

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No.29

September 2008

Captain's Log

I started my last log full of enthusiasm, talking about fledglings, cricket and mayflies. Now reality has set in. Expectations of a long hot summer, with al-fresco meals in the garden, large trout taking fly on the river, and England celebrating magnificent victories against New Zealand and South Africa, have been replaced by the realities of cool wet evenings spent looking at the garden through the windows, high water levels on the River Test and traditional England batting failures (although the final Test match provided some cheer!) It will, of course, be better next year, as always! Meanwhile, we look forward in the coming months to Wales at their magnificent best on the rugby field andum ... the Saints. Nearly forgot the fledglings. We still have fledglings demanding food from their worn out parents. And the tomatoes are sprouting forth. All green and likely to remain so. Green tomato chutney anyone?

A Club Buffet Supper was held on Friday 13 June. The brave speaker on this auspicious day was Storekeeper Barry Peck who volunteered (really!) to speak on the subject of "The International Internet – Magic or Technology". This also gave Barry a chance – quite rightly – to show off his skills on Microsoft Powerpoint presentations, in addition to display his knowledge of how the internet works. A very tall order indeed! Even so, he succeeded extremely well, even though many of the technological concepts were difficult to grasp, for some of us, me included. Barry's extensive experience in submarine cable technology enabled him to present his talk in a manner that was understandable to those with knowledge of ships and maritime technology. As a result, there was considerable debate after his talk. It was my pleasant task to thank him at the end of the evening and to attempt to summarise. My conclusion? Magic!

The excellent Anniversary Ball at Warsash in May was followed on 19th June by a wonderful Shipping Festival Service at Winchester Cathedral. The weather was kind to us this time and we all took part in a dignified and moving service dedicated to seafarers past, present and future in the splendour of the cathedral. A fitting sermon was given by the Secretary General of the Mission to Seafarers, Captain Bill Christianson, interspersed with amusing anecdotes of Mission "padres" in various ports. The Winchester College Chapel Choir (Director: Malcolm Archer); organist Paul Provost; and the Volunteer Band of HMS Nelson (Director Band Colour Sergeant Doug Scott LRCM RM) added to the visual and aural splendour of the occasion.

After the service we retired as usual to the Deanery gardens (with the band) and let our hair down with a glass or two or wine and snacks. Such hair as some of us have was let down further by a raucous rendering of "Happy Birthday" to Stowaway Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles on the occasion of his 94th birthday. The other Stowaway present was, as usual, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Mrs Mary Fagan. Mrs Fagan is a great supporter of The Cachalots and it is always a pleasure to see her at our events.

I know I'm not alone in believing this was one of the best services in recent years and a fitting tribute to all seafarers. Our thanks to the Church Committee under the chairmanship of Captain Simon Harwood, and to the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, for organising the event.

We should not forget also the Colour and Flag Parties, and the Guard of Honour provided by the Sea Cadets at the West Door. All were under the command of the Parade Marshall, Lieutenant Julia Whorwood RNR, to whom we owe special thanks for "not letting the side down" (her words, not mine) despite her husband having been hospitalised in Portugal following a motoring accident a few weeks before. Thankfully, we understand he continues to make a good recovery.

Thanks also to Julie Hall, who for many years has organised the "eats" for the occasion and has now retired to concentrate on organising Lionel. Thank you Julie, and good luck!

Apologies to those I have missed anyone out; our thanks and congratulations to you all. To those of you - like me – who have not attended many Shipping Festival Services in the past, I urge you to try to make it next year. The date is **Thursday 18th June 2009**.

The reader of the last "Cachalot" will recall that I had to buy Storekeeper Barry Peck (a very expensive!) lunch after HMS Southampton's visit to the port last March was cancelled at short notice. Well, I lost out again. We were invited on board for lunch on 8th July, but unfortunately this time I was the one absent (travelling back from a week in Portugal with Ann). The Club was well represented by Sea Staff Captain Rachel Dunn and Barry Peck (yes, him again!). They were both very fulsome in their praise for the hospitality shown to them, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The sad part of the story is that this was HMS "Southampton"'s last visit as she is about to be decommissioned. Our best wishes and thanks go to Commander Morris (no relation) his Officers and ship's company.

From all accounts, the Curry Lunch held at the "Gurkha Kitchen" on 12 July was a very successful affair. I say from "all accounts", because Ann and I missed it as we had other commitments. We intend to be at the next one, which is to be held on **Saturday 18th October 2008**. (NOTE: the Curry lunch shown on the Programme of events on 13 September has been cancelled, as it might detract from numbers attending the Southampton Boat Show.)

You may recall that the Club is a "City Champion" and as such various officers have attended meetings and functions organised by Business Southampton, with the aim of supporting and developing businesses in the area.

George Angas and I attended Swanmore College of Technology on 4th June as mentors/advisers during their Enterprise Day. This was at the instigation of Solent Skills Quest, which encourages partnerships between education and business in the area. Teams of students were tasked with producing and

marketing CDs for the international market in a competitive environment. The mentors came from all walks of life, so we did not feel “out of it”. It was good to meet and talk to bright, cheerful young people who clearly wished to get on in their lives. George and I probably learned more than the students from the exercise!

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) held a well attended presentation at the Oceanographic Centre in Ocean village on 23rd June, the subject being “Waterfront Strategy”. Storekeeper Barry Peck, Staff Captain John Mileusnic and I attended. Amongst other things, this meeting highlighted the shortage of waterfront sites available to businesses in the area. Discussion centred on how available sites could be developed and utilised for businesses in the most effective manner. A vigorous side discussion developed on the shortage of skills in the area, particularly in the yacht-building business which seems critically short of technicians qualified in aluminium welding. So much for the Credit Crunch!

“City Champions” held a breakfast meeting at the Rose Bowl (Hampshire Cricket Ground, to the uninitiated) in West End, Southampton on the morning of 26th June. George Angas and I attended. A splendid old-fashioned full breakfast woke us all up, following which we all took part in a forum on “City Construction and Property”. A presentation on the future development of the Rose Bowl was given by the Business Manager of Hampshire Cricket Club, and this was followed by a presentation on the Public/Private Interface in Development. A problem experienced by Hampshire CC is that most of the suitable builders are presently heavily involved in preparation for the London Olympics in 2012.

The most recent “Business Southampton” meeting was a conference held at the City Cruise Terminal on 29th July 2008. The theme of the conference was Southampton’s position as a world class Centre of Excellence for Maritime Industries. A number of short case-studies from the private and public sectors was given, and the keynote speech was delivered by Jonathan Shaw MP, Regional Minister for the South East and Defra Minister for Marine, Landscape and Rural Affairs (*phew!*), who spoke about the new Marine Bill. I was not able to attend this conference, but I am VERY pleased to report that Post Captain Peter Marriott, having been given the “all clear” from his surgeon to drive only the day before, duly represented the Club. He reported as follows:

“(The Conference) was very well attended, I would say in the region of 150+ attendees covering all walks of life in Southampton. It was a good opportunity to network with others who share the view that Southampton has a lot to offer for the maritime industries and that over the last decade much has been done to attract those industries to the city. The general tone was that there is great hope that all matters maritime will continue to prosper. It was good that the Club was able to be represented at the Conference.”

Most of you are aware that a proposal to present a Bursary to a student studying for a second (or higher) Certificate of Competency at the Warsash Maritime Academy has been approved in Committee. Details of implementation have yet to be worked out, and to this end the Boatseer and I intend to meet WMA representatives at the College during the latter part of September.

Regardless of my opening comments about the weather, I trust everyone has had a good holiday period. Many of you have been on cruises, so to try to keep up, I took Ann on a cruise recently. Despite initial doubts, we both thoroughly enjoyed it, and were presently surprised to see a few old friends on board, including the Pilot! Granted, it was only to Cowes, but the “Shieldhall” is a fine ship and the weather was fine, if a little “parky” later on. The off-board entertainment was also superb, with fly-pasts and fireworks. To be thoroughly recommended!

Many of you will be going to France and to Buckingham Palace at the end of August and beginning of September. Unfortunately, this is when we take our summer holiday, so we shall not be with you. I’m sure you will enjoy it all the more!

Our next (indoor) Club function is the 80th Anniversary Dinner at Brook House, Botley. Please note this will be held on **Saturday 11th October 2008**, NOT 25th October as stated previously. If we don’t see you beforehand, we hope to see you there.

Leslie R Morris

Club Captain


80th ANNIVERSARY DINNER
As drawn to your attention by the Captain above, the correct date for the Dinner at Brook House is
Saturday 11th October 2008
Some members may have received unamended versions of the Entertainments Programme when they were sent out with the December edition and it pains me that this publication is also guilty of exacerbating the situation by promulgating the incorrect date in the past three editions: many apologies.
Further details on page 6

Scenes from the Shipping Festival Service at Winchester Cathedral on the evening of 19th June



The Captain, Leslie Morris, welcomes the Mayor of Winchester, The Mayor and Mayoress of Southampton and the High Sheriff of Hampshire at the West Door.



Stowaway Mrs Mary Fagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, inspects the Flag Party drawn from the local units of the Sea Cadet Corps and the Branch Standard Bearer of the Association of WRNS. She is accompanied by the Marshal of Parade, Lieutenant (SCC) Julia Whorwood RNR.



The Volunteer Band of HMS Nelson, directed by Band Colour Sergeant Doug Scott LRCM RM, continue to entertain the congregation in the Deanery Garden afterwards.



Sea Cadet Adam Becket couldn't resist a taster of the delicious looking canapés that he was supposed to be serving. Probably set to follow in the footsteps of his dad Noel, a Southampton Pilot who, like most of his profession, would never turn up the chance of something to eat.



♪ Happy Birthday to You ♪

Officers, members and guests toast Stowaway Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles who was 94 on the day.

MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING TODAY

Introduction

The Executive & Finance and General Committee's of the SMMC have agreed to support, for three years, a person holding a first Certificate of Competence (CoC) to enrol upon and successfully complete an approved course of study at the Warsash Maritime Academy leading to that person sitting the MCA examinations for a the relevant higher CoC. This support will take the form of:

- Financial assistance in the form of a bursary for the payment of some, or all, of the approved course fees up to a sum of £1,000.
- Monitoring progress and where necessary providing mentoring.
- Provision, if necessary, of a social base during the period of study and beyond.

The debate was generally well informed but in order to ensure that we know what we are getting into and that it was sustainable within the Club's means for a reasonable term (three years), it was felt that we ought to be aware of the maritime education and training regime as it is today.

Background

No doubt we can all remember, when we embarked upon our careers at sea, the degree of trepidation that assailed us as we walked through the portals of the maritime college to which we had been dispatched by our well intentioned parents, guardians, local education authorities or even a shipping company on our first steps towards finding the 'holy grail'. This event occurred either as cadets/ apprentices, starting on a pre-sea training course prior to a four year cadetship/ apprenticeship, or/and when commencing our studies for our first certificate of competence. Some of us were lucky and received assistance from enlightened senior officers during our sea time, some of the younger ones amongst us might have even have been lucky enough to have been dispatched on mid apprenticeship release courses from which the successful ones usually returned to sea as uncertificated third mates on 'enormous' salaries to finish off their sea time for their first 'tickets', much to the envy of those less fortunate. Our engineer colleagues usually had completed a comprehensive shipwright's apprenticeship in one of the many shipyards around the UK and then sailed as junior or 4th engineers upon ships that they had very often helped to build.

What happens to the youngster today who in that wild moment of aberration decides that a career at sea, either as a deck officer or marine engineer officer is for him or her? To that end we requested John Bazley - MSc, AFRIN, FHEA, MNI, Head of School of Professional Studies at the Warsash Maritime Academy, Southampton Solent University, to come to the Club to bring us up to date with today's education and training routes for a career in the shipping and maritime industry. John very kindly came to the Club on Wednesday 23rd July 2008 to do just that.

What follows is a précis of John's excellent presentation. A more detailed document, including marine engineering pathways is available on file in the Club. For the sake of brevity only one pathway is described here and any errors or omissions are the sole responsibility of the author not the presenter.

E & T pathways for today's deck officer.

There are three main pathways to achieve command at sea today. A major difference between the system in the fifties and sixties and today has been the gradual realisation that a career at sea is changing. The rapid globalisation of the shipping industry during the last three decades has caused both rate and amount of change to be considerable. It is generally recognised now that the shipping industry today is only part of a much larger 'cluster' of related maritime industries that either use or support merchant ships in their loading / embarking, transporting and discharging / disembarking of cargoes / and or passengers.



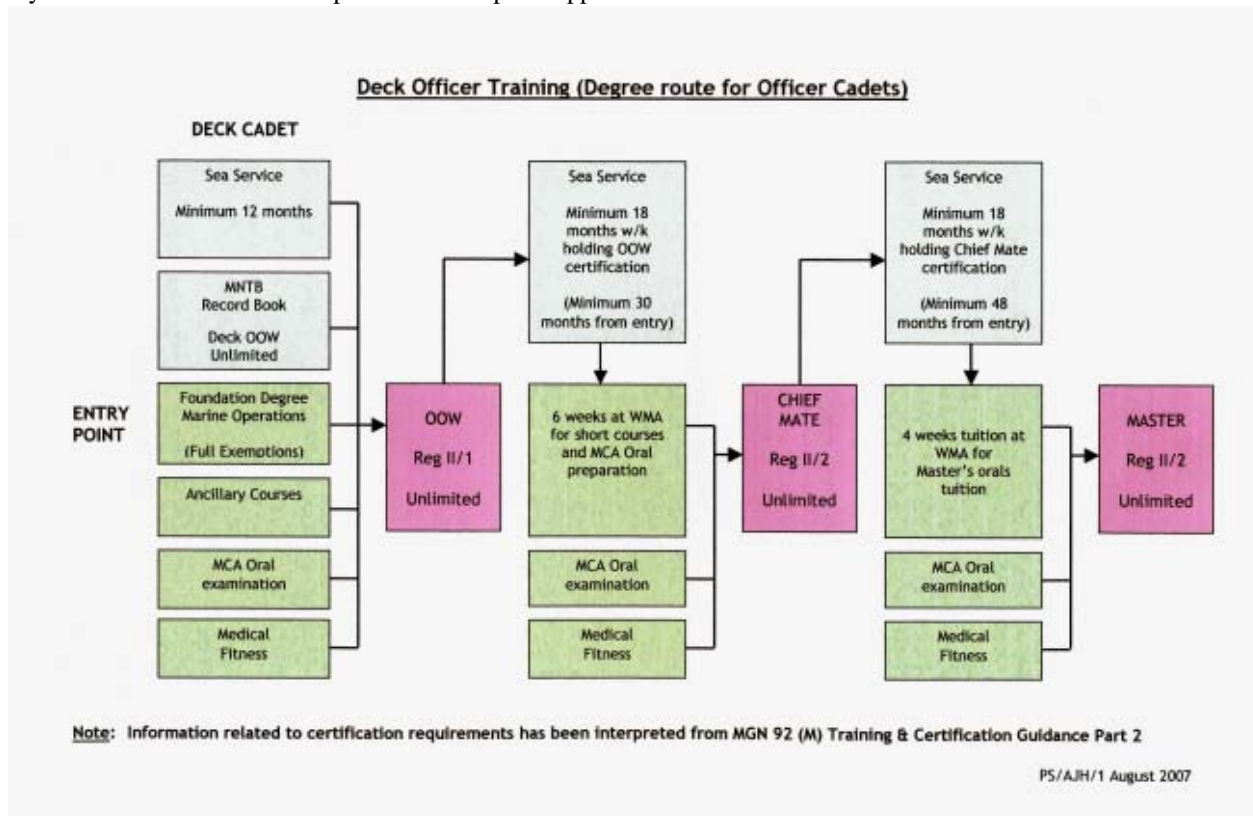
It is logical therefore to assume that today's ships officer should be aware of the interaction between the industries, however loose, and the effect that those cluster industries, e.g. maritime law – criminalisation of the mariner, research and development – latest technology: etc. can have upon ship operations.

The distinction between having the knowledge to do the job and being able to demonstrate competence to do the job has always been implied. Today it manifests itself, regardless of the route chosen, with national recognition of an academic standard as well as a CoC. The UK MCA issues CoC's that comply with the appropriate IMO STCW regulations, which in the case of deck officers of the watch, chief mates and masters for unlimited trading on vessels of 500 gross tonnes or more are, II/1 and II/2.

There are three main routes from cadet to command, namely:-

1. Starting as a deck cadet - Degree and MCA oral examination CoC.
2. Starting as an experienced seafarer - HND Part 1 and MCA examinations (managed on contract from the MCA by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. SQA) and MCA orals CoC.
3. Starting as a deck cadet – HND with NVQ portfolio during the cadetship and SQA examinations with MCA orals CoC.

By way of illustration the route map for the first option appears below:



This diagram is reproduced with the kind permission of the WMA

The above gives you some idea of the sea time needed and requirements for the sea phases, in light grey. The mid-grey (green) boxes identify the shore based college activities and the dark-grey (pink) boxes identify the STCW/MCA qualification. There are similar route maps for routes 2 & 3 which are not included here. Suffice it to say, by the end of his presentation John had made it abundantly clear that the route to command or Chief Engineer is no easier today than it was in our time and he very ably demonstrated how Warsash and the other UK maritime colleges have moved through these times of change to ensure that not only does the UK continue to have internationally respected standards of maritime education and training that produce knowledgeable and competent ships officers to man the increasingly technologically complex merchant ships in the worlds fleets, but we also have officers who are intellectually capable of moving ashore at any stage of their careers to take up positions in companies large and small, within the maritime cluster. In the longer term this ensures that the initial education and training investment, very often made by the employer of the cadet, is not lost to the industry at large if they eventually do decide to seek shore based employment.

The Cachalots contribution

As I have said we have agreed to provide financial assistance in the form of a £1,000 bursary to a suitable candidate. This bursary will start in January 2009 and in the next issue of The Cachalot I will set out how we, together with the WMA, will manage the award and process of the Bursary.

G.B.Angas.

Boatsteerer.

12th August 2008.

Queen Elizabeth 2 Special

80th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

!! Saturday 11th October !!

**Brook House, Botley.
1900 for 1930**

Baked Avocado with Siltton & Bacon

Beef Wellington

Seasonal Vegetables and Potatoes

Paris Breast

*Choux Pastry Ring filled with Cream, Strawberries
& Vanilla*

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

Port

After dinner Captain C. R. Kelso, M.B.E. will give a talk on the "History of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club.

This will be followed by a raffle in aid of the Wessex Cancer Trust. Donations of prizes for the raffle will be gratefully accepted.

£28 per person

Black Tie & Miniatures

With the QE2 due to sail on her final voyage, departing Southampton in November, I hope to make the next edition of *The Cachalot* a QE2 special. I say "hope" because it will depend upon your contributions. Some are already to hand but I know that within the club there is a wealth of first hand experience of the ship and hopefully some as yet untold tales and anecdotes. So pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and let's tell it as it really was, good or bad, warts and all, tributes and tribulations.

I will get it under way with my own tale first, to encourage you to do better. Hopefully it will not upset any sensibilities.

I will call it:

Oil & Water

During the early 80's I was a Marine Officer with ABP in Southampton, working on the Harbour Patrol Launch. One of my duties was to investigate incidents of oil pollution, gathering samples and other evidence with a view to the prosecution of guilty parties.

Before the QE2 was re-engined in 1986, it seemed that every time she called at Southampton there were regular reports of oil slicks, from the Needles to Dock Head. After she sailed we would sometimes find a broad black tide-mark on the quay wall at her berth. We were never able to actually observe oil entering the water but let's just say that our suspicions were aroused.

On one occasion I was able to manoeuvre the patrol launch between the ship and the quay and scrape a sizeable chunk of black goo off the wall. This was divided into three samples and sealed in Kilner jars, each one carefully labelled: one for the ship, one for the British Transport Police who used to handle the prosecutions for ABP, and one to be retained in the Harbour Master's office. I then boarded the ship, introduced myself and asked to inspect the engine room.

The oily water separator in those days was a very basic affair, seemingly just a big tank into which all the waste oil/water was pumped. When it was nearly full the supposedly clean water from the bottom of the tank would be pumped overboard, theoretically leaving the oil at the top. I suspect that while this was taking place an engineroom hand would be placed at the shell door and if any oil was observed in the water he would signal for pumping to cease. Anyway, I obtained a sample from the tank, divided it into three, as before, and then asked for an audience with the Master.

I don't know who was the most embarrassed, the Captain, who shall remain nameless, or myself as I was obliged to read him the caution, "You are not obliged to say anything, but anything you do say.. etc, etc." I don't remember if he said anything but I explained the situation to him and left him glaring at the two oily sample bottles that I had placed on his office desk.

In the event, the two samples, one from the ship, one from the quay wall, could not be positively matched and no prosecution resulted. It would seem that because the contents of the oily water separator were for ever changing, by the time that I took the sample from it, its composition was subtly different from the deposit on the quay-wall.

Sighs of relief, not only from the ship and from Cunard, but from ABP as well, I would think. Although duty bound to do so, it would have been most embarrassing to have to prosecute one of their best customers and their favourite ship.

Terry Clark

Any contributions to me ASAP please as I will be away for most of November and would like to get some of it done before I go. I will make the official cut-off date 28th November so the next edition will be a bit late, probably the 2nd week in December.



CURRY LUNCH



Another change of date (!), but this time because the original one coincided with the Southampton Boat Show and parking could well be nigh impossible.

It has therefore been decided to change the date to

SATURDAY, 18 OCTOBER.

1200 for 1230

Please amend your diaries accordingly.

The general opinion of those who attended the last curry lunch at the Gurkha Kitchen was that it was very good so we have booked the same venue again. £11 per head.



Names to the notice-board or to the office, please.

This contribution comes from Past Honorary Shantyman Tony Davis who last entertained us with shanties at the Sea Pie Supper in 2004 and now continues to do so with these memories of his introduction to modern cruising.

Cruising - A Little Bit Further Than "Down The River"!

Well, after serving about a decade as a "Shantyman to the Southampton Master Mariners" I now have to "come out" as they say and admit it.....I've now had my first experience of cruising in a "big ship"!

I did sail to Norway as shantyman in a 72 foot ketch of the Ocean Youth Club - some of you may have seen the television programme, "Spinners Under Sail" - and I had the privilege of sailing/shantying on the lovely, ill-fated "Maria Asumpta" several times. Beryl, my wonderful wife, has even more "sea time" than me, having served for several years as a mate on the ketch "Francis Drake" of the Ocean Youth Club. However, now, in my seventh decade, our daughter decided that my wife and I should experience the delights of being "spoilt" on board of a floating hotel, and what an experience it was!

We joined her in Southampton - catching a first glimpse of this huge "block of flats" as it appeared, driving along the dock road from the motorway. Well, we see some big ships back home in the Mersey, but the first sight of Royal Caribbean's "Navigator of the Seas" was something mind blowing! The dockside preliminaries were both efficient and courteous, with no unnecessary fuss or officiousness and my scooter and I were carried aboard with apparent ease.

Finding cabin 6300 presented no difficulties and although we knew my daughter had ensured "disabled" facilities, we were surprised and delighted at the spacious, well-appointed sight which greeted us. Especially pleasing - and surprising! - was the wide, easily accessible balcony outside of our sliding glass windows - somewhere to spend lots of time on a summer cruise I imagine... and of course, the "wet room" bathroom!

Our cabin steward - or "attendant" as RCI call him - was a delightful Jamaican called Patrick who tuned in to my renditions of Jamaican songs with apparent amusement - and stopped me after a couple of bars of one song with the information that it was a "naughty" song.... Something the late Cliff Hall of The Spinners had kept from us "white-ies"!

Patrick delighted us nightly by leaving "towel sculptures" in the cabin, a feature which I am told is increasingly found on cruise ships. First there was a little lamb - a fairly obvious starting point. Next, a bat, hanging from the cabin's centre light and using a coat hanger as a wing stiffener, but the piece de resistance was a wonderful elephant with my wife's sunglasses perched on its trunk! I just wonder how many different possibilities occur on a long cruise!

The cruise itinerary would be mouth watering to those who had been shore bound all their lives, and although I had visited all three of the countries which our eight day "taster" encompassed, the cruise itself and the shipboard facilities were enough to satisfy my blasé soul! As for my wife, the relief from cooking, ironing and waiting on me hand and foot must have been something very special. "First Stop" was Stavanger in the beautiful Norwegian fiord and the mooring point for our huge ship appeared to be smack in the middle of the town! We had decided to forgo the shore visits as the itineraries lasted for several hours and all involved a fair degree of mobility, - we had really come for a rest! Anyway, the views from the ship were interesting and beautiful in themselves, with the very picturesque houses and hotels along the quayside and the countryside in the background.

Next stop was Denmark and I was excited to see on the quayside what appeared to be a New Orleans type Marching Band which I expected to be playing "South Rampart Street Parade" or some such traditional Jazz march. Guess what we heard? Yes, "Wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen"!What else? The final stop was in Amsterdam, with the most wonderful trip through the Dutch waterways and shore visits for those who wanted them, taking in the very interesting Van Gogh museum among others.

Facilities on board were absolutely breathtaking - and "to suit all tastes". For the "shopaholics" there is a mall which runs half the length of the ship, containing souvenir shops, bars and small arcades. The ice rink - yes an ice rink! - had a wonderful show with skaters of great prowess from Canada and Eastern Europe putting on a beautiful performance. In one lounge, with a small dance floor, a quartet played Swing standards for dancing - proper dancing!- and the girl singer brought memories of the great Billie Holiday. We asked her where the band came from and were delighted to hear that they were Polish! It gave me a chance to show off my ability to say "Thank you!" in their language... I understand that the same musicians played a late night Jazz session in an upper deck bar. What else? Well, we never got to the Theatre where there were several first rate shows by all accounts but usually we found the days' activities enough for us!

A daytime trip - well, several trips - around the "Navigator" took in the sun deck, complete with swimming pool, Jacuzzis and reclining deckchairs, the "fitness centre" which must be wonderful - if you are fit!- a basketball court, which a crowd of Brits were using as a soccer pitch, and believe it or not a nine hole golf course.....! I found the computer centre about the sixth day so didn't get hooked into that.

The meals were absolutely first class. I rather worry that a longer trip might see me putting on a stone or so. The only fault I could find was - no black puddings at breakfast.... We were very fortunate to be sharing a dinner table with two very different, but most congenial couples - we were the only "first timers" so we heard a lot about cruises on other lines. I think we struck lucky for our baptism of fire!

Well, I've probably said enough for you to guess.....we were hooked (and booked!) on another cruise. We were lucky to have found that "Navigator" was sailing south from Southampton in October, taking in Madeira, all of the Canaries and Vigo in ten days. The idea of October sunshine was just too good to miss so..... "Hello and goodbye Southampton" once more!

Tony Davis.

p.s. The Canaries trip did have.... black puddings for breakfast!

p.p.s. We're off again this October - in the "Independence of the Seas". I believe this one takes 5,000 passengers.....! Oops!

p.p.p.s. AND it has a surfing pool - for them wot has legs that work!

Tony.

WITH THE FLEET AIR ARM

There was an extraordinary spirit in the 8th Army (the "Desert Rats") in those days. The front line was surprisingly mobile - the ebb and flow of the land battle, over long distances, came to be called "The Benghazi Handicap".

For the summer months of 1942 I had the double job of Torpedo Officer at the Fleet Air Arm base at Dekheila and the Liaison Officer with 201 (Naval Cooperation) Group RAF.

Among other things I was responsible for looking after two "Mobile Torpedo Units". These were units designed to prepare the torpedoes (and, if necessary, mines) up in the desert as close to the front line as possible. Fleet Air Arm aircraft and the Wellingtons would fly up to the Advance Landing Grounds, fuel, and load their torpedoes and thus have as large range as possible available to attack enemy convoys.

Our unit was in charge of a Torpedo Gunner (Warrant Officer whose name was Mr Barnacle) and was comprised of many specialist vehicles - torpedo transporters, air compressors, workshop vans, etc. All the drivers were Royal Marines and the torpedo ratings were supplied from Dekheila. I used to drive up into the desert quite frequently to see how these people were getting on.

All ceremony or formality was completely absent. Everybody wore rather nondescript khaki shorts and shirt. The days were blindingly hot and the nights surprisingly cold. All the army units were widely dispersed and men were extremely ingenious about their cooking arrangements, etc.

I conceived a great liking for bully beef especially with just a smattering of desert sand and I still think this the best form of meat to eat. Of course if any unit was near the sea the bathing was superb. There were tents, but mostly the soldiers would sleep under their vehicles.

I had one charming truck-driver who was a private in the New Zealand Royal Army Service Corps. This chap was driving alone in his three-tonner and got lost. Instead of driving round all night, he stopped and crawled under the truck to sleep. In the night he felt somebody tugging at his foot. He crawled out, and there were 22 Italian soldiers asking to be taken prisoner! He loaded them up and delivered them to our side of the line in the morning.

Despite the discomforts, this was what might be called a "Gentlemen's War",! The 8th Army and the German Afrika Korps fought like tigers, but had great respect for one another. It was a professional war between two very professional armies. General Rommel (the "Desert Fox") had a fantastic reputation among his own troops, and on our side also (so much so that I remember an Order of the Day from GHQ Cairo saying "This man Rommel is not ten feet tall, and in any case he is our enemy, so let's get on with it!"). I emphasise the point about a gentlemen's war because in the desert there were no terrified refugees, dead babies, mud, murdered prisoners and all the dreadful squalor of war which came at a later stage on the European mainland.

I have sometimes felt since that this campaign in the Western Desert was the last flicker of chivalry in warfare. It was unique, and it was really a privilege to see it and to be part of it.

The activities of the Long Range Desert Group began to be very effective. I was not personally involved with any of the LRDG operations. But by chance I knew quite a number of their people. Some time beforehand Commander Watson sent me up to Palestine to a place on the coast called Athlit. This was where the original Special Boat Service and Special Air Service had their first training camp. I spent a few days only with them, and it was here that I first met Fitzroy Maclean, George Jellicoe, Paddy Mayne and Tommy Langton, all of whom became great names.

The exploits of the LRDG would fill many volumes, as indeed they have. But just to explain the basic concept - the fighting in the desert was in the area between the coast on the north and the Katar Depression to the south; the latter was hundreds of miles of boulders and soft sand and was considered completely impassable by motor transport. But the Long Range Desert Group devised a technique of going round even further south in very small patrols, using specially adapted jeeps etc. These chaps were very skilled in desert navigation and their daring and ingenuity became legendary. The idea was to go as far west as possible, hundred of miles behind the enemy front, and then strike north with lightning raids to attack enemy airfields and interrupt their supply columns.

Typical was the raid on Benghazi organised by Fitzroy Maclean. They drove across hundreds of miles of desert and reached Benghazi. They cut the wire at night and got into the docks. They had an inflatable rubber boat in their Jeep and a number of limpet mines designed to attach magnetically to the bottom of enemy ships in harbour. Fitzroy Maclean was inflating his rubber boat, but unfortunately the bellows squeaked a bit. A sentry on the forecastle of a ship alongside the quay strolled to the rail and shouted down "What the hell's going on there?" Fitzroy replied in his immaculate German "Oh, it's nothing. Mind your own business". But after a few minutes the sentry became suspicious and walked aft to report to an Officer. Soon lights began to go on, dogs began to bark etc. and clearly the game was up: The wire fence was floodlit and there were armed watch-towers. Fitzroy led his companions straight up to the main gate, shouted for the NCO in charge of the guard hut, gave him a tremendous dressing down in German for not being on the alert and said "I might be a British officer mightn't I? Now pull yourself together and keep a proper watch". He then stormed off out of the gate, the very picture of an infuriated German officer - and escaped into the desert.

This exploit has been well written up in several books - notably Fitzroy's "Eastern Approaches". I must make it clear that I was not personally involved in these activities - indeed they were secret and I did not know at the time that they were going on. But I include them here because they formed an interesting and very effective part of the British military effort in this campaign.

While all these things were going on in the desert, life was very different in Cairo and Alexandria. Cairo was, of course, GHQ: Archibald Wavell, Claude Auchinleck and later Harold Alexander were the Commanders in Chief. Also here was Sir Miles Lampson as our Ambassador to Egypt. He played a pivotal role as Churchill's representative, not least in the intricate dealings with King Farouk and the Egyptian Government. Many years later my daughter Melita married his son Victor. Miles Lampson's young wife, Jacqueline, was Italian - the daughter of Professor Castellani, who was Mussolini's doctor. Incidentally, reading Castellani's book ("Microbes, Men and Monarchs") I discovered very many years later that during my time in Tobruk, Castellani was the Principal Medical Adviser to the Italian Army and was stationed near Derna, just along the coast from Tobruk.

Cairo was an enormously exotic place in those days. Army people on leave from the desert "made whoopee" to a fantastic extent. All this can be very well appreciated by reading "Cairo in Wartime" by Artemis Cooper, and also "To War with Whitaker" written by Hermione Ranfurly.

I had very few excuses for going to Cairo, but once I did drive up to GHQ in my Ford station-wagon and I took the opportunity of taking along the two Bushell girls who had a day's leave, plus Anthony Oxley, subsequently my brother-in-law. It was a long drive up to Cairo and half-way there was a big NAAFI. We stopped for a cup of tea. When we got to Cairo I thought it was time to put on my uniform cap and I said to Anthony in the back seat "Give us my cap, old boy". He looked round and then said to me "I can't see it Morgan". I said "Don't be a bloody fool, it must be there". But when we stopped and searched the car it was not there - evidently I had left it behind in the NAAFI tent, hours away. This was a problem because I could not go into GHQ with no hat on and just smiling at the sentries who saluted me. It was still quite early and we stopped for breakfast on the outskirts of Cairo. I was still wondering what to do about my hat when Pamela said "Leave it to me". She disappeared into a chemist's shop next door and came back with a large bandage. This she wound very professionally round my head and secured with a big safety-pin.

Thus I was able to go and do my business in GHQ, it being evident to everybody that I could not wear a cap. One of the people I saw said "My dear chap, what's happened to you: Do sit down". On our way back to Alex that evening I was able to retrieve my cap.

Later I had flown up to Benghazi and needed to come back to Cairo. I went out to the airfield where there was a U.S. Airforce Dakota just loading up. It had in it two salvaged engines from crashed RAF fighters. I said to the pilot "Are you going to Cairo?" He replied with a jerk of his thumb "Hop in, Bud"; and soon we were on the way.

It is extraordinary to think how casual flying was in those days. Nobody in the world knew that I was in that aircraft. Nobody seemed to mind about weights or passenger lists. If the aircraft had been shot down on passage I suppose I should in due course have been listed as "missing" and neither the Admiralty nor my family nor anybody else would ever have known what had happened to me.

I sat right in the tail of the aircraft, and there were some American colonels up front. We did not reach Cairo until after dark. There was an anti-aircraft searchlight exercise going on. The pilot did not know about this and he had never landed at Heliopolis before. The searchlights completely blinded him. He attempted to land and what happened after that I do not remember. All I know was that I woke up in hospital with an absolutely enormous egg on my forehead. I do not know how many days I was in hospital but I do know that the ever enterprising Pamela somehow got up to visit me and her cool hand on my forehead was very welcome. On the way back from hospital somebody pointed out to me the burnt-out shell of a Dakota pushed off to one side of the runway. I never knew what happened to the crew or the other passengers.

Alexandria was a wonderful "respite" for the Navy. Half a century too late, I would like to pay tribute to the Wells family. This was the family of Admiral Wells (who had visited me in the hospital in Suez). He lived with his wife and two delightful daughters in the magnificent "Port House". He had a large houseboat called "Betha" moored in Alex Harbour. This family were absolutely endlessly hospitable to the Fleet. The Mediterranean Fleet, particularly the destroyers and small ships, were worked almost literally to death. Any young officer could turn up on board the Betha and get a drink, a pair of swimming trunks and a chat with some of the delightful Wrens stationed at Ras-el-Tin or the C-in-C's office. Lady Wells gave wonderful dinner parties, and I owe her a particular debt of gratitude because she frequently invited Pamela and Amber Bushell to these, and was kind enough to invite me at the same time.

I bought a very nice sailing dinghy from an old English judge, Judge Murray Graham. He had somehow acquired the dinghy from two young Germans who, to avoid military service, had set out for North Africa at the beginning of the war. They had found their way, over many months, along the coast until they were arrested by the German Consul in Suez and sent home to Germany.

Judge Murray Graham was not using the boat. He said to me "Yes, I'll sell her to you on one condition, that when you leave Alex you sell her back to me". This was particularly charming of him because I had the thrill of ownership which would not have been the case had he just lent her to me. The dinghy had red sails and I renamed her "Jezebel". On her days off from the hospital, Pamela would often come out sailing with me. There was plenty to see in the harbour. A squadron of French ships which had escaped from Toulon had been interned here. This was a much happier arrangement than the Battle of Oran which I have already described. I believe this was largely thanks to Captain Roy Dick, Assistant Chief of Staff to Admiral Cunningham, who was bi-lingual French. A most delightful man, he was after the war Captain of HMS Belfast.

There was also in Alexandria Harbour a "sloop" called HMS Flamingo. She had been very badly damaged on the Tobruk run and while waiting to be repaired she was moored in the harbour to contribute to the anti-aircraft defences - her guns were O.K. Her First Lieutenant, Paul Hopkins, had been one of our torpedo course in HMS Vernon. The story goes that when they were on the Tobruk run and were attacked by Stukas he was the Gunnery Control Officer. He was a very pleasantly vague chap and in the stress of action he forgot all the formal orders for controlling the guns. It was a scary moment and when he got into the director tower he shouted down the voice-pipe "Shoot the buggers". The gun crews were well trained and swung round and did shoot down one of the Stukas.

On one occasion that Pamela and I were out in the dinghy, we broke our rudder trying to land on the beach at Dekheila. I had to drive her back to her hospital - but the only vehicle I had was an enormous torpedo transporter. Her hair was waist length in those days and she was standing in the back of the transporter drying it after swimming, when unfortunately she was recognised by the Matron - and she got into trouble for being out of uniform ashore.



Thirteen years after his first trip, George Bruce Thomson is now in command of the three masted ship, the "Bay of Naples" This letter to his brother Robert describes dramatic events while loading cases of petroleum oil (kerosene) in New York.

Bay of Naples. New York

Sept 1st 1889

My Dear Rob

Here we are nearly ready for sailing and I am glad of it, for I am about tired of this place. It's a very fine place as long as you have plenty of the almighty dollars but unless you are prepared to shell out a sufficient quantity of them you won't get along 'no how'.

Two or three of the skippers here have been up to Niagara Falls but I have not visited them yet and will have to wait until my next trip here.

Tom Elsmore is not back from his holidays yet so unless he gets back by tomorrow (which I think is his day for returning) I will not see him. He says he is going to try to get to Liverpool next year.

I went on board of the 'Umbria' the other day and saw Mr Thomas and had a look all over the vessel which I think is nearly OK. He is going to call at your office and let you know I am alive here and getting fat. I might as well say here that I have gained about five lbs in weight since I left London so I reckon that's not so bad for me inside of three months.

I have had my photos taken here and am sending two by this mail, one for Argo and one for Mamma or Nellie. Tom can wait until I come home and then I will give you half a dozen if they are not all gone.

It's an awful job writing letters, I never seem to have time to write one and still am never doing anything. If I could only get a mail off now and again when I am at sea in one of those lonely moralizing moods which so frequently occur to windjamming sailors, I think I could write a pretty decent one. I think when my girl arrives she will have to be content with mighty few, or else have to write herself for the two of us. Still, when I was second mate too I used to fill up 16 or 18 pages to Newcastle NSW and never seemed at a loss for something to say. This reminds me that I have not got my album with me this voyage and it's your fault as you were looking after my books.

Well I suppose I will have to say something about the 'Naples'. We have got 55,600 cases on board, a very poor cargo for a ship of this tonnage. She is only a blooming old pick pocket anyhow and she is as deep as a sand barge.

Seventeen of my crew have deserted here including my steward. I think I told you about him so need say nothing more. Tell Ned I will write to him from Rangoon. I would have written him from here but I thought it was too soon to bother him with my nonsense as he will not be finished with his own yet.

By the bye, I have not seen colour of that breast pin of mine since I left Westfield House. I suppose you fellows are taking it in turns to wear it as you have not one as good of your own. That's the way you take advantage of your little brother.

Now Rob, I must wind up. If I think of anything else to say before sailing, I will put it in as I am going to send this back with the pilot.

4th. My dear Rob, little did I think when I was winding up the other night what else I would be obliged (to) put in this letter. As I was sitting writing the night before sailing about 11.30 pm, I was startled by a cry of fire. I jumped out on deck and then saw flames bursting out of the fore hatch. We aroused all hands and got our pumps to work on it, at the same time sending rockets and signals of distress up. Our pumps were as nothing on the fire, for the petroleum burnt well, as petroleum will burn. About half an hour after the fire started, we got two tug boats alongside and got their hoses to work but the fire gained on us rapidly until about 1.30 am when I suppose we had eight or nine tug boats alongside which gave us about 17 streams of water. We were anchored in about nine fathoms of water and I came to the conclusion that if this lasted very long, the ship would sink at her anchorage. I had holes cut in the deck on each side and got hoses down abaft the fire to stop it from working aft. About 3 am I got a couple of boats to tow me ashore on one of the islands as there was 15 feet of water in the hold, slipped my anchor and landed alright on a soft bottom. After this we gained on the fire. The foremast in the between decks was red hot, also the plates on the starboard side, beams bent out of shape with heat and by the time the fire was extinguished the decks were just beginning to give way. All around the fore part they are about an inch thick.

I saw the last of the fire about half past six am and at that time there was 17 feet of water in her fore and aft. We got her pumped out again and finished this evening, picked our anchor and chain up again the same day as it was ranged and now lie at anchor in the same place as I was before.

We have got to discharge all our cargo again so I shall be in New York about another six weeks.

Now Rob, I must wind up again and will let you know more particulars later.

With dearest love to Mamma and all at home.

I remain your affectionate brother, George.

P.S. Can't find out cause of fire at all. Hatches were all on and everyone turned in except the anchor watch and myself and I was writing in my room at the time. A mighty good job I was on board at the time. GBT.

HIGH HOPES OF SALVAGE

STEAMERS WHICH HELPED THE BAY OF NAPLES

A SHIP HAS A NARROW ESCAPE FROM
DESTRUCTION BY FIRE-
RUN AGROUND
NEAR GOVERNOR'S ISLAND.

There was cause for rejoicing aboard at least five vessels in New York Harbor yesterday-and tugboats at that; all but one of them.

A big ship had been saved from destruction by fire and a sum calculated at not less than \$30,000 is likely to be divided among the five rescuing vessels. As a result there is not a deckhand or cook aboard the tugs Talisman, Temple, Indian, and Mirand and the steamer John Sylvester who is not hoping that he will be awarded at least \$1,000. It is expected that fully \$150,000 salvage will result from saving the British ship Bay of Naples from burning early yesterday morning at her anchorage off Bedlow's Island.

The Bay of Naples was to have cleared for Rangoon to-day. She had on board a full cargo of case oil and was manned by a crew of twenty-four men. A little after midnight the anchor watch smelled the odor of fire from his position on the forecastle. He sprang at the fastenings of the fore hatch, tore them off with the assistance of an axe, and the next instant saw that the fore hold was a mass of flame. Closing the hatch the sailor rushed aft to the cabin door and gave the alarm. Capt. Thompson took in the situation in an instant. His ship, loaded with oil, was on fire. He seized a couple of rockets, rushed on deck, planted the sticks against the rail, and fired the signals.

By this time all hands were on deck. The hose was led along from three or four pumps and a couple of hands chopped holes in the deck. Through these apertures the nozzles of the hose were run, and while three-fourths of the men worked at the pumps the remainder stuffed battens around the hose nozzles, and closed tight every crack through which it was possible for any air to get below.

Within twenty minutes after the first rocket had been fired the Mirand bore down on the ship. The tug was on her way to Philadelphia, going out on the last of the flood tide, when the sight of a ship in distress caused her to alter her course without delay. Then, following each other in quick succession, came the Talisman, the Temple, the Indian, and the Sylvester. The Sylvester is a ferryboat plying between South Ferry and Bay Ridge. She was on her last trip when the signal of the Bay of Naples was discerned. Notwithstanding there were a few passengers aboard, the

Sylvester bore down direct on the Naples and got her lines aboard and was at work in a very short time. It will, no doubt, surprise some of her passengers to learn that each of them is entitled to a certain portion of the salvage money.

As soon as the fire steamers got hold of the Bay of Naples steps were at once taken to get the vessel into shallow water. There was no time to weigh anchor, so the chain was slipped and the steamers started ahead, making direct for the anchorage to the southward of Governor's Island. The Naples was pulled in close to Governor's Island and as soon as she grounded the water was poured into her hold with a vengeance. The police boat Patrol coming up rendered further assistance by turning in water from her four pumps. By this time the fire was in hand, and a little later, with 17 feet of water in her hold, the Bay of Naples was safe and the fire was out.

The next thing to do was to get the water out. The pumps were set at work, but the crew was pretty well used up, some by burns and others by hard work, and a tug was employed to pump the ship out. As the Bay of Naples lies now she is on good soft mud, off Governor's Island, and can be readily gotten off at high water. Aside from the oil that was stowed forward of the foremast, there is comparatively little injury done. It seems a miracle that the vessel did not go like a flash, and it can only be accounted for by the prompt flooding of the hold. So great was the heat at times that the men could not work forward of the foremast, while in the starboard bow twisted plates attest to the heat to which they were subjected.

The Bay of Naples is a full-rigged three-masted iron ship of 1,621 tons burden, 286 feet long, 39 feet wide and 23 feet depth of hold. She belongs to J. & G. Bullock & Co. of London, and was built in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1875. She arrived at this port on July 24 with a cargo of 1,000 tons of Portland cement consigned to her agents Simpson Spence & Young of 78 Broad-street. She reloaded at Hunter's Point with 55,600 cases of high-proof refined kerosene oil, shipped by Russel & Co. of 60 Wall-street to their agents in Rangoon. It is estimated that the cargo, which is valued at \$55,000, has been damaged at least \$12,000, as from 6,000 to 8,000 cans of oil are a total loss. The vessel will be taken to Erie Basin, where she will be put on the dry dock and repaired. The loss on the ship will be at least \$15,000. She is now in charge of the underwriters.

Tug men were figuring yesterday that 60 or 70 per cent of the value of the ship and cargo will be awarded as salvage, or, allowing for damage by the fire, about \$150,000, as their estimate is that the Bay of Naples and the oil she carried were worth \$200,000. These figures are bigger than

those of the agents, but if they are anywhere near correct each of the rescuing steamers will get about \$30,000. According to Admiralty decisions, one-half of each vessel's share goes to the crew and the other half to the owners. Of the one-half for the crew the master takes one-half - or a quarter of the whole - while the remaining one-quarter of the whole is divided up among the engineer, firemen, and deck hands pro rata. This would give the Captains of each of the steamers about \$7,500, and as each tug carries about five hands the share of these men is figured at about \$1,000 apiece, the engineer receiving, however, the largest amount after the Captain. Salvage money can only be allowed to those who are actually on board, whether crew or not.

There are few deck hands on the tugboats of this harbor who are not well posted on Admiralty law. Young and old hands will spin out with remarkable accuracy list after list of salvage cases decided by the courts. To get hold of a distressed vessel any craft showing the "Union down" by day or a sky rocket by night is the aim and ambition of every tugboat man.

As an evidence of the sharpness displayed on this score, it is told of the tug Hawley, one of the handiest boats in the harbor, that she recently ran across a big ship anchored off the bar, deserted. It appears that the ship got aground on the bar at low water, and that the master decided to go up to the city in a tug that had hold of the ship, get a gang of riggers, take them aboard, and, as he was towed up the bay, get his topgallantmasts housed for passing under the bridge. The master took all hands off in the tug, and left the ship at anchor. About an hour later the Hawley came along, ran up alongside the vessel, and hailed, but received no answer. The master of the Hawley boarded the craft, but could find no one. Going up on the poop deck he discovered that the ship was dragging her anchor. Then he signaled a tug lying close in shore, proceeded to get up anchor, and had the latter nearly aweigh when the signaled boat came alongside. Accepting the offer to take half that was made, the second tug took hold with the Hawley and little difficulty was found in crossing the bar.

About half way up the lower bay a tug was met carrying back the Captain of the ship with a gang of riggers. The Master of the Hawley forbade any one to touch the ship's deck before his charge was anchored off Communipaw Flats. A salvage claim was at once put in and the court allowed the Hawley and her ally \$30,000.

The New York Times

Published: September 4, 1889

It is interesting to compare George's matter of factual account with the above report as it appeared in the New York Times.

It leaves little doubt of the mercenary nature of the local tugboat crews and would even seem to boast about their "sharpness". One can envisage George's "almighty dollars" spinning before their eyes. But then where would the "Bay of Naples" have been without their rapid response?

In the event, their optimism was ill-founded: only 283 of the 55,600 cases were damaged and the oil left in them filled 211 new ones. The total salvage award was \$20,000, not the \$150,000 anticipated.

Read the interesting original report of the Admiralty judgement at <http://bulk.resource.org/courts.gov/c/F1/0044/0044.f1.0090.pdf>



An everyday story of seafaring life.

When Miss Bigg arrived at the office she immediately noticed that, overnight, the fax machine had been hard at work. She hung up her coat, turned on the electric kettle and turned to the machine.

When Mr Small (Chief Executive of Carefree Carriers) arrived Miss Bigg was already reading the first of the messages. It was from Captain Little, Master of the bulk carrier “Carefree Coast” and read:

“ Weather conditions deteriorating steadily and wind now SSE Force 10, vessel pitching steeply, pounding and shipping water overall. Revolutions reduced to minimum consistent with maintaining steerage way but little improvement noted. Accordingly, at 1710 turned to run before the sea and vessel now proceeding without violent movement.

Charterers informed that ETA now uncertain and will update this when conditions improve and course resumed . Regards Little”



The second message was from the charterers of “Carefree Coast” – Agostine Brothers, and read:

“Profoundly disturbed to learn that “Carefree Coast” has reversed course and must advise that as from 1710 local time vessel is “off hire” and will remain so until she regains the position where she turned around. You will recall earlier difficulties with this Master when he refused to co-operate with stevedores at Port Yokomo and declined to accept block loading and insisted on a reduced load rate in alternate hatches in accordance with his calculations of sheer forces/bending moments. This delayed the vessel by some 14 hours and again incurred you an “off hire” penalty.

Suggest you instruct Master to resume course without delay and endeavour maintain his original ETA.

Regards Luis.”

When Miss Bigg took Mr Small his coffee he put down the newspaper and asked “ Anything of interest in those messages you were reading?” Miss Bigg thought for a moment and said “ Well, yesLuis. Agostine is not very happy about something to do with the “Carefree Coast” – I think Captain Little has turned the boat around, or something, because of the wind and he is going to be late ... just a moment, I’ll go and get them”.

Oh God, thought Small, he’s at it again –when will these people realise that the charterers will not be messed about like this. He lifted his phone and said, “Bob, come round”.

Bob Tiny (or Captain Tiny, as he was often called at business meetings) put down his paper and walked the short distance to Small’s office : He knocked, paused briefly, entered and sat down.

Miss Bigg appeared and put a long roll of fax paper on Small’s desk but, without looking at it Small said “ Bloody Little is at it again – it seems that he has stopped, or turned or something, and his ETA is all to Hell – here, read it” Tiny took that proffered roll of paper and started to read.

“That bloke really IS the limit” said Tiny “ Surely he knows how he upset them in Yokomo – what do you want me to do? ”

Tiny had served at sea with Carefree Carriers (when they were “direct” employers) and attained the rank of Second Officer before coming ashore when his wife developed an illness. The shore posting – as an assistant to the Marine Superintendent, Captain Minim – was meant to be a temporary one but when Minim was given “early retirement” Tiny was given the title of “Operations Manager”. Much as he had enjoyed working with Minim he had never understood Minim’s inability to see the economic sense of Small’s arguments when some of the Masters took decisions that upset the charterers.

Small thought for a moment and then said “ Send him a message stressing the importance of maintaining his ETA and stressing how he has upset Agostine – remind him of that nonsense at Yokomo” Tiny looked worried; he had sailed with Little as Third Officer and knew him to be a good Shipmaster.

"I will put your signature to it Sir, it will make more of an impact” said Tiny .

On board “Carefree Coast” a weary Captain Little was trying to snatch a few minutes rest on the chartroom settee and keep an eye on his Third Officer. Rodriguez was a good Officer but like so many of his associates he was reluctant to keep the Master informed of developing situations of possible danger until the “11th hour”. The ship was riding comparatively easily, although the wind and sea had not eased, and the worrying pounding had stopped.

“Messages, Captain”. Rodriguez handed Little a sheaf of papers and returned to the radar.

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, Little read:

“Charterers are extremely angry about your decision to alter course and insist that you must maintain your ETA as advised previously. They were upset by your actions in Yokomo and the “off hire” incurred by that and your present actions will be detrimental to our trading position and reputation. Please reconsider and advise us and charterers as soon as you have resumed course to discharge port. Acknowledge. Small”

The second message, from Agostine was much shorter and read:

“ You are currently “Off Hire”. Advise position where you reversed course. Am in discussions with your owners. Agostine”

Dusk was falling as Little walked to the Bridge wing. The ship was rolling and pitching but that worrying pounding and slamming had gone. Astern, huge seas rolled towards the ship, lifted her effortlessly and pushed her along before hissing past – to be followed almost immediately by another one.

Little knew that his stance at the loading port had been a correct one and despite the stevedore’s threats to “ throw you off the berth” he had stuck to his guns and insisted on loading in accordance with his plan. Granted, he HAD reached a bit of a compromise with them by allowing them to load faster than he had said but it had probably been OK. The Chief Officer had not really understood the workings of the” Loadmaster” but he knew that the Captain was an experienced Bulk carrier Master and he accepted his workings. The “Off Hire” business HAD worried him and he knew that there would be trouble.

As darkness fell Little pondered on the situation. Maybe, just maybe, it HAD moderated a bit and perhaps it would be worth turning her around and having a look. After all, if it was still bad he could always turn again. Sending the Third Officer down to tell those below that “she is going to roll her guts out” Little walked to the autohelm and gave her starboard helm.

In London, Small was making his third phone call to the Charterers assuring them, that if Little did not reply shortly then he would give him a precise instruction to resume his course and speed.

Tiny was sitting in his office reading about the ISM Code and wondering how he was going to cope with the the paperwork.

Tiny’s phone rang and a moment later he was sitting in Small’s office. “Listen,Bob” said Small “ I’m not a bloody sailor but as an accountant I can well see the dangers of this situation. We had enough trouble fixing that ship at a lousy rate and any more “off hire” will kill us. How old is Little ?” Tiny thought for a moment and remembered celebrating the Captains 52nd birthday in Lower Buchanan when Third Officer of the “ Lake”.

“About 58” he said.

“Thought so” said Small “and that’s getting on a bit for a bulker Master. He’s a good enough bloke but he has trouble accepting today’s trading realities. That business in Yokomo really was over the top and now this rubbish. Surely he must know that these ships are built strongly to withstand this sort of weather and that we simply cannot allow him to do as he pleases every time the going gets unpleasant and the job becomes uncomfortable”.

“I think he has changed a lot since I sailed with him” said Tiny “ He was really good then but I agree with you that maybe he is getting a bit past it – what do you want me to do? ”

“Have a word with Lillian and see if we can rid of Little. Ask her to speak with the Manning Agency and see if they have a Master available – one of theirs will do, and we can do the change at the discharge port. We’ll tell him that the charterers have lost confidence in him and that as the three ships are chartered to them we cannot see any way to employ him. We’ll sort out the details later but it will not cost a lot ”.

On the bridge wing of “Carefree Coast” Captain Little gripped the dodger top and peered into the darkness. It was cold , he was very tired and he was already regretting his decision to turn. The weather seemed to have got worse and the ship was pounding heavily on almost every occasion she pitched. The Chief Officer steadied himself between the radar and the ARPA and waited for the next gigantic crash followed by the shuddering that ran throughout the entire hull." Maybe, if I put the revs up a touch she will take it better" said Little to anyone who was listening. “Hell’s Bells”, he thought “I suppose I’d better tell them what I’m doing” and ten minutes later Small smiled with satisfaction when he read:

“ Resumed course towards discharge port and increasing speed to safe maximum. ETA and details of diversion to follow. Advise charterers. Regards. Little”

In London the rain started as Tiny and Small left the office and made their way towards “The Underwriter”. In the South Pacific a solitary EPIRB endeavoured to alert the World to the loss of yet another bulk carrier in unexplained circumstances.

CRK 27/7/08

Cricket Section



As President of the Southampton Master Mariners Club 's Cricket Section I have been asked by its members to give a short history of the section and appeal for help to re-establish this once thriving branch of the main club.

From the information I have gleaned the section was formed in 1955. The first Secretary/Treasurer was a very enthusiastic Capt. Guy Farmiloe, aided and abetted by Capt. "Store" Hodson, Edney Curtis, Phillip Filer and others.

Between 1955 and 1977 a number of well-known local cricketers joined the main club and formed the nucleus of a strong team. Included were David Rule, Colin White, Alan Pierce, Frank Grayer, David Curtis, Archie Ferguson, Benny Ansell, John Smart and Nick Lockyer to be joined at a later date by Cdr. Reggie Bond, Capt. John Treasure-Jones, Paul Raworth, Ian Bagshaw, Mike Weston, Arthur Marshall, Graham Donald, George Gifford and Colin Lampard. Occasional guest players included Roy Marshall (West Indies & Hampshire), Jimmy Gray (Hampshire), Gerry Way (HCC), Harley Parish, and Jack Drake.

Phillip Filer was our baggage master for a number of years and in his will he left a bequest of £1000 to the cricket section for the purchase of cricket equipment.

Our home base was the University's Montefiore Ground at Swaythling, one of the best cricket wickets in Hampshire, lovingly looked after by Bob Barrett, the University Sports Grounds Superintendent. Sadly, blocks of flats have been built on it to accommodate University students.

We now play our 'Home' fixtures at the Southampton Solent University's Hardmoor Ground, which lies just off Stoneham Lane opposite Trojans Sports Ground.

Previously, our main opponents were the Wardrooms of HMS Vernon, Nelson, Collingwood, Dryad, Mercury, Excellent, Daedalus, and R.S. Yacht Club, Warsash College staff, and Winchester College Staff. Regrettably, with the demise of the Royal Naval Establishments, very rarely is one to be found on our fixture list. Such clubs as Shirley Police, Portsdown, SSU Staff, Overseas Mapping, Swanmore C.C., Eccentrics, Shirley C.C., etc., are now included.

The "apres match" was either a sumptuous dinner or a buffet. Indeed, once a year Marjorie was always surprised to see me leave for work with cricket gear in one hand and my DJ in the other.⁵ We played HMS Vernon on the County Ground at Burnaby Road, Portsmouth, followed by our being entertained in the Wardroom as their principal guests at their Guest Nights. A member of our team was always expected to reply to the toast "Our Guests". At our home fixtures we would reciprocate either at the main club or in the clubroom at Montefiore.

With the increasing costs our refreshments, once ably provided by members' partners, were gradually reduced to a finger buffet, then to beer and sandwiches, and, latterly, to very little.

In the early days the Golf and Bowls sections were very active and, during the winter months, the three sections held triangular matches at skittles in various local bowling alleys. Unfortunately, the two were forced to disband due to lack of support.

Although quite sound financially, the cricket section still struggles to survive with the help from students at Warsash and a player or two from ABP. Capt. Ken Warren is the current captain of Cricket, Ian Bagshaw is Treasurer and, until two weeks ago, Mike Weston was Secretary. He has immigrated to Tasmania to join John Lloyd at the college there.

This has left us with a terrible void in our ranks and we are looking for someone to act as Secretary in his place. If there is anyone in our main club membership of about 440 members who would like to help us, please ring me on 023 8061 3351. You will be received with open arms!! Similarly, if there is a member who would like to enjoy a little social cricket, please ring me on the same number. We would be very sad if this section was also forced to close through lack of support.

At the time of writing the club has played seven matches and won six. A very good effort in spite of all the difficulties!

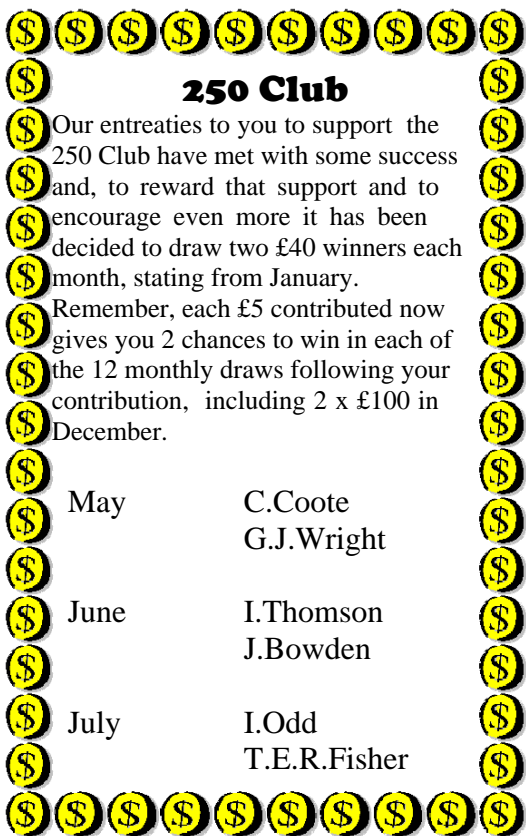
J.R.K.Smart.

Rope Ends

SEA PIE SUPPER

In order to provide a more prompt and efficient service to our members and their guests it has been decided, after much heated discussion, to seat people at round tables for ten persons. We are assured by the caterers that this will mean that you will be served more promptly and efficiently and with food that is suitably hot. Parties of more than ten will be accommodated at tables nearby, thus ensuring that you will be able to lean back and converse with those at a neighbouring table. We hope that this new arrangement will make for a more comfortable and enjoyable occasion for all.

We have been trying to keep our cost down, but in the current economic climate, with prices in general on the increase, and food in particular, it has been found necessary to increase the ticket price. When tickets go on sale on 11 November each Club member will be able to buy one ticket at £40.00. Tickets for non-members will be £42.00 each.



250 Club

Our entreaties to you to support the 250 Club have met with some success and, to reward that support and to encourage even more it has been decided to draw two £40 winners each month, starting from January. Remember, each £5 contributed now gives you 2 chances to win in each of the 12 monthly draws following your contribution, including 2 x £100 in December.

May	C.Coote G.J.Wright
June	I.Thomson J.Bowden
July	I.Odd T.E.R.Fisher

CACHALOT DOWNLOADING

These days the number of journals, newsletters and regular articles that can be downloaded from websites in PDF format is rapidly increasing, and this is certainly no longer an unusual method of obtaining such publications.

In the case of the Club's Newsletter that you are reading this in, the cost of postage alone is now in excess of £200 per quarter and the cost continues to rise, both for the UK and foreign. Reducing this expenditure where possible would be a valuable saving of the Club's finances, as would reducing the number of copies needed from the printer.

I would therefore ask all members who have access to the internet whether they will consider downloading the Newsletter as a PDF file from the Club website www.cachalots.org.uk by clicking on the "The Cachalot" link on the left hand side. Please try this with the June edition No. 28 which is posted. In order to view the high quality pictures and colours it is necessary to have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader, which can be downloaded free from www.adobe.com and clicking on the "Get Adobe Reader" button. This is a reputable website. However, to run the latest version it is necessary to have Windows XP as a minimum operating system.

I am sure many will find the PDF version in colour better than the black and white printed paper copy. If members who are willing to change to receiving the downloaded version and thereby save the postage could notify the Club office that they are willing to do so by e-mail at office@cachalots.org.uk, then a list of the addresses will be compiled and when the next edition of the Newsletter is posted on the site then an e-mail will be sent to everyone on the list advising them.

Thanking you in advance.

Barry Peck
Storekeeper

NEW CACHALOTS

- I.Bowman**
- H.Carlson**
- A.Jenkins**
- R.Leslie**
- P.Sadler**
- P.J.Williams**

Gone Aloft

Captain Jack Antony Pellow.

1929-2008

With great sadness we have to announce the passing of "Tony" Pellow on Monday 21st July.

After working briefly in a Bank, Tony became a cadet in Union-Castle with whom he served in the mail and intermediate fleet rising eventually to become Chief Officer of Roxburgh Castle.

Shortly after leaving Union-Castle he joined the Trinity House Pilots Isle of Wight District (as they were called at that time) who piloted ships to Southampton.

He started on the Isle of Wight in 1960, and eventually took the opportunity to transfer to Southampton where he later became a Choice Pilot for Overseas Container Lines. He transferred to A.B.P. when they took over the pilotage in 1988, and retired as senior pilot in 1992.

Tony was a Southampton man through and through. His father was Dock Master in the port for some years, and Tony was educated in the City. Apart from being a Cachalot for longer than any other member, he enjoyed his membership of many other Clubs in the city, where his natural good humour and willingness to take on many of the duties involved made him many friends.

Our condolences go out to his wife of 57 years Kathy, and their two children and grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by all his many friends.

Tony Howard

Tony Pellow joined the Club in 1951 and was our longest serving Cachalot.

Peter Powell

It is with great sorrow that I write a short epitaph to my long time friend, Peter Stanley Powell, who passed away on Friday July 18th, age 90, after a prolonged stay in hospital following surgery for bowel cancer.

Although never having served in the Merchant or Royal Navies he was an avid sailor, having owned a sailing craft for most of his life. He was a man of many interests, and enjoyed being a member of the SMMC with all its various activities and functions. He was also a loyal member of the RAF Sailing Club at Hamble and was involved in extending and updating the Club House and Gardens. He was also responsible for arranging "Lectures and Presentations" during the winter months at the sailing club.

He also had a great love of classical music and was the Vice-President of the Southampton Recorded Music Society, having been a founder member some 60 years ago. He seldom missed any meeting of any club he belonged to, giving everything his fullest support.

Peter was a god friend, fine and generous, and was devoted to his family and friends. Both Barbara and I will miss him dreadfully and his passing will leave a great void in many peoples lives; he will be sadly missed.

Roy Michael Gage

Peter Powell was a member of the Club since 1964.

D.M. Wright CPM

David was a previous Toast Master at the Sea Pie Supper, last fulfilling that function in 2000. He resigned from the Club in March, following a severe stroke, and died in June.

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:

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(The CACHALOTS)
Southampton Seafarers' Centre,
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Dates for your Diary

Mon	Sept	15	Coach trip to Buckingham Palace
Fri	Sept	26	Quiz-SMMC v Seafarers' Centre
Tue	Oct	??	Last Night of the Proms Concert, Tidworth
Sat	Oct	11	80th Anniv. Club Dinner, Brook House **
Sat	Oct	18	Curry Lunch, Gurkha Kitchen **
Sat	Dec	6	Christmas Dinner, King's Court
Sat	Dec	13	Christmas Lunch, King's Court
Fri	Jan	2	Docklands New Year Service, SSC
Sat	Jan	17	Burns Night Club Supper, King's Court
Thu	Jan	22	AGM, Club Room
Fri	Feb	5	SeaPie Supper, Southampton Guildhall
Fri	Mar	27	Skittles Evening, So'ton (Old) Green B.C.
Thu	Jun	18	Shipping Festival, Winchester Cathedral

*** Please note change of dates*



When?	1900 on Friday 26th September.
Where?	At the Southampton Seafarers' Centre.
Who?	The SSC quiz team will be challenging others, including the SMMC.
What?	To the ordeal of instant recall of the sort of facts that normal people would have long forgotten.
Why?	Now there's a question.
What else?	There will be a buffet available.
Will it cost me?	Only money.. £6 each, includes the buffet.
What now?	Names to the notice board or to the office. Get in training.