

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.2

November 2001

Here we are once more! And in a new format as we try to embrace new technology and keep up with the 21st Century. Much activity has occurred since we last reported to you and we are happy to be able to tell you that your Club has enjoyed a number of well supported events.

Ball of a Ball

Remember the Summer Ball on the 22nd June? After a very difficult period trying to fill enough tables to make the event viable, the organisers' efforts eventually bore fruit with a beautiful Summer's evening in a fine venue with idyllic gardens to set it off. The numbers were still rather fewer than they would have wished but all who participated apparently had a Ball -What else? The Draw that evening raised £293 for the Wessex Cancer Trust. Thank you to all who provided the prizes and to those who bought the tickets.

Southampton in Southampton

In July the City of Southampton received a visit from the warship of the same name. Some of us were able to visit the cocktail party held to entertain various local organisations and interests. This was such a huge affair that it had to be held in a marquee-type awning on the fore deck in amongst the control gear for a missile launcher. There would never have been room for us all in the wardroom. We were much impressed by the hospitality. Unfortunately the weather was anything but summery. It was no evening for skimpy cocktail dresses! The following day your Club Captain represented us at a luncheon on board hosted by the Commanding Officer.

Seafarers' Services Attended

The Club has recently been represented at Seafarers' Services in St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Columba's Church of Scotland in London. The latter encompassed the AGM of the Club's landlords, the British & International Seafarers' Society. Captain Reg Kelso, our last Boatsteerer is a director of BISS and in that capacity he gave a pleasing 'thank you' to the guest speaker.

Steaming on the Solent



On the 9th July, a party from the Club embarked on the s.s. Shieldhall for an afternoon cruise in the Solent. This is the restored steamship that used to lie in Ocean Village but which is now berthed at No. 48 Berth in the Docks. The trip was organised by Dennis Thorne, one of your Entertainment Committee members. Opportunity was taken for him to be presented with an 80th. Birthday Card on the bridge by the ship's duty master who happened to be another Club member.

The cruise encompassed steaming past Cowes with good views of the Royal Yacht Squadron. Apparently the cream teas were much enjoyed.

The ship is hardly a glamorous passenger vessel but is particularly popular with those people known as 'steam buffs'. The whole point of the preservation is to maintain the two triple expansion engines in steam - provided by two Scotch boilers. It normally cruises within the Solent but it also has made passenger trips to Poole, Weymouth and Shoreham. Its certificate allows 150 passengers to be carried. Shieldhall also undertakes charters to take parties of sponsors to watch the start and finish of 'Round the World Yacht Races'.

Another speciality has been the provision of locations for films. Large parts of a Brazilian television soap opera were made on board a couple of years ago. On that occasion the ship carried hundreds of 'extras' who were chosen to look like Italian immigrants (but many of the voices sounded very 'ampshire'). Even some of the crew had walk on parts. Voyages without passengers have also been made in order to visit various festivals where such ships are prized. It is intended to make a return visit next year to Dordrecht on the Dutch Waterways to an international steam festival which not only has ships but also includes steam rollers and fairground steam engines.

Club Supper

On October 12th Walter Weyndling acted as our 'guest?' speaker at the well attended and much enjoyed Club Supper. His talk explained what it used to be like as a Department of Transport surveyor in the West of Scotland and the Isles. His adventures could only be described as hilarious. The seamen and fishermen are a wily lot up there. We should know - we have Robbie as an example in the Club!

Tidworth Outing

On the 30th October we had our latest outing to the Garrison Theatre at Tidworth to listen to the Lucknow Regimental Band. Once again they were superb, with a very wide ranging selection of music. They even produced a jazz guitarist to give an amazing solo when he could be spared from his duties in the clarinet line up. As usual they had an invited civilian soloist. This was a young soprano called Prudence Black. Her singing was not only faultless; it was powerful. Yet she is only 15 years old and still attending Wells Cathedral Choir School. Everyone agreed that she may very well be the next singer to hit the headlines. The evening concluded with the audience singing Rule Britannia & Auld Lang Syne at the tops of their voices, waving flags and letting off party poppers - a great time was had by all!

The next visit to Tidworth has already been inserted in the Club diary for next year. The date is 16th April and the occasion is to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. It should be another evening to remember. Don't forget to append your names as soon as the list opens in the Club Room. The price last time was £17 to include the coach ride, admission and a buffet supper. The coach starts from the Club but also picks up at Chandler's Ford.

Curry Lunches

A very successful Curry Lunch was held in September and another on the 24th November, 2001. It is intended to continue this tradition next year and the first will be held on 2nd March. Saturday lunch times seem to be very popular as they give the opportunity to combine a sociable meal with a traipse around West Quay. If you don't like curry an alternative can be found if advance notice is given. However, you don't know what you're missing! There is even a curry specially for vegetarians.

Away at Dartmouth

The first weekend in October was utilised for the Club's first "Away Fixture". The Captain suggested making a guide tour of the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. This was fleshed out by the Entertainments Chairman, John Smart, to turn it into a really successful weekend. The result was two nights in a hotel in Torquay, two breakfasts, two dinners, a lunch and a dedicated coach throughout for just £90 each. The hotel was adequate, the weather was mostly kind, the outings were really interesting and the company was great fun. Incidentally, we were able to show a small profit on the event. The general opinion was "Lets do something similar next year". We have been wondering about "Scenic Suffolk" but have yet to run down a suitable hotel.

Burns Night Dinner

The first major social gathering of 2002 will be a Burns Night Dinner to be held in the Club Room on Friday, 25th January. Naturally, there will be a piper to escort the haggis into the room. Some of you may need to remove your hearing aids! We have secured the services of a renowned speaker to toast the haggis. You will not even need a translator to enjoy his speech.

Sea Pie Supper

Then comes the Sea Pie Supper in Southampton Guildhall on Friday the 8th February, 2002. There will be the usual guest list and our Principal Guest will be Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhig, First Sea Lord. Hopefully, our honorary shantyman, Tony Davis (of Spinners fame), will be able to come and lead us in the sea shanties which are the culmination of the evening. Remember that the tickets usually sell out on the day of issue which is Tuesday, 20th November, 2001. The office is now in the portakabin in the car park. Unless you are very elderly or disabled please use a public car park during weekdays.

Other Coming Attractions

We intend to have a skittles evening at the Southampton Old Bowling Club, just along from our own Club, at the end of February. Friday 22nd Feb. is the preferred date but this has yet to be confirmed. Watch the notice board or ring the Club.

Last year we tried for the first time a Curry Supper and Quiz. It proved to be most enjoyable and we will be repeating the exercise on Friday 17th May.

Planes and Boats and Trains

Saturday 1st June has just been confirmed as the date for our first "away" Club Dinner for some time. It is to be held at the Royal Air Force Yacht Club in Hamble and further details will be published in the next newsletter.

It is also hoped to hold a Club Supper and evening cruise aboard the "Shieldhall" and possibly a Club outing on the Watercress Line, but at the time of printing their 2002 programmes were not yet available. Details will hopefully be published in a later newsletter. The entertainments committee is also investigating the chances of another weekend away if a suitable venue can be found.

From Summer to Autumn

We have established that attendances at summer events particularly in July and August suffer from competition from holidays etc. For this reason we have decided to hold an Autumn Ball next year. This year's Summer Ball was eventually very successful but it was a real struggle to achieve sufficient numbers to make it viable. A couple of other minor events were actually cancelled for lack of takers. Anyway, next year we have decided to have an Autumn Ball. It will be held in the *Hilton National Hotel* at Chilworth Roundabout, Southampton, on the

26th October, 2002

please enter this event in your diaries *NOW*.

We anticipate the cost to be £30 per person. We also will be publishing an all-in price for those wishing to stay overnight. It is a fine and convenient venue. Some of you will remember that we held the Ball there in 1999. Since that time the hotel has been re-furnished as it is now over ten years old. We have been assured that they can now accept credit cards for drinks purchases and the dance floor has been replaced with a solid one. You will also notice that this time we have secured a Saturday slot, thus making it easier for those finishing work late on Friday afternoon. The Botleigh Grange could not accommodate us in a suitable room owing to weddings having been booked very far in advance. The music for dancing has not yet been finalised. No doubt there will once again be a Raffle in aid of the Wessex Cancer Trust so we'll be looking for donors of prizes - particularly corporate contributions.

A Brief Look at the Activities of the Cricket Section of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club



1956 to 2001

It may be mid-winter and cold but we cricketers look at that as being nearly half way to the next season which we usually begin with a not too serious workout in the nets in March or April. Cricketers, at least in this country, are born optimists; we have to be.

I am led to believe that not too many of the Club Members know much about us. The intention with this requested item is to change this a little.

The Cricket Section was formed in 1956. It played social, i.e. non league, cricket. Cricket Captains had to be full Captains of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club. If none was deemed to be suitable permission had to be sought from the Club's General Committee to engage a Messmate. Mr Colin White was the first such person to be so appointed in 1969.

The whole history of the Section's documentation is not available; just as well else this article would become a thesis. In the early days post match entertainment was often a very formal affair, with DJ's frequently being the dress of the evening. As the team was often the principal guest at such events, formal responses to toasts were not uncommon.

Life was nothing like so frenetic in the first twenty years or so as now... How could anyone nowadays find time to play a game of croquet before the cricket match? We, and several of our opponents find difficulty in having a full side present at the time when 'wickets are pitched' (the cricketing equivalent of soccer's 'kick-off time').

The historical aspects here are based largely on the comprehensive reports of 1977. These marked the end of Guy Farmiloe's tenure as Secretary and Treasurer, positions held since the Section's formation. His resignation reports are tinged with sadness relating to a casual approach and lack of commitment by the players; how we have all seen this in life in general over the intervening years. (I arrived at Warsash in 1977 so recall the era well; the elderly lecturer who took me around the grounds expressed dismay at the fact that there was no longer the time, nor the interest, to present Shakespearean plays in the gardens.) The Section's members became less dedicated and more selective in the games they played. They seemed not to appreciate the work put in to arrange fixtures and grounds; team and gear organisation; refreshments; collecting all receipts, paying all debts and balancing the accounts; writing Press Reports after each match; preparing the season's averages (cricketers can't survive the winter without being able to ponder long and hard over the 'averages'); and a multiplicity of correspondence. People like Guy are the bedrock of any organisation and they cannot afford to be lost to the organisation.

Those same tasks, except for Press Reports which aren't done anymore, are now spread between the Team Captain, Baggage Master, Secretary and Treasurer. We are still seeking ways of involving more people to spread the load from the Team Captain without fragmenting the match roles.

The Statement of Accounts for 1977 showed Subscriptions to be £5 per head; they're only £7 for Full Members of the Club now, and Match Fees to be 50p; they're only £2 now. Postage, stationery etc. in 1977 amounted to £53... It's a good job that that hasn't gone up proportionately.

It is many years since the team comprised Full Members of the Club. Since Guy's reflective 1977 report the team has become even more dependent on non-members. This last season we drew on a pool of eleven Full Members of the Club and ten non-members. These are, however, largely mariners or ex-mariners who are associated with marine related industry or nautical training. We welcome and value 'guest' players. Some become regular, we're a popular bunch of blokes, and pay their way in full. The nucleus of 'shore-based' players ensures that we can always select a team but the best feature of this nucleus is that it enables the 'sea-going' fraternity to play whenever they are available, the shore contingent happily stepping aside.

The number of fixtures played each season has stabilised at around sixteen since 1977. Our biggest problem now is short notice cancellations, mainly by RN teams. Their players also find it difficult to get time off or cannot justify having to pay back to a substitute the time taken to play an evening game of cricket; including travel and post match entertainment a good five to six hours flash by.

Much change in the conduct of the games has taken place over the years. No longer is it possible to score a century, in form batsmen must retire at 25 or 30 in most games. With a bowling restriction of four overs the chances of getting a 'hat-trick' are slender particularly with our elderly and relatively immobile fielders; we can't all be hidden in the field.

There are Club Members who will recall Yvonne Lawrence's 'spreads' and 'sherry trifles' at Warsash and the reciprocated quality in the wardrooms of HMS Collingwood, Nelson, Vernon, Excellent, Dryad, Sultan, Mercury and the Old Naval Academy. Entertainment is now much lower key all round comprising, generally, cans of beer and 'Coke' and sandwiches in the pavilion. Occasionally a BBQ or light curry is offered but it's rare. Players' partners are seldom able to assist with refreshments; indeed they invariably have other commitments and are rarely seen at matches in any capacity. Guy would shake his head in despair.

Guy's report makes mention of two awards 'Edney Curtis' and 'Guy Farmiloe'. Neither has figured in my time of association with the Club. Perhaps it's time to dig out the history and seek to re-establish them or respect the reasons for their demise. We currently award a cup presented by John Sutton for 'Player of the Year'. Only paid up players are eligible to vote. It is not necessarily presented for prowess on the field of play and it cannot be awarded consecutively to the same person, no matter how deserving.

Among the names of players in the 1977 squad, then in his fourth season, is a person who still plays for the Club and is not the eldest by some margin! This reminds me of an amusing incident due to the current Treasurer's 'Matchday Activity'... In order that he stands a chance of enjoying the game and to avoid having to extract cash from disgruntled players who were 'out first ball', 'didn't get to bowl' and who 'dropped several catches', Match Fees are collected *before* the game. The player just referred to, who invariably bats in a helmet and often opens the innings, on one occasion didn't wear his helmet, 'top edged' the ball into his eye and had to retire to hospital for treatment. He returned before the end of the match and grabbed the Treasurer demanding the return of his match fee. The quick thinking Treasurer politely, but firmly, declined this request and countered by endeavouring, unsuccessfully, to get a further contribution claiming that he had had to pay for the services of a substitute fielder who also had to be entertained. All hands, except our injured player, were suitably amused agreeing that he had been 'stitched up' in more than one way.

The teams featured in the fixture list have changed a bit since 1977. Some of the RN Wardrooms don't exist. Some are less committed due to changes in work situations. No longer can RN personnel get time off to play sport when they want it. They have to get cover and repay the time; it takes a lot of commitment to do that week after week. We do, however, have like-minded clubs wanting to play against us, our home at Southampton Institute's Hardmoor ground providing some of the best and safest pitches on which to bat in the area.

We always play to the best of our ability, tactics and strategies vary with the whims of the captain and winning is not the 'be-all and end-all'. Socialising after the match is still very important to us even if we are in a much less lavish era than the 50s and 60s.

What we would dearly like is a few more Cachalots prepared to play. If any such people are around, particularly if under the age of 50, they'll be more than welcome and bring down the average age. The Compliments of the Season to you all and roll on April, well worth wishing away a few months of life for we men of the Cricket Section.

Don't forget; your Club is routinely open four days a week at lunch time. It serves sandwiches, snacks, salads or cooked meals. There is a cooked special each day and the price has recently only been £2.75. Don't forget that, when dining, a bottle of house wine can be bought for only £5 - a far cry from the usual hotel or restaurant prices. If you are in town at lunch time, Tuesday to Friday, Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink and take your food orders.

Suggestions for events, for improvements, offers of help, articles and anecdotes for inclusion in this pamphlet will all be received with pleasure. We are even prepared to receive complaints if they are constructive. The Club's address is:

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The Southampton Seafarers' Centre,
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SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3BR
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Dates for your Diary

The Club will be closed over Christmas and the New Year but will re-open on Wednesday, 2nd January, 2002. For those concerned there will be a Past Captains' Meeting on the 5th. Jan.

- Thu JAN 17 Annual General Meeting
- Fri JAN 25 Club Supper. Burns Night
- Fri FEB 8 Sea Pie Supper
- ?? FEB Skittles Evening, Old Bowling Club
- Sat MAR 2 Curry Lunch
- Fri MAR 29 Club Supper. Wine Tasting?
- Tue APR 16 Tidworth Musical Medley
- Sat APR 27 Curry Lunch
- Fri MAY 17 Curry Supper. General Knowledge Quiz
- Sat JUN 1 Club Supper at RAF Yacht Club
- Thu JUN 20 Shipping Festival, Winchester Cathedral
- Sat SEP 21 Curry Lunch
- ??? OCT Tidworth Last Night of the Proms
- Sat OCT 26 Autumn Ball.

The Club events list for 2002 accompanies this missive and will alert you to the rest of the club lunches and suppers for the year ahead. Some other events may well be organised in the near future. These will be announced in the next Newsletter.. Also on that leaflet is the return slip for your subscriptions and "250" Club (if required). And enclosed is another leaflet detailing sweaters, shirts etc that are available with the Club logo embroidered thereon.