

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.21

September 2006

Captain's Log

The year continues to be eventful with, as you would expect a mixture of good and bad news.

The good news is – that we have signed a tenancy agreement for new club and office premises on the first floor of the Southampton Seafarers Centre (SCC) at 12-14 Queens Terrace, with the Missions to Seafarers Trust Ltd. The premises consist of an office, a clubroom, a meeting room and a library, all with views across the park to Southampton docks. This maritime environment is further enhanced by being situated directly above the SCC which will, in the longer term, enable both of us to benefit from the synergies that exist between two of Southampton's older and well respected maritime institutions.

We moved during a three week period in July and our thanks must go to Archie at the Royal British Legion for allowing us to continue to use the Eastgate Street clubroom during that period and also to John Hughes and Colin Dorrington at the SCC for their assistance in extending their bar licence to cover ours, modifying the existing dumb waiter to be suitable for supplying us with food from their kitchens, getting HF&RS approval for fire prevention and H&S requirements all integrated into a single risk assessment.

As you may imagine, the conversion of a solicitors office of some years to the clubroom that we now have did not just 'happen' and all of us owe our thanks to the highly flexible, resourceful, multi-skilled and dedicated team of members, harpooners, past captains and officers, who turned their considerable talents to:-

Wire stripping, office removals, communications and office administration, washing down paintwork and windows, painting, purchasing and constructing tables, chair and carpet cleaning, bar decoration, laminated floor purchasing and laying, shelf buying and construction and display cabinet building and construction – to name but a few. Your Captain paid off sick in the middle of all of this and my thanks go to Peter Marriott for taking over the controls, even though Janet his wife was in hospital too. I am glad to say that both of us are making steady recoveries. To the team, who know who they all were, very many thanks on behalf of all the Cachalots, the end result speaks far more eloquently than I of your efforts.

For those of you that have not been able to visit the new club yet, the photographs in this edition will give you some idea and we hope to see you all in the not too distant future.

The bad news is – that Neville Hall died on the 1st August after a year-long battle with Motor Neurones disease. He died peacefully at home with his family. His professional colleagues, Cachalots and friends will miss his lively sense of humour, caring nature and the many interesting conversations that we had based upon years of experience within different facets of the industry. Our thoughts and condolences are with Miranda, Melanie and Matthew. You will always be welcome at the club and, as a member Matthew, if your future allows, hopefully you may wish to pick up where your dad has left off.

George Angas

Latest

From the Staff Captain

At the time of writing this, we are not fully "operational" because we are still awaiting the issuing of the licence to permit us to sell alcohol. This is through no fault of our own or the SSC management who are arranging it. At the 11th hour the authorities decided, after checking new building safety regulations, that alterations to fire escapes, roof lights and substantial internal changes would be needed before a licence could be issued. However, the management of SSC worked hard on our behalf and it seems that as the Club will have probably no more than 50 or so people in it at any one time they can apply for permission under a less punishing set of safety regulations. This they have done and the minor changes will be put in hand very quickly and we hope that the licence will then be issued without further delay.

There is also still a problem with catering arrangements. It has always been the intention that the needs of our members would be fulfilled by the SSC kitchen. This means that food orders will have to be passed down to the SSC staff on duty (one floor below) and then when they are ready, the Club informed, and then the food transported up to the club room. There are plans being looked into to try and simplify this arrangement. In the meantime it has been decided that the Club will provide a selection of freshly made sandwiches and the usual bar snacks (crisps, nuts etc) for sale, while keeping the matter under review with the intention of making this just a short term arrangement. Because of current environmental health and food regulations it is not possible for the Club to provide anything grander than this.

So do come and use the new club rooms, we are sure that you will be very pleasantly surprised at what has been achieved. The Club is open for business from 11.30 am to 2.30 pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Peter Marriott 29/8/06

Return to The Southampton Seafarers' Centre

You will remember that we were previously at the Southampton Seafarers' Centre in Orchard Place but that building has now been demolished and redeveloped as luxury apartments. The building just along the road that was known as the Missions to Seafarers is now designated as the SSC and that is where we are at.

Access is not from within the SSC itself but just along the road towards the new traffic lights at Latimer Street you will see another set of four steps leading up to our entrance. The door here is electronically controlled from the office and the button to summon attention is the second one down on the adjacent intercom device. A muffled but hopefully respectful voice will demand your identification and if you can make yourself heard above the sound of the passing traffic they will press the button to release the catch and you should be able to push the right hand door open. There is a buzzing sound to indicate when the catch is open. Please remember that the inboard intercom is situated on the outer wall of the office and it may take a few seconds for someone to reach it and respond. Hopefully, if funds permit, we will in the future be able to install a card operated system similar to the one at the RBL.

Once inside, go up the stairs and at the first landing you will see a door in front of you with the legend:- "Warning, This Door is Alarmed". You needn't be, it's only the office but it is, of course, sacrosanct. Instead, go through the double doors on the right, into a corridor and the entrance to the main Club room is immediately on the left. At the end of the corridor the Gents toilet is situated to the right. The Ladies toilet is situated on the second floor, as are the offices of the building's two other tenants.



The Club Room

The Committee/Meetings room is at the end , on the left and the Library/Quiet Room right.

It will come as no surprise to those of you who have ever been foolish enough to become involved in such endeavours that there have been a few "hiccups " in our plans along the way. I reproduce here two articles from Capt. Kelso, written a few weeks apart, that indicate the "fluidity" of our progress to date.

A SURVIVAL STRATEGY

On Friday, July 28th. –despite the massive traffic chaos on the approaches to the city – a cross-section of Club members (including the Captain - and Storekeepers past and present) mustered to have a farewell drink in our clubroom at the Royal British Legion. Joined by Archie, The Legion's secretary, we expressed out thanks for the hospitality extended to us over the past year, drank the health of the Royal British Legion, unscrewed pictures and fittings from the bulkheads and took our leave of Eastgate Street.

Hopefully, by the time you read this we will have settled into our new Clubroom above the Southampton Seafarers' Centre –plans are afoot to move in on Friday, August 4th., although we accept that there may still be work to be done. It has proved impossible to progress the fitting of a stair lift until we are actually in occupation and this is now being actively pursued.

Many people have put in many hours of hard work to "move" the administration office and clubroom from Eastgate Street to Queens Terrace. The paperwork associated with the move has been horrendously time-consuming but the dogged perseverance of the Club's officers and volunteers has carried the day and all the legislative requirements seem to have been met – and the bar stocked!

We think you will be pleased with the final result. There IS more to be done so do not judge us too harshly – every week will see an improvement.

The move has drained our reserves to a much greater extent than we had bargained for. Legal costs and the cost of meeting the health and safety Inspector's dictates were greater than we had budgeted for. We decided to erect a rather more attractive bar than the one we first planned. The configuration of the staircase means that the stairlift will be much more costly than we envisaged. Club volunteers painted the room and cleaned the carpets and blinds at minimal cost. We were compelled to fit an emergency lighting system; that was expensive.

And so we move into our new premises with just about enough in the bank to keep our head above water for the first couple of years. We are well aware that in the year ahead we will be called upon ***to spend more than we earn*** but we are very optimistic that the attractive new premises will lead to an increase in the membership and increased income leading eventually to financial tranquillity!

The earlier appeal for greater participation in the "250" Club has met with considerable success but we make no apology for asking those club members who did not respond to that appeal to do so NOW.

Shares cost £5.00 each, membership of the "250" Club is for one year from the date of your contribution and entitles you to participate in 11 monthly draws with a prize of £40.00 and a December draw with a prize of £100.00. Currently, most participants contribute an average of £20.00 annually – and if ALL our 460 members did so our financial problems would be over!

PLEASE – SEND YOUR CHEQUE FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO:

The Southampton Master Mariners Club,
Southampton Seafarers' Centre,

12-14 Queens Terrace, Southampton SO14 3BP
And write "250 Club" on the back of your cheque.

We have not increased our subscriptions for many years and we do not wish to do so. By joining the "250" Club you can help us to continue with this policy.
CRK 30/7/06

THE NEW CLUBROOM.

JUST when you think that nothing more can go wrong, sometimes fate conspires to unearth a hitherto unknown hazard – and the rest is history.

That, indeed, is the story of the delayed opening of our new Clubroom. In late July we were quietly confident that in a matter of days we would be admiring the view over Queen's Park (through the windows so lovingly cleaned by Meryl Clark) as we sipped a modest glass of amber liquid and admired the handiwork of the myriad volunteers whose hard work has resulted in Club premises akin to those of Royal Mail House.

Then, someone, somewhere unearthed a pending statute from the EU rulebook and everything relating to the extension of the liquor licence ground to a halt. We HAD the bottles, we HAD the glasses, Liz was ready and willing to utilise both but the unbending body of officialdom said "Not yet".

And so, the days passed and – much as we enjoyed the hospitality of the Southampton Seafarers' Centre – frustration took over. Understandably, many of you asked "When WILL it be sorted out?" and THAT was the one question that nobody could answer. In truth we could have "moved in" at any time but bar sales would have been "soft drinks only" and we felt that that was too much to ask of our members!

Today – the last Friday in August – there are firm grounds for optimism and, in fact, both yesterday and today have seen the attendance of many "regulars" whose faith was amply rewarded! Unfortunately, due to circumstances entirely beyond our control no food was available in the Clubroom (although a trip downstairs assuaged the hunger of some) but – as I write – we are quietly confident – yes, AGAIN, that we can overcome that problem in the very near future and, by the time you read this, a more normal service will have been resumed (as British Rail used to say). To facilitate catering our landlords must re-position the "dumb waiter" that serves the Clubroom and this is proving to be more difficult than they originally envisaged. They assure us that they are "working on it" and that success will ensue.

Everyone who has seen the new premises has expressed their delight at what has been achieved by the happy band of volunteers who have given so much of their time and effort to afford us a Clubroom to be truly proud of. Slowly but surely we are recovering our long lost treasures and soon all of them will again be on display.

Space does not allow a mention of the names of those who answered the call for painters, varnishers, picture hangers, flat pack assemblers, cleaners, computer manipulators, flooring layers, plaque fasteners and other skills too numerous to mention but I sincerely hope that they know just how much their efforts are appreciated.

SO – there you have it. YOUR Clubroom is "up and running" – well, almost, and it WILL be better as the days progress.

All that is missing is YOU.

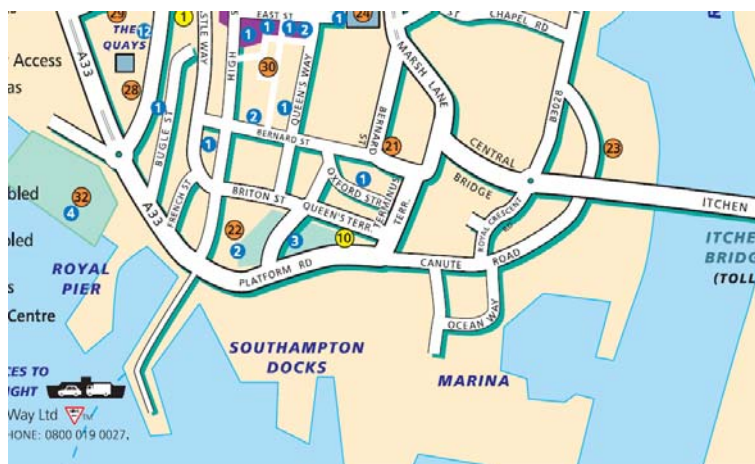
CRK 25/8/06



The bar and looking through to the Library



No, we are not on the ground floor, those vehicles outside are on the top deck of a passing car transporter



Venue	Local Parking		Per Hour
	Min	Max	
College Street (21) (Takes credit/debit cards)	1 hr	7+	80p
Queens Terrace (10)	30min	2 hr	£1.00
Eastgate Street (30) (Pay for what you use)	1 hr		80p
On Street (Blue zone Oxford St, Latimer St.)	30 min	2 hr	£1.40
On Street (Green zone Platform Rd)	1 hr	4 hr	90p
(All pre-pay except Eastgate St.)			

Better Late...

Once the five flat pack bookcases were assembled and fitted in the designated library/quiet room, the books were released from their confining boxes, dusted off and placed in their new home.

At about the same time the Honorary Archivist, also freshly dusted off, arrived clutching an errant volume. "Now that the library is re-instated I can return this book," he chortled, deftly flicking open the borrowers book and filling in the "Date Returned" column with a flourish *and* an exclamation mark.(!) *see below...*

Names of Book	Signature of Borrower	Date Borrowed	Date Returned
THE WAY OF THE GRAND SALOON	M.H. Williams	29.8.96	28.11.96
BLUE FUNNEL LEBEED	—	—	—
HULL DOWN	—	28.11.96	28.1.97
Business in Great Britain	W. Robinson	19.2.97	1.7.98
The Pioneer Story	Jennifer (W.R.)	24.2.97	1.7.98
Lamp and Ball	J.C. (W.R.)	—	1.7.98
Cannons Company	—	18.11.97	9.11.97
Shipping Law	W.H. Roberts	21.3.97	10.8.2006!

That's another 9 years 4 months and 21 days that he has been studying Shipping Law and it will take a computer to work out what the fine should be, compounded over that time.

It is intended that there will be a computer installed in the library (*it is there now but nobody seems to know how to fire it up*) and we can put all the titles and authors on a database and keep a track of all the borrowings and the defaulters with just a few clicks of the keyboard.

I wonder however, if, 9 years and more ago, we had had a computer to record the borrowings from the library and that computer had been stored in a box and shifted about hither and yon, and subjected to dusty and damp conditions, whether that computer would, when switched back on after 9 years, have revealed the dark secrets of the Hon. Archivist? Somehow I doubt it. But the low-tech little red book did!

I suspect that there's a lesson there but you will have to be of a certain age and frame of mind to appreciate it.

Can it be ??

With this issue, No. 21, I will have been editing **The Cachalot** for five years and during that time it has gone from a four page newsletter to a twelve page magazine which seems to be generally well received..

You may have noticed that a lot of the content "goes back a bit" and I think this rightly reflects the memories and recollections of, let us say, a mature membership. However, it is not an editorial policy. I can only work with what I am given and I would like to be able to include some more contemporary contributions so that us old salts can confirm that things aren't as good as they were in "our" day.

At the risk of repeating myself, what I want is anything written by, about or for, Cachalots. I don't want to have to delve into other publications and repeat their stuff just to fill our pages. The internet can be a great source (see page 5) but I want more of your own experiences.

Some of **The Cachalot** is produced in colour but printing costs limit the final edition to black on white. The latest "progress", courtesy of Royal Mail, is that we now have to fold it to avoid swingeing postal increases. Those of you who would prefer their copy unfolded or don't wish to get the iron out every quarter, can opt to receive the e-mail version in its original glorious colour and print it off yourself.

And now ??

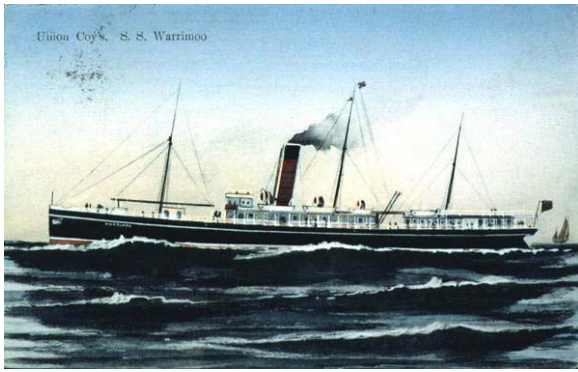
And now, I can reveal, Ta - Raaa, the launch of the good ship **www.cachalots.org.uk**, our new web site.

To coincide with the opening of our new Club rooms and the publication of this edition, the site should be accessible from the 4th September. It has been set up and put together by Cachalots Paul Davies and Clive Robinson and our thanks go to them. At the time of writing I have had a sneak preview and am very pleased with the result and I hope that you will be too. If not, any comments to **paul.davies@cachalots.org.uk**. No, I am not sloping shoulders but Paul has asked that any feedback and comments should go straight to him. In the future I hope to be able to edit the site in conjunction with this magazine. I will just have to go on a course first (I thought I'd finished with all that!).

Hopefully, the site will contain all you need to know about the Club and the News page will bring you up to date with happenings between editions of the mag. Access to some of the future pages will be restricted to Cachalots only, by the use of their own passwords. These pages will include the present and past editions of **The Cachalot** and some of the pictures that the restrictions of space have precluded me from including in the mag.

The Officers and functionaries of the Club have now all been allocated their own Cachalot e-mail addresses and you can find a list on the back page.

Navigating through the Centuries



The passenger steamer SS Warrimoo was quietly knifing its way through the waters of the mid Pacific, on its way from Vancouver to Australia.

The navigator had just finished working out a star fix and brought the master, Captain John Phillips, the results.

The Warrimoo's position was Latitude 0 degrees - 31 minutes North and Longitude 179 degrees - 30 minutes West. The date was the 30 December 1899.

"Know what this means?" first mate Dayldon broke in. "We're only a few miles from the intersection of the Equator and the International Date Line".

Captain Phillips was prankish enough to take full advantage of the opportunity for achieving the navigational freak of a lifetime. He called his navigators to the bridge to check and double check the ships position.

He changed course slightly so as to bear directly on his mark. Then he adjusted the engine speed.

The calm weather and the clear night worked in his favour. At midnight the Warrimoo lay on the Equator at exactly the point where it crossed the International Date Line!

The consequences of this bizarre position were many.

The forward part of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere and in the middle of summer.

The stern was in the Northern Hemisphere and in the middle of winter.

The date in the after part of the ship was 30 December 1899.

Forward, it was 1 January 1900.

The ship was therefore not only in two different days, two different months, two different seasons and two different years, but in two different centuries - all at the same time.

Whilst the passengers missed out on a New Year's Eve celebration, and one entire day, 31 December, disappeared from their lives, the people aboard Warrimoo were, undoubtedly, the first to greet the new century.

(Ref: The Australian Water Transport 'Log Book' No 85 - June 1998, Page 7)

The above contribution, which I hadn't seen before, was forwarded by Rodney Burnet and seems to have been circulated by Vintage Port, an internet group for ex Port Liners.

I found a slightly longer version on the net, at

www.prweb.com/releases/2004/11/prwebs181111.htm

and I fear that this splendid anecdote may be apocryphal. Apart from the reference above, which I have been unable to verify, there is a reference to an article by D.A.Clulow, "Towards the Millennium", in Sea Breezes, vol 70, 1996, pp 945-946, which I have also been unable to find. Mr. Clulow is the author of a couple of books on the Manchester Ship Canal and may be an ex Blue Star man.

There WAS a "Warrimoo" engaged on that route, in fact Mark Twain travelled from Vancouver to Australia on her in 1895, but I find it strange that there are no earlier references to this incident which I am sure would have entertained the Victorian public as much as it does us. The tale only surfaced as we approached the Millennium.

And at that time, of course, the Americans had to get in on the act and their nuclear powered submarine, "USS Topeka" repeated the feat, this time 400ft down, "because of the number of vessels at the surface"!

They didn't go as far as to claim which end was in which hemisphere (maybe classified) but I expect that their navigation was a lot more accurate than Capt. Phillips was able to achieve.

Great yarn though, and if anyone is able to access those references perhaps they could let us know.

IT'S A HARD LIFE:

In the 1960's I sailed with a Second Engineer who always dripped about the Company owing him a weeks pay. After several voyages I eventually told him to tell me details and I would try to sort something out.

In 1942 the ship in which he was serving was off West Africa when it was hit by 4 torpedoes, they took to the boats and were eventually picked up by a British warship and landed at Freetown thence back to the UK.

Being a keen young Officer who lived near Tilbury when he got home he headed for the Engineer Supt's Office in Tilbury Dock and reported himself.

The conversation went something like this:-

E/Supt.: 'I'm pleased to see you Mr.... I require you to join in ORONTES in Liverpool on Monday morning.'

Officer : 'But sir, I'm due for 10 days survivors leave.'

E/Supt.: 'Aye, you had 10 days sitting in that lifeboat doing nothing, you can have the week-end off and join the ORONTES on Monday morning' !

WAR

Another extract from "The Unforgiving Minute" by Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles. After his time on the China station he returned top the UK and completed his training as an Acting Sub-Lieutenant at Greenwich and Portsmouth before being sent to HMS Echo as a fully fledged Sub-Lieutenant. Promoted to Lieutenant after one year, he then completed a Torpedo Specialist Course at HMS Vernon....

When war came my appointment was as Torpedo Officer of HMS Emerald, which was an elderly cruiser lying at Chatham. My first job was to take charge of a special train taking hundreds of sailors from Portsmouth to commission the ship in Chatham. This train was arranged to stop for 20 minutes at Woking to enable us to get a cup of tea etc. I fell in all these sailors and told them not to wander round and get lost during the tea interval. But when the train got to Woking it was already half an hour late. So I got out and went to the other side of the station to see the Station Master and tell him not to try to catch up by cutting the 20 minutes which we had been promised. He said O.K.

But as I walked out of his office I saw our train drawing out of the station. I saw a sailor looking out of the window and I gestured to him to pull the communication cord. He didn't quite understand what I meant, but I gestured again and he got the idea and pulled out fathoms of chain, with great relish. The train came to a halt half-way out of the station.

My compartment was in the front, so I had to walk along the track, cheered to the echo by all the sailors as being myself the only one who missed the train. I learned from this episode that it is very difficult to walk along railway sleepers with any dignity. The spacing is such that either one adopts a short mincing pace, or else strides across two at a time with the

gait of a village idiot! The sequel to this was on Christmas Day in mid-Atlantic in a terrible gale. A Petty Officer came into my cabin for something and saw a small silver cup which I had on my desk. He said "What did you win that for Sir, catching trains?"

So we joined HMS Emerald. She was a fine old ship, but very much out of date. Her Captain was Augustus Agar, a VC from World War I. The "Commander" was Fogarty Fegan, who later in the war was lost in command of the armed Merchant Cruiser "Jarvis Bay" in a gallant but hopeless fight with the German Pocket Battleship "Admiral Scheer", for which he himself was awarded a posthumous VC.

Captain Agar had, in fact, commanded HMS Emerald previously on the East Indies Station. In those days RN ships in the tropics were painted white with yellow funnels so she must have looked like a fine great yacht. However, now she was dark grey and rather rusty.

Many of the officers were Reservists - our dear old Engineer Commander had been running a chicken farm for many years. Many of the ship's company had also been called up again long after leaving the Navy. A Leading Seaman was wearing a greatcoat at dawn action stations one morning. I stood beside him and as it very gradually got lighter I thought there was something funny about his greatcoat. When I looked more closely, instead of blue it was dark green and it had "U.D." on the lapels (United Dairies).

All these Reservists called back from civilian life did a splendid job and remained wonderfully cheerful.

We left Chatham for Scapa Flow as part of the "Northern Patrol" intended to stop German surface forces getting out into the Atlantic through the Iceland Gap. HMS Emerald was

extremely unsuitable for this job. She was very long and low and old-fashioned. The guns crews had to man her 6" guns in open gun-shields - open to all the driving spray and biting cold winds of the North Atlantic. The upper deck was awash most of the time at sea and we had to use a wooden catwalk beside the funnels to get forward and aft. Several times the ship's boats (large 32' cutters) were smashed to matchwood.

My pride and joy were the four quadruple torpedo tubes - 16 torpedoes, more than any other ship in the Navy. It was a dreadful job to keep them serviceable because they were under water half the time. Also the depth charges, which were my responsibility, kept breaking loose from their stowage on the quarterdeck. In my cabin, right over the port propellers, I would sometimes hear at night that the depth charges were loose again - 350 lbs of high explosive in each, rumbling to and

fro overhead as the ship rolled.

After some time on the Northern Patrol we were sent instead to escort slow convoys to and fro across the Atlantic to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The winter weather on these runs was quite terrible. In Halifax we were always given a great welcome by the Canadians. But the place was feet deep in snow and ice. A further disadvantage was that the Maritime provinces were "dry",

i.e. alcohol could not be legally sold. However, the inhabitants never seemed short of anything they needed. The hotels would automatically provide glasses, soda water etc. and all one had to do was to have a bottle in one's greatcoat pocket.

One thing I particularly remember at Halifax was that on arrival armoured trucks protected by Canadian "Mounties" were at the jetty. These were to collect the £5M worth of gold bullion which we had to take across on every trip - for safe storage in the USA. The battleships who sometimes accompanied the convoys used to carry £10M each.

HMS Emerald carried a little Fairey Seafox aircraft on a catapult between the funnels. This old bi-plane was really completely useless and I do not remember that I we ever flew it off; with the gales and the spray the aircraft was never serviceable. It was towed away and repaired by the Royal Canadian Navy in Halifax each visit, but was useless again within a few hours of leaving harbour.

We had a very amusing Navigating Officer who was a beautiful pianist. If it was ever calm enough he would play the piano in the Wardroom. But in one gale at Christmas time in 1939 the ship rolled so much that the piano broke loose and went sliding from side to side of the Wardroom, crashing against the bulkheads making extraordinary musical chords. Then the whole insides fell out of it. (When we got back to Liverpool we tried to have the piano mended, but there was one key missing. We said to the Navigator "Go on Pilot, give us a tune - don't bother about that note". It was very mysterious where the key could have gone. Some time later, the Surgeon Commander had a muster of his medical stores. When the sick-bay staff were mustering the splints, one of them was found to have a white side!)



H.M.S. EMERALD

Towards the end of the winter HMS Emerald was sent to the Harland & Wolf Shipyard in Southampton for a much-needed refit. At this time I was re-appointed as the Torpedo Officer of a newer cruiser - HMS Arethusa. Again we were sent to Scapa Flow. One of the first jobs was to take hundreds of British soldiers across to Norway, which was under threat of German invasion. We did several trips to Andlesness. Once I had no night watch, but when I woke up we were back in Scapa Flow again. Things had gone very badly wrong with the Norwegian expedition and instead of taking more men over, we had to go over empty and start bringing them back again. Going up the fjords it was dreadful to see beautiful little wooden villages all bombed and burned and smoking.

We went alongside a small jetty and our soldiers were queuing up to be embarked. They were so tired after many days of fighting, and it was the first time I have ever seen men actually asleep on their feet. Each man would have his head on the shoulder-pack of the man in front of him, and would only wake up when the queue shuffled forward a little bit, then fall asleep again.

One of the Army officers who came up the gangplank when I was the Officer Watch on the quarterdeck was my old maths master from Clifton, Yak Liddell, who was half-Norwegian.

At this time, although I did not know it, there was an Australian (Fred Osborne) serving as a RNVR Lieutenant in one of a number of small Naval corvettes. I knew him extremely well later in life. He told the story that while his little ship was embarking troops in Norway he met General Carton de Wiart in charge of the force. The bombing was so bad that the General said to him "This looks to me an impossible job". But the General many years later wrote in his memoirs "I learned that night that the Navy does not know the meaning of the word 'impossible'".

HMS Arethusa was frequently bombed during these evacuation trips, but never hit.

After the end of this Norwegian campaign, Arethusa was sent to Gibraltar to join a powerful group called "Force H" under the legendary Admiral Sir James Somerville. By this time France had fallen and the Germans were in occupation. The greater part of the French Fleet was in Toulon and they escaped. One group went to Alexandria and were interned. Another force went to Dakar, and a large unit (two battlecruisers and several other heavy ships) went to Oran.

The War Cabinet was determined that the French Navy should not fall under German control. This was such a dangerous threat that the whole of Force H was sent to take station off Oran. A destroyer (HMS Foresight) was sent in with a huge white flag and carrying Admiral Holland, a former British Naval Attache in Paris who knew the French Admirals as personal friends. He had the unwelcome task of giving to the French Admiral (Gensoeul) a three-fold ultimatum: either (1) the French ships should join the allies and fight alongside us, which of course would have been the best option, (2) the ships could steam to some neutral port and be disarmed and interned, (3) to save their honour the ships could scuttle themselves as they lay in Oran. Otherwise Force H would attack them forth-with.

We arrived off Oran about 6 a.m. on 4th July 1940 and I believe the original time limit for the ultimatum was three hours. The French argued and hesitated, because they never believed that we would carry out our threat. The day drew on and Force H,

parading up and down outside Oran, was in great danger from enemy U-Boats. Signals flew to and fro to the Admiralty and I understand that Churchill himself was quite adamant that we must attack. Eventually all the ships of Force H opened fire at the French inside Oran Harbour. It was of course an absolute massacre.

Two things I remember particularly vividly. One was that the few French ships who had managed to return our fire had shells which threw up violently coloured splashes. (This was so that any gun which was firing inaccurately could be identified and rectified). We, in Arethusa, were straddled by a salvo of shells with purple dye. We were not hit but the purple splashes fell over us on the bridge and our white uniforms began to look like typewriter ribbon.

The second thing which sticks in my mind is that before we left Portsmouth to join Force H some new secret British magnetic mines were brought on board. A young RNVR Torpedo Officer (Geoff Hodges) handed them over to me and showed me how to prepare them when they were needed. This was an awkward job because the detonators had to be put in through a narrow hole and connected to their terminals by feel - rather like a surgeon putting his hand into a man's stomach on the operating table.

When we got to Gibraltar I turned these over to the Torpedo Officer of HMS Ark Royal. During the attack on Oran, aircraft from Ark Royal dropped several of these mines in the approaches to the harbour — the first time these new British "A" mines had ever been used in anger. (In fact I believe that they sank one French destroyer and one tug, but I did not see this and cannot be sure).

At the end of the day the French force was completely destroyed except that one big French battle cruiser (Strasbourg) got out and escaped, plus I believe two other small ships.

With hindsight this was of course a terrible thing to have to do. Many post-war books have been written saying that the British did it with lumps in their throats and tears in their eyes. But the sad fact is that in wartime and in hot blood that is not the way men think. All our young Gunnery Officers, for instance, would be observing the fall of shot, and making sure that the range was correct rather than worrying about the fate of the French.

One very sad result of this Battle of Oran was that bad feeling has existed between the Royal Navy and the French Navy even to this day.

(A curious sequel came my way. In 1951 I was in command of the destroyer HMS Chieftain. With three others we visited Mers-el-Kebir, the port of Oran. For the first and only time in my life in a foreign port nobody came anywhere near us -no welcome, no liaison, no invitations, no contact of any sort.

So, left to ourselves, some of us went for a walk in the Dog Watches. As we walked up the hill at the back of the port I saw two large fields with a strange white crop in them. We wondered what it was. When we got nearer we could see that each field was full of small white concrete crosses where the French casualties had been buried. And when I got close to the hedge and peered through the brambles at the top of it I saw engraved on each cross "Dix Marins Inconnus" (10 unknown sailors). Terrible.)



The Voyage of HMS Cook

March 1957 - August 1958



In 1957 I was serving on a Survey ship HMS COOK which at that time was considered a "Private Ship" and not part of the Fleet, all Survey Ships being painted overall white with a buff coloured funnel. Now the Survey vessels are all considered an integral part of the Fleet and Task groups and are painted light grey.

HMS COOK was "laid down" as HMS PEGWELL BAY at A Pickersgill and Sons Ltd Sunderland, in 1944, then became HMS LOCH MOCHRUM, finally becoming HMS COOK completed in July 1949 at Devonport Dockyard. At that time most Ocean going Survey ships were converted LOCH/BAY Class ships.

The Hydrographic Office was formed in 1795 its job to provide the Admiralty with up-to-date charts to be made available for use by the Fleet. This is done through information obtained by ships such as HMS COOK who not only obtain info but also produce amended Charts onboard for forwarding to The Hydrographic Dept at Taunton. Other Navies and our own Merchant Navy are supplied with these charts, at a price, it is a fact that the Hydrographic Service was/is the only Naval Dept to earn money.

The Ships complement was 14 Officers and 135 Ratings, the Commanding Officer and most of the Officers belonged to the Hydrographic Branch of the Service, we did however carry a Surg Lt Cdr, a Supply Officer, an Engineering Officer, an Electrical Officer and a Bosun. Most of the Junior and Senior rates belonged to the Survey Branch, but we also carried Senior and Junior rates in the Mechanical Eng, Electrical, Cooks, Stewards and Supply Branches. I was the Stores Petty Officer (PO Jack Dusty) responsible for all Naval Stores.

There was no air conditioning onboard, portholes were open and a wind scoop was pushed out to scoop up the what "air" there was to create a "breeze", you had to be careful whilst at sea that the scoop didn't scoop up the "oggin" and drown anyone who was seated below. All crew members with the exception of Officers "slung" hammocks, slept on mess tables, lockers or stools. Once out in hotter climes nearly everybody slept in camp beds on the "upper deck".

Victualling for the Ships Company was what the service called "Modified General Mess". This was where the Senior victualling rating together with the Senior Cook rating drew up weekly Menus to be kept within the monetary budget, allowed by MOD(N). All meals were cooked in the galley and collected at the appropriate times when meals were taken, by "Cooks of the mess", or mess men from the Senior rates mess. The Wardroom had its own system of catering and its own galley but the daily messing allowance was the same as the Junior/Senior Rates, but was supplemented by additional charges paid by each officer.

The ship Commissioned in Plymouth Dockyard on 13th March 1957 when relatives and friends of the Ships Company were guests onboard for the Ceremony and were able to look around the ship which was to be our home for the next 18 months.

The Ship cast off at 1020 on Tuesday 19th March 1957 and the First Foreign Service Commission of HMS COOK began to the Central Pacific. We ran into some extremely "heavy" weather in the SW approaches which included the Land Rover being torn from its "secure lashings" which then proceeded to career around the Foc'sle smashing into and damaging boats and life rafts before it was finally secured.

To add to our misery the Asian Flu epidemic which had just started in the UK followed us at sea and approx. 20 of the ships company went down with it. The Sick Bay was only fitted with 2 cots and so the remainder were bedded down in hammocks around the ship in Messes and Passageways.

There was a Medical Emergency on board when our First Lt, Lt Cdr John Paton accidentally spilled ammonia on his face. Airlift was requested from the USN to ensure early hospital attention, he was initially transferred to City of Oxford inward bound for Panama and thence to a US Flying Boat. Colon hospital reported there was no permanent damage to his eyes and would rejoin the ship after completing the treatment.

We arrived in KINGSTON JAMAICA on 7th April where we took some well-earned shore leave, recovered from the pounding, put right what we were able of the damage, and refuelled. Sailing on the 11th April for Colon where our passage through the Panama Canal was to begin.

On Saturday 13th April we commenced passage through the Canal, with most of the ships company on deck to witness the sights and wonders of the Canal. We were hauled through by mechanical mules/donkeys arriving at the US Naval Base at Port Roman but as we arrived after 1630 we were required to wait until the next day before we could fuel!!

We remained there until PM the following day when after refuelling we sailed for Christmas Island in a calm sea.

A day to be remembered was Thursday 18th April when HMS COOK crossed the equator for the first time. In keeping with tradition their Majesties King Neptune and Queen Amphitrite honoured us with a visit, attended by their full court. Initiation of the ships company was soon progressed and everyone had a most pleasant bath in a mixture of salt water, paint and duresco, compensated by a most impressive certificate. The remainder of the day was declared a holiday at the request of their Majesties,

At 0900 on the 6th May 1957 the ship arrived at Christmas Island in the Pacific and for the next few weeks joined up with Grapple Squadron where the NAAFI had set up a "tent" on the Island and opened a "bar" which was operated as far as I can remember by one NAAFI employee.

The culmination of our stay with Grapple Squadron was on the morning of 15th May when we witnessed the dropping of the first Hydrogen bomb, the first in a series of nuclear tests at Malden Island. All the ships company wore Action Working Rig, together with anti-flash gear and darkened goggles, plus the sensitised badges supplied, to detect whether we had been subjected to radiation and which were pinned to our AWR shirts. We were then mustered on the upper deck, sat down with our backs to the explosion and waited. After the explosion and fireball we were allowed to face the direction of the explosion. The burst was most impressive and all present were of the opinion that COOK had been quite near enough. After the excitement had died down we handed in our badges, each one with a serial number shown against each name. Having heard nothing for 46 years I have come to the conclusion we were radiation free!!

On the 22nd May we said our farewells to Grapple Squadron and set course for Suva, Fiji, surveys were carried out en route before finally arriving on 6th June where we were greeted by the band of the Fiji Military Forces, playing with much vigour until long after the ship was secured. This was to be our

refuelling base whilst surveying in the Fiji area.

The morning of 13th June 1957 was fine and sunny and a guard was landed to take part in the Queens Official Birthday Parade. The parade took place at Albert Park where other contingents taking part were Fiji RNVR, Fiji Military Forces, the Royal New Zealand Air Force and Fiji Police. The Ceremony was a great success and COOK's detachment was well received by the thousands who watched the parade.

After a pleasant stay we sailed for New Zealand and the ship secured alongside in Auckland on 19th June 1957. The weather in NZ made a noticeable change after several weeks in the tropics and was not unlike that which we experienced during our last week in Plymouth.

All too soon our short refit period came to an end, many friendships had developed ashore and we formed the impression that the Kiwi Navy were not a bad crowd, collectively and individually, we were to see more of them later on in the year.

Next on our programme was some earnest surveying and after a short call at Suva for fuel the ship "nosed" into Natewa Bay on the Island of Vanua Lavu the second largest in the Fijian Group. This was to be our survey ground for the next three months.



Awaiting detonation of the H bomb, Malden Is



Eyes front!

A week after our arrival in Natewa Bay an official ceremonial visit was made to the ship by some local Chieftains. During the ceremony a Tambua (Whales Tooth) was presented to the ship. This is the highest mark of respect that a Fijian can show to a visitor

Very soon friendships sprang up between ship and shore and hardly an evening passed without "visitors" arriving to share our cinema shows or just sit on the foc'sle with their guitars and break into song; the harmony achieved by a group of Fijian singers is to be heard to be believed.

At weekends spent on the survey grounds banyan parties were landed on some of the numerous and handy beaches. Other weekends visits were made to Suva or Levuka, the later was a small place on the island of Ovalou where the COOK was the centre of interest to the local population who made us very welcome and once again we appreciated

Fijian hospitality at its best.

The survey of Natewa Bay completed we sailed for Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. The grim reminders of the Pacific War were still present in the form of wrecked and rusted war machines of every nature. These were slowly being cleared away. During our stay many parties of school children visited the ship and seemed to enjoy their visit.

Surveying was now at an end for 1957 the next item on the agenda being a refit and lie-up period in Auckland. After arrival on the 19th

November last minute touching up and polishing were completed in preparation for the ships annual inspection. This was carried out on the 26th November 1957 by the Naval Officer in Charge, Auckland.

For the following 4 months we sampled KIWI hospitality, so much in fact that seven of the ships co were married before we sailed, one member of the ships co and his bride having the Petty Officer of the Patrol sent to "accompany" him back to the ship, acting as best man!!

During our stay we had 6 deserters, 2 from our first visit in June we learned later that they managed to get jobs ashore, all returning voluntary before we sailed in March 1958 with the one exception who required a Petty Officer plus 2 to fetch him onboard. The CO then gave him permission to get married in the forenoon (accompanied by the Patrol) with the ship sailing an hour after his return onboard.

The refit at an end we carried out sea trials and sailed for the Solomon Islands the send off from Auckland was very emotional for some (those newly wed) and a happy occasion for most it meant we were on our way home.!!

Our first call was at Honiara on the island of Guadalcanal where we started taking our anti-malaria tablets. It was a picturesque little place and very quiet, quite different to the scenes of war a few years previous.

We landed a camp party to carry out an inshore survey; from Honiara we called at Gizo where yet another camp party was detached to survey the harbour approaches. Having discovered that some of the Solomon Islands were incorrectly charted the need for fuel and fresh provisions made a trip to Port Moresby, New Guinea, necessary. We enjoyed a pleasant weekend and a liaison with the Australians ashore was established.

More surveying followed in the Solomons area when again our need for fuel resulted in yet another call at Suva. This was to be our last call during this commission which made the saying of farewells necessary, the ship would return but not this ships co. We finally left on a wet afternoon with a rather subdued crowd to see us off. One day some may return but if not, we are left with many happy moments well spent.

Course was now set for the Solomons once more where we progressed with the survey, on the 12th June 1958 a guard was landed to take part in the Queens Official Birthday parade at Honiara, the author being the Petty Officer of the guard. From reports received a good showing was made also on this occasion.

A few more days were spent in and around Port Moresby, we then started passage to Singapore where the ship was due to recommission on 30th July 1958. On arrival at Singapore all our reliefs had not arrived, mine included, and so we sailed for Hong Kong where the remainder of reliefs were waiting for the ship. Turn over to our reliefs, then to HMS TAMAR to await flights home on 14th August 1958. Time away from home 18 months.

HMS COOK remained in the Pacific for the next 7 years, carrying out surveys throughout and also acting as rescue vessel during Royal Flight at Phoenix Island, March 1963, and were at Suva for the Royal visit in December 1963. Ships Companies were changed by Air Trooping. Left UK March 1957 arrived back in Devonport (UK) February 1964. Placed on disposal list May 1964 sold to a Greek Company 1968 for breaking up.

RAY HUNT

Lieutenant Commander RD RNR

Recent articles in the newsletter brought a few 'lamp swinging' thoughts to mind.

Back in '69 I joined Red Funnel as Chief Officer and in those days our working day was from 0530 to either 2230 or later if you were on the last ferry from the Island. It was my practice to sleep on board in Southampton if on an early start or late finish.

One night on the *Cowes Castle* I was woken in the early hours by sounds of a generator starting and movement on deck. On investigation I found that a 'Solfire' had been declared and that a ferry was required to transport foam tenders to South of the Isle of Wight.

A tanker, '*Pacific Glory*' had been in collision and was on fire with the Fawley tugs in attendance. We loaded two tankers, one from Wiltshire; the other from Fawley, a 1930's vintage vehicle whose driver said he had topped 30 mph on the way round from the refinery. With Capt Cecil Diaper in command we set off in company with Fire boat 39. We could hear the VHF conversations between the tugs and were able to follow the progress of the fire fighting. *Pacific Glory* was on fire in her after tanks, accommodation and engine room. The fire was being contained but the engine space was becoming filled with water, and no pumps available.

We were passing Bembridge when we received a call from S.P.R. at Calshot recalling both ourselves and the fireboat which was equipped with a large pump and hoses. I asked for verification and was assured that 'Fire Control HQ in Winchester was happy the situation was now contained' and we were not required, (they could not have heard the VHF transmissions).

We returned to the Royal Pier to be told to 'Stand by'. Too late to be of any help. *Pacific Glory* became a total loss with the after end flooded and aground.

I did see a communications transcript later and our recall was missing!

---oo0oo---

"Squat"

While driving '*Shearwater*' hydrofoil I had the misfortune to touch bottom in Cowes Harbour.

It was low water springs and as the hydrofoil had a draft of 10' 6" at rest, I decided to come onto the foils while still in the harbour. We were probably doing 13 knots when we came to an abrupt stop!

I asked one of the 'James boys' to take his launch round us to check soundings and he assured me that he could find nothing untoward. Capt Henry Wrigley, the Harbour Master later swore that there were no obstructions in 'his' port but old Captain James remembered a barge sinking during WWII loaded with 'beach defences'. The damage to the foil and skeg would bear that out. The for'd foiled and after foil were scored and the skeg was at right angles and the rudder indicator showed hard starboard. We managed to run home to Southampton on the foils, steering normally but ignoring the indicators.

Now was that 'squat' or did the bottom come up?

Captain Gerry Draysey RD

Rope Ends



AUTUMN DINNER DANCE

Saturday 28th October

**Brook House Masonic Centre,
Botley**

Baked Avocado with Stilton & Bacon

Roast of Lamb

With a

Red Currant, 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.

BE CERTAIN THAT YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT:

The Chief Steward is often a much maligned member of the ship's company but sometimes with good reason.

When the Oronsay was fitting out at Barrow (about 1951) one of the new Hoovers went missing, this was reported by the checkers and the suppliers certainly did not quibble as the order was for hundreds of pieces and the manufactures replaced it without delay. About seven or eight years later the Hoover 'rep' put his head round the Stores Managers door in Leadenhall St. and said 'good morning sir, I thought that you might like to know that that Hoover that went missing from Oronsay at Barrow has just shown up, it has come in with a claim for repair, under warranty, from an address in Blackpool'. The same Chief Steward was still in the ship, his wife ran a B&B in Blackpool, he was shortly to retire and he did!

When senior, long serving, Officers retired it was the company's policy for some of the management and superintendents to entertain them to lunch. On this occasion the senior Manager present said a few brief words about the guests service and made a small presentation on this occasion the short speech included 'and Mr, we don't' really know how you will spend your retirement, we know that you are not a golfer, we know that you don't drive a car and wonder if perhaps your wife might allow you to do the hoovering on occasions!!



Captain Alistair Campbell-Cant

Alistair was born in Glasgow on the 31st October 1931, the son of a master mariner. He attended a Glasgow grammar school, and decided to follow in his father's footsteps and was apprenticed to Lyle Shipping. He worked for several shipping companies finishing with the Cunard Line. He served on several Cunard ships of which the Caronia was his favourite. When he left the sea he was the navigating officer of the Queen Mary. With the advent of the Boeing 707, he realised that the days of the Ocean Liners regularly sailing across the North Atlantic were coming to an end. He was offered and accepted the position of Cunard's deputy cargo Superintendent and after a year was promoted to Cargo Superintendent. He eventually decided to leave Cunard and formed his own successful Marine surveying company, from which he retired nine years ago. He enjoyed living in his adoptive City of Southampton and his retreat, "Bosun's Cottage", in Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight. Alistair was an avid runner and walker. He liked listening to classical music, especially Mahler. He was a great authority on malt whiskies and I enjoyed many a dram with him. He was a member of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. Alistair was a great friend to have, and will be sadly missed by myself and other friends. We offer condolences to Meg and his daughter Gillian.

Rest in Peace old friend.

Barry Eagles

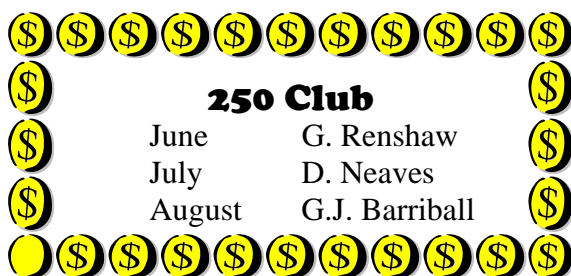
NEW CACHALOTS

D.J. Case
L. D'Espagnac
R.G. Sinclair
J. Vincent



The Last Night of the Proms concert at Tidworth is on 24 October and will cost £24.50 per person to include coach fare and buffet supper. This is usually a popular evening and the list is now on the Club noticeboard, so please enter your names as soon as possible. Bookings can also be made by telephone.

We have not yet had a definite date from Robin and Jenny Hibberd for the anticipated wine tasting. Those interested should keep in touch with the office or the NewWeb Site.



The New Club room is currently open three days a week, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, at lunch time. Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink and she can take your orders for sandwiches and snacks.

Other food, hot meals from the SSC menu, will become available when modifications to the dumb waiter are completed and a communication system is installed. You are asked to bear with us and show some understanding as the new system develops to all our satisfactions.

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 new address is:

**The Southampton Master Mariners' Club,
(The CACHALOTS)
Southampton Seafarers' Centre,
12-14 Queens Terrace,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3BP**

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Dates for your Diary

Sat	SEP	9	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

Gone Aloft

**N.C. Hall
A.T. Campbell-Cant**