

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.23

March 2007

The Post Captain's Log February 2007

Introduction

In my year as Captain, quite a lot, in respect of the future of the Club, has happened that is of interest to all members and I hope that this log will provide you with a record of these events that will be a more detailed and easier to read 'review' than you will get from piecing together the minutes from the various meetings or The Cachalot issues that we have held/dispatched throughout this eventful year.

Background

In 2005 there was much discussion about the future of the Club with members being either pessimistic or optimistic. What was missing was any factual or definitive review as to the actual 'state' of the Club in fundamental terms of: Were members happy and if not, then why not? Was the membership increasing? Were we (the Club's officers) using the Club's resources for the benefit of all the members as effectively as we could? etc. It was agreed that a working group be set up to undertake a strategic review of the Club and, based upon the evidence found make recommendations to the appropriate committees for consideration and action. The Strategic Review that was produced by the working group and the recommendations that it contained were approved at last year's AGM and have provided me, your Officers and many Harpooners and Cachalots with a full workload throughout the year. In fact, had it not been for the willing and generous support from all concerned, especially Peter Marriott who took up the reigns of office so effectively during my enforced absence during the summer months, we would not have achieved half as much as we have. It should also be remembered that the subject of this log are extraordinary activities that took place in addition to the day-to-day administration of your Club.

The Agenda

1. Find new premises for a Clubroom and negotiate a lease with the landlord.
2. Prepare for and move into new Clubrooms.
3. Advertise for, interview and appoint a Boatsteerer's assistant.
4. Change computer communications to broadband.
5. Computerise the Club accounts and establish an operational budget.
6. Review the Club membership and identify major issues affecting the drop in new members and how to attract new members.

State of play and operational log

1. **Location of new premises** (cont. on page 2)



Captain Peter Marriott

Your new Captain was born in London in 1939 and attended Finchley Catholic Grammar School in north London. After a short pre-sea training course at King Edward VIIth Nautical College in London he was indentured to the British Tanker Company, later to become BP Tanker Company, joining his first ship in January 1956. He remained with BP for 33 years, the first 20 of those at sea during which time he gained his Masters Certificate in 1965 and served on all sizes of tankers and in all ranks up to and including master. This was followed by 13 years office based in a number of operational and safety roles, including a secondment to the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) as Technical Advisor.

In 1988 Peter left BP to become a civil servant as the first Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents and to set the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) in 1989. After eight years in this role he left the Civil Service and then worked at the Warsash Maritime Centre, where as a consultant, he set up a risk assessment group and worked closely with marine insurers to assess ships and their operations from an insurers point of view. After four years doing this work he finally retired from gainful employment in late 2001.

Peter married Janet in 1967 while he was still serving at sea and Janet thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities, when available, to sail with Peter before he became office based. They have a grown-up son and a daughter and two grandchildren.

State of Play – The SMMC is now, as from the 31st July 2006, located at its new address. Rent and Rates are set and some discretionary rate relief has been granted by Southampton City Council, rates division (SCC). The rooms were cleaned and decorated prior to the move by the Club’s officers, Harpooners and Cachalots. New window blinds purchased, a new bar built. A new display cabinet has been built and installed by Terry Clark. Wine cooler, fridge and cash till purchased. Bar stocks are ordered through the Southampton Seafarers Centre (SCC) providers, lunchtime menu and food provided by SCC. Club employees, officers, premises and artefacts are protected by appropriate Club insurance policy. All artefacts and memorabilia returned to and on display in the Clubrooms. The Clubrooms are protected by a refurbished and maintained alarm system. Computer communications with the Club are connected to a BT Broadband facility. A monitor and keyboard for members to access the WWW is provided in the reading room. The Club’s Portacabin is now empty and has to be sold and removed from the RBL premises. Refurbished food delivery dumbwaiter in operational condition.

Operational log – (January – April 2006): Contacted Southampton Seafarers Centre and negotiated draft lease. Appointed Coffin Mew & Clover (Solicitors) to act on our behalf. Altered the Club Rules (year 2000 edition) to allow the nomination of Club Trustees for the purposes of managing a commercial tenancy agreement between the Club and the SSC. Also to allow for the calling of an extra ordinary general meeting. Made submission to and opened dialogue with SCC to be granted discretionary rate relief. Received and accepted an offer of assistance from Clive Robinson (MD) and Paul Davies of C Data for improving the electronic information and communications services for the Club and individual Cachalots.

(May – August 2006): Working parties removed all old and non-functional cabling. Washed off all paintwork and chair frames, repainted all walls and ceilings. A contract carpenter built a new bar and doorway between the office and the Clubroom, turned the two access doors around and fitted a new sink unit in the kitchenette. A new floor was laid behind the bar and in the kitchenette. New blinds were purchased and fitted to the glass windows and doors. Aegis Alarms Ltd was appointed to overhaul, return the existing alarm system to working order and maintain it annually. All carpets and chair seats cleaned. All artefacts and memorabilia moved from the Royal British Legion Clubroom to the new premises. Enhanced communications system installed and achieved operational status. Clubs administration and officers moved from RBL to new Clubrooms. (*Ref: Minutes of EGM of the E&F Committee 24/02/06. Minutes of GC meeting on 06/04/06.*)

(September – December 2006): SCC refurbished the mechanical food delivery system from their kitchen to 1st floor landing. Agreed that: toilets to be refurbished by SCC. Handrail, from pavement to entrance doors, to be fitted by SCC. Entrance hall, stairway and 1st floor landing to be re-painted by Club volunteers with the paint and new carpets provided by SCC. Negotiated through HGI, Business Insurance Brokers an appropriate ‘Club’ insurance policy to protect employees, officers, premises and contents with Royal and Sun Alliance. T.Clark

constructed and installed a new display cabinet. The Clubroom was let out for two functions (British and International Seafarers Society annual staff Christmas lunch and the Southampton Sea Cadets Christmas dinner).

2. Employees

State of Play – The Club employs E. Robson as bar person and R.James as the Administrator.

Operational log – (May – August 2006): Fortunately, Elizabeth agreed to come with us from the RBL and has been hard at work keeping everything in ship shape order as well as serving us all with food and drink.

(September – December 2006): Richard joined us and after a fairly steep learning curve is now getting to grips with the administrative challenges that we have had to deal with.

3. Club Officers for 2007.

State of Play – The Club Officers proposed at the Past Captains meeting on 3rd January 2007 and approved at the AGM on 11th January 2007 are:

Captain.	P.Marriott.
Staff Captain.	L.Morris.
Sea Staff Captain.	I. Odd.
Boatsteerer	G.Angas.
Storekeeper.	B.Peck.
Functions Officer	G.Cartwright.*
Membership Officer	D.Gates.*
Hon Legal Advisor	S.Daniels.*
Hon Archivist	H.Roberts.*
Hon Editor ‘The Cachalot’	T.E.Clark.*

* = *Elected as Honorary Office Bearers.*

Operational log – Lionel Hall has stepped down at the Sea Pie Supper after eight years as Boatsteerer. I am sure that you will agree with me that we all owe both Lionel and Julie a big vote of thanks (no more spare bedrooms filled with ‘The Cachalots’ memorabilia Julie!) for keeping the Club on an even keel and steering a steady course through the sometimes troubled waters of those years. I only hope that I can maintain your high standards Lionel and we look forward to seeing you both in the Club for many years to come.

4. Strategic Review (Club Membership)

State of Play – Position of Membership Officer reinstated to manage the Club membership issues. Agreed Criteria for Club Membership all within the framework of the existing Club Rules 2000, as amended in 2006 (see Para 1 above). Initiatives for increasing the publicity of the Club and attracting new members being acted upon.

Operational log – (September – December 2006): Established a Club Membership working group who met four times between 17th November and 8th December 2006. *Ref: Membership Working Group minute’s 17/11,24/11,1/12, &8/12/2006.*

5. Strategic Review (Membership details and database)

State of Play – Currently 50 members have responded to the request to complete a questionnaire, in confidence, that will

provide professional details and interests of members for use at a later date when canvassing other members of the Southampton's maritime industry to try and identify ways in which a closer and mutually beneficial dialogue could be established between us. (See the December issue of The Cachalot). This is currently being fed into a spreadsheet for easy reference.

Conclusion

By reference to *The Agenda* above you will see that we are more or less 'on track' with our stated objectives and whilst this is a very good reflection on the commitment and hard work of your Officers there is still a long way to go. We did make mistakes this year, we have recognised these and have taken action to prevent them happening again next year. For example, this year we combined the roles of Storekeeper and Functions Officer and asked Gerry Cartwright to take the job. Gerry, without complaint worked long and hard to keep on top of it. This was a mistake, the job was too big and it made for an uncomfortable year for Gerry when a smaller load and/or more timely assistance could have helped. This will not happen again.

We have agreed that by adopting a policy of 'greater inclusivity', in which club administrative functions are clearly defined and broken down into manageable units, it will be possible for willing Officers, Harpooners and Cachalot volunteers alike to provide an efficient service to the members on a part time basis and still have time to do everything else that they want to do in their busy life styles. As examples of this, you will see that for this year the General Committee has agreed to decouple the roles of Functions Officer and Storekeeper and have reinstated the position of the Membership Officer.

Last, but by no means least I would like to thank all of my fellow Officers, Peter Marriott, Gerry Cartwright, Lionel Hall and Richard James and Elizabeth Robson for their unstinting support both when I was there and absent.

To those Harpooners and Cachalots that turned up to help with the move. To Doug Gates for his continuing support to Gerry Cartwright during the year. To Gerry Cartwright, Simon Harwood and Mike Weston as the Entertainments, Church and Cricket Committee Chairmen respectively. To, Terry Clark, Reg Kelso, John Mileusnic, Barry Peck, Hamish Roberts, John Smart and Andrew Tinsley, as members of the two working groups and for their non committee/working group advice given very politely to some of my more harebrained ideas! To Terry Clark for the interesting and professional editions of The Cachalot. To those members that have responded and contributed to questionnaires. A big **thank you** to you all and I am sorry that I was absent for so long. In spite of this it has been a most enjoyable year for Sarah and I getting to know more of you and working with you to maintain the standards of professional and social fraternity of the Cachalots. A privilege and an honour indeed.

May I wish you all a healthy and prosperous New Year and Peter, good luck for your year as Captain. You can count upon my continuing support.

George Angas.
Post Captain. 21st February 2007.

Curry Lunch at P.O.S.H.

Saturday 10th March

The Curry Lunch scheduled for this day will now be held at the P.O.S.H. Restaurant at the bottom end of Queensway where we hope you will join us in saying our "thank-yous" to the outgoing Boatsteerer, Lionel Hall.

£7.50 per head

Names to the office by Thursday 8th please.

Skittles Evening

Southampton (Old) Green Bowling Club

Friday 30th March at 1900

Chilli Con Carne

Lemon Meringue Pie

This is a very serious and challenging evening when the more energetic? Club Members get into training for our skittles evening at the Southampton (Old) Green Bowling Club. Last year was a great success, and nobody tripped and fell over the skittles alley in spite of the cheapness of the alcoholic refreshment. There will, of course, be the customary large, handsome, and valuable prizes for the highest scoring lady and gentleman plus an appropriate wooden spoon type prize for the lowest score of all. We would like about 30 participants, but spectators are welcome to come along and ridicule the competitors if they dare. The remarkably cheap price for this fun evening is only £12.00 including the meal. Cheques should be made payable to "The Cachalots" and handed either to the Storekeeper, Functions Officer, Richard or the Boatsteerer as soon as possible, and certainly no later than 16 March.

Wine Tasting

Saturday, 14 April, 2007 - 1130 for 12

Jenny and Robin Hibberd are once again coming to tickle our palates with some of the wines from Domaine Savary de Beauregard in the Languedoc region of southern France. Their wines are not available in supermarkets or in bulk. By selling to groups direct they are able to offer top quality wines from around £5 per bottle, for sale by the case. For those still sufficiently sober after the degustation there will be a Buffet Lunch.

Please note that we are hoping to begin the wine tasting at 1200 so prompt attendance will be much appreciated.

MENU: *Roll and Butter, Coronation Chicken, Sliced Ham, Quiche, Sliced Smoked Salmon, Seafood Salad, Seasonal Salads and Hot Salad Potatoes, Summer Pudding, Sherry Trifle, Chocolate Roulade, Creme Caramel*



There is no charge for the wine tasting but the cost of the lunch is **£12.00** per person. Names to the office as soon as possible, as we need to let Jenny and Robin how much wine to bring. How frightfully sad it would be if there were insufficient wine to go round! Please hand your payment to the Storekeeper, Functions Officer, Richard or the Boatsteerer by 1400 on Friday, 30 March. Cheques should be made payable to "The Cachalots". For those Club members who do not like wine you may turn up at about 1300 for the buffet only.

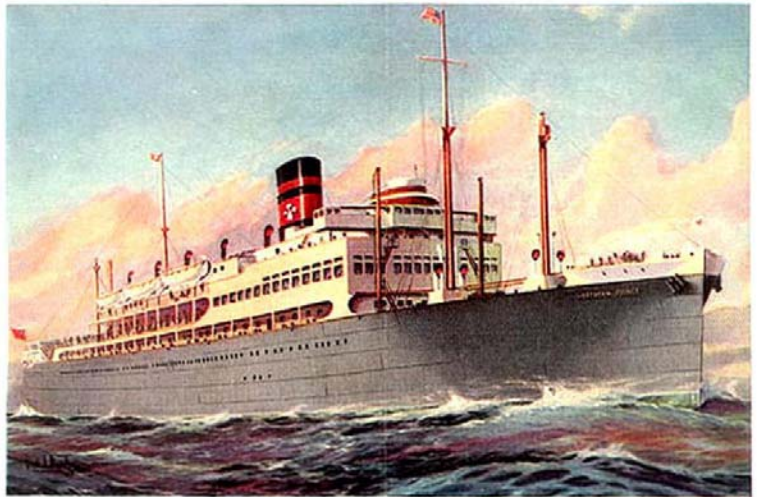
More events on page 11

To The Mediterranean

This extract from "The Unforgiving Minute", the memoirs of Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles, continues from the last and takes him to the Mediterranean.

In the Admiralty a suggestion was made that the fireship technique could perhaps be used in the Mediterranean, where the Italian Fleet tended to remain in harbour. I was given orders to go out to the Mediterranean to report to the Commander in Chief in Alexandria with these ideas. I was to take passage in a large merchant ship going in convoy to Gibraltar and then through the Mediterranean (the ship was the "Northern Prince"). We sailed from Liverpool shortly before Christmas 1940 and were at sea in a gale in the Bay of Biscay by Christmas Day. Quite a large number of Naval and Army officers were on board, including one we called "the galloping major". He was the splendid Bernard Ferguson of the Black Watch, subsequently leader of the Chindits in Burma.

The Naval officers had volunteered to keep watch on the bridge with the ship's Merchant Navy officers - in case we could be of assistance with the convoy orders and signalling etc. As it happened, I was on the bridge during the morning watch on Christmas Day. It was as dark as a black cat's bladder (to use a rough naval expression!) and was blowing a southerly gale Force 11. Suddenly an even blacker patch appeared on the port beam, which I now know was the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes. A small blue light began to make in morse "Scatter". With the arrogance of youth I said to the Officer of the Watch "O.K., I'll deal with this, old boy". So with our own small blue light I replied "Ha, ha, Merry Christmas to you, too". However, very shortly afterwards there was gunfire, and as we now know, the German pocket battleship "Hipper" had attacked one of the rear ships in the convoy. (I saw a little Flower Class corvette, which was one of our escorts, turning hard a-starboard, and going back to deal with the situation!). Immediately we carried out the order to scatter, which involves each ship spreading out at best speed on a previously ordered course. At daylight we had lost sight of all the other ships and had to make our own way to Gibraltar. There was no sign of the Hipper, who must have broken off her attack.



"Northern Prince" was one of four "Compass Point" ships built for Prince Line in 1928/9. At around 10,920grt they were the largest dry-cargo ever owned by the company. They also carried 101 1st Class passengers in luxury accommodation. She was bombed and sunk off Crete on 3rd April 1941.

N.B. There was an interesting aspect arising from this event - concerning the powers of the Masters of merchant ships. It must be remembered that these Masters have very little legal authority over their crews, whereas in the Navy of course we have the rigorous clauses of the Naval Discipline Act.

The Master of the Northern Prince was a good tough experienced old Yorkshireman, but on Christmas Eve there had been a party in the Officers' Mess and the old man had been sitting singing on the deck in fancy dress, hammering with a spoon on the bottom of a saucepan and, as it seemed to me, making an absolute drunken fool of himself. I was not impressed and I wondered how he maintained his authority in the ship.

But the next morning, when the "Scatter" signal was received, he was on the bridge in a flash, knew exactly what to do, everybody else on the bridge fell silent as he gave his orders and I caught sight of him in his oilskins on the lee side of the wheelhouse absolutely in command of the situation - a very impressive figure. This experience taught me the vital lesson that nothing must ever be done to diminish in any way the authority and status of Master Mariners. I have been very

strongly aware of this ever since, and I had the opportunity to argue this case vigorously in a House of Commons Committee 30 years later, when the Labour Party wanted to have discipline administered by a "Ship's Committee".

Several days later the Northern Prince got safely into Gibraltar. The ship was moored fore and aft to two buoys on the eastern side of the crowded harbour. The first night a tremendous westerly gale arose, the after mooring-line parted, the ship swung round and her stern grounded in the shallow water. I remember climbing down into the tiller flat and seeing the huge rudder head moving bodily up and down about 12", which of course smashed the hydraulic steering rams and disabled the ship.

Most of the officers taking passage were moved to another large merchant ship and we had to "double up" for accommodation. We then proceeded eastwards through the Mediterranean - in fact one of the last convoys to do so. The convoy was not attacked and I do not remember what naval escort there was. Of course we passengers in these ships knew little or nothing about the operational situation.

But two or three days later we were through the Narrows and south of Sicily. I was, in fact, down in the engine room, being shown round by the Chief. Then there were a series of loud explosions so I hurried up on the bridge to see what was happening. To my amazement there was the brand new aircraft carrier, HMS *Illustrious*, only a mile or two away on our port beam. The Luftwaffe had recently arrived in Sicily and a very large number of Stuka dive bombers had come out to attack our convoy. But they had seen the *Illustrious*, which in fact had come to protect us and which was of course a much more valuable target for the bombers. I was watching in amazement as dozens of these Stukas dived down to attack. *Illustrious* was surrounded by spray from the "near misses" exploding in the sea and as I watched, a bomb fell down the after liftwell and set the ship on fire.

Of course, the convoy scattered again and I did not know what had happened to *Illustrious*; But in fact she managed to get into Malta and carry out emergency repairs, in spite of almost constant enemy air-raids. She was at this time under the command of that magnificent man, Captain Dennis Boyd, who incidentally had been Captain of HMS *Vernon* during my torpedo course.

Eventually *Illustrious* left Malta and got safely to Alexandria. There I had the opportunity to see the vast extent of the damage. Apart from anything else, the bomb in her after hangar had lifted up the 4" armoured flight-deck into a fore and aft ridge, more like the roof of a cottage! She had to go to the USA for long-term repairs.

In due course, and without further incident or attack, our convoy reached Piraeus. It was when the German invasion of Greece was expected at any moment. We only remained in Piraeus for a very short time, but I remember two small incidents. One was that the King George V Hotel was occupied by scores of press reporters of various sorts, all waiting for something to happen. It seemed to me that the entire lot spent every hour of the day in the bar. But apparently one of their number had to be sober enough to go to the Ministry of Information building to see whether there was any news.

The other small picture in my mind is going to the railway station and seeing the Greek Army boarding their trains to go up to defend their frontier. One of these soldiers, a fine tall man, was wearing the extraordinary ceremonial uniform which makes them look more like ballet dancers - long white tights, short frilly skirt and some sort of red headgear. But I noticed that the sole of one of his sandals was flapping off and had been tied up with a piece of string. There was snow on the ground. I wonder what happened to him.

The final part of this trip was from Piraeus to Port Said. Nothing worse happened except that one of the other merchant ships was apparently torpedoed by a U-Boat. I say "apparently" because I did not see what happened to her but believe that she did not sink.

At Port Said in January 1941 we disembarked and I went by rail across the Nile Delta to report to Naval Headquarters in Alexandria.



From Sail to Steam

Past Captain Ian Thomson's great grandfather, Captain Robert Thomson, was master in sail with Rathbones and steam with Alfred Holt. Ian, who was Club Captain in 1991, has several of Robert's letters home but most are now in the Merseyside Maritime Museum.

One of Robert's sons, George Bruce Thomson, was indentured to Rathbones and did his first voyage to sea in 1876 on the "Auriga" from Liverpool to Australia via the Cape. (Coincidentally, Ian was to make his first trip on the same route, some 77 years later.) George later commanded Larrinaga steamships and retired as their Marine Superintendent.

Ian has a large collection of letters from the two seafarers and we hope to be able to reprint some of them here in a series of articles which we hope will be of some interest to you.

This first is an extract from the history of Rathbones and details Roberts career with them while he was master of the tea clipper "Scawfell".

The Scawfell was a wooden full-rigged ship built by Charles Lamport at Workington in 1858. She was strongly built, with teak beams, strengthened with iron braces, and with oak planking and an oak deck. She could carry a cargo of just over 1 million pounds of tea (approx. 500 tonnes in modern measurement).

The Scawfell was a true tea clipper, and under Capt. Robert Thomson achieved one of the fastest ever voyages from China to England, leaving the Canton River on the 14th January 1861 and arriving off Point Lynas, bound for Liverpool, on the 11th April (85 days pilot to pilot).



The Scawfell was first owned by Rathbone Bros. of Liverpool, and then was sold to Wilson & Balin of South Shields in 1872, then W.Hutchinson of Newcastle in 1880. She was abandoned at sea in a Force 12 storm on the 9th January 1883, at 47.30 N 11.10 W, her pumps having become blocked by the coal cargo.

Rathbones dates its history back to 1742 when it was founded as a Liverpool based shipping business. In the early 20th century it turned to financial management and is now one of the UK's leading independent investment management banks with a total assets portfolio in excess of £8 billion.

Rathbones' strong position in the China trade in the 1850's and 60's was largely due to good management of their tea clippers. There are paintings of two of these ships, the *Bosphorus* and the *Scawfell*, in the Merseyside Maritime Museum. Painted in about 1855 by an associate of the Liverpool marine artist Joseph Heard, the *Bosphorus* is seen in full sail, entering the Mersey with New Brighton Battery in the background. She flies the Rathbone flag with the letter 'R' on a central white band flanked by two red bands, and the ship's name on a blue pennant. At 1,346 tons and 217 feet in length, she was one of the largest of the Rathbone vessels.

The *Scawfell* built by Lamports of Workington in 1858, was only 825 tons but was capable of carrying a cargo of 1,020,000 lbs. of tea; she was one of the fastest clippers of her day and, under her master Robert Thomson, broke many records. The painting of the Chinese school depicts her lying at anchor in Hong Kong harbour, with the town and mountains in the background.

Several documents relating to the voyages of the *Scawfell* also survive and life aboard a tea clipper can be glimpsed through a crew list and the official log for the voyage to Manila made between February and December 1870. The crew was a multi national group of over twenty men from all corners of the United Kingdom, from America, Norway and Holland and some unfortunate instances are recounted by the log. The second mate was lost overboard, the log noting 'Wm Maitland could not swim' and poignantly a list of his belongings is appended: '4 books, 4 singlets, 4 pr. drawers, 5 pr. stockings, 4 crimean shirts, 1 muffler, 5 pr. trousers, 1 great coat, 1 jacket, 3 vests, 1 oilskin, 1 towel, 1 pr. sea boots, 1 pr. braces, 2 pillow cases, 1 slate, 1 pillow, 1 rug, 1 bed, 1 cap, 1 bible, 1 pr. shoes, 1 bed curten'. These were signed for by the unfortunate man's younger brother, only 19 years old and on his first voyage as ship's carpenter.

A second incident occurred in Manila, when the cook took exception to the steward's criticism of 'his useage of the cabin beef, struck him – the steward – on the face with a piece of wood causing his face to swell and his eye quite black, then drew a knife to stab him and was only prevented by the steward running away'; a sensible precaution, as the cook later asserted that he would 'slay him like an ox' if the steward came into the galley again!

Robert Thomson was master of the *Scawfell* throughout her career with Rathbones from 1859 to 1871, and during his voyages he wrote regular letters to his wife at home in Liverpool. These letters in the possession of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, give a delightful, personal view of the life of a master of one of the foremost tea clippers.

Thomson married Helen Bruce in 1855 and their growing family lived first in Nelson Street and later moved to Govan Cottage, 44 Edge Lane. He was evidently a competent and conscientious master, deservedly taking a pride in his sailing prowess and in the qualities of the *Scawfell*, and his letters frequently refer to competition between ships. In 1859, he wrote from Foochow of an excellent run, 'the people here say it is the smartest this year', in 1861 he sailed from Macao to Point Lynas in a record 85 days, and in 1866-7 had a record voyage from Foochow to Deal. He was ambitious and, besides getting the best prices and cargoes for Rathbones, he also traded tea and other cargo on his own account, writing to his wife: 'so you see if I am fortunate, I intend to be rich some time or other'. His own trading in 1864 included cheeses and hams, the latter 'pronounced to be the best in Hong Kong', and he used some of the cheese to pay for a chess set for his family. But trade was difficult: 'all I have sold has brought me little profit . . . [but] not so much as I have been accustomed to'. Nonetheless, he appears to have prospered; he was able to send his children to boarding school and by the 1870's he was negotiating to buy a house costing the considerable sum of £500.

Besides news of the voyage and his trading activities, Thomson regaled his wife with details of life in the various Eastern ports. On one occasion, in 1859, he reassured his wife that he had been to church but, even better, had been visited on board by two parsons: 'the one wanted his dinner and the other a glass of grog – both of which they had'. He told his son that his pet cat, which was on board the ship, had 'whooping cough', but was recovering; complained about the laundry service in Colombo, which could take as long as a fortnight and necessitated his buying new shirts; and was surprised, after going on 'the scale', to find that he weighed 220 lbs. Evidently he had grown a moustache, as he described his pleasure when, returning home from a voyage, he was greeted by his wife running into the room looking 'almost young', jumping up to kiss him – and being rather taken aback by the moustache.

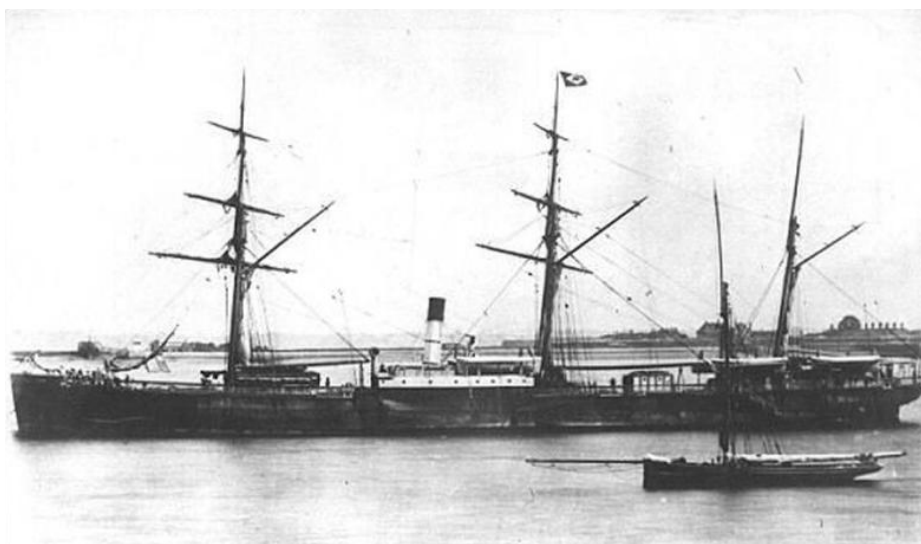
In 1871 a disaster befell the *Scawfell*: the ship had loaded cargo in Colombo and Tuticorin and was heading home, when the cargo caught fire and Thomson was forced into St Helena. The following is printed notification from the agents there:

Capt. Thomson, ship *Scawfell*, from Tuticorin reports that on the 18th September last two days after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, lat 32S, long 14 E, he discovered the cargo to be on fire, and on opening the hatches found the smoke to be so dense that it was utterly impossible for anyone to go below, so deemed it advisable, fearing the flames may ascend, to batten down the hatches and caulk them as well as fasten the skylights, so as to exclude all air from the cargo. The vessel is still on fire and has put into port for the purpose of extinguishing it. A survey will be held today. The crew have been obliged to live on deck since the discovery of the fire. NB The *Scawfell* has discharged a portion of cargo (all more or less damaged) and the fire now being extinguished, will as per recommendation of Surveyors, effect temporary repairs and proceed on her voyage . . . A quantity of cotton, coir, cocoa nut fibre being so much burnt was hove overboard as useless. A part of the upper deck on port side had to be cut away for the purpose of getting at the fire, and a large quantity of water pumped down.

Captain Thomson brought the *Scawfell* home safely, and she was sold to Wilson and Blair the following year.

Thomson's son George was indentured to Rathbones as an apprentice on the *Auriga* in 1876, and it is not clear why Thomson himself did not continue his employment with them. He joined another shipping firm in command of the steamship *Agamemnon*, with which he continued to break records; in October 1872 he wrote of a voyage of 32 days from Penang to Liverpool that it was 'the quickest passage on record . . . I think how lucky I have been to get clear of a sailing ship and I hope I will never be on one again'.

Perhaps a fitting final comment to record from Thomson would be the following, written in October 1872: 'We have made the quickest passage to Port Said that has been made by any of the steamers yet – with the exception of Rathbones which we do not pretend to beat'.



Alfred Holt's "Agamemnon" in 1866 (John I Bax collection www.red-duster.co.uk)

Harnessing the Wind.

The recent dispute between Russia and a neighbour, resulting in the disruption of gas supplies to several European countries, has, once again, concentrated minds on the problems of ensuring the uninterrupted supply of energy sources – principally oil and gas. The continuing conflict in Iraq, anti-Western feeling in Venezuela, Iran and elsewhere and the kidnapping of oil workers in West Africa are but some of the factors contributing to this anxiety.

Some years ago a study indicated that 60% of all oil reserves were contained within areas of political instability and, since that time, the situation has deteriorated. The consequences of a prolonged disruption to the supply of crude oil or gas would be catastrophic – and nowhere more so than in the global shipping industry.

Over the years much thought has been given to finding other sources of power and a return to coal fired steam boilers is undoubtedly the most obvious solution. Environmentalists will greet this with dismay and, in any case, it is doubtful if coal burners would be tolerated in many ports of the world. Nuclear power is NOT an option.

Almost 100 years ago the Royal Navy replaced the steam reciprocating engines of HMS Rattler with gas engines (and gas producers) and these proved to be extremely efficient – and allowed for a significant reduction in engine room manning. The gas producers were fuelled by anthracite and their gaseous product (used in a modified engine) replaced the liquid oil fuel used previously. Much later, in 1942 a Swedish coaster installed wood-fired gas producers but a Danish shipyard opted for the use of coal.

Perhaps Doctor Diesel – the inventor of the diesel engine – had a premonition about a shortage of crude oil because he was the man who first suggested the use of pulverised coal dust as a fuel for his compression ignition engine. Such an engine was produced in Britain and, although extremely promising in terms of economy and power output, the concept died in the late 40's.

Since man first ventured upon the water the concept of using the wind to afford propulsion has developed continuously and today this development has taken on a new emphasis. “Wind power” had one great disadvantage – the recipient usually had to travel, more or less, in the “direction” of the wind and it was this that concentrated minds on the need to find some way of enabling the user to travel into wind –and to be able to manoeuvre for navigational and collision-avoidance reasons. Early studies concentrated on a wind powered rotating device that would, by gearing, transmit its power into propulsive power. In the early 1800's one Robert Dawson came up with such an idea but his technical submission (to King George the Third) probably bewildered His Majesty as much as it does those who read it today.

Later that century a 2 ton yawl equipped with various sails and “a windmill driving a waterscrew propeller” successfully crossed the Atlantic. Preparing for any

eventuality, her two man crew had ensured that in the event of a lack of wind her screw propeller “could be turned by hand” but history does not relate if this means of propulsion (?) was adopted! As the years passed designs improved and concentrated on various concepts of propulsion. Germany probably led the way with the “Dyasnachiffe” and the ugly Flettner rotor ship (financed by the German Navy) whilst elsewhere the rigid wingsail and windmill design took priority. It was claimed that in gale force conditions a 20,000 ship could achieve a speed of 13 knots using either of these.

In 1984 I was invited onboard the Everard coasting vessel “Ashington” in Southampton where she was being fitted with the “Walker Wingsail System” – proven and tested at Cambridge University. She had been fitted with two freely rotating wingsail units on rigid mountings. The notes I made at the time recorded that the units were “in a triplane configuration and trimmed to the most advantageous angle in relation to the wind by the use of a fin without regard to minor alterations in the direction of the ships head” I hasten to explain that we were being addressed by an expert! Subsequent reports indicated that the scheme was a very great success and that significant fuel economies had been achieved – but it all went quiet!



“Ashington” fitted with the Walker Wing-Sail
www.cookeassociates.com/commercial

Modern thinking appears to concentrate on the same idea of harnessing wind power, used in tandem with more conventional methods of propulsion, to achieve economies in fuel and reduce funnel emissions.

Today, fuel costs represent some 60% of the operational costs of a commercial vessel – and more and more countries are seeking ways to reduce damage to the environment by funnel gases - so the search for “wind assisted propulsion” is unlikely to decrease.

Undoubtedly, the most interesting development – German again – relates to the use of “a high-tech kite flying at an altitude of up to 500 meters where winds are more stable than at sea level” and the makers claim a 50% reduction in the fuel consumption of this “hybrid sailing ship”. They also claim a

10% increase in speed. At least one “kite flying” ship is trading successfully and there are plans for more.

In Denmark, a company of naval architects is improving the design of its 1995 windship and claim that it will be profitable, both environmentally and economically, to build it. Japan is entering the arena and they – like the Danes – stress that it is not just the price of oil that legislates in favour of the windship. By minimising the amount of machinery space, cargo space can be maximised.

The race is on and the winner will be anyone’s guess – but this time the concept of harnessing the wind to assist in the propulsion of commercial vessels is unlikely to die.

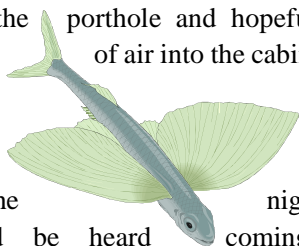
CRK 16/01/07



www.skysails.info

Flying Fish

In the days before air-conditioning, apart from those sleeping on deck on stretcher beds (see Cachalot 18), in attempt to make some sleep possible, all the ports were open and fitted with 'wind scoops' a metal device that fitted into the porthole and hopefully diverted a limited amount of air into the cabin. One problem was when we were in waters frequented by flying fish there were occasions when during the night hysterical screams could be heard coming from, usually, ladies cabins and when investigated by the Night-watchman he would find a scantily clad passenger, pointing to her bunk, where a cold, slimy, wriggling (but with very pretty coloured wings) fish was flapping its last - If the night watchman was feeling frivolous he might ask the passenger if she would like it cooked for her breakfast!



This is the last of the amusing anecdotes that were provided by our anonymous contributor and no doubt some of you will have identified him by now. I am sure that there are lots more such original tales out there and if so I would dearly like to hear from you. Otherwise I might have to start printing some committee minutes to fill these pages. You have been warned! Ed

Southampton’s Maritime Memorials.

History reveals that when the Roman army left Britain in 407AD they abandoned the town they had built, some 300 years before, on a bend in the River Itchen adjoining today’s Bitterne. It was called Clausentum and it was to be some 300 years before the Saxons established a new town in the area, albeit not quite on the same site. The new town was called Hamtun and it was centred in today’s St.Mary’s area –close to the waterfront. Understandably, given its geographical position it developed as an important sea port and despite the close if unwelcome attention of marauding Danes it flourished for three centuries.

Hamtun declined in 1000AD and the population dispersed throughout the surrounding countryside. Many reasons have been given for this downturn but the most persistent one is – the river Itchen silted up and seaborne trade ceased.

Unfortunately, my historical references do not reveal how the silt was dissipated but, dissipated it was (probably by the natural processes of tidal flow) and by the 12th century Hamtun was once again a thriving port to be supplemented a century later by the establishment of a shipbuilding industry. The fortunes of the port fluctuated and by the 16th. century most of the continental trade had gone to be replaced by a less rewarding coastal trade. The 18th. century saw a revival of the continental trade and an increase in coastal trade and the town thrived.

As seaborne trade increased it was evident that the port had to expand and new docks and shipyards soon lined the Itchen. In 1842 a rail link with London was established. In 1907 the White Star Line moved it ships and its operations to Southampton and, as they say –“The rest is History”.

Depending how one looks at it, it is, perhaps, a “happy” fact that Southampton, still the premier deep sea passenger port in the United Kingdom and a seaport with such a long and distinguished history, has so few maritime memorials. Given the number of ships that have traded to and from the city – many of them employing local men and women – it came as a surprise to discover that only seven “lost” ships are honoured and remembered on publicly displayed memorials throughout the city.

St.Michael’s Church in St.Michael’s Square –adjoining the one-time home of the Club – displays a wall tablet in the South aisle in memory of the Royal Mail Steam Packet “AMAZON” destroyed by fire in January 1852 on her maiden voyage from Southampton to the West Indies. Some 105 passengers and crew perished and 56 survived.

Southampton Old Cemetery in Hill Lane is the site of a dual memorial, in the form of an obelisk, to record the loss of the Royal Mail Steam Packets “RHONE” and “WYE”. Both vessels were lost October 1867 during a

West Indies hurricane with a combined loss of 166 passengers and crew and 50 survivors.

The same cemetery displays a memorial in the form of a pink granite column on a square base to honour the loss of the Royal Mail Steam Packet "DOURO".

In April 1882 this vessel was in collision with the Spanish "YRURAC BAT" off Cape Finisterre with the loss of 21 passengers and crew. Happily, 114 survived.



The Douro Memorial

The Western Esplanade is the site of one of the most impressive memorials – a canopied Portland stone drinking fountain in memory of those who lost their lives when the London & South Western Railway packet "STELLA" grounded off Alderney on March 30th. (Good Friday) 1899.

This memorial is even more interesting when one reads that it was erected by public subscription to recognise the bravery and sacrifice of Mrs. Mary Ann Rogers, Stewardess on the "STELLA" who, realising that a lifeboat was full to capacity and in danger of being swamped declined to board and remained on the sinking vessel.

Understandably, the White Star Liner "TITANIC" features prominently in any record of Southampton maritime memorials. Her loss, on April 15th.1912, following collision with an iceberg in the North Atlantic is very much a part of the city's heritage and many of Southampton's sons and daughters perished on that dreadful night.

To this day the casualty figures are disputed. The US Enquiry said 1,517, the UK Board of Trade enquiry ruled 1,503 and the UK Enquiry calculated 1,490 but the most widely accepted number is 1,502 following the revelation that Fireman John Coffey deserted in Queenstown (Ireland) following a premonition of disaster. Survivors totalled 704.

The Seaman's' Chapel in St.Mary's Church displays a tablet in memory of the 8 musicians who continued to play (reputedly "Nearer my God to Thee", although this

is also queried) as the ship sank. Another memorial to the musicians, in London Road, was destroyed during the blitz in 1940.

The old High Street Head Post Office once displayed a tablet in honour of the 2 British and 3 American Sea Post Officers who were lost with the ship. Its whereabouts now is uncertain (as the Post Office has moved) but reputedly it is in the Below Bar Post Office but possibly not on display. This will be confirmed, or otherwise, in the near future.

St.Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Bugle Street has a brass plate affixed to the leg of an oak table (low down, I believe) inscribed "In memory of the Restaurant Staff –subscribed by colleagues and friends". (*The tablet has now been moved to the top of the table so that it can be seen more easily. The Ritz Restaurant was a very fine restaurant for the exclusive use of 1st Class passengers, at an extra, very high, cost. It was managed by Luigi Gatti and of the 68 employees, who were neither crew nor passengers, 65 perished in the disaster.*

www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/item/4770 ..Ed)

In East Park, Above Bar there is a bronze and granite memorial to the Engineer Officers of "Titanic" subscribed by "their fellow Engineers and friends throughout the world"

The blitzed Holyrood Church, Below Bar is the present site of another Portland stone memorial to the crew (stewards, sailors and firemen) subscribed for by "the widows, mothers and friends of the crew". Originally, this stood on Southampton Common but it was vandalised in 1972 and moved to its present location that same year.

Finally, in the Chapel in The Southampton Seafarers' Centre, Queen's Terrace (in the building currently housing the Club) there are two memorial plaques dedicated to the memory of the seafarers – 7 Merchant Navy, 2 Royal Fleet Auxiliary and 3 Royal Navy – who lost their lives on May 25th. 1982 when the Cunard Ro-Ro "ATLANTIC CONVEYOR" was struck by an Exocet missile fired by an Argentinean aircraft during the Falklands War, and subsequently sank.

Most readers will know that there is a memorial on Tower Hill, London bearing the name of each and every Merchant Seaman –without exception – lost during WW2.

These names are also recorded in 3 leather bound volumes and it would appear that there are, at least, three sets of these volumes. One set is held in St.Paul's Cathedral, London, another set is held in Winchester Cathedral (and it is traditional for a representative of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club to place a small wreath on the opened book on Armistice Day) and the third, by amazing good fortune and the keen eyesight of a Club member, is now in possession of the Club. It is hoped that these three volumes will be afforded a suitable "resting place" in the near future and that they will, under supervision, be available for inspection by the public.

CRK 16/2/07

Rope Ends

Club Buffet Supper

Wednesday, 2nd May, 1900
In the
Club Room

A Club Buffet Supper with a talk entitled
"The Fastnet - Views from a Lighthouse"

By Leslie Coney

Beef and Pepper Salad
Selection of Continental Meats
Quiche
Duck Paté
Poached Salmon
Seasonal Salads and Potatoes
Roll and Butter

Apple and Blackberry Meringue
Orange and Lemon Mousse
Chocolate Profiteroles
Fruit Salad

There is a maximum seating capacity of fifty persons so please give your names to the office as soon as possible, so that we may advise the Seafarers' Centre in good time. The price is **£14.00** per person. Please make your payments to the Storekeeper, Functions Officer or Richard in the office before Friday, 20th April.

Curry Lunch

Saturday 19th May

This will be held at the P.O.S.H. Restaurant at the lower end of Queensway.

£7.50 per person

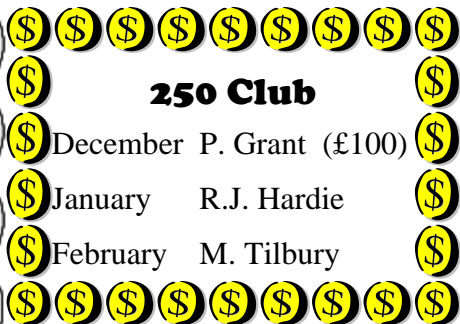
Cowes Fireworks Trip

Friday 10th August

The Club has reserved 50 places for this event, which is otherwise sold out already

£26 per person

A £10 deposit is required with each booking with the final balance due by the end of June. Names to the list or to the office. First come first served.



250 Club

 December P. Grant (£100)

 January R.J. Hardie

 February M. Tilbury

CAPTAINS & OFFICERS 2007

CAPTAIN:	P.Marriott
STAFF CAPTAIN:	L.R.Morris
SEA STAFF CAPTAIN:	I.Odd
BOATSTEERER:	G.Angas
STOREKEEPER:	B.Peck
POST CAPTAIN:	G.Angas
FUNCTIONS OFFICER:	G.F.Cartwright
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER:	D.Gates
ARCHIVIST:	H.Roberts
HON LEGAL ADVISOR:	S.Daniels

PAST CAPTAINS:

1963 Bayley R.E.A.	1968 Kirton E.J.	1973 O'Connor B.M.
1977 Corner A.J.	1978 Phelan C.N.	1982 Murphy F.C.
1985 Love P.A.	1986 Fenwick M.	1987 Renshaw G.
1988 Downer I.	1989 Noble J.M.	1990 Moffat J.C.
1991 Thomson I.B.	1992 Kelso C.R.	1994 Moore P.
1995 Stead P.J.	1996 Hall L.W.	1997 Hughes T.
1998 Smart J.C.	1999 Plowman E.	2000 Clarke T.E.
2001 Carr D.A.	2002 Stirling I.W.	2004 Tinsley A.R.
2005 Harwood S.	2006 Angas G.B.F.	

HARPOONERS:

G.Draysey, R.Dunn, P.Fost, R.Gage, A.Gravestock, G.Lang, P.Leece, A.McDowall, J.Mileusnic, R.Olden, K.Owen, F.Pedersen, R.Pretty, J.R.K.Smart, J.C.Smith, M.Wallace, J.Whorwood, T.Winsborough.

GENERAL COMMITTEE: Includes the Captains & Officers, Past Captains and Harpooners identified above

EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE:

P.Marriott (Chair), G.Angas(Sec), D.Gates, R.Kelso,* J.Mileusnic, R.Olden, K.Owen, B.Peck, J.R.K.Smart, A.Tinsley.

ENTERTAINMENTS COMMITTEE:

G.F.Cartwright (Chair), G.Angas (Sec), T.E.Clark, R.Dunn, P.Fost, R.Gage, A.Gravestock, A.McDowall, F.Pedersen, J.R.K.Smart, J.Whorwood.

CHURCH COMMITTEE:

S.Harwood (Chair), G.Angas (Sec), G.Draysey, P.Fost, P.Leece, A.McDowall, R.Pretty, J.C.Smith P.J.Stead,* I.Thompson,* T.Winsborough

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:

D.Gates (Chair), G.Angas (Sec), T.E.Clark,* M.Wallace, B.Peck.

* = Co-opted members

CHAPLAINS: Rev'd A.Huckett, Rev'd P.Foley. Rev'd F.Sahetapy.

SHANTYMAN: D.King.

NEW CACHALOTS

J.S. Downs
R.J.M. Grey
R.P. Gribble
Mrs A. Hunt
N. Jeffrey
G. Lock
J.D. Young

The proposed trip to Copenhagen did not attract enough support to make it viable and has had to be cancelled. However, for those disappointed at having to forego another continental jaunt, all is not lost. Lionel Hall has come up with two other suggested options which might better suit members' timetables.

The trip would be scheduled for a Monday-Thursday in September or October. Both tours feature excellent hotels, channel crossings with Brittany Ferries and relaxed itineraries. Both include:

hi-spec luxury coach with toilet and video
outward crossing via Portsmouth/St. Malo
return sailing via Caen/Portsmouth
breakfasts in the hotel
4-course dinner on board ship en route home.

1. The Loire Valley. ~£250 pp

two nights 3-star hotel accommodation
cabin accommodation with private facilities for outward
overnight crossing
full sightseeing programme including a visit to wine
producer Gratien & Meyer

2. North Brittany Coast. ~ £305 pp

two nights 4-star hotel accommodation (Grande Hotel at
Dinard)
welcome drink on arrival
cabin accommodation for both the outward and return
crossings
3-course dinner in the hotel on the first night
full sightseeing programme including visits to Dinan,
St.Malo & Mont St Michael

For further details and to register any interest and your
choice of options please contact Lionel Hall or the office.

-----oOo-----
lastword@lloydslist.com

Songs for supper. To Southampton's Guildhall for the fabled
Sea Pie Supper of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club, with
600 maritime folk sitting down to the celebrated menu,
unchanged in living memory.

Port director Doug Morrison who tells a tall tale with exceptional
élan, was the principal guest.

The event is the venue for the annual change of flag with Peter
Marriott, who many of us recall was the first chief inspector of
the MAIB, taking over from George Angas, who we remember
did great things at Warsash.

During his year in charge Angas instituted a recruitment drive to
increase the number of club members, who are known as
"Cachalots" and enjoy numerous local privileges.

Being able to sing loudly, as the Sea Pie Supper concludes with
high volume sea shanties, is clearly one of the qualifications.

The Club room is currently open three days a week,
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 1130 - 1500. Liz will be
only too happy to serve you a drink and she can take your
orders for meals, sandwiches and 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:

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

Tel/Fax: 023 8022 6155

E-mail: office@cachalots.org.uk
Editor: te.clark@tiscali.co.uk
www.cachalots.org.uk

captain@cachalots.org.uk
staffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk
seastaffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk
boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk
storekeeper@cachalots.org.uk
postcaptain@cachalot.org.uk
functions@cachalots.org.uk
archivist@cachalots.org.uk
legal@cachalots.org.uk
editor@cachalots.org.uk

Dates for your Diary

Sat MAR10 Curry Lunch, **POSH Restaurant.**
Fri MAR30 Skittles, Southampton (Old) Green BC
Sat APR 14 Wine Tasting, Buffet Lunch, Club Room
Wed MAY 2 Club Buffet Supper, Club Room
Wed MAY16 Entertain Watch Ashore to Lunch
Sat MAY19 Curry Lunch, POSH Restaurant
Wed MAY23 Technical Seminar, tba
Wed JUN 13 Club Buffet Supper, Club Room
Thu JUN 21 Shipping Festival, Winchester Cath.
Sat JUL 14 Curry Lunch, Club Room
Fri AUG10 Cowes Week Fireworks Cruise
Sat SEP 15 Curry Lunch, Club Room
Tue OCT ?? Last Night of Proms Concert Tidworth
Sat OCT 20 Autumn Dinner Dance, Botley
Fri NOV 2 Harpooners' Dinner
Tue NOV13 Sale of Sea Pie Supper tickets
Sat DEC 1 Christmas Dinner, King's Court
Sat DEC 8 Christmas Lunch, King's Court

Gone Aloft

J.Q. Lees