

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 32

June 2009

Captain's Log

The evening of the Sea Pie Supper seems to be in the distant past but worthy of a mention as my first event as Club Captain and because of the weather, some called it adverse, others called it Winter. Our principle guest, Commodore Thornton CBE RFA, became snowbound and our Boatsteerer stepped forward, rescuing the evening with an excellent Plan B. Earlier that week George Angas, Peter Marriot and myself had set off early morning from our respective homes to attend a schools project on the Merchant Marine at Weston. Considering the chaos on the roads because of snow I was feeling quite pleased with myself as I crossed the Itchen Bridge, Peter very close by, our destination in sight and on time, when the School closed because of the weather. So near and yet so far.

My first pleasurable duty as Captain was to attend the annual inspection of the Southampton Sea Cadets. After the initial inspection the cadets gave a number of demonstrations to the large number of parents, friends and dignitaries. The whole evening was a success for the cadets and I am pleased to say they passed the inspection with flying colours. Our links to the wider community continue to expand and the Club was invited by Business Southampton to comment on transport issues around the South. A number of members put together a paper concentrating on the short sea container trade and how this could reduce the amount of heavy transport on our roads. This was followed by three of us attending a Business Southampton Transport Seminar. George Angas was one of the syndicate leaders while Reg Kelso and myself joined separate groups, comprising city business, transport and shipping company managers, council representatives and local government officers. The final results of the seminar and the consultations will be known in the summer.

Due to work I missed the March curry lunch but Carol managed to enjoy a well attended event. The 'Gurkha Kitchen' venue has proved popular not only for the excellent Nepalese cuisine but also the accessibility of the restaurant. We have several dates booked throughout the year for all those who enjoy a relaxed informal lunch. A busy March continued with the 191st Birthday Service of the Sailors' Society in the chapel at the Seafarers Centre. The service was well attended and afterwards over a cup of tea I had the opportunity to meet many of those who give their time to the welfare of seafarers. This event was closely followed by an excellent evening as guests of the Southampton Royal Navy Officers Association at their annual dinner held at the Tudor Merchants' Hall. The principle guest was Commodore A L Rymer RN who gave a very interesting talk about the current and future state of the Royal Navy and it was with great pleasure that later I was able to respond on behalf of the

guests. That night there were many comments about the closing and renovation of the Merchants Hall and that on reopening the planned hire fees for the venue would be far above that affordable by many organisations. March was rounded off with the hotly contested skittles and supper evening at the Southampton (Old) Green Bowling Club. It was nice to see so many members and guests supporting this club event and, as the Bowling Club held their grand Meat Raffle that evening, Gerry Cartwright succeeded in stocking his freezer with multiple wins.

Carol and I were guests at the Royal Air Force Yacht Club Commodore's Cocktail Party in April. Our hosts for the first part of the evening looked after us extremely well before we all sat down to an excellent dinner in superb surroundings overlooking the Hamble. The wine and conversation flowed in equal amounts.

I would like to thank all the clubs officers for their hard work on behalf of the members and in supporting me as Captain for 2009. The current economic situation has placed even more pressure on the committees and I hope that the membership can support them in their endeavours so that we can, as a club, weather the storm.

The next major club event is the Shipping Festival at Winchester Cathedral on 18th June where we hope to meet as many of you as possible.

John Mileusnic
Club Captain.

Stop Press

A Club Supper has been arranged, in the Club Room, for

Wednesday 24th June.

Our Guests will be the Rev'd Bill McCrea and his wife Roselyn. Bill recently retired as Port Chaplain of the BISS in Southampton and also as Honorary Chaplain of the Club and this Supper will mark Bill's acceptance of Honorary Life Membership of the SMMC.

Catering will be by John Davies and the menu:

ROLL & BUTTER
PRAWN & ASPARAGUS SALAD
WILD MUSHROOM SOUP
POACHED FILLET OF SALMON WITH LEMON & CAPER SAUCE
BROCCOLI SPEARS
NEW POTATOES
MANGO MOUSSE & STRAWBERRIES
COFFEE & MINTS

Price will be £25 per head
and numbers strictly limited to 36
on a first come basis.
1900 for 1930

SMMC BURSARY

Following interviews in April the selection panel chose the first recipient of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club Bursary for a student at the Warsash Maritime Academy. The award was made to Matthew Nicholls who is studying for his Chief Mates Certificate and on Friday 8th May we were pleased to welcome Matthew, who is happy to be called Matt, for his first visit to the Club rooms.

Matt, age 27, is employed by Carnival UK and has been with that company since he first decided on a career at sea. He has a BA (Hons) in Business Studies and an HND in Nautical Science and as a Cadet at WMA he won the Matthew Flinders Cup for Navigational Excellence.

When not at sea or studying Matt lives in Torquay with his wife, who is a maritime historian, and they are expecting their first child in October. In addition Matt's father-in-law is a Chief Engineer.

This first visit to the Club was a social occasion and gave Matt the opportunity to meet a number of Club members and wives. However, it is the intention that fairly soon Matt will be invited to come to the Club to be awarded a Bursary Certificate in a more formal event to mark this special occasion.

In the meantime we wish Matt all the very best in his studies and examinations and look forward to seeing him again at the Club.



THE SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE

THURSDAY 18th JUNE 2009 AT 7.30 p.m.

CONGREGATION TO BE SEATED BY 7.15 p.m.

Every year in June, the Shipping Festival Service is held in Winchester Cathedral, by permission of the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, as a tribute to those who have served, and those who continue to serve, in the UK's vital shipping industry. This year, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, the Mayors of Winchester and Southampton and other dignitaries will be attending.

The preacher will be the Reverend Dr Andrew Wood who is the Chair of the Southampton Methodist District. Our Club Captain, John Mileusnic, will read the Lesson.

In addition to the Winchester Cathedral Choir, the City of Southampton Brass Band, under the direction of Nick Dawson, will take part in the Service.

Proceeds from the collection taken during the service will be divided equally between the Southampton Seafarers' Centre and Winchester Cathedral.

After the service, if the weather is good, wine and small eats will be served in the Deanery Garden.

We would be very pleased if as many Cachalots as possible, together with their relatives and friends, could attend this major Club event. The service starts in Winchester Cathedral at 7.15 p.m. on Thursday 18 June, and we look forward to seeing you then.



AUTUMN DINNER DANCE

Saturday 20th October

Brook House Masonic Centre, Botley

*Egg & Brawn Salad
with a Dill Mayonnaise*

*Medallions of Pork Fillet
With a Calabados Sauce
Seasonal Vegetables & Potatoes*

Strawberry Shortbread

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints

A non-alcoholic fruit punch will be served on arrival

Drinks at sensible prices

Music by

Harmony House

Black Tie,
1915 for 2000.

Priced at £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.

BOATSTEERERS LOCKER

Continuing to review the long term prospects of our Club is an ongoing occupation of your officers. We have now been at the Queens Terrace address for three years. During that time we have computerised our administration, improved our website, and undertaken several new initiatives to raise our profile within the wider community e.g. established a Bursary with the Warsash Maritime Academy to help seafarers study for higher certificates of competency, make donations to the Southampton Seafarers Centre, the Wessex Cancer Trust and Winchester Cathedral. At the same time, thanks to Gerry Cartwright as Entertainments Officer and the members of this committee, we have maintained a full, varied, and, according to those of you that have participated in them, most enjoyable social events calendar.

One of the advantages of computerising our accounts is that we can produce trend analyses and Barry Peck has been hard at work doing just that.

Since the end of our last financial year (October 2008) it has become apparent that the Club has been spending more than the income it was earning and we have been putting some considerable time and effort into, not only to forecast the figures for the next few years, but also come up with some solutions.

At the outset I wish to stress that we are not yet in a critical financial situation, indeed we have in excess of £60,000 cash assets in the bank. However, if we do not take action now, then it will not be long before we are. (Papers: 'Financial Review'. B.Peck March 2009. & 'Business Plan 2009 – 2011'. G.Angas April 2009 are available on file).

The above papers were presented to the Executive and Finance Committee, to assist with its deliberations on Wednesday 8th April 2009 and amongst many other actions agreed (see: minutes, on file) it was agreed that all expenditure and income would be looked at against the following criteria, namely that the Club has to:

- Remain solvent
- Provide the members with what they want
- Nurture and increase its membership
- Be managed efficiently
- Should not move premises again unless there is a much better / no other option

Under the criterion 'provide members with what they want', our analysis shows that of our 410 members only an average of 40 of you use the Clubrooms and it tends to be the same people that do so. The question that we are addressing in this issue of the Cachalot is: Do you really want a Clubroom facility? It may be nice to have, but we have to ask ourselves that if only forty of us are going to use this facility then can we really afford it? In order to test this we are enclosing a questionnaire which I would request that you complete and return to us as soon as possible. As you will see the questions that it asks are related to what is it that stops the majority from using the Clubroom and what is it that we can do to make using the Club a more attractive proposition. Your help through a response to this questionnaire, or, if your concerns are not covered adequately by this questionnaire, then we will be pleased to receive any other contribution from you.

The first date for making a critical decision is in November 2010. Be assured that your officers will continue to work toward finding solutions to the challenges that face us and you will be seeing reports of what we are doing in subsequent editions of The Cachalot. I look forward to hearing from you.

George Angas

Boatsteerer 20/04/09.



CURRY LUNCH
The next Curry Lunch will be held on
Saturday 4th July
By popular request we shall be returning to
The Gurkha Kitchen
1200 for 1230
£11.50 per head

THE SOLENT WATERFRONT STRATEGY

Introduction

This article is a précis of the full document produced by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) – See: www.SEEDA.gov.uk/solentwaterfrontstrategy for the full document. The Solent Waterfront Strategy (SWS) was launched nine months ago in response to the Government's 'South East Plan' published earlier in 2008. Whilst this may not affect you directly, I thought such a précis might be of interest especially as we are City Champions and are involved in the development of such strategies through our membership and contributions to Business Southampton. We are also all professional mariners with an interest in ships and the sea and upon that basis I commend this to you. I would say at the outset that any errors within this article are my fault.

Background

The Solent Waterfront Strategy launched on the 29th July 2008 in order to establish the importance of the sector and its significance to the economy. The Solent marine sector is estimated to be worth £5.5 billion, and makes up 27% of the Solent's economy and provides 25,000 direct jobs.

The Strategy's main aim is to support the marine industry by safeguarding strategic waterfront land sites for business growth. Local authorities in the coastal area that runs from West Sussex to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have been consulted and planners and policy makers will also be encouraged to support the Strategy. The need to address the marine skills shortage through investment in programmes is emphasised.

Comment

Of this strategy **Kathy Slack, the Director of SEEDA for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight** says: "SEEDA sees this Strategy as a clear plan of action for developing the Solent for business while safeguarding its environment. It's also a good example of partners and business working together to identify the marine sector's needs and coming up with a workable solution."

"The Government's recently published South East Plan recognises the importance of safeguarding key sites for the marine industry as identified in SEEDA's Waterfront Strategy, because we know how much marine businesses contribute to the local economy. Further support to industry will be provided in the forthcoming and unique Marine Bill, which will create streamlined regulation and planning alongside better protection for marine wildlife and habitats." **Jonathan Shaw, Minister for the South East.**

Executive Summary

1. Historically Portsmouth has been 'Home of the RN'. Southampton; 'The Gateway to the World' & Cowes; 'Mecca of World Yachting'.
2. The Solent has, over the last three decades lost large parts of its maritime industrial base.
3. Strategy concentrates upon
 - The commercial Port of Southampton.
 - The defence port of Portsmouth.
 - The marine leisure and recreational centres of Lymington, River Hamble and Cowes.Should any or all of these centres fail there would be serious economic and social consequences so we need a plan for each to prosper.
4. Consequences of inaction will be decline and a change in the structure of what is left. Southampton may well lose its status as a major direct port of call.
5. Conclusion: To bask in nostalgia is unwise. Action is needed. SEEDA and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) working together to develop future spatial economic and land use policies to secure the future prosperity of the marine sector of the Solent sub-region.

Marine Industry in the Solent

1. Principal characteristic of the maritime industries is their diversity in both range and skills, economic and political drivers and their specific requirements.
2. The Solent maritime industry cannot be treated on a single, 'one size fits all' cluster and whilst the principal maritime activities are in competition, a community has developed which recognises that scarce coastal resources and professional regulatory services need to be shared for the benefit of the community as a whole.
3. The three major clusters of maritime activity are:
 - *Ports and Shipping*: Centred upon Port of Southampton, Fawley refinery and Terminal and the Hamble Oil Terminal. Also at the various wharves along the rivers Itchen and Test, at Portsmouth Commercial Port and on the Medina.
 - *Naval and Defence*: Centred upon Portsmouth Harbour that contains the naval base, the armament storage sites at Frater and Bedenham, Fleetlands (helicopter repair and maintenance) and Horsea and Whale Island for military training.
 - *Marine Leisure*: In addition to the Hamble, Lymington and the Medina activities are also located in the Test and Itchen rivers, Chichester and Langstone Harbour.
4. The main issues facing these clusters are i). Overcoming constraints to growth. – the lack of land availability with a coastal location, given that there is competition between the maritime clusters for available sites to expand into, is the most determining factor for marine industries and ii). The pressures on the use of the Solent's environmental resources. – These include the possible effects of climate change, e.g. increasing flood risk. Also, any compensatory measures arising from any of their activities may have upon the integrity of European Sites.

Policy and Administrative requirements

1. There are scores of statutory planning policy documents produced by the 14 local authorities that cover the Solent coastal zone. This makes administrative arrangements and any actual change very complex and slow. There are very few mechanisms in place to ensure that an overall view is taken and this prevents any action, led by a few partners, and focused upon the challenges of the maritime industries being implemented.

2. Whilst the importance of the coastal zone is recognised, it is usually the environmental issues that are focused upon rather than capitalising upon coastal assets as an important contributor to the UK's future economic growth. There is no specific ownership of 'marine activity' and little recognition of the marine sector and its component parts. There is little in the way of policy guidance and support for future development of the coastal zone and this is hindered by an apparent lack of appreciation of the maritime industry at national level.
3. Objectives for the South Hampshire sub region in the period to 2026 are for productivity to increase by 2.3% per annum and approximately 59,000 new jobs and the marine sector offers significant potential to contribution to these.

Economic significance of the Marine Industry

1. The economic analysis of the marine industry demonstrates its critical importance to the Solent sub region. If the above objectives are to be met, planning policies that support for the growth of the maritime sector must be developed.
2. There are 1,750 businesses operating within and making a significant contribution to the marine sector in the Solent sub region. The key facts of this contribution are;
 - 25,000 direct jobs are provided by the marine sector in the Solent.
 - The marine sector relies upon a diverse supply chain (logistics and freight, component manufacturing, wholesale retail, clothing, financial services, clothing, catering and specialist equipment) which also supports 12,500 jobs.
 - The Gross Domestic Product of maritime activities in the sub region is £3.6 billion of which wages and profits are £1.9 billion. This represents 18% of the total value of the Solent economy.
 - The marine sector makes an annual contribution to the National Exchequer of approximately £672 million

The above do not include the contributions from:

- The Fawley oil and petrochemical facility.
- Portsmouth Naval base and other MOD establishments in the sub region.
- Tourism expenditure including cruise related visitors.
- Educational establishments.

If these are included then the marine industries are more likely to contribute approximately 25% of the total value of the Solent economy.

Other interesting facts

1. Approximately 80% of the jobs supported by the Solent marine industry are retained within the sub region ensuring that the economic benefits of this employment are maximised for other local businesses and their employees.
2. Nearly 50% of the industry's customers and 40% of its suppliers are also located within the Solent sub region.
3. The maritime industries give high value with an average turnover of £125,000 per employee when compared with £48,000 per employee in all other employment sectors in the SE.
4. The GDP contribution (18%) is nearly double the contribution made in terms of employment numbers (10%), i.e. a high productivity industry.

Recommendations and implementation

Our recommendations are framed to assist SEEDA and partner authorities to unblock the major constraints to growth and to ensure that strategic consideration is given to the long term prospects for the marine industry. These recommendations are:-

1. SEEDA and PUSH should try to influence the government to recognise the national and regional significance of the marine industries to the Solent area.
2. SEEDA, PUSH and the marine industries should raise the profile of the Solent as a centre of the UK marine industries and actively promote it as a place of growth and innovation.
3. Strategic marine sites of existing national or regional economic importance should be identified, safeguarded and/or allocated for marine use
4. SEEDA and PUSH should work together with the Port to identify and safeguard land for future port-related use to secure the Port's future as a premier, global port and economic driver within the Solent sub region.
5. Significant investment is required in recruitment and skills programmes in the sub region to address the marine skills base shortage.
6. PUSH working in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency should assess the feasibility of creating new habitats on at least a Solent-wide basis as a compensatory measure for the effects of expansion of the marine industry.
7. SEEDA and PUSH should assess a range of fiscal measures and policy mechanisms to bring forward a supply of affordable employment land suitable for marine industries.
8. Long term planning solutions should be identified to address the potential impact of climate change on the marine industries.
9. Existing bodies responsible for the implementation of marine planning consent procedures should be encouraged to work closely to improve co-ordination and streamline and simplify decision-making for marine business.
10. Strategic planning decisions for the Solent should be made in the interests of supporting the growth of marine industries and the organisational structure should be redefined to enable this to happen.

This Solent Waterfront Strategy was compiled for SEEDA by Adams Hendry Consulting Limited and Atkins and Marina Projects Limited.

Conclusion

This was written in 2008 before the current economic decline started to manifest itself in our everyday lives. The rate of movement with respect to the implementation of these recommendations will be linked to the implementation of the 'Marine Bill' and will now no doubt slow down. However, as City Champions and members of the Port –City Futures Board of Business Southampton we are well placed to contribute to any initiatives that may arise from this strategy in the future whenever that may be.

George Angas, Boatsteerer. April 2009.

YUGOSLAVIA

FITZROY MACLEAN'S MISSION AND BARI (PART 2)

It should be explained that at this stage of the war in the Mediterranean, all naval operations in the Balkans came under the C-in-C Levant at Alexandria, whereas operations on both coasts of Italy were controlled by C-in-C Mediterranean from Algiers - and later from Caserta. So in effect the gun-running to Yugoslavia was conducted by me theoretically under the orders of C-in-C Levant. Therefore my "Special Operations" office in Bari was - again theoretically - no business of NOIC Bari: I was, so to speak, a small separate enclave, and very independent. In practice of course I obviously had to work very closely with NOIC in every way, and certainly did so. But it did mean that I had wonderful freedom of manoeuvre to do what I thought was right over in the islands on the other side of the Adriatic. It was for this reason, for instance, that I had my own small radio station in Bari. It was a wonderful situation to be in as a young Lieutenant Commander.

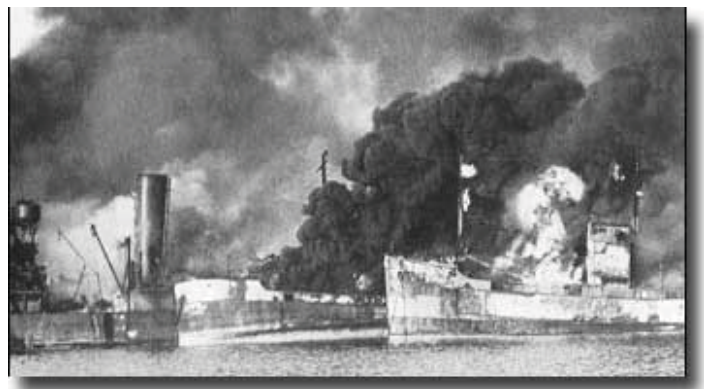
My first visit to the Yugoslav islands was to Korcula, taking Fitzroy Maclean over in one of my MLs. We crept into Vela Luka harbour in darkness, going very slowly, when a rifle shot rang out from ashore. This was the normal Partisan way of challenging an incoming ship - although we did not know it at the time. However there was no further shooting and we went on in and somehow established our identity to the Partisans.

We were taken to the Partisan headquarters. Fitzroy Maclean was immediately accepted and welcomed by the Partisans, because he was able to communicate partly in Russian and partly in Serbo-Croat. We also had in our party a representative of the British Secret Service - a mysterious individual who we nicknamed "Sinister Cooke". His very fluent Serbo-Croat made the Partisans very suspicious of him, in which they were quite correct. He was too good to be true!

Anyway this did not spoil the welcome we received. Some time previously I had sent over Lieutenant "Agony" Pain, who was living with the Partisans as Liaison Officer to facilitate the arrival of the supplies which were being sent over from Bari. There was an amusing incident when we went into the cottage where he was billeted. There was a very small room with two beds in it. I sat down on one of the beds because there was nowhere else, and then remembered that my oilskins were drenching wet. There was a female Partisan Commissar also in the room. I stood up and said to Pain "I'm sorry, I'm making your bed soaking wet". He replied "Oh, no, it's not my bed, it's our bed". What in fact he meant was that in the Communist ideology all possessions belonged to the Party and not to the individual. Nobody could claim anything as his own possession. But, eyeing the female Commissar, I laughed at "Agony" Pain, who got his leg pulled for a long time about this remark.

The Allied Army in Italy were making very slow progress northwards because of stubborn resistance by the Germans and the defensive nature of the terrain. The Army needed all sorts of supplies very urgently. On the 2nd December 1943 it had been decided to take a chance and send two large shipping convoys simultaneously into Bari to unload. At dusk on this evening the Luftwaffe took the opportunity to attack this overcrowded harbour.

The first I knew about it was in the bar at the Albergo Imperiale, when we heard the distinctive grunt of a Bofors anti-aircraft gun nearby: We thought it must be some exercise which we had not heard about. But all at once a full-scale air-raid was in progress. I got on my motorbike and dashed down to Navy House to find out what was happening. Things were even more complicated because Captain Eustace Guinness had arrived and had taken over from Captain Jock Campbell as NOIC. They were having dinner together but decided that Captain Campbell should deal with this matter because he knew the place.



Ships burning in Bari

Apparently a large number of German aircraft had come in low from the seaward (under the radar) to attack the very overcrowded port. NOIC ordered that all ships which could move must clear the harbour as quickly as possible. I was sent down to the South Mole to assist in this process.

The first ship hit was a tanker which sank and filled the harbour with oil. The next ship hit was an ammunition ship which blew up with the most fantastic explosion I have ever experienced. Burning wreckage was hurled all over the harbour, and set many ships on fire. I was on board a destroyer, HMS Zetland, at the South Mole and was blown right along the deck, but was not injured. There was a large merchant ship (which I now know was the American ship "Lyman Abbott") at anchor very close nearby. I asked the Captain of Zetland to lend me his motorboat and went out to the Lyman Abbott. The ship was in darkness but not on fire. I cannot remember how I climbed on board but I found none of her crew left alive and no steam, no power etc.



A scene of devastation in Bari

Tugs had been ordered to take any disabled ship out of harbour, but this one had no means of weighing her anchor. Soon I had been joined by Captain Guinness and one other man. Our problem was to cut the anchor cable so that the ship could be towed out. We found some sandbags. We called alongside a motor torpedo boat and asked for one of his explosive "scuttling charges". We got this up, tamped it well onto the anchor chain, lit the fuse and ran aft. After it exploded we found that it had cut the cable very neatly. The ship was now riding by her anchor chain held only by the slip on the forecastle: So when a tug arrived it would be a simple matter to knock off the slip and she could be towed away. All this took quite a long time and there was incredible confusion everywhere in the harbour, and more and more fires.

Another dreadful aspect which we did not know at the time, was that the ammunition ship which blew up contained large numbers of mustard-gas shells and bombs. As is now known, neither side made use of mustard-gas in World War II. But in fact gas shells were kept in reserve so as to be able to retaliate immediately if the enemy used gas.

When the first ammunition ship blew up, this mustard-gas was scattered on top of the oil which was floating in the harbour. Small craft of every sort, including MTBs and MGBs, were going round trying to pick up survivors etc. Some of their crews went overboard to rescue injured men. When the casualties eventually got to the large military hospital outside the town, the heat in the operating theatres evaporated the mustard-gas which began to affect the eyes of the surgeons.

I was not injured but my uniform was completely ruined and my precious motorbike had been knocked in half by bomb splinters.

Later I also learned that according to US records, the Lyman Abbott herself was carrying mustard-gas bombs in her cargo.

It was a major catastrophe. I believe the final count was 17 ships sunk and 1,000 men killed in that small harbour. From the enemy's point of view this must have been one of the most successful small-scale air-raids of the war. After the war these events were written up in Blackwoods Magazine as BIG BANG IN BARI.



A Visit to Oxford University's largest College

We have arranged for a visit to Christ Church College and Cathedral on Thursday, 10 September. The coach will pick up in the docks at VTS at 0915, where car parking for the day has been arranged, and then from outside the Club at 0925. There will also be the usual stop in Chandler's Ford at approximately 0945. There will be a ten minute stop at Chievely services, after which we expect to arrive at Oxford at 1115ish. The Christ Church water meadows will be open, with free access to the Thames and Cherwell. If the weather is fine then picnic lunches may be the order of the day. Otherwise Oxford city centre is nearby with many restaurants/hostelries to take luncheon. The guided tour begins at the visitors entrance at Christ Church water meadow at 1400 and lasts until about 1530. The return coach will leave at 1545 and our ETA back at VTS, after similar stops on the way, is 1730. The cost of this interesting and pleasant day out is £29 per person, which includes the coach fare, guided tour of Christ Church College and Cathedral, and all gratuities. There are only 36 places available which will be on a first come first served basis.

Very First Trip

I grew up in the West Somerset coastal town of Minehead from whose small harbour a busy coasting trade had existed from mediaeval times right up until the First World War. As a schoolboy, I spent a lot of time down at the harbour watching the small fishing and pleasure boats plying their trade, fishing from its granite wall and messing about in boats myself when I learnt how to handle them.

My chief interest though lay in a sturdy black hulled wooden ketch, the last survivor of that local coasting trade. The vessel was engaged on long term contract to supply coal to the town gasworks from Lydney in Gloucestershire. In spite of years of carrying such a filthy cargo she was kept clean and smart with white painted wheelhouse and deck fittings, varnished spars and gunwales. She also had a scrolled stem head under the bowsprit in the form of a Union flag which was kept carefully painted in red, white and blue.

The owner and master occasionally took reliable able bodied friends along for a trip on condition that they worked their passage. He also very occasionally took local boys for a trip provided that they were obedient, willing to learn, not afraid of hard work and had their parents' permission. I had let it be known in the right quarters that I had all these virtues and just hoped that the permission bit would follow if and when the time came. It so happened that I was in the same class at school as the master's nephew, and so took care to stay on friendly terms with him.

His family lived near the harbour and we messed about in boats, fished, and worked the same vegetable plot together in the school gardening club. One morning in Spring 1948 he casually asked me if I would like to go for a trip with him during the coming Easter holiday. His father would be sailing for the trip as acting mate and would keep an eye on us. Heaven! All thought of school work vanished until I could get home that afternoon and coax the necessary permission from my reluctant but resigned parents. I had little inkling of what I was in for.

The ketch was the "Emma Louise" of 72 nett tons, a length of 75 feet and a beam of 19 feet. She had been built by a well known shipbuilder at Barnstaple, North Devon in 1881, and in the first part of her career had carried cargoes between West Country ports, Ireland and the South Coast entirely under sail. In 1926 she had been bought by a local seafaring family and brought to Minehead to be employed in the Bristol Channel trade. Even at that date, sailing coasters were fighting a losing battle with road transport and the railway, so before the Second World War the vessel was fitted with an auxiliary engine to assist her entering and leaving port and in the strong Channel tides. When I sailed on her she was 67 years old and nearing the end of a long hard life.

I climbed down one of the slippery harbour facing piles to her deck on a grey morning about 0700, aged 13 and clutching the food I had been told to bring for the trip. A loaf of bread, a cabbage, 3lb of onions and a half pound of butter. All the fresh food was stowed carefully away in the jolly boat resting on the single hatch, the coolest and cleanest place on board I later learnt.

We boys were told to sweep up the few remaining pieces of coal left lying around the deck after the last discharge, put them in a bag and take them down into the foc'sle where the master had already lit the fire in the stove.

Meanwhile the engine was started by the mate – no easy matter as I had often observed from the quay. It was a single cylinder semi-diesel engine of 1920's vintage which was heated with a fearsome paraffin burner directed at the cylinder head. When the mate judged the cylinder to be hot enough, diesel oil was let in which caused an explosion and smoke to pour from the exhaust pipe leading aft above the wheelhouse. After this alarming treatment the engine usually started and settled down to its familiar tonka-tonka beat. Sometimes it refused to start and the process had to be repeated until it did. For this reason, once started the engine was never turned off when under way as it was too



The photograph shows the "Emma Louise" alongside in Minehead harbour with her sails up to dry before loading pit props seen on the quay beside her, and was taken in 1932. This is before her conversion to an auxiliary sailer and so she still carries a jib boom, topmast and full suit of sails. The steam crane is alongside her, and must have been nearly as old as the ship.

Photograph reproduced by courtesy of John Gilman, author of 'Exmoor's Maritime Heritage' published by Exmoor Books 1999, who was another old school friend of mine.

dangerous for a man to climb down into the engine room and stand in a cramped space next to a swaying near red hot engine. Any engineers reading this will understand the workings of such an engine better than me, for at that age I was not very interested in mechanicals and so cannot give a more technical description.

One of the local boatmen appeared on the quay above to cast off our mooring ropes and we pulled them in under the eye of the mate. The engine was put into reverse and we slowly moved astern out of the harbour as there was no room for the ship to turn inside it. Once clear of the harbour we motored down Channel for about two miles and dropped anchor in deep water to wait for the tide, turning off the engine.

Sailing craft had to make use of the strong Bristol Channel tides even when motor assisted, in order to make the best progress and arrive at the next port when there was enough water to enter. At Minehead the tide goes out about three quarters of a mile at Low Water Springs and the harbour, situated at one end of the bay, is dried out by some 300 yards at Mean Low Water. With a mean tide height of 23 feet, this leaves a period of about two hours each side of high water for a loaded ship to enter or leave safely.

I spent the time at anchor stowing my few belongings in a locker in the foc'sle and getting to know the ship's gear and learning their names under the tutelage of the mate, who said he and his brother the master, only wanted to hear the proper names used by us boys. My friend had sailed on the ship two or three times before but could not remember all the nautical terms so had to learn them again. About an hour before low water the engine was restarted and we boys were shown how to heave in the anchor using the standard hand windlass as fitted to all coastal sailing craft. Two iron bars were inserted into a crosshead and pumped up and down, when by means of rods and pawls the windlass barrel would slowly turn and the anchor chain be hauled in.

We took turns pumping one lever while the mate worked the other and after about 20 minutes of this exhausting work the anchor was aweigh. When clear of the water, a small tackle was hooked on to the anchor and heaved up to the cathead where it was secured and held by a single iron pin. This pin could then be knocked out with a hammer when anchoring and the anchor would fall straight down and clear of the forefoot. The master meanwhile had put the engine ahead and set course to keep the distant island of Steep Holm fine to port. We were heading up Channel and our trip proper had started.

As there were no other craft about, one of us boys was left on the wheel with instructions to steer for a distant landmark while the two men hoisted the sails. The mizzen, staysail and jib were hoisted by hand, while the mainsail needed the assistance of a small diesel donkey engine with a drum end. The main gaff with sail was too heavy to hoist with her reduced crew of just two in the summer months, bearing in mind that there was a helmsman needed the whole time. I went up into the bows and looked over the bulwarks to see the forefoot ploughing steadily through the greenish brown Bristol Channel water, listened to the creaking timbers and the urgent thrumming of the sails. Although it was a cloudy day there was only a light breeze, not enough to make the empty ship lean or dance about very much.

We helped to cook the mid-day meal on the coal fired foc'sle stove, sausages and onions fried together in a large cast iron pan with bread, butter and tea. We were told that fried onions on their own were very good if one felt unwell, and that if we felt at all seasick to just eat fried onions and bread, but fortunately neither of us did!! We were shown how to keep the stove alight by feeding small amounts of coal and cleaning out the ash regularly into a bucket. How to hold onto the ladder after descending into a pitching foc'sle otherwise you could be thrown against the stove behind you, whose top sometimes glowed red hot when cooking.

Several half hour tricks at the wheel were also undertaken and we helped to lower the sails about an hour before arrival at 1730. The Severn had narrowed considerably to a buoyed channel by then and the master wanted good all round visibility to avoid the various small craft congregating around the entrances to Lydney and Sharpness. Our line throwing to the Lydney lock men drove the master to near despair and I was able to note several new words to add to my nautical vocabulary, but the ship was eventually tied up alongside a coal hoist in the canal by early evening. We then had to hoist the jolly boat over the side, swing the main boom outboard and uncover the hatch ready for an early start loading in the morning.

An evening meal was cooked and eaten, stew if I remember rightly. We were all as hungry as horses. After washing up, my friend pestered his father to allow us to go off in the jolly boat for a row in the canal. With strict instructions not to lark about, look after the boat and to return before dark, off we rowed. On looking more closely around the small boat I realized that it also served as the ship's lifeboat as there were two floatation tanks, spare oars, a locker for dry stores and nestling in the stern bilge, a small wooden barrico holding fresh water. The ship must have been one of the last British merchant ships to carry her lifeboat water thus.

We could both handle small boats and spent a pleasant hour or so exploring the canal and the assorted craft in it. We also kept an eye open for duck or moorhen nests in order to take some eggs back with us to supplement the rations. None were found as it was probably too dirty for wildfowl to nest in that part of the canal.

Our berths on board were in the cramped foc'sle, reached by climbing down a short wooden ladder through a curved scuttle with a sliding hatch just forward of the mainmast. The foc'sle was triangular in shape but blunted in the bow by the chain locker bulkhead, just big enough to contain two hammocks, one on each side against the hull with storage lockers under which doubled as seats. In between the hammocks was a triangular mess table in gimbals which could be slid up to the deckhead to make a clear space when not required. Aft of the table was the stove with a cast iron flue

pipe going up through the deckhead, which was never allowed to go out during a trip and so provided welcome heating in cold weather. Two glass prisms let into the deckhead provided additional daylight and after dark there was an oil lamp.

In the stern, and reached by another ladder down from the wheelhouse was a cabin for the master and mate containing two bunks, lockers and a small desk. There was a skylight, but again only an oil lamp after dark. This cabin was next to the engine compartment and so was hot and noisy when under way with the crew seldom using it. The only electricity on the ship came from dry batteries used to power an old long wave wireless receiver which was kept on a shelf above the master's bunk. This was used solely, as far as I could see, to listen for football results and weather reports in that order! There was no radio transmitter of any kind on board, and looking back, I don't think the crew would have wanted one. The fact that the vessel used to pass just a few miles off Portishead Radio Station had no significance to their lives. They had eyes and ears. Why would they want to talk to anyone ashore?

By 0730 next morning a coal train had been shunted alongside of us under the hoist, so we had a quick breakfast and the master checked the coal in the wagons to make sure it was of the right quality for gas production. The first 10 ton wagon was hoisted up in the steel framework and the chute positioned poking well down over our hatch coaming. The wagon was tilted on a hydraulic platform until the coal fell out into the chute and slid in a cloud of dust down into the hold. Such treatment would soon have worn the ship's timbers so the hold had long been lined with sheets of steel plate. The ship would have originally been capable of carrying 100 tons of coal, but since the steel engine compartment had been inserted into the hold space, this had been reduced to 90 tons.

After the first wagon had been loaded, coal trimmers climbed down into the hold to shovel the coal into the wings. They then climbed out to allow the next wagon to be tipped in and so on until 9 wagons had been loaded and the ship was down to her marks. She was also covered in a layer of coal dust as were we all. A hose was passed down from the quay and the mate washed down the whole ship from stem to stern with fresh water, while we were given a broom and a mop and told not to let the scuppers become blocked with coal dust.

When the ship was clean again, the fresh water tank on deck which held about 50 gallons was filled by the same hose. A bunker hose was then passed aboard and the fuel tank was topped up with enough diesel to take us back to Minehead and return to Lydney, for fuel was easier and cheaper to obtain in the canal.

The jolly boat was hoisted back onto the hatch, the main boom swung in again and everything readied for sea. We were not going to depart until the following morning as the ship normally never sailed at night. In that event, with only two men in the crew, one would have been steering and the other acting as lookout the whole time, not to mention cooking and lighting and trimming the navigation lamps. Neither would have had any rest.

After a cooked tea of fried sausages, onions and potatoes we boys had intended to walk into the town of Lydney and have a look around, but the thought of a 3 mile round trip was too much after a busy day, so we sat on the hatch and were entertained by seafaring yarns as recollected by the master. A vessel that old had quite a history, and we were told fascinating tales of life aboard her both when under the master's ownership and before, as he had known the previous owner and had had her early history passed on to him.

It was an early departure the next morning in order to 'lock out' at high water and we cleared the lock entrance by 0700 and threaded our way down river with the other coasters, barges and tugs leaving the up river Severn ports. The sails were hoisted as soon as possible, and with motor, sails and an ebb tide we were probably making 10 knots. We were the only sailing vessel in sight and several other small craft steered close to us in order for skippers to exchange news, gossip and local football league positions. The "Emma Louise" was a familiar sight in the Severn estuary and her crew well respected as being among the last of a dying breed of seamen.

Once past Severn Beach on the Somerset side of the channel we felt the force of a stiff south westerly breeze and the ship heeled until the lee scuppers were awash, the freeboard in loaded condition being little more than 18 inches. The bows ploughed straight through the short Severn waves with little pitching and spray blew continuously across the deck. As it became dangerous to walk the length of the deck we boys were told to stay down in the foc'sle and make our own dinner.

My companion soon succumbed to the motion and the foc'sle smell and took to his hammock, while I did not feel like eating much either, particularly as I had to sometimes climb up the ladder and empty the bucket which had been placed strategically under him. To get away from the foc'sle smells I spent a fair part of the afternoon crouched on the top step of the ladder, where, sheltered by the scuttle I could observe the sea and the landmarks we were passing. Looking down the deck to the stern I could also see the faces of the crew peering through the spray covered wheelhouse windows, and if I ventured to step outside the scuttle and stand up on deck they would gesticulate to me to stay inside where I was sheltered from the weather.

We made good time on the homeward trip, the wind dropping as we arrived off Minehead just past low water, where we lowered the sails and anchored again to await the rising tide. The crew cooked a hot meal, which if I remember rightly consisted of corned beef and potato hash and yes, fried onions, telling us to eat it all up. This we did and washed

it down with plenty of hot tea, so that by the time we were due to heave in the anchor we both felt better and were able to take our turn on the windlass.

We motored into the harbour at about 1830 and this time our heaving lines up to the men on the quay must have been more acceptable, as they did not bring any more ribald comments from the master. We tied up beside the old corrugated iron clad steam crane, the ship's usual berth. My parents were waiting on the quay but I doubt if they recognized me at first in a fading light as I was several shades dirtier and wore an old cloth cap I had found in one of the lockers.

Before I could join them we had to help prepare the ship for unloading the next day, so the boom was swung out, the jolly boat dropped into the water again and the hatch uncovered. The master then had to go ashore and light a fire under the crane boiler so that there would be enough steam pressure in the morning when work was due to start, as he was also the crane driver. The crane would lower huge steel buckets down into the hold where they were filled by shovellers supplied by the nearby gasworks, raised and tipped into waiting lorries on the quay. Each bucket held about half a ton of coal and filling them was back breaking filthy work. When you looked down into the ship's hold during discharging, sometimes the only sign of life was the whites of the shoveller's eyes!

The "Emma Louise" continued sailing in this trade until 1953 when her triennial survey revealed that extensive repairs were necessary which would have been prohibitively expensive. My friend later told me that the surveyor's knife had sunk up to its hilt in her sternpost. She was therefore sailed on one last trip to Appledore in North Devon, near to where she had been built 72 years before, and broken up. Various pieces of her equipment were saved and sold to enthusiasts, including her carved stem head which I believe was acquired by Basil Greenhill, the then director of the National Maritime Museum.

I did not see her final departure, as by then I was away at sea as a cadet on voyages to Australia, but that trip I made on her was my real 'first trip', and life was never quite the same after it.

Terry Winsborough.

This article first appeared several years ago in "Shieldhall Matters" but has been amended in detail to pass the scrutiny of those members who may have served their time in sail!



The Case of Captain Fryatt in the Great War.

The British ultimatum to Germany had not yet expired when the first blow of the war fell upon the Eagle Oil Tanker fleet. The 9000 ton "San Wilfrido", which had only been commissioned to the fleet four months earlier, struck a mine in the mouth of the River Elbe, on 3rd August 1914. She was on her way in ballast from Cuxhaven to a British port and had a German pilot on board. Fortunately, there was no loss of life, but the Master, Captain C H Williams and forty officers and crew were interned and had to suffer the ignominy and tedium of four long years in a German prison camp.

Doubts in my mind as to whether the mine had been laid by the German or the British Navy led to further thoughts about British Merchant Seamen interned by the enemy in both world wars, and to their position as prisoners of war - persons captured or interned by a belligerent power during war.

In the strictest sense the term is applied only to members of regularly organised armed forces, but by a broader definition it has also included guerrillas, civilians who take up arms against an enemy openly, or non-combatants associated with a military force.

In the early history of warfare there was no recognition of a status of a prisoner of war, for the defeated army was either killed or enslaved by the victor. The women, children and elders of a defeated tribe or nation were frequently disposed of in similar fashion. The captive, whether or not an active belligerent, was completely at the mercy of his captor. If permitted to live, the prisoner was considered by his captor to be merely a piece of moveable property, a chattel. During religious wars, it was generally considered a virtue to put non-believers to death, but in the campaigns of Julius Caesar, a captive could, under certain circumstances, become a freed man within the Roman Empire.

As warfare changed, so did the treatment afforded captives and members of defeated nations or tribes. Enslavement of enemy soldiers in Europe declined during the Middle Ages, but ransoming was widely practiced. Civilians in the defeated community were only infrequently taken prisoner, for as captives they were sometimes a burden upon the victors. Further, as they were non-combatants, it was considered neither just nor necessary to take them prisoner. The development of the use of a mercenary soldier also tended to create a slightly more tolerant climate for the prisoner, for the victor in battle knew he might be the vanquished in the next.

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, some European legal and political philosophers expressed their thoughts about improving the effect of capture upon prisoners. Hugo Grotius, for example, stated in "On the Law of War and Peace" (1625) that victors had the

right to enslave their enemies, but he advocated exchange and ransom instead. The idea was taking hold that in war no destruction of life or property beyond that necessary to decide the conflict was sanctioned. The treaty of Westphalia (1648), which released prisoners without ransom, is generally thought to mark the end of the era of widespread enslavement of prisoners of war.

In the 18th century a new attitude of morality in the law of nations, or international law, had a profound effect on the problem of prisoners of war. The French political philosopher, Montesquieu, in "The Spirit of Laws" (1748) wrote that the only right in war a captor had over a prisoner was to prevent him from doing harm. The captive was no longer to be treated as a piece of property to be disposed of at the whim of the victor, but was merely to be removed from the fight. Rousseau expanded on the main theme and developed what might be called the "quarantine theory for the disposition of prisoners", and from this point on the treatment of prisoners generally improved.

By the mid-19th century it was clear that a definite body of principles for the treatment of war prisoners was being generally recognised in the western world. But the observance of the principles in the American Civil War (1861-65) and the Franco German War (1870-71) left much to be desired, and numerous attempts were made in the latter half of the century to improve the lot of wounded soldiers and of prisoners. In 1874 a conference at Brussels prepared a declaration relative to prisoners of war, but it was not ratified. Between 1864 and 1907 a series of treaties were concluded in Geneva for the purpose of ameliorating the effects of war on soldiers and civilians, the history of the conventions being closely associated with that of the Red Cross, whose founder, Henri Dunant, initiated international negotiation in 1864 to provide for:

- (1) the immunity from capture and destruction of all establishments for the treatment of wounded and sick soldiers and their personnel;
- (2) the impartial reception and treatment of all combatants;
- (3) the protection of civilians rendering aid to the wounded and
- (4) the recognition of the Red Cross symbol as a means of identifying persons and equipment covered by the agreement.

The first convention was ratified within three years by all the European great powers, as well as by many lesser states. It was amended and extended by the second Geneva Convention in 1906. Also, and perhaps not before time, by the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, its provisions being extended and applied to Maritime Warfare.

Fewer men were engaged in Naval Warfare than in land battles, which could involve thousands of participants, and warships under sail would have experienced difficulties in actually capturing or rescuing enemy crews, leading to further problems in accommodating, feeding and guarding them while on board.

During the Great War of 1914-18, however, when prisoners of war were numbered in millions, there were many charges that the rules drawn up by the 1907 international conferences at The Hague were not being faithfully observed.

Two of the most interesting and controversial instances of this nature concerned British merchant ships and their non-combatant Masters; the Great Eastern Railway Company's steamer "Brussels" (Captain Charles Algernon Fryatt) and the Anchor Liner "Caledonia" (Captain James Blaikie). Both tried to ram U-boats, the first causing one of Germany's highest scoring U-boat aces to submerge, the second striking the U-65 a glancing blow.

The story of Captain Fryatt's capture, his unexpected trial on a charge of attacking a German warship on 28th March 1915, even though he was a civilian, his barbarous execution by firing squad on 27 July 1916, and his lavish State Funeral in London in 1919 are well known, but perhaps less well remembered than the execution of his fellow East Anglian, Nurse Edith Cavell. The privations of Captain Blaikie, who fortunately did not suffer the same treatment, are perhaps less well known.

It is no surprise that, in wartime, the execution of Captain Fryatt was exaggerated by propagandists on both sides. To the British he was more than a hero, more a martyr; to the Germans he was a criminal, no more than a pirate, and Dr Alan G Jamieson, Research Fellow at the University of Exeter, in a most interesting article entitled "*Martyr or Pirate. The case of Captain Fryatt in the Great War*" ("The Mariners' Mirror", Volume 85 No 2 (May 1999) 196-202 introduces and clarifies several aspects of history and International Law with a view towards reaching an answer to the question "Martyr or Pirate?". The following extracts from Dr Jamieson's research are reproduced with the kind permission of the Honorary Editor of The Mariners' Mirror.

"During the 19th Century the so-called Pax Britannica brought peace of mind to most of the world's sea routes. Piracy was much reduced and merchant ships no longer required to carry guns for defence in peacetime. The Declaration of Paris (1856) banned privateering so the "private" ship of war disappeared and conflict at sea was left to the state navies of the world. It seemed that non naval ships had no reason to be armed in either peace or war and the question whether merchant ships had a right of self defence appeared irrelevant. Even the so-called armed merchant cruisers, which appeared from the 1880's did not alter this picture since such peacetime liners would only be armed in wartime after they had been commissioned into the navies of their countries."

Thus it came as something of a surprise when Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, proposed in March 1913 that in wartime British merchant ships should be armed in self-defence. The guns and gunners would be provided by the Navy, but the ships would retain their status as civilian vessels. German Naval Authorities took a hostile view of Churchill's proposal. In August 1913, the Institute of International Law held a Conference at Oxford aimed at drawing up a Manual of Law aimed at Maritime

Warfare. The German delegates denounced the proposed arming of merchant ships in wartime and claimed that merchant ships had no right to self-defence. However, the majority of delegates supported the British and American view that merchant ships had an inherent right to self-defence, which had been recognised for centuries, and the Germans reluctantly gave way.

The Conference's resolutions were embodied in the Oxford Manual of Naval Law (1913), but this work was not officially adopted by any country.

Since the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) the German Army had been bitterly opposed to all forms of "unofficial" warfare. French civilian sharpshooters (franc-tireurs) had been a substantial nuisance to the Germans, who had responded with summary executions. Of course, all nations were agreed that attacks by armed civilians on land were illegal since they undermined the distinction between combatant and non-combatants that was fundamental in the laws of war. The German Army took the distinction very seriously and the new German Navy sought to apply the rule of land warfare to wars at sea. Maritime conflict was to be between state navies and merchant ships were to take no part in it. Merchant ships which defended themselves against German warships were the same as franc-tireurs on land in the German view, and their Captains would receive similar punishment.

The Germans were, however, not consistent in their approach to this problem. When the First World War broke out, the prize regulations issued by the German Navy specifically provided that resistance by armed belligerent merchant ships was legitimate and the crews of such vessels would be treated as prisoners-of-war if captured. The prize regulations applied to cruiser warfare and none of the pre-war discussions of self-defence by merchant ships had mentioned submarines. However, by the end of 1914 Germany's cruisers had been driven from the world's oceans and her Battle Fleet had been bottled up in home ports. Only the submarines appeared to offer the Germans a way of doing serious damage to the British Merchant Fleet.

On 4th February 1915 Germany opened her first unrestricted U-boat campaign against Britain by declaring the merchant shipping around the British Isles would be attacked indiscriminately, with little regard to the prize regulations for cruiser warfare. U-boats could remain submerged and torpedo merchant ships without warning. The early U-boats carried few torpedoes, so to maximise their impact, most attacks were made on the surface, using the submarine's gun, or putting bombs on board the enemy ship in order to sink it. Surface attack naturally left the U-boat in a vulnerable position, not only to attack by warships. Even an unarmed merchant ship could sink a U-boat on the surface by ramming. It is hardly surprising that the Germans continued to insist that merchant ships had no right of self-defence, since the exercise of such a right would endanger their U-boats.

The British hoped to arm their merchant ships for defence, but the supply of guns was limited in 1915 and the process proceeded slowly. Thus the Admiralty's order of 15th February 1915 to British merchant ships on what to do if they met a U-boat stressed other methods of self defence. The Admiralty said that "*no British merchant vessel should ever tamely surrender to a submarine, but do her utmost to escape*". Most U-boat attacks would be on the surface, so if a submarine was seen at a distance, course should be altered to put the U-boat astern and the merchant ship should then move away at full speed. If the U-boat appeared suddenly close ahead, the merchant ship was to "*steer straight for her at your utmost speed*", and the submarine "*will probably then dive.*" This order soon became known as the "ramming order", but the Admiralty had been careful to avoid the word "ram" in the order because of its connotations of attack rather than defence.

One of the merchant ship Masters who received the Admiralty order of 10th February was Captain Fryatt of the Great Eastern Railway Company. He served in the Company's passenger ships that ran a regular service across the Southern North Sea between Harwich and Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Fryatt encountered his first U-boat on 2 March 1915 when he was Master of the unarmed steamer "Wrexham". The U-boat attempted to stop him near the Dutch coast, but he ordered full speed and soon escaped.

On 25th March 1915, Fryatt was Master of the unarmed steamer "Brussels" following the usual route, when the U-33 appeared on the surface close to his track. Fryatt ignored the signal to stop and directed his ship at full speed towards the U-boat, forcing it to submerge. By the time U-33 returned to the surface, "Brussels" had escaped.



The "Brussels" was later renamed "Lady Brussels" under the B&I Line

The British armed more merchant ships and by 1916 such vessels were becoming a nuisance to U-boats, often driving them away during surface attacks. In February 1916 the German government declared that armed merchant ships were legitimate targets for unrestricted U-boat attack. This provoked a protest from the US government, which followed the British in claiming that merchant ships retained that status whether armed or not. This view seemed to be generally accepted since most neutral states treated armed merchant ships as civilian vessels rather than warships. The exception was The Netherlands, which since the start of the war had refused to let armed merchant ships use her ports.

Thus Captain Fryatt, still working on the Harwich-Rotterdam service, could not mount a gun on his ship. The lack of such defence became increasingly worrying when the U-boats intensified their attacks, particularly in the Southern North Sea, with many allied and neutral ships being lost on routes to The Netherlands. Following further American protests the Germans reduced the U-Boat effort, but turned

to attacks by other warships on the Dutch routes. On 23rd June 1916 Captain Fryatt and the “Brussels” were captured by German destroyers off the Dutch coast and taken to Zeebrugge in occupied Belgium. On 6th July another British ship, the “Lestris” was captured in similar circumstances. Since British merchant ships on voyages to The Netherlands could not be armed, the Admiralty had to provide some other defence and on 26th July 1916 British warships took a convoy of merchant ships from England to The Netherlands, the first British convoy, other than troopships, of the Great War, and primarily a response to destroyer attacks rather than U-boats.

Fryatt’s trial and execution on 27 July 1916, on a charge of attacking a German warship, even though he was a civilian, contrary to the laws of war, took the British completely by surprise. Asquith, the Prime Minister, promised that those involved in the trial and execution would be punished after the war, and that more immediate retaliation would be considered.

The most obvious retaliation would be that the British would shoot a captured U-boat Commander, but the execution of prisoners was a sensitive subject for the British. The greatest benefit of the U-boat campaign for the British was that it infuriated the Americans. The British blockade hit American trade, but German submarines killed American citizens. The execution of Fryatt could be portrayed as further German frightfulness and was generally condemned in the United States. However, if the British carried out retaliatory executions, they might lose American sympathy, especially as the shooting of Irish rebel commanders after the Easter Rising earlier in the year had not been forgotten in the United States. Instead the British proposed to confiscate all German property in the British Empire and not return it until those responsible for the “judicial murder” of Fryatt and other war crimes were punished. This proposal was put to the Allies, only to be withdrawn after the French raised objections. They feared that in retaliation the Germans would seize all French property in occupied zones. In the end, although public outrage in Britain at Fryatt’s death was considerable, the British Government restricted itself to written protests over Fryatt’s execution and to vague promises to bring to justice those responsible for it after the war.

Only a few months later, however, on 4th December 1916, the Anchor liner “Caledonia” serving as an armed troopship, was torpedoed by U-65 near Malta. Although his ship was sinking, Captain James Blaikie tried to ram the U-boat and struck her a glancing blow. After the “Caledonia” sank, the submarine picked up Captain Blaikie and he was eventually taken to Germany, where it was feared he would receive the same treatment as Captain Fryatt. The British Government asked the US Embassy in Berlin to do all it could to protect Captain Blaikie.

In London, it was once again suggested that a captured U-boat Commander might be shot, but this would offend neutrals, particularly the United States, and might trigger a series of executions in Britain and Germany.

Then news was received from the Americans that their diplomats in Berlin had been assured by the German Foreign Office that Blaikie was not in danger of court martial and execution. The Germans were prepared to regard the “Caledonia” as an “armed cruiser” which had a right of action against the U-boat. Although Blaikie was safe, the Cabinet wanted to make plain its general policy on threats to British merchant Captains. At the end of 1916, the British Government asked the Americans to make clear to the German Government that if in future British merchant officers or seamen were executed, Britain would take immediate reprisals. Those reprisals were not specified, but nor were any ruled out, including retaliatory executions.

After 1st February 1917, the long running dispute about the right of merchant ships, armed or unarmed, to defend themselves was rendered irrelevant by the new German unrestricted U-boat campaign. Merchant ships, armed or unarmed, allied or neutral, were sunk indiscriminately, with many being torpedoed by submerged U-boats attacking without warning. The distinction between combatant and non-combatant in sea-warfare disappeared for the rest of the Great War. A number of U-boat Commanders were named as war criminals by the British, but after the war only a few were prosecuted in Germany. Despite Asquith’s promises, no German was ever tried for his part in the “judicial murder” of Fryatt.

Captain Fryatt, says Dr Jamieson, was neither a martyr, nor a pirate. His death was the result of a fundamental disagreement about the status of merchant ships in wartime. The Germans felt that merchant ships, armed or not, should have no right of self-defence. The Anglo-American view was that for centuries merchant ships had possessed that right. In both world wars, the Anglo-American view prevailed, but recent developments in international law seem to have altered the position. In the late 1980’s the International Institute of Humanitarian Law began to prepare the first manual of legal rules for sea warfare since the Oxford Manual of 1913. This finally appeared as the “*San Remo Manual of International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea*” in 1995 and contained a new approach to the position of merchant ships in wartime.

As a general rule, merchant ships in wartime should be immune to attack unless they become a definite military objective. A merchant ship may carry small arms for anti-piracy defence, and a chaff protector to confuse missiles, but any other armament will make a merchant ship a military objective because it is said to be impossible to distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons.

Dr Jamieson concludes by mentioning that the ghost of Captain Fryatt may take comfort in the pronouncement that a merchant ships bow, which could be used to ram a submarine, is “not considered to be a weapon”.

Soon after the end of the war in 1918, the nations of the world gathered at Geneva to devise the Convention of 1929, which before the outbreak of World War II was ratified by France, Germany, Great Britain, the United States, and many other nations, but not by Japan or the Soviet Union.

Hamish Roberts

Rope Ends

Cricket Section - Fixtures List 2009



Fixture Date	Opposition	Home/Away	Time	Notes
May				
1 Tue 05	Shirley CC	Away	1800	Soton Sports Centre
2 Wed 13	HMS Sultan	Away	1730	TBC
3 Wed 20	Portsmouth	Away	1800	Southwick Park
4 Tue 26	OMCC	Away	1800	Soton Sports Centre
June				
5 Thu 04	The Vine Inn	Home	1800	Hardmoor
6 Tue 09	DHSS St Cross (Home)		1800	Eastleigh & Otterbourne
7 Wed 17	SSU Staff	(Away)	1800	Hardmoor
8 Fri 19	Eccentrics	Away	1800	Victoria Country Park
9 Tue 23	Shirley CC	Home	1800	Hardmoor
July				
10 Thu 02	The Vine Inn	Away	1800	Bursledon Rec'n Ground
11 Tue 07	Portsmouth	Home	1800	Hardmoor
12 Wed 15	Winchester Clg	Home	1800	Hardmoor
13 Tue 21	OMCC	Home	1800	Hardmoor
14 Wed 29	DHSS St Cross	Away	1800	Soton Sports Centre
October				
15 Sun 04	Tangmere	Away	1230	Malcolm Rd behind The Bader Arms PH

There is now a page on our web site, www.cachalots.org.uk dedicated to the Cricket Section. On it you will find not only the fixture list above, but reports of the matches to date this season.

- \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$
- \$ **250 Club** \$
- \$ March J. Jones \$
- \$ R. Lowther \$
- \$ April R. Bloom \$
- \$ A. Tinsley \$
- \$ May P. Le Voguer \$
- \$ R. Wilton \$
- \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

Just to remind you that this newsletter is now posted on our web site as soon as it is ready to go to press. Bearing in mind yet another rise in the postal costs, if you would like to join the growing band of members who are happy to read it online rather than receive a printed copy just let us know your e-mail address and we will notify you as soon as each edition goes online.

And I am sure that our Membership Officer would like me to remind those of you who haven't yet paid your subs that although we are now half way through the year we are still willing to collect your subs/250 Club contributions.

Finally, another reminder that the Functions Officer can obtain a selection of ladies and gents clothing: sweaters, sweatshirts, rugby shirts, polos, fleeces etc. on which the Club badge or other insignia can be embroidered (at extra cost). Full list and further details from Gerry Cartwright. And in the next edition, space permitting.



CAPTAIN EDWARD J KIRTON, M.B.E

Many club members have read with sadness the news of "Eddie" Kirton's passing.

Born in Hull, he was posted to Southampton in the early 60's as Dock and Harbour Master by the then British Transport Dock Board and very soon he became an active member of the Club. He served as Club Captain in 1968.

As Dock and Harbour Master "Eddie" was always a very welcome guest at the weekly Thursday lunch hosted by the Area Marine Superintendent aboard the Union-Castle mailship when his lively conversation and humour enlivened many an occasion. For many years the host had assumed that a "can of Allsopps beer" was an adequate accompaniment to the sumptuous meal and the newly-appointed Assistant Marine Superintendent (and the new Dock Superintendent, Cameron Smith) had little difficulty in persuading Captain Kirton to support their "revolution" to replace the cans of beer with bottles of South African wine. Although visibly shaken by the suggestion, Captain Hodson quickly agreed, and thereafter the luncheon conversations - and the meal - were even more enjoyable.

Captain Kirton died in Hull on 27th February . He is remembered with affection by Club members and those who worked under him in the marine department at Southampton.

Crk 25/5/09

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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Dates for your Diary

Thu	Jun	18 Shipping Festival, Winchester Cathedral
Mon	Jun	22 "Rose of Hungerford" canal cruise **
Wed	Jun	24 Club Supper, Club Room
Sat	July	4 Curry Lunch
Sat	Sept	5 Curry Lunch
Sat	Oct	10 Dinner Dance, Brook House, Botley
Sat	Dec	5 Christmas Lunch, King's Court
Sat	Dec	12 Christmas Dinner, King's Court

*** Please note change of dates*

NEW CACHALOTS

J. McMinn

R.H. Thornback

Gone Aloft

M.F.J. Daly

A.E. Ditchfield

E.J. Kirton MBE