

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.20

June 2006

CAPTAIN'S LOG

I hope that this edition finds you all in good health and enjoying life. Quite a lot has happened already this year, in addition to the usual busy social calendar. As you are aware we had a number of changes to the officers and Boatsteerers assistant at the end of the year. Fortunately, Avis Hunt provided us with a valuable hand over period before she left us and Doug Gates is continuing to assist Gerry Cartwright. Without their help we would have found it very difficult to maintain the Club administration.

In the March 2006 issue of The Cachalot we enclosed the strategic review of the Southampton Master Mariner's Club which identified some of the issues that face us as a club within Southampton's maritime industry and some suggested solutions for you to consider and comment upon. We had many responses either verbally in the Club room, by e-mail and letter. Thank you all for taking the time to respond. I am pleased to say that 85% of the responses were in favour of the proposed actions, 10% were not so sure, with the remaining 5% being neutral. On that basis we have moved forward with the first priority namely, to try and locate a more suitable premises for an administration office and Clubroom. We have made some good progress and the situation at the moment is as follows.

We have located the first floor of the Southampton Seafarers Centre at 12-14 Queens Terrace, as suitable for our needs. We have negotiated a tenancy agreement with the landlord, the 'Missions to Seafarers Trust Ltd.' and we are awaiting only the agreement of the Southampton City Council's Planning office to grant the necessary 'Change of Use' for the premises and our solicitors to register the TA with the land registry before we sign it. We are hopeful that we will indeed sign this agreement in the very near future and take up residence by the 9th June 2006. Once we have moved in then we can start to concentrate upon undertaking those activities that will raise the profile of the Cachalots and help to generate an increased awareness and interest in the Club's activities, e.g. an enhanced website, open

lunchtime/ evening discussions, Club activities, etc. Both the SSC and the SMMC are enthusiastic about developing the much closer relationship that will grow between us and see mutual benefits from the development of the strong synergies that exist between us. We have followed the Club's processes and procedures and, as you are aware, called an Extraordinary General Meeting that unanimously approved the terms of the TA, the proposed changes in the Club Rule Book to enable to appoint and properly indemnify Trustees.

I attended the AGM of the Cricket Club, and a most interesting evening it was too. If there are members who live locally and would like to get involved, please contact the Royal British Legion Clubroom. We will advise all members of the new contact details once we have signed the contract and have a 'commencement of operations' date.

I would also like to draw to your attention that Melanie Hall, Neville Hall's daughter has established a 'just giving' website in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association. For those of you who do not know Neville, a firm and supportive Cachalot, he is suffering with this disease and Melanie and Matthew Hall, together with their friends have organised and completed a 'Three Peaks' climb to raise money for this association. If any of you would also care to support the MNDA, the web site can be found at:
www.justgiving.com/nevillehall.

It is with continuing shock and sadness that I have to report the sudden and tragic death of Nigel Hunt in Mombassa on May 19th. I know that many of you will have known Nigel, both he and Avis were committed Cachalot and Cachalot supporter and would wish to join in sending our condolences to Avis, Lise and Sally. His funeral will be on Friday 2nd June at Hamble Parish Church.

George Angas

June 2006



THE SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE

THURSDAY 16th JUNE 2005 AT 7.00 p.m.
CONGREGATION TO BE SEATED BY 6.45 p.m.

PREACHER:

The Right Revd. Crispian Hollis
Roman Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth

COLOUR PARTY FROM H.M.S. KING ALFRED, ROYAL FLEET AUXILLIARY, STANDARD BEARERS OF THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION, THE ASSOCIATION OF WRNS, THE ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION and THE MERCHANT NAVY ASSOCIATION.

FLAG PARTY FROM THE SOUTHAMPTON, ROMSEY and WINCHESTER UNITS OF THE CADET CORPS.

MUSIC BY THE VOLUNTEER BAND OF H.M.S. NELSON UNDER THE DIRECTION OF BAND COLOUR SARGEANT CRAIG HENDERSON, R.M.

AFTERWARDS, IN THE DEANERY GARDENS,
WINE and REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

**THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SERVICE WILL
BE DONATED TO
THE SOUTHAMPTON SEAFARERS' CENTRE
and
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL**

ALL WELCOME

Canon Charles Stewart, Vice Dean, Precentor and Sacrist, completed his distinguished period of service with Winchester Cathedral on 21st May. The Club is very grateful for Charles' commitment over the past 12 years in ensuring that the annual Shipping Festival Service was successful. We would like to say thank you to him and to bid him and his family Godspeed as they move to Walton-on-Thames

Club Buffet Supper

1900 for 1930 on Tuesday, 13th June
In the Royal British Legion Clubroom

"The Rag Trade"

A talk by Bill Atkinson, ex Chief Buyer for Christian Dior

The price is £14 per person

List on the board or contact the office

Payments to the Storekeeper/Functions Officer on or before 2nd June, please.

Catering for the buffet will provided by John Davis
And will include the following selections:

Beef & Pepper Salad
Poached Salmon - Coronation Chicken
Turkey, Ham & Cranberry Pie
Leek, Prawn and Asparagus Quiche
Seasonal Salads and Potatoes
Rolls & Butter

Summer Pudding - Pears in Red Wine
Sherry Trifle - Crème Caramel



AUTUMN DINNER DANCE

Saturday 28th October

**Brook House Masonic Centre,
Botley**

Baked Avocado with Stilton & Bacon

Rack of Lamb

With a

Red Current, Mint and Red Wine Sauce

Seasonal Vegetables & Potatoes

Orange and Cointreau Gateau

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

**A non-alcoholic fruit punch will be
served on arrival**

Drinks at sensible prices

Music by

Harmony House.

**Black Tie,
1915 for 2000.**

Priced at £28 per person.

During the evening there will be a raffle held in aid of the Wessex Cancer Trust. Any donations towards this raffle will be gratefully received.

There is no restriction on numbers so why not make up a table of family and friends?

List on the notice board,
or book through the office.

A MEMENTO OF H.M.S. FOX

On a recent visit to my native West Somerset I paid a visit to my last remaining uncle, who lives in a village quite close to Watchet and whom I had not seen for many years.

On ringing his doorbell at 2pm, my wife and I were surprised to be greeted, after a short interval, by the sound of four bells being struck loudly from just inside the front door. He opened the door, greeted us and ushered us into his hallway where we saw a large brass ship's bell hanging in a specially made wooden tabernacle.

My uncle explained that it was a bell from H.M.S. Fox allegedly found crated up in a store room when the cruiser arrived at Watchet for breaking up in July 1920.

It had no ships name on it or even a broad arrow but to my eye it looked definitely a R.N. bell, being too large and elaborately cast to belong to a merchant ship and in obviously unused condition. The original purchaser had understood that it was the spare warship's bell kept on board for use in emergency should the original be lost or destroyed, the inscribed bell having presumably been removed by the Admiralty before the cruiser was sold for breaking. I was told that it had been bought from the breakers by a local businessman and passed through his family until bought by my uncle about 20 years ago.

He was very proud of it, having served in the Fleet Air Arm during WWII himself although his wife would only allow it to be struck on special occasions!

I had no idea that my uncle possessed this bell until visiting him, and felt it was quite a strange coincidence to see such an important artefact from the ship only a few months after writing about her last voyage in Newsletter No 16

Terry Winsborough

PASSENGERS SITTING AT OFFICER'S TABLES.

I was serving as an Assistant Purser in ORION on one occasion when, on leaving Sydney homeward bound, I was told by the Staff Commander that he instructed the Head Waiter to seat two young ladies on my table. This was somewhat of a surprise as he did not, as a rule, plan my love life for me, rather the opposite in fact!

The two sisters turned out to be delightful company and were the grand daughters of Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, the Australian Commander in Chief in WWI. The only problem was that they were such good company that I was frequently 'on the mat' in the morning for the noise coming from my table at dinner. One time being on their recounting of the following story:

On an occasion during the 1st war grandfather was in his open staff car going to inspect a rather remote army unit, dressed in all his finery, including cocked hat with feathers, when they approached the unit the gate was seen to be open, there was a rifle leaning up against the sentry box and there was no sign of life. As the staff car slowed down an Aussie soldier appeared from behind the sentry box adjusting his dress, took one look at all the top brass and started to roll a fag. The Field Marshall, almost purple in the face, said 'Do you know who I am?' The soldier lit his fag and said 'No, oo'r yer?' Answer 'I am Field Marshall Lord Birdwood, your Commander in Chief. The soldier was not the least impressed, lit his fag and took a puff, and said 'Why don't you stuff those feathers up yer bum and f.. f.. fly off like any other bird-would'. - yet another meeting with the Staff Commander for me the following morning !



Curry Lunch

1200 Saturday 1st July
at

The Southampton Seafarers' Centre

Following the two previous successful Curry lunches at the above venue we shall be returning there for the next. And this time we are assured that there *will* be Beef Madras instead of Chicken Tikka and as well as the milder Chicken Korma, along with the usual condiments and vanilla ice cream. Alternatives by prior order only please.

Just **£6.50** per head.

Please note that this does not include coffee in the lounge area for which a small donation is expected.

Names to the notice in the Club-room or to the office, with payment please.

s.s.SHIELDHALL

COWES FIREWORKS

Friday 4th August, 1830 - 2359

The Club has reserved 60 places on this popular cruise to view the fireworks display which is traditionally held on the Friday of Cowes week.

£28.50 per person

Does not include food but hot meals will be available, payable on board on the night.

Departs 48 berth, Southampton at 1830, please allow plenty of time for parking and boarding.

List on the notice board, or book through the office.

Cachalots in Cologne

A Personal Account by the Editor

On Friday 28th April a small but select group of Cachalots and their Ladies, twenty-five in total, set forth from Southampton for a five-day excursion by coach to Cologne and the Rhine valley.

An early, 0600, start from the VTS station at 39 berth, Southampton, where Lionel had arranged for our parking. In a brand new luxury coach, in plain white, and with no markings other than PARNHAMS on the windscreen, to ensure our anonymity. A brand new (-fangled) Sat-Nav system too, but it couldn't cope with the temporary roadworks in the Ring Road just outside the dock gate. Andy, our driver, couldn't bend the big coach round the diversion down French Street so we had to back up round the traffic lights in Lower High Street. Lucky it was early in the morning. After that we reverted to the time honoured method of shouting confusing and conflicting directions until Andy was back on more familiar territory.

Cross Channel with Sea-France from Dover to Calais, thence on to Cologne where they were booked at the five-star Renaissance Hotel on a Bed & Breakfast basis, the evenings being free.

No more problems on the road and we made our scheduled 0930 passage on the "Berlioz". Those of us who were quick enough also made it to the restaurant in time to grab a seat for breakfast, "full English" of course. An uneventful crossing, as was our trip through the low countries towards Cologne, with just a quick "stretch the legs stop" near Leuven on the way. A rash of road works were also afflicting the centre of Cologne and the Sat-Nav machine tried to send us under a 1.9m restriction in our 3.5m high coach. Another backing up exercise against red lights into the rush hour traffic but the locals seemed to take it all in their stride with no evident bad temper. It took us another thirty minutes backwards and forwards across the Rhine before we were able to find an alternative route to our hotel in the centre of the town. Luckily Dennis Roberts had the appropriate map in his chart portfolio and was able to direct Andy with precision.

Once settled in, and after sampling a couple of bottles of the very drinkable (and reasonable; just €7.50 a bottle) house wine in Lionel's cabin, four of us, Lionel, Doug, Meryl and myself decided to hit the town and find a typical German hostelry or restaurant. Fat chance, they all seemed to be Italian, Chinese or Thai. A cold wind was about to put paid to our search and as we looked dispiritedly around we were rescued by Ken Owen who had spotted our plight from an Italian restaurant across the road where he and Alwyn, along with Ian and Joanne Thomson, had found succour. We had a very pleasant meal there, spoilt only by the local smokers who still insist on lighting up before, after and in-between courses.

Saturday was also a free day, with members able to explore Cologne at their will.

After a splendid breakfast, with a choice from most of the things that you could think of, the same four of us made our way to the Cathedral and joined the throng of tourists there. I had never been to Cologne before and found the whole cathedral experience both awe inspiring and fascinating. How they manage to keep it a working cathedral as well as a major tourist attraction was revealed when we were cleared from the ambulatory and invited to stay in the main body of the Cathedral for the 12:00 Service. They are never going to be short of a congregation but even a not very religious man such as I could not help but be moved by the sense of grandeur, history and continuity of it all.

After the service we visited the Treasury and were yet again overwhelmed, this time by the magnificent workmanship on the treasures and exhibits there. One could have spent a whole day in just the Treasury alone but it was time for a late lunch and we emerged from the Cathedral into the square just as it began to rain. We quickly found seats in a nearby restaurant, this time a

Mexican one, before returning to the hotel via the busy shopping area where Meryl indulged in a bit of what is now known as retail therapy.

In the evening, after yet another couple of bottles of the house wine, this time in our room, we went searching again for that German experience. Some premises that had looked promising in the day-light were definite no-gos in the dark and as the rain came on again we were attracted into a Brazilian Restaurant. One attraction was that you could eat as much as you liked for €21.60, starting with a self select salad course and followed by cuts of meat which were sliced onto one's plate from a huge skewer by a man with a big moustache and a very sharp knife. The other attraction was that every thirty minutes or so a small troupe of scantily clad Brazilian beauties would perform a samba, or somesuch, between the tables.

Whatever it was, it involved a lot of shaking and gyrating of the said scantily clad bodies. We are talking thong and bra here and I believe they may have been wearing some sort of head-dress as well but I am not really sure. Now I understand what they mean when they talk about a "brazilian". Needless to say, our Boatsteerer, ever the gentleman, refused to turn his back on the performers until the matriarch serving lady told him forcibly to eat his food before it got cold. At the next performance, the girls, recognizing in Lionel a true aficionado of their attributes and skills, had him up dancing with them! And then a conga line was formed with both performers and customers prancing around the restaurant, my wife amongst them! I could hardly believe my eyes. The tragedy of the whole thing was that none of us had brought a camera with us so I was unable to capture the scene as evidence. And the look on the ex-Storekeeper's face was a picture in itself!

We arrived back at the hotel at the same time as others from our party from their chosen venue and some of the ladies were still breathless with laughter having been entertained all evening with relentless tales from the Great Dane. And a great time was had by all; talk about Jack ashore, it just goes to show that you never grow out of it.



On the Sunday the party visited Cochem on the River Mosel, spending three hours exploring the historic, medieval old town, now a major tourist destination.

After another hearty breakfast and another tour around the road-works we enjoyed a trip through the winelands of the Moselle region before fetching up at the picturesque town of Cochem. Not too "touristy", in fact many of those enjoying the town seemed to be local Germans, it being the Sunday of a holiday weekend. With not much sun, and a biting wind, an intrepid few of us still made it across the bridge to view the town from the other side before retreating into one of the many cafés for tea and tab-nabs.

Back at the hotel, after sampling the house wine yet again, this time in Doug's room, we decided to eat in as it had started to rain again. Being a Sunday there was no restaurant service but good food was available in the bar. The poor bar-man and his assistant found them selves not only watering twenty-four thirsty Brits and one Great Dane but feeding them as well.

On Monday, Boppard, another attractive historical town, this time on the Rhine, was visited. All members then opted for an hour and twenty minute cruise up river to St. Goar, just below the Loreley rock, before meeting the coach there for the return to Cologne.

As we left Cologne that morning we were amused to see another coach in the same place and in the same predicament that we had been, trying to extract itself into the traffic. Another Sat-Nav misdirection no doubt.

Boppard, another Roman, originally Celtic, town, and steeped in history, was just beginning to stir when we arrived at 1130, giving us an hour and a half to explore before our boat trip, on the appropriately named "Loreley". Most members had lunch on board in the saloon as we passed the various turreted and spired fairy-tale castles – it was too brisk to stay for long on the open top deck. The vessel called briefly at the various landing stages on both sides of the river: stop – passengers off – passengers on – away, with true Teutonic efficiency; that is, until we got to our destination. Now, we had been told it was to be a one hour and twenty minute boat ride and we had set off from Boppard at 1300. At 1415 we had left St. Goarshausen on the opposite bank to St. Goar and at 1419 we were approaching the landing stage there when it became apparent that not all of our party was mustered and ready to disembark. Two of the ladies were missing! Their husbands and the Boatsteerer set off in search and they were located in the ladies powder room. Lionel claims that when he found them there he was dragged in too but this is probably wishful thinking on his part. The result of this tardiness was that at St. Goar the Captain of the "Loreley" would have had to amend his log entry to:- stop – some passengers off – passengers on – stragglers from Das Engländer Cachalots party off – away. Naming no names, but I think that Alwyn and Rosemary should be ashamed that they caused that poor Captain to run two minutes late for the rest of the day.

We had just over an hour to look round St. Goar before rejoining our coach at 1530, just as it started to rain.

That evening a "Club Supper" had been arranged in the Hotel's restaurant and this was greatly enjoyed by all hands.

Our Boatsteerer had negotiated with the hotel to provide a special menu for our party with a discount on the house wine (we actually observed the staff decanting the by now familiar bottles into the carafes for the tables). Despite it being a Bank Holiday – still observed most rigorously in Germany – and therefore short on staff, the hotel looked after us splendidly and we were all well pleased. After the Loyal Toast, a vote of thanks was given to the Boatsteerer and the Storekeeper for their efforts on our behalf and Lionel then thanked my wife Meryl for putting up with the company of himself and Doug over the long weekend, (more like a buffer at times, but what would we do without them?).

On the return trip home a two hour visit to Bruges was fitted in before a final stop at a beer and wine outlet and the sea-crossing, this time with P&O.

After checking out, following breakfast, we found that the hotel had been most generous to us in its accounting of our drinking

habits and, having satisfied myself that nobody else had been charged in my stead, I decided that I would have to live with my conscience. On the coach, Lionel, following up his thanks of the previous evening, presented Meryl with single yellow rose, the old smoothie, but his reputation was then slightly tarnished when he admitted that he had lifted it from a breakfast tray left outside a fellow guest's room.

Our visit to Bruges was just

long enough to grab a bite to eat and select from the tempting array of chocolates, cakes and other goodies on offer in every shop, it seemed. On departure, an executive decision was made to cut out the intended visit to a chocolate "factory" and to concentrate on more essential commodities, i.e. booze. This was achieved in good time and we were able to secure passage on the "Pride of Dover" at 1730, an earlier sailing than the one booked, arriving back in Southampton at around 2100. All in all, a most enjoyable trip and not too rushed. The weather could have been kinder, but then couldn't it always, and we didn't actually get rained on to any degree when we were out and about. An excellent coach, an excellent hotel and excellent company in the shape of fellow Cachalots. What more could you want?

The Entertainments Committee is considering a coach/ferry excursion to Copenhagen in 2007. The coach would leave from Southampton and travel to Harwich where it would board the overnight ferry to Esbjerg. There would be two nights in a central hotel and then another overnight ferry voyage back to Harwich. The cost would be in the region of £300 and before proceeding further we would appreciate hearing, without any obligation at this stage, if there are sufficient members interested to make the project worthwhile. Please let the Boatsteerer or Storekeeper know if you are likely to be interested.



Cochem and its Castle

Here is another extract from "The Unforgiving Minute", the private memoirs of Stowaway, Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles. These recollections concern Shanghai and the Yangtse River and I suppose I really ought to have printed these before the ones about Wei-Hai-Wei in the last edition..

SHANGHAI

This enormous city was usually our first port of call on the way north. Shanghai was divided into various international "Concessions". There was a very large British business community. The river was crowded with shipping of every sort and description, and every nationality. It was also the base for about a dozen Yangtse gunboats of the Royal Navy whose task was to protect the large number of British owned ships which traded up the river, as far as Hankow and above.

The gunboats, which all bore the names of insects (Bee, Scarab, Ladybird, etc) were extraordinary old-fashioned (1915) ships. Very small, very flat, very shallow draft and with only two officers and about 40 men. They had one single 6" gun, but this was sufficient to give them enormous influence over the local Warlords up river. One must remember that China really had no effective central government in those days.

These ships used to go 1,000 miles and more up-river, on their own for many weeks at a time. The Yangtse can rise or fall perhaps 80 feet overnight, so that the gunboats could be steaming along on the King's business one day and high and dry in a paddy field the next. When the ships were at anchor at night one of the duties of the watchkeeper was to have a large bamboo pole, and when his nostrils informed him that a body was caught up on the cable, he had to go forward and dislodge it.

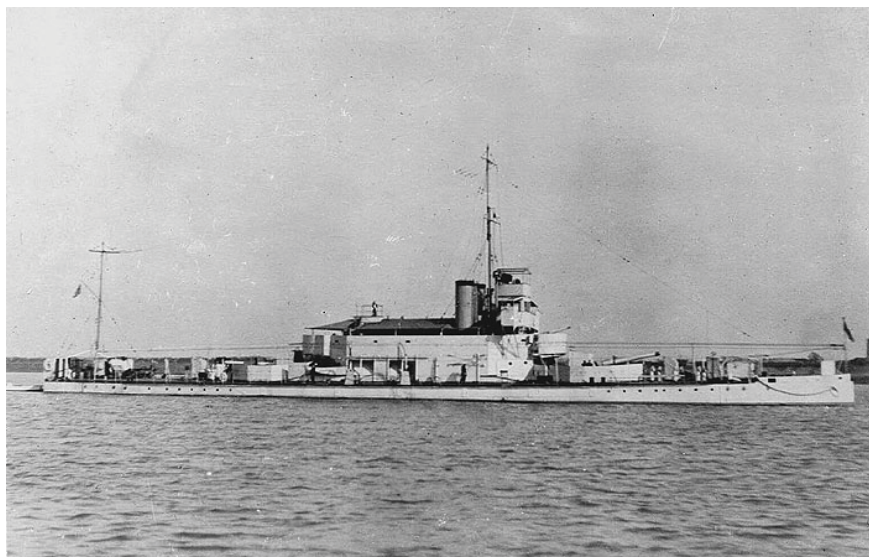


Photo: historicalphoto.org

HMS Ladybird in 1917

In time of spate whole villages with dead men, women, babies and pigs etc. would come floating down the river. At times the current through the gorges with their high stony cliffs was so strong that the gunboats could not get through. In this event the ship would drop back down-stream to the nearest village: In the morning hundreds of Chinese would gather with an enormous long rope made of plaited bamboo. There were galleries carved in the rock face from time immemorial, and the men would spread out along the gallery and attempt to tow the ship through, with her engines simultaneously going full speed ahead. If this was successful the ship would stop at the next village up-stream and each man would receive one silver dollar - fantastic wealth; But if the ship did not get through, they got nothing - a typical logical Chinese arrangement.

These gunboats were under the command of "RAY" (Rear Admiral Yangtse). When we were there the incumbent was a rather enthusiastic bachelor. Shanghai was what might be called the "whoopie city" of all history - just fantastic. The story told about RAY was that one day one of the young commanding officers put his ship in for a refit and then asked for leave. The Admiral barked "What do you want leave for?" "Well Sir, I was going to go home and, er, get married Sir, and, er, bring my wife back here Sir". The Admiral glared at him and said "Good God, boy, would you go the Lord Mayor's Banquet and take a ham sandwich with you?"

Note: About 50 years later I told this story in a speech at a banquet in the Mansion House in London. In his reply the Lord Mayor (Sir Anthony Joliffe) started his speech "My Lords, Ham-sandwiches and Gentlemen"....!

We Midshipmen worked very hard on board, we played a lot of organised games ashore, being only allowed "late leave" until 10 p.m. once a week. So our contact with the wicked city consisted mostly of going to the innumerable cabarets, to have supper and dance with the "Taxi Dancers". The drill was to buy a book of tickets and then present the tickets one at a time to the girl of one's choice in exchange for a short dance.

In HMS Cumberland Gun Room our favourite cabaret was "Le Perroquet". The girls were of many races. Lots were Chinese

and lots were Eurasian and in Shanghai some of them were White Russians. Remember, this was only about 15 years after the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow. Many of the Russian aristocrats and officers had escaped, some to Europe and some to the Far East. These refugees' daughters had to earn their living as best they could. We liked to imagine that many of our dancing partners were "princesses". In fact the Russian girls were very nice and some were quite extraordinarily beautiful.

We all used to queue up to dance with Nina, a lovely tall blonde girl who was several years older than us. Long afterwards I heard that Nina had married the captain of a huge American Dollar Line passenger ship; so that was a happy ending as far as she was concerned.

This was all rather harmless - but there was of course a very seamy side to this huge and astonishingly cosmopolitan city. One day I was in charge of the motor boat collecting the officers who had gone ashore earlier in the evening. While the boat was waiting alongside the bund, an overdressed young girl with very high heels walked along the jetty and said to us "Excuse me, is Stoker Maxie Rowe on board?" I was about to put my head into the engine room and say cheerfully "Stokes, there's a friend of yours here". But Leading Seaman Pitman, standing beside me, older and more experienced than me, got in first. He said to the girl "No Miss, I'm sorry Miss. Stoker Maxie Rowe is on duty in the ship today. He won't be able to get ashore today Miss". As she went away I looked into the engine room and there, hiding flat on the floorboards, behind the engine box, was Stoker Maxie Rowe!

Another time in Shanghai I was driving the ship's pinnace, a large open boat. I was collecting the liberty men who had had all-night leave and were returning on board at 7 a.m. I had about 70 liberty men in the boat. At the ship's gangway they all climbed up. We knew how they worked it - if anyone was still a bit drunk, his friends would stand shoulder to shoulder on each side of him to stop him swaying about while being inspected by the Officer of the Watch. One of the last up the gangway was a young Ordinary Seaman who seemed absolutely grey with exhaustion. The Leading Seaman standing beside me in the boat said to me gravely "Look at him, Sir -look at the poor fellow. Lipstick all over his hat". There were, in fact, dreadful purple smears on his white uniform cap.

A dreadful aspect of Shanghai which I remember was when the ship was moved overnight to Hays Wharf, a dockland area. On the jetty here were a large number of "street children". They were clad in rags, their hair had never been cut, and they lived just like dogs. At night they would curl up on the pavements to sleep. To earn a few cents they would put on the most extraordinary juggling performances. But if one of our sailors went to throw away a bag of gash - scraps of food, etc, these children would rush over and fight one another even for cabbage stalks.

The density of shipping in the river at Shanghai was extraordinary. Liners, merchant ships, warships of all nations - Japanese, American, French, Portuguese, and innumerable local trading junks and sampans. One morning a small Chinese coaster came round the bend, ran off her helm and hit us a resounding bash on our fo'c'sle. Luckily our anchor took most of the blow and the coaster backed off - her captain grinning all over his face - and then went on up-river.

Running ships' boats day and night in all this traffic and with very strong tides, was an exhilarating business and I suppose "taught us our trade" a bit.

Altogether we were sorry to leave Shanghai and go on north to Wei-Hai-Wei.

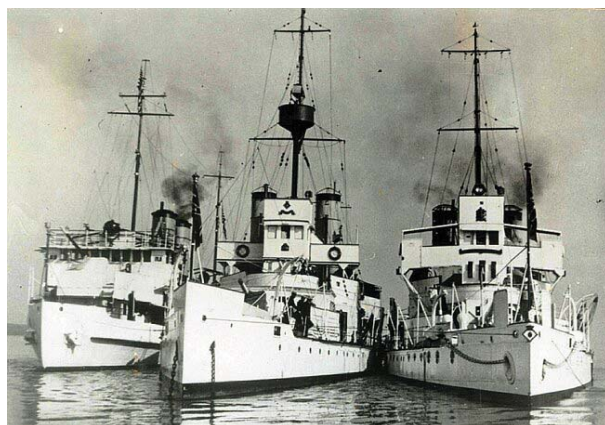


Photo: historicalphoto.org

USS OAHU, HMS BEE & HMS LADYBIRD
I think this was taken just after the "Panay Incident"

I found these photos of the gunboats that Sir Morgan mentions in his memoirs on a web-site called www.historicalphoto.org but I have since been unable to access the site and hope I am not breaching any copyright laws here.

On December 12, 1937, Ladybird and Bee came under fire from a Japanese artillery unit near Wuhu on the Yangtze. HMS Ladybird took six shells and Bee dodged a shell as she came upon the scene. The Japanese battery commander had simply ignored the White Ensigns on the ships and blasted everything in sight. As the engagement ensued, the British Consul from Nanking left the Ladybird and, under fire, rowed ashore. He walked into the battery commanders headquarters, dragged the commander to his guns and made him order them to stop. Later that morning what has come to be known as the "Panay Incident" occurred. USS Panay had been escorting ships some 20 miles down river from the aforementioned event when she came under "accidental" attack by Japanese aircraft. Heavily damaged, the Panay sank about an hour later. Ladybird and Bee were first on the scene to rescue survivors.

This information comes from another web-site: www.hmsfalcon.com where you can find lots more information about the Yangtze River gunboats and over 400 fascinating photographs from those times as well as some video clips of the actual Panay bombing and rescue of the survivors. Ed.

The Voyage of Vengeance.

The recent report of the brutal killing of the double agent, Denis Donaldson, in County Donegal gave rise to a great deal of speculation in the Irish and United Kingdom press. The revelation that Donaldson, the Head of Administration for Sinn Féin, had been on the payroll of British intelligence for some 20 years infuriated many Republicans and it was almost inevitable that, once his whereabouts were known retribution was bound to follow.

It is a sad truth that Irish history –particularly the history of “The Troubles” – often repeats itself and the more one read about the fate of Mr.Donaldson the greater recall one had of events some 124 years earlier.

In 1882, the struggle for Irish independence was in a particularly brutal phase and in May of that year the world was shocked to read of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Chief Secretary for Ireland and Mr. Thomas Burke, the Under-Secretary.

Both men were walking in the tranquil surroundings of Dublin’s Phoenix Park when they were attacked by a group of men, armed with knives, and, in full view of many Dubliners enjoying the evening sun, stabbed repeatedly. Fortunately, a plain clothes policeman recognised one member of the gang and it soon became obvious that all were members of a notorious group called the “Invincibles” – a Republican splinter group.

Events moved slowly but in January of 1883 six men were arrested and charged with the murder of the two men. One of the five, a man called Carey, turned “Queen’s Evidence” and, as a result of his testimony, his five co-conspirators were convicted and publicly executed by hanging. Carey was a marked man and the “Invincibles” swore to take their revenge on him and his family.

The English authorities moved quickly to protect their valuable informant and it was decided to send the Carey family to South Africa where they could begin a new life.

In conditions of great secrecy, Carey, his wife and six children fled Ireland and, a few days later they embarked on the Castle Line’s “Kinfauns Castle” bound for Port Elizabeth.

This was an era in Ireland when secrets were hard to keep and, not surprisingly, the “Invincibles” network had informants at many levels of government administration. Scarcely had the travel arrangements for the Carey family been finalised before the terrorist organisation made arrangements for one of their members, a man called Patrick O’Donnell, to join the same ship. Carey did not know O’Donnell and the two soon became friendly and spent many hours together drinking and playing cards.

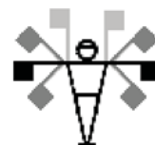
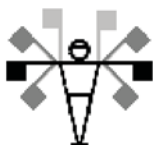
In those days coastal passengers transferred to coasting vessels at Cape Town and, on Saturday, July 28th. 1883, the Castle Line coaster “Melrose” left Cape Town for Algoa Bay with Carey and O’Donnell sharing a cabin.

On Sunday, July 29th. “Melrose” was off Cape St.Blaize and many of her passengers were enjoying an afternoon sleep. On the ship’s bridge the Second Officer, Mr. Becher, was taking a compass bearing when he was startled to hear the sound of a gunshot – followed, almost immediately, by two more. Leaving the quartermaster on the wheel, Becher immediately rushed to the Second Class Saloon where he found O’Donnell with a revolver- and an obviously-dead Carey.

O’Donnell put up no resistance and he was immediately placed in irons and locked in an adjoining bathroom pending the ship’s arrival at Port Elizabeth where he was handed over to the authorities – and subsequently repatriated to England where he stood trial at The Old Bailey. Second Officer Becher was the chief witness at the trial and, having been found guilty of murder, O’Donnell was executed a few days before Christmas.

There has long been conjecture as to why O’Donnell chose to carry out the execution in the way that he did. On the long passage from England to South Africa there must have been numerous opportunities for him to have knocked Carey unconscious and thrown him overboard –perhaps after late night drinking sessions when few other passengers were around and risk of detection was extremely low. By shooting his victim in broad daylight –and remaining at the scene of the crime – O’Donnell must have known that he was virtually committing suicide. There have been many discussions about his actions and the only plausible reason given is that he wanted to be acknowledged as a “hero” of the great struggle for independence and had he chosen the easier option he would have remained unrecognised.

Mr.Becher was promoted to Master very shortly afterwards and continued to serve with the Castle Line up to, and beyond, March 8th. 1900 when the two rival companies, The Union Line and The Castle Line merged to form The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company Limited.



Many thanks to those who responded to my plea for technical help in my *Cachalot by email* article in the last edition. Basically, from what I can gather, it would seem that my PagePlus program is designed to produce a finished article ready for quality printing and the PDF file produced is therefore heavy with the information required by today's professional printer. A lot of this information is surplus to the requirements needed to reproduce the same article on a screen or to transmit it over the internet so the file can be a lot smaller. Adobe Acrobat can produce such computer friendly PDF files and I ought to clarify what I said about it last time.



Adobe Acrobat is a DTP program that costs several hundred pounds. Adobe Acrobat Reader is the freely available program that enables us to read the PDF files that Acrobat produces but is unable to write or edit them itself. The full Acrobat program will take the file produced by PagePlus and turn out the e-mail friendly PDF version which we can then send to you. I don't have that program but a man who does is Cachalot Paul Davies who has volunteered to do the necessary for me so that those up-to-date, computer literate, web-surfing Cachalots who responded to my offer can receive their e-edition, all four of them!



Yes, it would seem that the rest of you are still stuck in the days of Morse Code and semaphore but, nothing daunted, the forces of modernisation march relentlessly on!



To this end, Cachalot Clive Robinson and his company, C Data Services Limited, have come on board with a generous offer to host a new web-site for the club. When it is launched you will be able to access it at:



www.cachalots.org.uk

With the help of Clive Robinson and Paul Davies we hope to have this new site up and running in June and it will hopefully detail the Club's news, activities etc., as well as having the current and past editions of the Cachalot available. Because this is a private club, many of the pages will only be accessible to paid up Cachalots, by means of yet another of those forgettable passwords. Sorry, but it's the only reasonably safe way to do it.



In conjunction with the new site the Club's e-mail address has now changed to:

office@cachalots.org.uk

You can see the potential here; I, no doubt, will become editor@ etc and the officers of the Club likewise; Captain@ etc.etc. And if you would like to have your own Cachalot e-mail address instead of one of those lengthy, incomprehensible and instantly forgettable ones offered by the big Service Providers, for around the same as you pay them, or perhaps just a little more, you can be yourname@cachalots.org.uk and help support the Club financially as well.



Have no fear – the old e-mail address still works and will for a while until the changeover is fully implemented (in fact at present, e-mails to the new address are merely being forwarded to the old one so all messages sent out by the Club will still be from the old address). However, when the Club has moved to its new premises we will be acquiring broadband, and with it changing our e-mail account. It would therefore be wise to change your address books to the new one by the end of June, although we will remind all those members with their e-mail addresses currently in the Club's address book before the old account is closed down.



Further details as and when we get settled into our new premises and get connected to the necessary broadband facilities.



The Way Ahead?

Commercial shipping is slowly coming to terms with the realisation that a seafaring career is no longer attractive to young people of the quality required to manage the complex ships of today – and that those who are prepared to endure the rigours and deprivation of life at sea expect to be very adequately compensated in terms of salary and conditions. Add the escalating costs of fuel and the need for economies is clear.

In a recent address to the Royal Institute of Navigation, Transport Minister Dr Stephen Ladyman referred to the “ever-evolving shipboard equipment, systems and practices necessitating new training requirements”. His address centred on the theme of developing “e-navigation” (including innovations such as Automatic Identification and Electronic Chart Display systems) and he concluded by saying “I believe we are sitting on an historic opportunity, one that must be seized now or we will live to regret it” Dr. Ladyman did not, however, mention the “unmanned ship”.

Some 82 years ago one of the most famous nautical magazines published a poem entitled “A Forecast - The Crewless Wireless Craft”. Part of it reads:

Electric power invisible, compact, its force expended,
In recent years its generous help to floating homes extended,
But now, (we speak in time not yet, prophetic is our vision)
The crewless, wireless ship we view (waste not your swift derision).

It is doubtful if the anonymous author would have won many prizes for his or her poetic offering and, in 1924 the concept of the Unmanned Ship must have seemed too far-fetched for serious consideration, but it took a scant 60 years for the prophesy to be fulfilled. In the early 80's when domestic manning costs were soaring Japanese ship-owners commissioned a study into the unmanned ship and five years later a 20,000 ton bulk carrier entered service designed and equipped to undertake the first “remote control” voyage. The initial concept envisaged a fleet of unmanned cargo vessels under the remote control of a manned command ship. On departure and arrival the ships mooring lines would be handled by crew members –disembarked and embarked by launch or helicopter – but, for the long ocean passage, each ship would be unmanned.

The trial ship successfully completed a voyage across the Pacific Ocean – from Japan to the West Coast of the United States –monitored throughout by her command ship.

The latter controlled the speed, navigation and collision avoidance manoeuvres of the robot ship and, on arrival at the destination port the experiment was deemed to be extremely successful. The cost of the technology was high, and this coupled with an amelioration of the manning problem, saw the blueprints stored away for the future.

More recently, the advent of the internet and the reducing costs of technology sent the technicians back to the cupboard where their earlier plans were stored and, in early 2005, a major Japanese yard unveiled plans for its unmanned ship controlled through the internet.

The yard developed two interdependent systems – one an integrated navigation system and the other a ship control system. The first is intended to maximise operational safety and economic efficiency. A satellite sends routing (and weather) information to ensure safe passage to an onboard electronic chart and engine control system and monitors collision avoidance manoeuvres whilst the integrated Control System continuously monitors the operational condition of the complex systems throughout the vessel. Satellite communications allow the ship operator to control the progress of the voyage from within the comfort of the office and this means that the additional costs of the manned command ship – as envisaged in the earlier experiment – will no longer be incurred.

Advances in electronics, computers, satellite navigation systems and communication systems allow today's office-bound “master” even greater and more precise control of his seafaring command. Undoubtedly, the day is not far off when the unmanned freight carrying ship will become a reality but it is a certainty that vessels carrying passengers (seaborne hotels) will always be manned. Despite these advances, in a seafaring environment the human brain has the ability to predict and sense developing problems in a way that technology cannot. Piracy and terrorism are important considerations and, of course, the legal standing of the unmanned ship has yet to be clearly determined. Is the vessel a “derelict” and fair game to be taken as salvage by the first person audacious enough to put her standing to the test?

Despite these concerns there are reports that the designers have been granted “certification” by some of the major Ship Classification Societies so those august bodies must accept that the idea is practical, safe and marketable.

Our anonymous poet ended with the lines:

So here we have the future ship, unsinkable we deem her,
No longer need we navigate with paddle, sail or steamer.

In 1924 that was a very brave prediction and today it would be an equally brave person who says “It will never catch on”.

Rope Ends

The Revd Bill McCrea has recently retired from his position as BISS Port Chaplain in Southampton and his cheerful countenance will be missed on the ships and around the port. Bill was also one of the Club's Honorary Chaplains and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

We welcome the Revd Frans Sahetapy,
who is Bill's replacement.

"We would like to say a big thank you to all those who have purchased extra tickets for the "250" Club. It will go a long way towards the additional costs incurred in our move to the Southampton Seafarers' Centre, and we sincerely hope that you will continue to support the "250" club in future years. It would be interesting to hear readers' comments as to whether it would be a better idea to increase annual subscriptions rather than relying on the "250" club to help pay our running expenses."

You may remember my piece in the December edition about some filming we did on the *Shieldhall* back in October. I was pleased to see that it featured in the first of a two part docu-reality programme called *Ocean Odyssey* on BBC 1. The programme detailed the life of a sperm whale and the shots of the *Shieldhall* came out very well although one had to suspend belief a bit to see her as an Atlantic cable ship.

The closing of the last dry-dock in Southampton has caused some problems for the *Shieldhall* and she will now be going down to Falmouth at the beginning of July for her docking. Fortunately there is a Tall Ships event at Dartmouth when she comes out so she will be able to recoup some of the expenses.

Such extended trips put a strain on the manning requirements when compared to a normal day trip locally and we are in need of additional Navigating Officers. If you hold a current certificate and Eng 1 and would like to be involved please contact Peter Tambling or myself *Ed.*

UNUSUAL PASSENGERS:

On one homeward voyage in ORMONDE we received a message to divert to the Cocos Islands, a group of Islands between Fremantle and Colombo, and embark Mr John Clunies Ross (who's family had 'owned' the islands for many generations), who was coming to the UK to get married and a seaplane sent from Singapore to collect him had been unable to land on the lagoon because of gale force wind and rain.

The word went round the ship that 'The King of the Cocos Islands would be joining us at 0530 the next morning at which there were a dozen or so passengers waiting to see what they could, amongst these was a lad about 5 or 6 years old with his mum, both very cockney and so presumably returning emigrants.

The 'F ' deck gunport door was opened and, although the lee door, it was most unpleasant outside, a small motor launch passed by quite close and a travel bag was heaved in, the launch came round again, closer this time and a very wet man, dressed only in a shirt and shorts hurled himself in though the door on all fours, the cockney lad saying ' E aint a king, he aint got a crarn on, he aint even got any shoes on'



Admiral Sir Anthony Morton, GBE, KCB

Stowaway Sir Anthony Morton died on May 6, aged 82.

His final appointment, from 1980 –1983, as the UK's Military Representative on Nato's Military Committee in Brussels, was recognition of a brilliant career at sea and ashore in a variety of senior policy-forming staff posts. Known for his forceful advocacy, Morton was well equipped to set out the British position in this top-level international forum with its important role in managing an effective defence policy that would also be acceptable to 15 individual Nato nations.

Promoted to rear-admiral in 1971, Morton was the senior naval instructor at the Royal College of Defence Studies in Belgrave Square before being appointed to his first influential Ministry of Defence post as Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Policy). In 1975, as a vice- admiral, his last seagoing tour was as Flag Officer First Flotilla, responsible for the fighting efficiency and administration of some 40 warships, a job which took him in various flagships to the North Atlantic, Mediterranean, Black Sea and Indian Ocean.

Sir Anthony was a regular visitor to the Southampton Master Mariners' Club with a penchant for the Sea Pie Supper where he would swing the lamp until the small hours. He was appointed to be a Stowaway Member in 1994.

Captain Nigel Hunt, BSc FNI

Captain Nigel Hunt, who was a Harpooner of the Club and well known in the maritime world, both Nationally and Internationally, died suddenly on 19th May while engaged on survey work in Mombasa.

After attending the School of Navigation at Warsash he spent 22 years at sea, finally enjoying two years in command, before accepting the role of Harbour Master and Chief Executive at Yarmouth. Nigel next opted to accept the challenge of returning to his alma mater and spent nine years at the Warsash Maritime Centre working with the full mission ships bridge simulators and manned model ships on the lake at Marchwood. During this time Nigel was leader of project teams carrying out port development work for numerous ports globally. He also carried out a number of high profile casualty investigations. Nigel worked on several projects for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Cyprus Bureau of Shipping, the UK Ministry of Defence and the UK Salvage Organisation. He was a Younger Brother of Trinity House and Chairman of the Nautical Institute Papers and Technical Committee.

In 2003 Nigel took the bold step to establish Hunt Marine Services Ltd. and enjoyed international success. His busy lifestyle did not prevent him visiting the Club whenever he was in the UK and notwithstanding, he accepted the challenge of Harpooner for 2006.

He is survived by his wife Avis, who you will know as Boatsteerer's Assistant, and two daughters, to whom we offer our deepest sympathies.

Boatsteerer.

The Club is currently 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.

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:

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Dates for your Diary

Tue	JUN	13	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	24	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
Sat	JAN	20	Burns Supper, King's Court

NEW CACHALOTS

David Evans

Colin Thomas

Peter Sara

Gone Aloft

**Admiral Sir Anthony Morton
H.J. Gulliver
N.W. Hunt**