms to their band uniforms ready for 6 p.m. The only place available to change this year was one of the toilets and, noting that there were a number of ladies in the band, Mr. Rich was not too pleased.

SEA PIE SUPPER

The Guildhall, Southampton

Friday 03 February 2006. 1830 for 1915

Tickets, @ £32.00 each, went on sale on Tuesday 15 November in the Club office.

There may still be some left

First come, first served: 4 per member.

If you are unable to attend the Club, 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.

BOOK REVIEW

This book review comes by kind permission of it's author, John Clandillon-Baker, the editor of The Pilot, the official organ of the United Kingdom Maritime Pilots' Association. It appeared there in the October 2005 edition.

FOUR TIMES A SCAPEGOAT

BY CAPTAIN DOUGLAS HARVEY

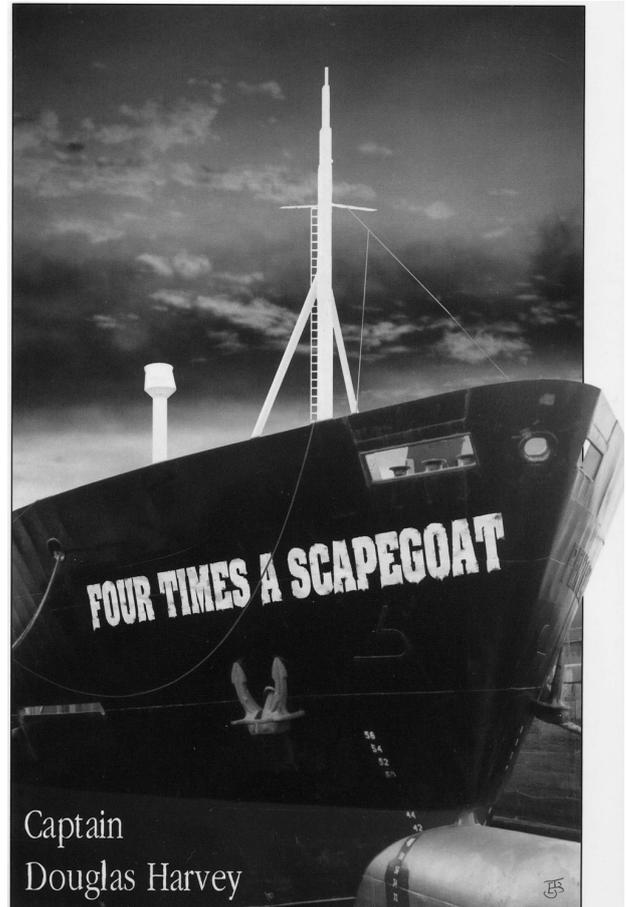
This book has been quite difficult to review. The problem is that Captain Harvey is a perfectionist in an imperfect world and by his own admission doesn't suffer fools gladly. Unfortunately as a captain of gas tankers Captain Harvey comes across not just fools but an endless stream of brigands, crooks and smugglers. When he joins a ship he uncovers incompetence and neglect by those he relieves and spend his entire voyages bringing the ships back up to scratch. I have no knowledge of the carriage of gas but Captain Harvey goes into detailed explanations as to how, as a result of his expertise the ships he commands end up carrying more cargo than ever before. His skills are not just limited to gas cargoes, on one ship he suspects that the engine is not performing to its best and sets to with the engineer to tweak all the setting which he claims resulted in a two knot increase in speed! All this attention to detail unfortunately resulted in Captain Harvey upsetting many ashore who allegedly set him up as a scapegoat, once with customs and a second time with his company to get rid of him.

During this time as master Captain Harvey only mentions pilots when he is bemoaning compulsory pilotage or exercising his prerogative to throw them off the bridge so it is surprising to learn that he had attended an interview to become a pilot for the Forth. In 1990 our hero is called in to commence training but it does not begin well, with the opening line on this chapter stating "*Since the introduction of the 1987 pilotage Act the standard of pilotage in the UK has shown a steady decline*". It seems that suddenly Forth pilots are not only incompetent (again) with "*Rarely a day goes by in the River Forth when there is not some incident or other*" but also blackmailers and fraudsters and just in case there is any doubt left we are also grossly overpaid. Oh dear!

During training he witnesses first hand how not to handle ships onto the various berths and into the docks. Once authorised Captain Harvey details all the berths and explains how it should be done. During his time as a pilot Captain Harvey has to deal with the RN and in a somewhat classic one liner states "... *I am no great lover of the RN, am even less impressed with the RFA, and have no time at all for the RNR*". So, that's that bunch sorted out then! But, if he has no time for the pilots Captain Harvey reserves his full wrath for the management of Forth Ports. Whilst I agree with many of the criticisms made against the establishment of CHAs and the 1987 Pilotage Act, unfortunately this is the legislation under which we all have to operate. Captain Harvey disagrees with many of the regulations, byelaws and directions imposed by Forth Ports but rather than seek to change perceived illogical rules through the pilots' committee he embarks on a one man rebellion. This action which involves breaching byelaws and ignoring Directions with which he disagrees, for some reason does not endear him to the Harbour Master or the port management. The other pilots decide not join him on this crusade and are therefore dismissed as "*a bunch of wimps*". Regrettably the fully detailed account of the ensuing dispute between Captain Harvey and Forth Ports is set out in great detail and is not easy reading!

It culminates in Captain Harvey's earlier departure from the gas tankers being analysed and used against him thus setting him up as a scapegoat for a third time and he leaves the Forth pilotage after three years in service.

The rest of the book sees Captain Harvey back at sea doing ship deliveries with rubbish officers and crews and then becoming chief



mate again on gas ships with Bergeson's. This section could form the basis of a gas carriage manual since to quote again "*I can squeeze in more cargo than anyone, only because I know the gas trade better than anyone, and have so many tricks up my sleeve that I now have a third arm*". Detailed explanations as to how this is done and how everyone else is polluting the atmosphere by venting gas is provided. The book concludes with Captain Harvey sorting out another gas ship under the Bibby Harrison Management Services which is in a state of dilapidation. Again we are subjected to a detailed account of rubbish crews, incompetence fraud theft etc. and Captain Harvey leaves the ship claiming that he was only appointed in order to become a scapegoat.

Captain Harvey claims to have written this book as means of exposing the corrupt underbelly of the world of merchant shipping, in particular in the gas trade. I am not in a position to make a judgement on the accuracy of the very serious allegations made against named companies, ships and easily identifiable individuals but I believe that there is an exaggeration of the facts since ships successfully carry 95% of the world's trade without Captain Harvey on board. In the section on pilotage I do feel qualified to express an opinion. Much of the criticism is unjustifiable since Forth Ports is a thriving port operator and although largely unacknowledged, high quality pilotage plays a vital role in any port's success. Contrary to the impression given in this book the Forth pilots don't have a reputation as ship wreckers!

As a general summary of the book I found that the narrative was difficult to follow in places and the proof reading has been a bit sloppy. In particular, throughout most of the book the term "*of course*" appears as "*off course*" and to me that just about sums the book up.

JCB

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Rope Ends

DEFAULTERS

In the days of all white crews, Defaulters was one of the major 'entertainments' on board and, depending on the Captain could be pure theatre. After a popular port there could easily be 100 defaulters, or more, on the bridge at noon the next day.

On one memorable occasion an Ordinary Seaman had requested to see the Captain to state a complaint about the Chief Officer and so was brought up to the Bridge to be available at the end of the Loggings.

At this time the Chief Officer was a very extroverted, erudite and somewhat terrifying figure known throughout the ship as 'Hangman', being reputed to have acted as such during the Spanish Civil War.

The Captain, in a manner very friendly, for him, said, 'Now my Boy, I understand that you wish to make a complaint about the Chief Officer - tell me about it'.

OS: "Chief Officer swore at me sir and I don't like that".

Captain: "What did the Chief Officer say?"

OS: "He called me a F***ing doormat sir".

Captain: "What do you have to say that, Chief Officer?"

Chief Officer: "I didn't swear at him, he's a bit slow sir, and I told him that his faculties were dormant"

It was very hard for the assembled officers to keep the solemn mien required on such occasions!



Christmas Lunch

You may still be in time to book for the Xmas lunch at King's Court Masonic Centre, Chandlers Ford, on Saturday 10th Dec. 1215 for 1300.

NEW CACHALOTS

P.J. Ellerton

D.M. Healy

C.B. Hoengard

A. Hockett (Hon. Chaplain)

A. MacPherson

M. Spencer

Enclosed with this edition you should find a copy of the programme for next year, complete with a cut-off strip for return with your subscriptions and "250" Club contributions. You are reminded that you should enclose a S.A.E. with any correspondence requiring a reply, wine lists, SeaPie Supper tickets etc.

BURNS' NIGHT SUPPER

**Saturday 21st January
Kings Court Masonic Centre**

It will be a return to Chandler's Ford for the popular Burns Supper and Pipe Major Joe Fagan will be there again to entertain us musically. Price per head not yet finalised but around £25. Names to the board or to the office please.

1900 for 1930

Black Tie and Miniatures

New Year Service

The traditional Docklands New Year Service, to which you are cordially invited, will take place in the chapel of the Southampton Seafarers' Centre at 0900 on Wednesday, 4 January. The preacher will be the Revd. Tim Daykin, Vicar of St. Michael's Church, Southampton, and also Religious producer at BBC Radio Solent. The service is expected to last about 40 minutes and will be followed by refreshments.

THANK YOU!

Some weeks after I retired this summer, I was at the Curry lunch with Barry when I was ambushed by Cachalots bearing gifts.

At the time I was (almost) rendered speechless by the generosity and thoughtfulness of the Club Officers and members who had schemed together and dug deeply into their pockets to buy me some wonderful gifts by which to remember my time in the office of the Club for the last five years.

I was presented with a beautiful gold pendant and chain, designed by a young designer from Winchester. Also a very modern silver bangle to go with the Club insignia of a silver whale pin and the most enormous bouquet I have ever seen. I also had personal gifts from the Boatsteerer, Lionel, and his wife, Julie.

I am still overwhelmed by all these truly beautiful gifts which I greatly treasure. Thank you all very much.

There were also some very kind remarks made in speeches by the Boatsteerer, the Storekeeper and the Club Captain. Thank you too for those.

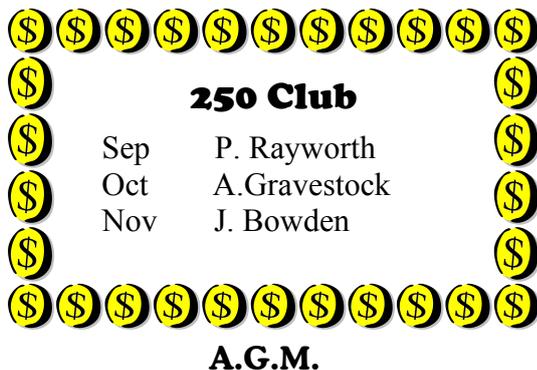
(In retrospect, maybe they were just very pleased to be getting rid of this bossy woman from the office. It didn't quite work, however, as I have just been spending a few hours back in harness, providing some cover for my successor, Avis, who is taking a much needed break in Florida after four months of keeping control of the office team.)

I have really enjoyed my time with you all and have made lots of good friends. The best part of the job was always the time I spent with the members. You remember the old saying that "All the nice girls love a sailor"? How could I not have enjoyed my time when I was surrounded by so many handsome gentlemen?

I will not lose touch with the Club as Barry is an active member, so in spite of all the gifts, kind words and such a wonderful send-off, you can't get rid of me that easily. I hope to see many of you often in the future.

Meanwhile, thank you all very much again and my love and very best wishes to you and your families for Christmas and the New Year.

Judith.



Please note that the AGM will be held at 1900 on Wednesday 11th Jan at the Royal British Legion Club. This is a change of date to one previously promulgated.

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 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	DEC	10	Christmas Lunch, Kings Court.
Fri	DEC	23	Club closes for Christmas break.
Tue	JAN	3	Club re-opens
Wed	JAN	4	Docklands New Year Service, 0900 Southampton Seafarers Centre
Wed	JAN	11	AGM, Royal British Legion Club, 1900
Sat	JAN	21	Burns' Night Supper, King's Court
Fri	FEB	3	Sea Pie Supper, Guildhall, 1830
Sat	MAR	4	Curry Lunch
Fri	MAR	31	Skittles Evening, So'ton (Old) Green Bowling Club
Tue	APR	4	Tidworth Concert, Lucknow Band, Prince of Wales Regiment
Wed	MAY	3	Club Buffet Supper
Wed	MAY	17	Entertain Watch Ashore to lunch
Sat	MAY	20	Curry Lunch
Wed	MAY	24	Technical Seminar
Wed	JUN	14	Club Buffet Supper
Thu	JUN	15	Shipping Festival Service, Winchester
Sat	JUL	1	Curry Lunch
Fri	AUG	4	Cowes Firework cruise, S.S. Shieldhall
Sat	SEP	2	Curry Lunch
Tue	OCT		Tidworth Concert, Last Night of the Proms.
Sat	OCT	28	Autumn Dinner Dance, Brook House
Fri	NOV	3	Harpooners' Dinner
Tba	NOV		Wine Tasting
Tue	NOV	14	Sale of Sea Pie Supper tickets
Sat	DEC	2	Meeting of Past Captains
Sat	DEC	2	Christmas Lunch, King's Court
Sat	DEC	9	Christmas Dinner, King's Court