

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.25

September 2007

CAPTAIN'S LOG

According to the seasonal calendar summer is nearly over and autumn is just around the corner. Of course summer is the traditional time for many people to take their holidays though in the case of Cachalots it seems to me that holiday time is anytime during the year – perhaps prompted by special bargains! However, if any of you have taken your holidays during our glorious summer of 2007 I trust that you found somewhere dry and warm. For those of you who stayed at home I hope you were not affected in any way by the horrendous flooding which hit so many parts of the UK.

Janet and I have not been on holiday yet so were able to attend the majority of functions which have taken place since I wrote my previous log. June was a particularly busy month in that respect. On 10th June we were honoured to be invited to attend the dinner held by the Lord-Lieutenant, Mrs Mary Fagan, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. The dinner was held in the wonderful setting of the Great Hall in Winchester and it was a great pleasure to be at the same table as Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles, who as you know is a great supporter of our Club.

Two days later there was the Club Buffet Supper when Lieutenant Colonel Stuart McLean gave a fascinating presentation entitled, "The Royal Military Police in the Gulf War, 1991". During the Gulf War Stuart was the Provost Marshal in Kuwait and he is known to many of us from our visits to the Tidworth Barracks for the Band Concerts.

Then on 14th June I had the honour of representing the Club at the annual dinner of the Nautical Institute, when I was lucky enough to win a bottle of wine in the raffle – a fine Ukrainian red which I have "put down" for drinking on a special future occasion!

The Shipping Festival Service at Winchester Cathedral took place on 21st June and was as ever a very moving and splendid occasion. The weather on that occasion was kind to us and we were able to enjoy wine and nibbles in the Deanery Garden after the Service. Sadly though the numbers attending the Service were not as great as we had hoped for, especially considering the amount of pre-publicity that had been given to the event. Please, put in your diaries the date of next year's Service which is 19th June and do come along.

July was a much quieter time with only one event and that was when Janet and I were invited to an evening reception on Trinity House Vessel "Patricia". The vessel was in Southampton for a brief respite while undertaking the annual inspection and checking of the navigation aids around our coast. It was a pleasure to meet a number of other members of our Club who were there in various capacities.

On August 2nd Janet and I represented the Club at the Royal Southern Yacht Club when their Commodore, Annette Newton, held their pre-Cowes Week reception. Then of course on August 10th there was the Cowes Week Fireworks Cruise on ss "Shieldhall". Once again the weather was clement and what a spectacular show it was. Needless to say we were all in very capable hands with Cachalots Peter Tambling as Master and Terry Clark as pilot. Once again I managed to win a bottle of wine in the raffle though by now that one has been drunk and enjoyed!

So as autumn approaches with the Club's busy social calendar ahead I look forward to the second half of my 12 months as Captain and hope to see as many of you as possible both in the club rooms and at those events.

Peter Marriott
Club Captain

Curry Lunch

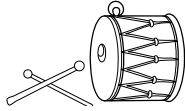
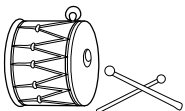
**Saturday 15th September
at the
Southampton Seafarers' Centre**

This Curry Lunch will be held downstairs in the SSC to allow those members who cannot manage the stairs at either the Club or at P.O.S.H. to join us. Let us hope that you can join them. Alternatives to curry by prior order only please.

Just **£6.00** per head.

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

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



This year the **Last Night of the Proms concert at Tidworth** is on **Tuesday 23rd October**

Price, to include coach fare and buffet supper, expected to be much the same as last year, £24.50. 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.



Meet the Queen

The 964.5 feet, 90,000 GRT, latest addition to the Cunard Line cruising fleet "Queen Victoria" is due to arrive from the builders, Fincantieri of Italy, on the morning of Saturday, 8 December, and to depart on her maiden voyage on Tuesday, 11 December.

Arrival and departure times are not yet available, but the "Shieldhall" is planning to "meet and greet" her on arrival and to bid "bon voyage" on sailing day. We have, booked a limited number of spaces on each of these trips at £23.50 per person, even though the arrival day coincides with the Club's Christmas Lunch.

Those who wish to join the Shieldhall for either or both these trips are requested to contact the Club Office without delay. Normal "Shieldhall" booking terms will apply, i.e. a deposit of £10 per person when booking, and the balance of £13.50 on month before sailing. Cheque payments should be made payable to "The Cachalots".



AUTUMN DINNER DANCE

Saturday 20th October

**Brook House Masonic Centre,
Botley**

*Smoked Haddock & Prawn Vol-au-vent
on a Bed of Mixed Lettuce*

*Loin of Pork
With a
Dijon & Herb Crust
With Cream, Apple & Cider Sauce
Seasonal Vegetables & Potatoes*

*Gateau Cortina
A Chocolate Sponge Soaked in Rum
Filled and Coated with a
Sweet Cream and White Chocolate*

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

**A non-alcoholic fruit punch will be
served on arrival
Drinks at sensible prices
Music by**

Saraband

**Black Tie,
1915 for 2000.
Priced at £29 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.

Welcome to this bumper edition of **The Cachalot**, a full 16 pages this time, and even an article on a modern ship. Not just modern, but state of the art, 2007 modern. The piece comes courtesy of Captain Robin Plumley who is one of the last of that rare breed, a fully employed British Master of a British ship! Wow!

Please keep those contributions trickling in, all will be gratefully received.

We have also decided to give in to Royal Mail blackmail, (now that would have been a more apt name than Consignia), forego the origami, and post it out to you unfolded as a large letter. The postage has gone up yet again but what the heck. Royal Mail is trying not to let on, their web site still quotes the pre April prices, but the latest rates can be found on eBay, where most of the world's commerce now seems to be taking place. - Ed

THE BOATSTEERER'S LOCKER

Introduction

1. Just thought you might like to know what is going on, in administrative and development terms, in and about your Club. These developments take place with the knowledge and positive support of your Captain, Staff Captain, Sea Staff Captain, Officers and fellow Cachalots. They are reported in the minutes of the appropriate committees, or call in and see us at the Club should you require more detail, you are all assured of a warm welcome and interesting discussion. Nothing stays still for very long in this day and age so here we go.

Clubrooms

2. The Southampton Seafarers Centre is receiving quotes for the refurbishment of the ground floor entrance foyer that will consist of the replacing of the existing slatted ceiling structure with a false ceiling and down lighter illumination. They will provide us with some paint and, in order to help with minimising the SSC costs, myself and other volunteer members will soojie (not in dictionary!) the walls and staircase ceilings down before painting same. After this the SSC will replace the existing somewhat worn and stained foyer and stair carpets. Hopefully the end effect will be more attractive to all concerned.
3. We are having a brass plaque and hardwood base made to attach to the outside wall. This will announce to all and sundry who and where we are.

Club Profile

4. Discussions are being held both internally (Club Technical Seminars working group) and externally (ABP, NI and Business Southampton) to consider the viability of the Club becoming involved, in the aftermath of the *MS Napoli* grounding and salvage operations, with the holding of a half day seminar to consider the effect on south coast ports of the grounding of a 6,000+ teu container ship off the south coast. The objective of such a seminar is not to scaremonger, but to consider the second stage, i.e. after the

initial emergency operation has been completed, criteria that will have to be addressed should such an event occur. In addition to this the Technical Seminars working group is also considering a menu of topics and speakers for our own internal seminars to be held this autumn and next year during our 80th anniversary. For more details contact the Club.

5. The Club has become a City Champion. This is one of several business initiatives developed by Business Southampton who's remit it is to assist and encourage the economic prosperity of Southampton and the southern region. Sea City and Port – City Futures are two other parallel initiatives that consider the development of Southampton's maritime industry. Your Boatsteerer and Storekeeper attended a tour of the docks and port areas by both coach and Solent pleasure cruiser who together with about 20 other City Champion members, listened to a presentation of the Port of Southampton by the Port Director, Mr D. Morrison and discussed port and other maritime related issues. Your Captain and Boatsteerer will also be attending a business breakfast at the Southampton Boat show to make further contacts within the local maritime world. For more information log on to: www.businesssouthampton.com and www.seacity.co.uk
6. One contact resulting from the port cruise was with Angela Wright who is the Chief Executive of Solent Skill Quest, part of the Southampton & South West Hants Education Business Partnership. We have had a brief discussion about how the Cachalots could assist in getting the word out to the local secondary schools that the shipping and maritime community exists on their doorstep and can provide a host of potential career opportunities. Again, watch this space.
7. Discussions have taken place between your Captain, Boatsteerer and the Editor of The Southern Daily Echo, who is in agreement that the Club could act as a conduit between 'the industry' and the SDE to report the successes and good news stories so that between us we can regenerate a significant awareness of matters maritime within the pages of the SDE. Your Boatsteerer has had discussions with members of the Southampton Shipowners Association and Business Southampton with a view to getting their agreement to this or a similar arrangement. The details have yet to be agreed, i.e. lines of communication, vetting of articles before publishing etc.

Conclusion

8. If you wish to have your say on the above or want to contribute idea/suggestions for future Club developments, please phone, email, or better still drop in and see us.

George Angas, Boatsteerer, August 23rd 2007.



This is the first part of Chapter 9 of "The Unforgiving Minute", the personal memoirs of Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles. It will be continued in the next issue.

Tobruk

The 8th Army was in retreat in April 1941. Commander Watson's idea was that some small floating mines should be taken up to Benghazi before it fell and left in the harbour to endanger the incoming enemy shipping. So he ordered me to take 100 British R-type mines up from Alexandria to Benghazi.

These mines had originally been developed early in the war to be flown into northern Europe and dropped into the River Rhine. The idea was that the strong tidal current would drift them down the river to get foul of ships, barges, bridges, etc and do some damage. As far as I know this scheme did not work very well and a spare lot was sent out to the Middle East in case they came in handy.

I had never seen these mines before. I was put in an ex-Norwegian trawler called HMS Skud V and with me a Mr McCann from the Naval Armament Depot in Alexandria. Together we had to find out how the mines worked because there were no instruction books. When we got into Tobruk Harbour I told the Naval Officer in Charge what we were supposed to be doing and he said "Well, Benghazi fell to the enemy three days ago and you had better hurry, otherwise they will be here next." So we landed the mines, put them in a cave, sent Skud V back to Alexandria and I remained in Tobruk.

On 5th April 1941 Tobruk was completely surrounded by Rommel's Afrika Korps, and the famous "Siege of Tobruk" had begun. This was the beginning of a very fascinating time for me. Navy House was very short-staffed. Ships of all sorts, especially fast destroyers, came in every night and had to be unloaded and away again by dawn because the harbour was under constant attack by enemy bombers. There was also a large German gun called "Bardia Bill" which had a tiresome habit of firing shells into the Docks at odd moments each day. One of my jobs was to take a party of torpedo ratings over to a large Italian liner called "Liguria" which was sunk in the harbour and blow down her masts and funnels which were believed to be an aiming point. But fortunately the enemy must have been short of ammunition because Bardia Bill did not open up very frequently.

After a few weeks the rather elderly Reserve Officer who was First Lieutenant of Navy House in Tobruk, went sick and so Captain Smith RNR, the Naval Officer in Charge, ordered me to take over as First Lieutenant. This I did for several months - and it was an unusual and most interesting job.

The strategic reason for holding onto the small area around Tobruk was to prevent the fuel and supplies needed by Rommel's Afrika Korps being unloaded at the port. Thus all his supplies had to be unloaded in Benghazi or Tripoli and then brought up across the desert to his forward troops.

The perimeter round Tobruk was defended by a composite force of Australian Army, a Polish brigade and some British units. All these came under the orders of the Garrison Commander, the Australian General, Leslie Morshead.

(Note: Interestingly, General Morshead was later a close friend of the Bushell family in Sydney. There is a Morshead memorial fountain, a beautiful structure, in the park just off MacQuarie Street, Sydney.)

General Morshead conducted a wonderfully stubborn defence over many months. The whole perimeter consisted of a very strong line of trenches, barbed wire and mines. The enemy on the far side did not make any strenuous efforts to break in, because they had not the strength, and their front line right up on the Egyptian border was more important to them.

General Morshead's Chief of Staff was a splendid tall Australian Colonel called "Gaffer" Lloyd. His headquarters were located in a large but very low and crowded cave. On one occasion the Germans did penetrate the frontier and several of their tanks got through and were making for the harbour. A despatch rider on a motorcycle spotted this and rushed down to the headquarters, jumped off his bike, pushed the camouflage netting to one side, went in and said breathlessly "Sir, Sir, there are lots of German tanks coming straight down the road". Gaffer Lloyd replied calmly in his broad Australian "Well, tell the bastards not to come in here: There are too many people in this bloody cave already". In the event, these tanks did not get very far. They were destroyed or turned back.

The bombing was the real threat to Tobruk. The Luftwaffe had landing grounds at El Adam and all along the desert. The distance from Egypt was much too far for the Royal Air Force to give us any protection. I think it is true to say that I never saw a single British aircraft throughout the time I was in Tobruk. The Stuka divebombers attacked us endlessly day after day. There were over a thousand air-raids during a six months period. The only defence we had was from a large number of extremely

formidable anti-aircraft units of the Royal Artillery. The harbour was full of wrecks, and there were very few remaining buildings. The largest building was Navy House itself - large, white and prominent: There were air-raid shelters in its cellars.

One day I was in the air-raid shelter during a particularly heavy raid. A large bomb from a Stuka hit Navy House and completely demolished its south-west wing. I was immediately underneath this and the force of the explosion was absolutely devastating. The lights went out and the air was so full of sand and dust that it was almost impossible to breath. But we all got out and there were no casualties.

Often it seemed wiser to take cover in one of the innumerable slit-trenches. One day I was running to dive into a slit-trench in front of Navy House when a stick of bombs fell - in fact one on each side of me. These Stuka bombs were fitted with screaming whistles to affect our morale. I heard them whistling down and realised I would not reach the slit-trench in time so I hurled myself flat on the ground. I was deafened but not hurt. An interesting point is that in the desert campaign as a whole, by far the largest proportion of people wounded from bombing were hit above the waist; the bomb splinters fly upwards, so lying flat was the best place to be.

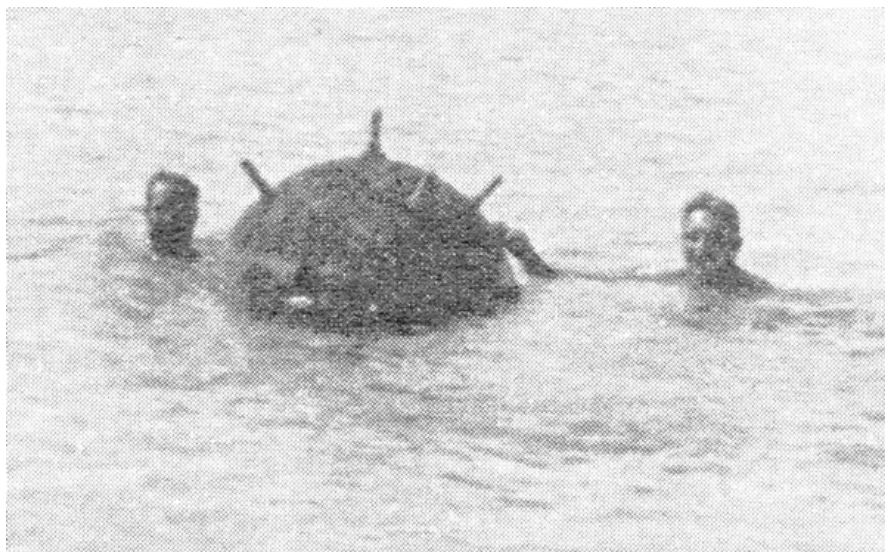
Looking back over the whole period of the siege, it seems remarkable how relatively few casualties there were. Our anti-aircraft units, which caused the enemy most trouble, were a prime target and did suffer many casualties.

To keep the Garrison supplied with reinforcements, ammunition, fuel, food and fresh water, was the greatest overall problem. It was about 350 miles from Alexandria to Tobruk. All our ships were in great danger from enemy aircraft not only while in Tobruk Harbour but on passage to and fro.

Most of the personnel, and a large amount of vital stores, were brought up by individual destroyers which came at high speed, dashed into the harbour in the middle of the night, unloaded as quickly as possible and sailed again hoping to be under fighter cover from Alexandria by daylight. Nevertheless, many destroyers were lost on the "Tobruk Spud Run".

In addition to destroyers, a collection of small merchant ships, trawlers, little tankers, landing craft and even small local schooners crept up the coast one at a time, hoping to arrive without attracting air attack.

On one occasion a merchant ship unloaded her cargo in a great hurry onto a large lighter which was moored in the middle of the harbour. This would be a prime target, so Captain Smith ordered the Libyan Labour Corps to take some small barges out and bring all the stores ashore. It was beautiful, calm, still weather with a full moon. It seemed certain that the Germans would bomb it during the night, so the Libyans went on strike and refused to go. Tough old Captain Smith sent for me and said "Number One, take out every sailor in the whole base party and get that damn stuff ashore". I must admit that I felt pretty anxious on receiving this order. The job was clearly vital, but I had a sense that it was extremely perilous. However I rounded up all the sailors I could find and out we went and within a few hours we had got all the stuff ashore and had not been bombed. One thing that I particularly remember was that one young sailor had found some rum among the cargo, had put it to good use, and was then on his knees shouting at the top of his voice and praying for his mother. This was demoralising the others. So I ordered a Petty Officer to knock him out and send him ashore with the next load. Otherwise a quiet evening!



*Morgan and Jack Davies (Canadian RNVR) swimming
a mine clear of the harbour entrance. Tobruk 1941.
This is not quite as dangerous as it looks.*

R.R.S. JAMES COOK

Cachalot Captain Robin Plumley is Master of this latest addition to the NERC fleet of research ships and he has given us this description of his vessel and of one of her first tasks.

Additional information, images and links for the science and the ship can be found at www.classroomatsea.net

The vessel is owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) who fund and manage research and training in environmental science in the UK. NERC funded research covers the full range of atmospheric, earth, terrestrial and aquatic sciences – from exploring the deep oceans to observing the earth from space. The vessel is managed and operated by the National Marine Facilities Division, based at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton.



RRS James Cook replaces the RRS Charles Darwin, now with Gardline, and complements RRS Discovery and will play a significant role in delivering NERC's science priorities in the coming decades.

Substantially larger than its predecessor, it is fitted with some of the latest research equipment.

She houses eight science laboratories and can accommodate up to 31 scientists and 23 officers and crew. The deck area has specialised handling equipment which can deploy remotely operated underwater vehicles to explore the deep oceans and sea floor.

21st Century Science

Oceans are a key part of the Earth system. They cover almost three quarters of the Earth's surface and hold over nine-tenths of the planet's water. We use and exploit them for food, energy and materials, and they play a vital role in regulating global climate.

But the oceans are changing. Average temperatures are increasing, causing sea levels to rise and contributing to coral bleaching. By the end of the century, seas will be more acidic than at any time over the past 25 million years because they are absorbing more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Although many uncertainties surround the future state of our seas, such changes will inevitably affect marine productivity, the global carbon cycle, atmospheric composition, weather patterns and coastal landscapes, making the oceans a key focus for NERC research.

The *RRS James Cook* has been designed to enable scientists to carry out a wide range of research from the atmosphere above to the earth's crust beneath the ocean depths.

Mud Volcanoes and Canyons

Background and scientific rationale:

The major objective of the new EU-funded FP6 Integrated Project HERMES (Hotspot Ecosystem Research on the Margins of European Seas), coordinated by the National Oceanography Centre Southampton, is to understand how environmental variables affect the biodiversity, structure, function and dynamics of faunal communities on the continental slope. The overall aim is to provide the scientific context for the management for European continental margin systems. The work is important in habitat conservation, the potential disposal of carbon dioxide, hydrocarbon exploitation, fisheries management, and the long-term effect of pollutants reaching deep-sea ecosystems from land. As part of HERMES, the NOC is committed to work on 'hotspot' ecosystems including canyons, cold seeps, landslides and coral mounds, as well as the slope sedimentary environments surrounding each of these hotspot types.

The NOC ROV cruise on *RRS James Cook* was one of the key cruises outlined in the HERMES proposal. It is planned to bring together scientific experimentation and investigation in canyons, cold seeps and open slope areas with a major public outreach campaign that will advertise HERMES, NOC and NERC science.

To accomplish this, 3 legs of 2 weeks duration were undertaken from mid-May through to early July 2007.

Leg 1 - Gulf of Cadiz Mud Volcanoes.

Background information has been built up during a *RRS Charles Darwin* cruise in 2006 when bathymetric, video and high resolution seismic surveys were undertaken over a number of mud volcanoes at varying depths. On *RRS James Cook* in May 2007, the ROV has been used to image the mud volcanoes in detail and to identify fluid escape areas/features. Sampling has been carried out to identify the origin of the fluids and whether they are biogenic or thermogenic. Cold seep communities living on the mud volcanoes, identified on previous cruises have been sampled and the environmental conditions on which they depend established.

Various coring devices have been used to recover samples of sediment, with some successful cores up to 10 metres long.

Leg 2 - Canyons off Portugal.

Here, the ecosystems in the Nazare, Cascais and Setubal Canyons provide a considerably greater supply of organic material than on the adjacent continental slopes. Sedimentary processes can be dramatic.

The ROV has been used to sample organisms seen during the dives and locate these precisely in relation to the canyon environments. Some of these appear to have become specialised for canyon environments. Another major objective will be to sample the deep channel (thalweg) that cuts into the canyon floor. We have made numerous attempts with a wide range of instruments to sample this feature but without success. The thalweg is however critical as this is where the fastest currents flow and the greatest sediment transport takes place.

Leg 3 - Whittard Canyon.

The HERMES partners have identified Whittard Canyon, on the northern margin of the Bay of Biscay, as an active system which has continued to transport sand to the deep ocean through the Holocene, when sand input to many canyons, including Nazare and Setubal, was cut off by rising sea levels. Although this canyon is less well studied than canyons on the Portuguese margin, bathymetry and backscatter maps allow the sand transport paths to be identified. The major objective in Whittard Canyon is to undertake a mapping and sampling transect down the canyon axis, in order to make a preliminary assessment of the similarities and differences in biological habitat between this canyon and the less active and less energetic Portuguese canyons. This will form the basis of a more extensive programme later in the HERMES project.

Outreach:

There have been 2 teachers participating on each of the 3 legs, 2 from the UK, the remainder from Spain and Portugal. They have fed information from the cruise directly to the classroom in each country and hopefully enthused young people in marine research. Media events have been undertaken at each port call in Cadiz and Lisbon. See www.classroomatsea.net

I hope Robin will forgive me for this little anecdote related to me by the Master of one of the Royal Research Ships when I was piloting in Southampton.

In earlier, less technological days, it was not unknown for the assorted scientists, boffins and researchers that were carried onboard to get so engrossed in their experiments that they would dangle all sorts of sampling equipment over the side without notifying the bridge first, with predictable results in the event of unexpected manoeuvring or a change in the weather. It became understood among the long suffering officers and crew that RRS really stood for Rope Round Screw! - Ed



Captain Robin Plumley welcoming HRH The Princess Royal on board RRS James Cook when she named the vessel at a ceremony at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, in February 2007.

A Letter Home.

A few weeks ago I read a letter written by a young seafaring Apprentice to his mother and father. It is a “matter of fact” letter, written some 121 years ago and the young man writes to reassure his parents that, despite the loss of his ship, he is “safe and getting on all right again”.

The full rigged ship “Dunnottar Castle” was built in 1876 by the Clyde shipbuilders Stephenson and Co. of Dalmuir and her owners were Thomas Skinner and Co. of London and Glasgow. An iron hulled ship, she was 258 feet in length and the gross tonnage was 1,750. Early records show her trading to New Zealand on charter to Shaw, Savill and Co. and mention is made of her “commodious and neatly fitted” passenger accommodation for six saloon and 16 steerage passengers.

The apprentice, Edward J. Holl, joined the ship in London early in 1886 and in May of that year the ship completed discharge of general cargo in Sydney, Australia before loading a full cargo of coal for discharge in California, USA. In his letter, written on passage to California, Edward reports fine weather but comments that “the navigation is rather dangerous as you are continually on the lookout for reefs, shoals and rocks, most of which you can’t see until you are on top of them –as we found to our cost”

Lord Howe Island was passed on June 12th. and the ship made steady progress passing Fiji Islands on the 19th. A week later “Dunnottar Castle” crossed the 180th. meridian and the young man noted “so we had eight days in the week but they took jolly fine care to make it come to two pea soup days”. Obviously the Chief Steward was aware of the ravages an extra days victualling would inflict on his accounts!

A few days later the ship passed Sophia Island and then Holl casually comments

“I saw nothing more until we found ourselves on top of Cure or Ocean Island (28 degrees 23 minutes North and 178 degrees 25 minutes West) on July 15th. It was in the first watch when we struck and the second mate’s watch on deck. I was keeping a lookout on the poop as we expected to make the land that night; well, one bell had been struck and the watch called. I had just hove the log and told the second mate how many she was doing and whilst he went down telling the skipper I thought I could smell the land and when the second mate came up I told him and we both had a good look round with the glasses but could see nothing. He went to tell the Captain but almost before he could get on deck we found ourselves grazing over some rocks and the next minute we were on top of a coral reef, and all that night we were hauling the yards round and round trying to back her off, but all to no purpose. There was a ground swell on at the time and every time it caught her it bumped her further on and almost shook the sticks out of her. As soon as daylight appeared we saw that we were in between two reefs with Cure Island about eight miles distant on our starboard bow.

From the time we struck until Monday morning we did not stop running out kedges, discharging cargo etc. but could not keep the water under so had all the boats over and provisioned them”

On Monday, July 19th. – four days after the grounding – the crew abandoned ship and made for Cure Island where they arrived in the afternoon “and found it to be nothing more than a big coral sandbank about two miles long, half a mile wide and the highest part about ten feet above the level of the sea with no sign of living thing or vegetation on it”

Tents were rigged and the exhausted crew slept soundly and on the next day (Tuesday) some of the crew returned to the ship and brought ashore the remainder of the food stores and the charts, compass, chronometer and other navigational equipment.

Other crew members rigged more tents and dug wells in search of water “which they found but it was rather brackish”

On Wednesday, after some discussion it was agreed that the island was so remote that any chance of being rescued was extremely unlikely and so the Mate, Apprentice Holl and five hands volunteered to sail a lifeboat some 1200 miles to the nearest “habitation” and having taken supplies for a month, they said farewell to their shipmates and, on Saturday, July 24th, set sail.

Holl continues “we took enough provisions for a month as we expected to get the NE trades and run down in 15 to 20 days but, instead of that we got a wind from the south’ard and east’ard and had a dead muzzler right the way down. The old hooker only had one good quality about her and that was that she was a good sea boat, but as for sailing she would go like an old crab. After we had been out a fortnight we found that it would be like taking us two or three months – instead of two or three weeks – so we had to start and economise our provisionsso on August 23rd. we had to buckle down to one biscuit and one pint of water a day. On August 28th. we decided to alter course for Necker Island in hopes of being able to get water”

August 31st. saw the boat approaching Necker Island but as they got within five miles of it they experienced a strong offshore current and so the landing was aborted.

Rations were cut further (“as we thought a little was much better than none at all”)

and course was set for Bird Island which was sighted on September 5th. Again, no landing was possible as the island turned out to be “nothing more than a big steep rock, but we managed to catch two boobies (sea birds) and as we had a little spirit lamp in the boat we had a jolly good feed”.

Course was set for Kauai and with a freshening wind the boat made a good passage of some 110 miles in four days but then the wind dropped and “for the last 30 we pulled every inch as it was a dead calm and we only had enough tucker in the boat for a day.

When we got near enough to the shore to make things out I can tell you it raised our spirits to see smoke rising and afterwards we saw some natives galloping down on horseback. At first sight of these fellows we hardly knew if they were civilised or not.

But, at any rate, as soon as they saw us they came off in their canoes and one of them spoke a little broken English so we told them we were hungry and thirsty. Well, they took us ashore in their canoes and I can assure you that I never met a kinder hearted set of people. You would have split your sides to see us when we landed on the beach, not one of us could stand and we rolled about as if we had been drinking. They took us up to their huts and gave us everything they had and if ever I had a feed in my life I had one then”.

The date was Sunday, September 10th. – some 52 days after they had set sail from Cure Island – and they were now concerned for the safety of those they had left on the island, with little food and brackish water. Their hosts agreed to take the Mate to a small port called Hanalai where he would find an English steamer “which he did and they came round after us and brought us all on to Honolulu where we arrived on Monday night. On the Tuesday the consul chartered a steamer to go down for the rest of the boys so she did not lose much time. The mate has gone with her so we hope to see the rest of them up here in a week or two. The people here have been very kind to us and we are living like young fighting cocks”

What Edward J. Holl was not to know was that, within a very few days of his departure from Cure Island to get help for his shipmates, the full rigged ship “Birnam Wood” passed close to Cure Island, spotted the balance of the crew and took them to Valparaiso, Chile. When the chartered steamer “Waialeale” arrived off the distant atoll they found it was deserted – with the exception of the three dogs from “Dunnottar Castle” – two terriers and a retriever –which were duly rescued and brought back to Honolulu to be reunited with Holl and his six shipmates.

Researching this event threw up another very interesting aspect of this story – the reason for the extreme haste with which the Hawaiian Commissioner in Honolulu agreed (with the British Consul)) to share the cost of the rescue steamer “Waialeale” to voyage to Cure Atoll in a fruitless effort to rescue the already-rescued balance of the crew of “Dunnottar Castle”.

Hearing the British seafarers were on an uninhabited atoll the Commissioner feared that they would annex it for the British Crown and, on arrival at the island, his first duty was to row ashore and claim it for the Kingdom of Hawaii.

On July 4th. 2006 an American maritime archaeology team discovered “ the massive hull sections, frames and deck machinery of an enormous iron hull sailing vessel” and, after a little research, they identified the wreck as being that of “Dunnottar Castle”. Some years after her stranding an Enquiry ruled that her loss “was, most likely, caused by a defective chronometer”. In those days “time” and “longitude” were closely related!

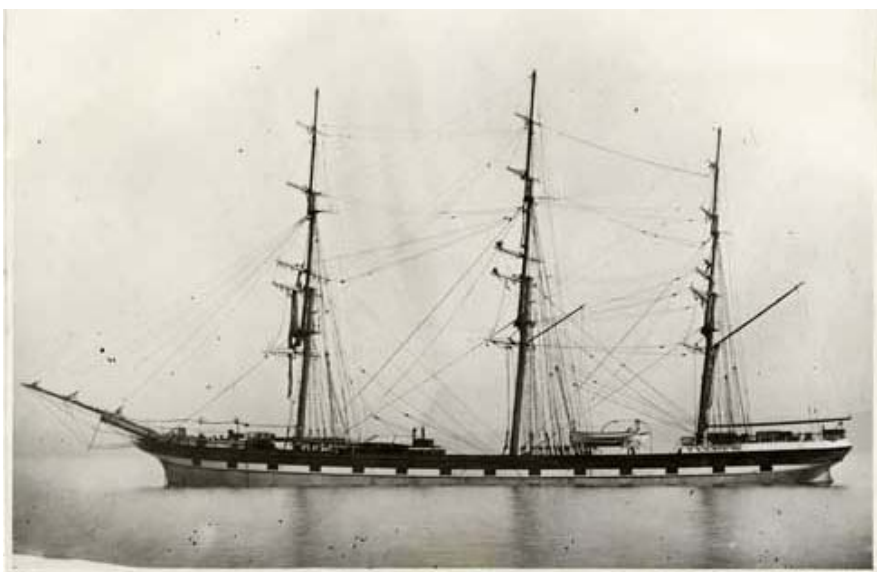
Apprentice Holl returned to the United Kingdom and continued to pursue a seafaring career. In 1900 he joined the Union-Castle Line (formed that year by the merger of The Union Line and The Castle Line).and rose to command in that company.

Following the merger, the house flag of the amalgamated company was hoisted on March 17th. 1900 on the mail steamer – yes – you guessed it – “DUNNOTTAR CASTLE”.

Captain Holl lost his life in 1916 “as a result of enemy action”

The name of his command is not known but it was not “Dunnottar Castle”; she foundered off Cape Wrath in September 1915 on passage to Scapa Flow.

CRK 4/4/07



San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection

Dunnottar Castle

HISTORY OF THE LIBERTY SHIP

SS. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN.

This is the first part of of an article taken from the lecture notes of Engineer David Aris

INTRODUCTION.

Of the 2710 Liberty ships constructed in the USA during WW2 there are only two remaining today, SS. Jeremiah O'Brien, in San Francisco, and SS. John W. Brown in Baltimore.

In 1994 the O'Brien steamed from her home port to Europe for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of D day, 1944 (where she had been on D Day +3 in 1944).

I was invited to be an engineroom watchkeeper for the return voyage from Le Havre to San Francisco and was 65 years of age at that time with a 38 year gap in my Seaman's Discharge Book. I was perhaps the most overqualified fireman that ship had ever had!

In my youth I had served an apprenticeship at the North Eastern Marine Engineering Co's works in my home town of Sunderland where we built the same type of engine as was fitted in the Liberty ship.

Visitors to the ship in San Francisco are given an explanatory leaflet which states "The Liberty hull was a modification of an earlier British hull" – no more than that. One of my aims has been to demonstrate to my American shipmates that there was a huge British input to the Liberty ship programme and it was certainly not an all American effort which is the usual picture portrayed.



Jeremiah O'Brien at Spithead for the D Day Anniversary in June 1994. Photo by the Editor who had the pleasure of piloting the vessel out to sea. See Cachalot 12.

THE OCEAN SHIPS.

WW2 commenced for the British in September 1939 at which time the UK imported some 55 million tons of food and materials per annum. It had the largest merchant fleet in the world, some 3000 ocean going vessels plus some 1000 coastal vessels the total capacity of which was about 21 million tons. Manpower was around 160,000 men.

By August 1940, the first year of the war 385 ships of capacity 1.7 million tons had been lost mainly to German U boats. 1942 saw about 300 U boats operating in the Atlantic and the UK and her Allies were losing ships at the rate of 2 million tons capacity per annum which was about 5 times the total replacement rate of all UC merchant building shipyards. During the whole war the UK lost 2284 ships (57%) and 31,908 merchant seamen (20%) which is a higher percentage figure than any of the 3 armed forces.

From 1939 –1945 268 million tons of supplies were imported into the UK.

These are very big figures.

Winston Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty at the outbreak of War becoming Prime Minister in May 1940. Hence had a particular interest in things nautical (he had

been First Lord on a previous occasion in his career, during WW1.) and he quickly realised that this country would fall to the enemy if we could not supply our needs by sea and so he set up the British Shipbuilding Mission to the USA this small group sailing to New York on the Cunarder Scythia in September 1940. The leader of the Mission was Mr. Cyril Thompson, joint Managing Director of the J.L. Thompson shipyard in Sunderland and at that time a mere 33 years of age. With Thompson went Mr. Harry Hunter, Technical Director of the North Eastern Marine Eng. Co. of Wallsend on Tyne, aged 49. Thompson and Hunter had worked together for many years as NEM engines were usually fitted into JLT ships. In New York two more people were added to the Mission, Mr. Bill Bennett, Principal Lloyds register Surveyor and Mr. Stuart Heck, Principal Engineer Surveyor to Lloyds, both from the NY office. Mr. RR. Powell completed the team he representing the British Admiralty.

The Thompson shipyard had not built any ships between 1930 –35 due to the depression but wisely kept their design and drawing offices busy constantly updating designs for better performance and economy against the time when an order would come in. This happened in 1935 when Halls of Newcastle built SS Embassy, a 9100 TDW tramp steamer which could achieve 10 knots on 17 tons of coal per day. She cost £95,000 and was sunk in 1941.

In 1938 the Court Line of London built SS Dorrington Court, a slightly larger version of the earlier ship at 10,800 tons DW she being sunk in 1942.

The Thompson /Hunter team took with them to the USA drawings of hull and machinery of a modified version of Dorrington Court as a sample of what they were hoping to purchase as this design had impressed the Admiralty achieving 11 knots on 17 tons of coal per day using a 2500 HP triple expansion steam engine.

The principal terms of reference of the Mission were to purchase some 60 10,000 TDW cargo ships per year. Unfortunately it was very soon discovered after their arrival in New York on 3 October that such ships were not available at which stage the team were instructed to arrange the BUILDING of 60 ships per annum. They then set out on a tour of all the main shipyards in the US and Canada and so far as the US was concerned no yards were available to build, either being still inoperative due to depression, or engaged in building for the US navy.

The Mission was then instructed to BUILT TWO SHIPYARDS, each to produce 30 ships as soon as possible and to this end Contracts were signed on 20 December 1940 to this end. No time was being wasted.

The Todd/Bath Iron Works yard was then constructed on vacant land at Portland, Maine, across the river from the city, this to be known as the east yard. Because of the geology of the terrain conventional slipways were not used but a massive drydock was excavated which could hold seven vessels under construction at one time, this divided 2/2/3. When 2 (or 3) ships were ready the docks were flooded, the gates lifted and the ships floated to a nearby fitting out berth. The director of this yard was William Newall. (Some time later this company built a second yard, the west yard, this having seven conventional slipways. The SS. Jeremiah O'Brien was built on slip no.,1.) Between contract date of Dec. 1940 and November 1942, some 23 months, this yard was built and

The second yard, Todd California, which was the first yard to be operated by Henry Kaiser, was built on reclaimed land at Richmond, California, on the east shore of San Francisco Bay; here seven parallel conventional slipways were used for construction of the ships. This yard was built, and its 30 vessels delivered in a mere 19 months from contract.

When originally planned, it was estimated that the cost, to the UK Government, of building the two yards would be \$9 million and the ships would cost some \$87 million (\$1.45 million per ship), making a total of \$96 million. In the event the yard construction costs came out at \$17million taking the total to \$104 million. On the completion of the 60 ships the UK Government sold the two yards to the US Maritime Commission and they went on to construct 236 and 138 Liberty class vessels respectively.

There were some differences in these 60 ships from the prototype which would have been built in Sunderland; there was much more shell and other welding although rivets were still used for all shell/frame connections. It was difficult in the US to source a supplier of the traditional British Scotch type fire tube boiler as US practice had moved on towards water-tube boilers but eventually railway engineers provided the answer with the American Locomotive Company built 90 boilers for the east coast vessels whilst two companies, one in Seattle, the other in Los Angeles, built 90 for the west coast ships.

The Mission also ordered, initially, 26 ships to the same design, this in Canada and these were virtually identical to a Sunderland ship being fully riveted and named the North Sands Class after the Sunderland shipyard. Canada went on to build a total of 353 ships of the class, some prefixed Park and others Fort due to minor differences mainly in the method of firing the boilers and the fuel used. (coal or oil).

After overseeing the building of the two shipyards and giving advice on the ship construction, Cyril Thompson returned to the UK in a Prince line vessel, Western Prince, which was torpedoed mid Atlantic this resulting in Thompson spending several days in a lifeboat (with all his official papers to be delivered to the Admiralty) before being rescued. Unusually he did not immediately return to his shipyard but attempted to join the Royal navy but was rejected so joined the RAF as a Flight engineer in Bomber Command before returning to Sunderland at the end of the war. Hunter remained in the US some further time helping organise the building of the main engines, the NEM triple expansion unit.

Thompson was awarded the CBE and Hunter the OBE for their efforts in this project, awards which, considering their vital responsibility in a project which could have lost Britain the war had they not succeeded, should have been much higher. (See later, Winston Churchill).

In 1942, Thompson and Hunter presented a technical paper to the now defunct north east Coast Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Newcastle, entitled "The British Shipbuilding Programme in the USA, 1940-42." This paper gives great details of the whole project and the original is now lodged in the archives of Newcastle University. I have had copies placed in the archives of the two remaining Liberty ships, in San Francisco and Baltimore.

All vessels built in the UK to Government order during WW2 were prefixed "Empire" regardless of size or type but for the 60 US built ships they chose the prefix "OCEAN" as it was thought that "Empire" would offend Americans! "Atlantic" was considered as a prefix but also rejected as half the ships were built on the Pacific seaboard and half on the Atlantic. Hence the emergence of the OCEAN class from which we shall see, the LIBERTY ship was developed.

To be continued

Embark Your Memories on a New Queen

With the maiden voyage of Queen Victoria in December 2007, a fourth Queen will add her illustrious name to the Cunard Line fleet. To celebrate the history of the four 20th century Queens, the world's first onboard museum, Cunardia, is being created on board the latest Queen.

The museum will adopt four broad themes:
Creating a Queen – building, launch, interior design and maiden voyages:

A Queen's day - life at sea from the passengers' point of view:

Serving a Queen – life at sea from the crew's perspective:

Queens at war - the role of the Queens in the Second World War and the Falklands War.

The Museum will comprise graphics with stunning imagery, computer interactives where visitors can explore particular topics and display cabinets housing artefacts associated with the Queens.

Cunard Line has appointed free-lance researcher, Elspeth Wills, to develop the content of the exhibition. She would love to hear from you if you sailed on any of the Queens either as a passenger or as a crew member. She is looking for your memories of what life on board was like and any artefacts such as letters, photographs and small objects associated with your time onboard. Her contact details are: Elspeth Wills Research, 3 Brown's Place, Edinburgh EH1 2HX Tel 0131 226 6659 email eandmwills@btinternet.com



The above is a press release which might be of interest to you. Hate to be picky, but I make it five, with only three being 20th century Queens. But what is detail when history is only there to be "spun"? - Ed

Southampton's Maritime Memorials

If you go up the River Itchen you will find on the Eastern bank Peartree Green, with its ancient pear tree, Jesus Chapel and school-house. It is an area once much favoured by the families that traditionally provided the Masters, officers and sailors who manned the many large privately owned yachts, sail and steam, in the late 19th, early 20th centuries, and in the graveyard of the little church you will find a tombstone bearing the inscription, "Sacred to the memory of Richard Parker, aged 17 years, who died at sea after 19 days dreadful suffering in an open boat in the tropics, having been wrecked in the yacht "Mignorette".

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him - Job XI11, 15
Lord, lay not this sin to their charge - Acts VII, 60

This memorial to an illiterate orphan boy is located over the unmarked graves of his father and mother, having been set up again after being damaged by a falling tree some thirty years ago. Apparently the memorial was given to a Captain Mathews, Parker's foster father, by a Mr John F. Hoskins, a mechanical engineer with an office in the City of London, but what connection with the Parker family seems to be unknown.

The yacht "Mignorette" sailed in 1884 on a delivery voyage to Australia with a total crew of four: Tom Dudley, Master, Edwin Stephens, Mate, Ned Brooks, AB and Parker the ship's boy. The vessel foundered in the Southern seas and the crew took to the small boat with practically no food or water. After some 20 days, in order to survive, they killed and started to eat the cabin boy. Four days later they were picked up and, when they got back to Falmouth, the Master and Mate were held in custody before both of these most respectable seafarers were committed for trial at Exeter for murder, for having killed their young shipmate in order to eat him, which they did. They were sentenced to death, but the sentences were commuted to 6 months imprisonment, only part of which was served. Able seaman Brooks turned prosecution evidence at their trial.

The case of Regina versus Dudley and Stephens (1884 QBD) is practically the only decision dealing with cases in which the accused commits what would otherwise be a crime against an innocent person in order to prevent harm to himself. Apart from self defence and prevention of violence there is no clear authority on the extent to which necessity is a defence to a criminal charge. R v Dudley & Stephens lives on as a leading case in English criminal law, but this would be little compensation to poor Parker.

Returning once more to the memorial, the second text was added at the request of Parker's brother and sister, surely an act of forgiveness and magnanimity.

Apparently the memorial stone was maintained in pristine condition for many years, although no one knew who cleaned the stone and tended the grave at dead of night, but local tradition maintains that before leaving England again for Australia, Captain Dudley had arranged for someone to do so. Also, although in poor financial straits at the time, he retained none of the surplus money from the defence fund, donating it as he had pledged to pay for the education of Richard Parker's sister, Edith.

Tom Dudley became a reasonably successful ships' chandler in Australia, where he died as the first victim of an epidemic of bubonic plague in Sydney NSW. Stephens and Brooks resumed their careers at sea.

Cachalots developing a taste for this sort of thing can further whet their appetites by devouring "Cannibalism and the Criminal Law" by Prof. A.W. Brian Simpson of the University of Kent at Canterbury, or Neil Hanson's "Custom of the Sea".

Neither the humble ship's boy commemorated in an obscure Southampton church yard, nor his shipmates, could in the awful agony of the moment have had any idea of what was to be their continuing importance in relation to the intricate subject of sanctity of life and the criminal law. R v Dudley and Stephens was the first and still possibly the only modern case concerning seafarers in which necessity was thoroughly discussed as a possible defence to a criminal charge. At their appeal the tenor of Lord Coleridge's judgement suggests that necessity can never be a defence to a charge of murder, but the case is not conclusive on the point, because the Jury merely found that the seamen would probably not have survived if they had not behaved as they did. It seems that allowance is no doubt made for certain species of necessity as a defence. not only for murder but for numerous other crimes and that since Dudley and Stephens the defence of necessity has been very much a matter of speculation.

No doubt many such incidents took place, recorded or otherwise, in times of war and, quite recently, at the inquest into the sinking of the *Herald of Free Enterprise* at Zeebrugge in 1987, the Coroner, during his summing-up, referred to the evidence of an army corporal who had been trapped with dozens of other passengers. Their only way of escape from the rising water was by means of a rope ladder, but it was blocked by a man who had frozen in panic while climbing it. After repeatedly shouting at him to move, the corporal ordered those below to pull the man off the ladder. They did so and he fell into the water and drowned, while the others made their escape. No criminal proceedings were ever contemplated against the corporal or any of the other people involved and, although the Coroner conceded "I think we need to at least glance in the direction of murder" he went on to describe certain killings as "a reasonable act of what is known as self-preservation.....that includes in my judgement the preservation of other lives; such killing is not necessarily murder at all". Necessity – "the great law of self-preservation and nature" reflected by the most senior judge in England a century before, might be a defence, after all, against a charge of murder, (Hanson).

One conclusion may be drawn from these short articles on Southampton's Maritime Memorials – just as there was plenty of variety in life at sea, so was there equal measure of variety in death.

The Memorials mentioned are all inanimate objects beaten out of brass, bronze or copper; hewn from granite or stone, sculptured from marble or shored-up as ruins, waiting to be stumbled upon by the curious or given a fleeting glance by passers-by, to most of whom, nowadays, a ship means only "your cruise liner" or "the ferry". There is however a vibrant, living memorial to be found almost directly below our club room.

This is St Andrew's Chapel, familiar to many present day seafarers and the dockland community but, although ecumenical in worship and open to all, less familiar to a wider cross section of the community.

Adjacent to the Seafarers' Centre the small, plain white walled chapel is approached through a small cloister lined with nautical standards. Open to the side to a small walled Garden of Remembrance, the walls bear an interesting variety of memorial plaques. Many of those commemorated once were stalwart Cachalots.

Inside the chapel are more flags and plaques, the most distinctive being those commemorating the tragic losses of the m.v. "Derbyshire" and, during the Falklands Campaign, the "Atlantic Conveyor".

Many seafarers from all parts of the world use the chapel for prayer and meditation during their necessarily short periods of shore leave in Southampton, and greatly appreciate the ministry of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Free Church Chaplains.

This living memorial to all seafarers is commended to the citizens of Southampton.

Hamish Roberts 24/4/07

FOR VALOUR (1)

In 1998 I was asked by a friend in Cunard, if – during our next annual visit to Ireland – my wife and I would visit the cemetery in Cobh, County Cork and see if the mass graves of the victims of the sinking of the “Lusitania” were being well maintained.

A few weeks later – on a glorious June day – we found ourselves in a quiet little graveyard high on a hill overlooking Cork harbour and, to our delight, we found that the entire area was being lovingly cared for.

As we made our way back to the car I was reading the inscriptions on the tombstones. Many of the graves were those of seafarers lost during WW1 and one, in particular, caught my eye. The inscription:

Mr. Fredrick Daniel Parslow V.C
Master, “Anglo-Californian”
April 14th 1856 – July 4th. 1915

How, I wondered, did Captain Parslow earn the Victoria Cross?

The “Anglo-Californian” was owned by the Nitrate Producers S.S.Co.Ltd. (The Anglo Line) and was normally engaged in the South American nitrate trade. In 1915 she was chartered by the Admiralty to carry 927 horses – for military use – from Montreal to Avonmouth and she was unarmed. On July 4th 1915 the vessel was some 90 miles SW of Queenstown (now Cobh), Ireland when she was intercepted by the U.39. The submarine instructed Captain Parslow to stop but the order was ignored and the ship increased to maximum speed. Parslow’s son – also Fredrick Parslow – was Second Officer of the “Anglo-Californian” and he elected to steer the vessel with his father issuing zig-zag instructions to avoid the fall of shot from the submarine. The uneven contest continued for some 90 minutes but, inevitably, the bridge got a direct hit – Captain Parslow was killed but his son survived. Almost immediately, a flotilla of patrol boats from Queenstown arrived, drove off the attacker and the severely damaged ship limped to her destination.

The Victoria Cross was instituted by Royal Warrant in January 1856 “for acts of great valour in the presence of the enemy by the Royal Navy and the Army”. During the Indian Mutiny (1857-1859) the award was extended to “Non-military persons” in recognition of several acts of great bravery by civilians and, that same Royal Warrant – issued in August 1858 – extended the award to those whose bravery “aboard ship” saved life or public property. Obviously, the Admiralty did not consider that this applied to the “civilian” crew members of vessels belonging to the Mercantile Marine and it was not until 1920 that a further Royal Warrant extended the award to “men and women of the forces of the Empire and the Mercantile Marine”

However, the bravery of Captain Parslow (and his son) was now legendary and to enable suitable awards to be made Captain Parslow was posthumously awarded the rank of Lieutenant, Royal Naval Reserve and his son that of Sub-Lieutenant, Royal Naval Reserve.

Thus it was that some four years after the event – on July 10th. 1919 – in a ceremony at Buckingham Palace, King George V presented the Captain’s widow with the Victoria Cross on behalf of her late husband. He was the oldest recipient of the award and the second Mercantile Marine shipmaster to be so honoured. Many thought that Second Officer Parslow deserved a similar award but, in the event, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Shipping records reveal that the “Anglo-Californian” was bought by Cunard almost immediately after her engagement with U.39 and was renamed “Vandalia”. She continued to trade for Cunard for several years but, in June 1918, she was torpedoed when navigating St.George’s Channel. There were no survivors.

Second Officer Parslow continued to serve with Nitrate Producers and was promoted to Master of the “Anglo-Australian”. In March 1938, on passage from Cardiff to Vancouver, the vessel reported that she was off the Azores – and that was the last that was heard from her; she vanished without trace.

CRK 16/6/07



The “Anglo-Californian” renamed “Vandalia” under Cunard

WHITE SEA CRUISE

By Barry Peck, Storekeeper

During June, to celebrate our fortieth wedding anniversary, Judith and I went on a cruise on Black Watch to the Norwegian coast, the North Cape and the White Sea, calling at Alesund, Trondheim, Leknes, Murmansk, Archangel, Honningsvag, Tromso, Olden and Bergen. The weather was wonderful, far better than the UK was having, the scenery was incredible, and of course once north of the Arctic Circle it was visible all night as well as all day as the ship passed through the Inner Leads both north and south bound. Black Watch is at the upper limit of size to pass through some of the passages, and with the topmast lowered only cleared some of the bridges by two metres, all of which made the experience even more spectacular.

The cruise was notable for two unusual reasons. Firstly, we went to northern Russia, which is not a regular call for cruise ships. In fact, we were told that we were only the fourth cruise ship to call at Archangel since 1977! At both ports we went on the tour entitled "Highlights of". The really sad, at times shocking, reaction we had in both places was that if what we saw were the highlights then what was the rest like? Murmansk which had been badly damaged by the bombing of WWII was almost exclusively Soviet era concrete blocks, whilst Archangel seemed to us to be stuck almost two hundred years in the past, with the roads off the main highways almost exclusively unpaved and the main roads so full of potholes that the coach could rarely reach 30 mph. Both towns showed an almost complete lack of maintenance to the buildings. To return to the Norwegian ports

afterwards with their prosperity and cleanliness was a most incredible contrast.

The second reason was also very different. Old friend and Club Member Mike Plumridge had arranged with Fred Olsen to have a wreath laid off Murmansk where his father had died when the destroyer HMS Matabele had been sunk in January 1942, and he asked me to help with the on board arrangements. Hotel Manager Ragnar Lervold had received the poppy wreath from the local Royal British Legion in Dover and had made the on board arrangements. Mike had given me a label to attach to the wreath, and in the morning on passage from Murmansk to Archangel Captain Tor Bohn performed a simple but moving ceremony with a dedication to all the allied seamen lost in those waters before throwing it off the stern. The contrast between this and the normal cruise ship atmosphere was most marked.



We have been on a number of cruises previously, and hope to go on more in the future, but this one will always stand out in our memories.



And Who Wouldn't?

Cachalot Henry Forse came up with a winning election slogan, albeit unintentionally, when he stood as the Conservative candidate for the New Forest District Council in the recent local elections.

Henry hadn't noticed the unfortunate (?) juxta-position of the X with his name when he started to deliver his leaflets. They were received with some amusement, if not hilarity, by bemused locals and even the National media got in on the act.

With a message like that Henry was duly elected, *nem con* we would think, and now he just has to live up to his promise.

Rope Ends



*Congratulations
To*

Peter and Pamela Jackson

*Who celebrated their
Golden Wedding
Anniversary
In August*



NEW CACHALOTS

P. Holliday
R. Southern



250 Club

June R.J. Pilley
July S. Dyer
August P.J.B. Raworth

---oOo---

Members are reminded, once again, that they can join, renew or increase their subs to the "250 Club" at any time of the year and that their subs will run for 12 months from that time, after which they should receive a gentle reminder to renew from the office.



Cashot Light Vessel

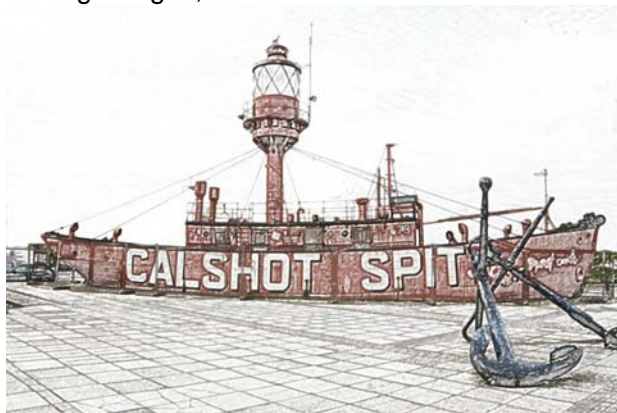
Captain Kelso recently noticed a small paragraph in the Southern Daily Echo reporting that property developers were about to build new apartments in Ocean Village on the site upon which the old Calshot Lt/Vl now stands and did anybody have any suggestions as to likely relocation sites.

If not, the Southampton City Council does not have a budget for its maintenance and repair and a part of Southampton's maritime heritage would be likely to end up in a ship breakers yard.

Several suggestions have been made by various members, but if you have any serious suggestions (and no, my bottom is not a dry dock!) please let me know and I will forward them on to the developers communications manager.

Many thanks,

George Angas, Boatsteerer.



The Light Vessel, No 78, was built by Thornycrofts at their Woolston yard in 1914. It was manned until 1978 and then ran fully automated until around 1982 I think, when it was replaced by the present Light Float which is the responsibility of ABP, rather than Trinity House.

So it has been "aground" for about 25 years and those years have taken their toll. As well as the obvious rust, it has been vandalised and all the glass around the light is broken, by well aimed stones no doubt. It is now surrounded by a make-shift security fence to keep the great British public from causing it or themselves any more injury.

The vessel is registered with the National Registry of Historic Vessels.

Ed.

OBITUARY

ANDREW JOHN CHALMERS

Andy Chalmers, who died on 17th July at the age of 74, went to sea in 1949 as an apprentice with Royal Mail Lines. He subsequently served with Ropner, Union Castle and General Steam Navigation until 1961, when he came ashore for five years working in the family business. He went back to sea in 1966 as a second officer with the Post Office (later British Telecom) cable ship fleet, which from 1974 was based at 203 berth, Southampton. He gained command in 1982, commanding CS Alert and CS Iris not only for the normal cable repair work in the North Sea/Atlantic area but also major telecoms and defence projects in the Caribbean, Atlantic and Pacific. He took early retirement in 1990, and soon moved with his wife Fran to Spain, although he visited the UK every year for reunions and to visit the Club.

Andy was an excellent seaman and cable officer, a calm and understanding captain, and above all a gentleman. All of us from the BT fleet, officers and crew, who sailed with him will sadly miss him.

Barry Peck

THE SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE 2008

Despite increased advertising in recent years, the number of Cachalots attending the annual Shipping Festival Service in Winchester Cathedral has declined.

Next year we celebrate the Club's 80th anniversary, so it is vital that all members make every effort to promulgate, attend and support our Shipping Festival Service.

Please make a note of the date in your diaries

Thursday 19 June 2008

The Service will start at a new, later, time of 1930.

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 SEP 15 Curry Lunch, S. Seafarers' Centre *
Sat OCT 20 Autumn Dinner Dance, Botley
Tue OCT 23 Last Night of Proms Concert Tidworth
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

** note change of venue*

Gone Aloft

A.J. Chalmers

Sad, also, to see the passing of Vice-Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch who was our Principal Guest at the 2001 Sea Pie Supper. A wartime submarine ace and thence a serial escaper after capture by the Germans, Sir Ian, who went aloft on August 12, was a keen proponent of all things maritime and forged many links between the Senior Service and the Merchant Navy.