

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 38

December 2010

Captain's Log

On Friday evening, 3 September, Peter Grant, our Functions Officer, discovered that the Gurkha Kitchen was no more. This was disturbing news as he had booked a curry lunch for Saturday, 4 November, but full marks to Peter, he managed to arrange a last minute booking at P.O.S.H. so not all was lost. For those he was unable to contact, Peter waited at the Gurkha Kitchen, until such time as he thought he had everyone, then he posted a notice on the door. In the event about twenty of us had a delightful lunch at P.O.S.H. so it's congratulations to Peter for saving the day.

The following day, Sunday 5 September, was the Merchant Navy Memorial Service at Holyrood church in Southampton. It started to rain just before the service began, but fortunately it was only a brief shower. The Mayor of Southampton laid a wreath, followed by the Merchant Navy Association, and then myself. Amongst the congregation there were about eight Cachalots and wives. Not a bad turnout, but it would have been good to see more.

Tuesday, 7 September, saw about twenty of us on a coach trip to Windsor Castle and the Savill Gardens. It was a day of sunshine interspersed with a few heavy showers. Naturally the heavens opened just as we reached the coach park at Windsor. Fortunately there was plenty of shelter nearby. The tour of the State Apartments and St. George's Chapel was most interesting. The restoration work, after the disastrous fire, has been completed very sympathetically, and the damaged areas are as beautiful as they originally were. We could have done with an extra hour to see everything fully, but we had the back of our tickets stamped on departure, so we are able to enter the castle free of charge within the next twelve months and intend to take a more leisurely visit in the near future.

On Friday, 17 September Trevor Sapey of the Mary Rose Trust gave a talk after an excellent Club Supper in the Club room. For several of us, who had heard him at a Mariners of Wight lunch in Cowes last year, this was a second bite at the cherry, so to speak. Personally I found the talk more absorbing the second time around. Trevor dressed up in a typical costume likely to be worn by sailors in the time of Henry VIII, and brought replicas of many artefacts found in the wreck including surgical implements, plates and bowls, and weapons.

2010 has been designated as the Year of the Seafarer by the UN and, together with supporters of the Southampton Mission to Seafarers, we attended a service for the shipping industry and Mission supporters at St. Michael Paternoster Royal, the Society's home church in central London, on Thursday, 23 September. The preacher was the Reverend Tom Heffer, Secretary General of the mission to Seafarers, who spoke about the work of the Mission in various ports, with a power point presentation. In 1409 Dick Whittington, four times Lord Mayor of London, paid for the rebuilding and extension of the church. The name Paternoster was taken from Paternoster

Lane, (now renamed College Hill), which took it's name from the sellers of paternosters (rosaries) located there. Royal is a corruption of the French town La Reole, near Bordeaux, which gave its name to a nearby street occupied by wine merchants. Dick Whittington was interred in the chancel in 1423. The church was destroyed in the Great Fire of London and was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren between 1685 and 1694. It was then destroyed by enemy action in July 1944. After restoration it was re-opened in December 1968 as the headquarters of the Mission to Seamen (now Seafarers).

The three-yearly reunion of ancient Union-Castle Line seafarers took place on 25 September. Just under 250 attended, and it was a most enjoyable evening, swinging the proverbial lamp with many past shipmates. Jamie Cayzer-Colvin attended and very kindly organised for several models of Union-Castle Line and Clan Line vessels to be sent from London and displayed at the reunion. Once again our grateful thanks go to Mike Morley for organising yet another superb evening.

Our annual dinner-dance was held at the Royal Air Force Yacht Club on the banks of the Hamble River, on Saturday, 9 September. Forty-nine members and their wives/sweethearts enjoyed a delicious meal and dancing to "Twilight". The raffle raised £255 for the Wessex Cancer Trust.

The Merchant Mariners of Wight invited us to attend their lunch at the New Holmwood Hotel in Cowes on Friday, 22 October. Michael Grey, former editor of Lloyds List, gave an interesting talk about the "Year of the Seafarer" and it's effect on maritime affairs across the world.

On Friday, 12 November I was invited to attend the Annual Supper of the Southampton Shipping Golfing Society at the Royal Winchester Golf Club. It was a thoroughly convivial evening with an excellent meal. The society was founded in 1921, just seven years before the Cachalots, so next year they will be celebrating their 90th Anniversary. I am not a golfer but it seems to me that this is just the right organisation for those players with a shipping background.

Remembrance Sunday saw us at the Cenotaph in Southampton for the Remembrance Day Service, where I laid a wreath on behalf of the Club Members. Music was provided by the City of Southampton Albion Band, who will be playing at the Sea Pie Supper in February. Steady rain poured throughout the service, so everybody, including the Mayor, had a good soaking.

This year sees the 75th anniversary of the stone laying of the Mission Building in Queens Terrace. It also happens to be the 100th anniversary of the first Docklands Service on 2 January, 1910. To commemorate these two significant dates there was a special service in the Centre chapel at 1500 on 21 November, the nearest Sunday to the actual stone laying date. The preacher was the Reverend Canon Ken Peters, Director of Justice and Welfare, (known as JAWS for short), of the Mission to Seafarers.

Gerry Cartwright, Club Captain

Boatsteerer's Locker

Welcome

I hope that you all enjoyed the great summer and Indian summer that we have had this year and, more to the point, that you are looking forward to the festive season which is almost upon us. On a more personal note, Sarah and I are looking forward to the start of this Christmas celebrations with the imminent arrival of twins, far more so I might add than our daughter who is about to produce them!

I am also very glad to report that Barry Peck is, after a lengthy stay in Southampton's emporium of health (General Hospital), making a gradual recovery and will hopefully soon be sent home to continue his convalescence under the eagle eye of Judith who will ensure, even if only to insure that she does not have to trek in to Southampton every day, that he does what he is told to do in order to return to full good health as quickly as possible! I am sure that you will all want to join me in wishing Barry and Judith well over the next few difficult weeks.

The Clubroom

This is probably the single most important issue facing us in the coming year and even though only 10% of us use the Clubroom it gives me no pleasure to report that we have been working towards our schedule to withdraw from the tenancy agreement on the 31st July 2011. It is also sad to report that we continue to haemorrhage cash at an unsustainable level. It is against this background that we have been and are continuing to discuss with John Hughes, Chairman of the Southampton Seafarers Centre, a new contract for either an Office or Office and Clubroom. These discussions are still ongoing and once we have something definite to report we will do so by all means at our disposal. Meanwhile could I reiterate that: **"The Club is not about to close! Regardless of the outcome of our continuing discussions we will have an office and we will continue to manage our professional and social activities for the benefit of all our members in accordance with the Club Rules"**. I embolden the above to emphasise the content because I have been approached many time during the last few months by people commiserating with me over the forthcoming closure of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club! I would be very pleased if you, should you have a similar experience, will please respond accordingly.

Sea Pie Supper

The tickets are now on sale at £47.00 for members and £49.00 for guests. I am also pleased to announce that Dame Mary Fagan DCVO will be our Principal Guest this year and will respond on behalf of all the Guests. We had no choice but to increase the price of the tickets this year because our suppliers have done the same and it is becoming increasingly difficult, in the current economic situation, to hold our prices.

Business Southampton

We are now in the middle of presenting our initial findings to the major sponsors of this project and have agreed two follow up projects for future development. Watch this space.

I visited the Independence of the Seas as a BS guest on Monday 8th November. She is one of three Freedom Class RCCL vessels (total fleet of 22 vessels) all with similar principle dimensions including a gross tonnage of 160,000 tons (imperial) and room for 3,634 guests who are served by 1,365 officers and crew. A central promenade has inside cabins with windows on to it provides shops, eateries and an English Pub. There is a mobile platform amidships and positioned athwartships that is hoisted up and down over three floors with a band playing from it as part of the evening's entertainment for those in the promenade and also presumably the adjacent cabins.

For sheer size and appointments it is an impressive vessel which will now be based in Southampton. No doubt we will also be seeing others from the RCCL fleet the latest of which are the two Oasis class vessels (the Oasis – 2009 and the Allure of the Seas – 2010) which weigh in at 220,000 GT, can carry 5,402 guests that are served by 2,115 officers and crew. An impressive operation and a most enjoyable day was had by all.

Farewell and Happy Christmas

After four years in the Boatsteerers seat I will, if David Stocks nomination for the post is accepted by the Past Captains, be handing over to him after the Sea Pie Supper. Administration is not really my forte and I must thank Richard, Barry, Douglas, Elizabeth, Gerry, Peter Marriott, Terry, Reg, Simon and Peter Grant for all their efforts to not only prompt but also correct my many mistakes before they became too obvious to everybody. I would also offer a big thank you to all the Harpooners who have so willingly given of their time and efforts, both in and out of our committees. Your support has been much appreciated and any offence given over the years was, I assure you, either unintentional or unavoidable.

A Club such as ours can only survive by a constant team effort that plays to the strengths of each team member, that recognises the voluntary nature of any contribution made and respects the environment in which it operates. It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with you all for the good of this well respected and enduring organisation that has during the last 82 years made such a valuable contribution to Southampton's maritime community.

I am sure that you will all join with me in wishing David well with his application and, hopefully, his nomination. And, if successful, giving him your full support in his role as Boatsteerer. I look forward to continuing to work with you all to promote the Cachalots and the industry which we serve and also to enjoy your comradeship and friendship.

May I wish you all an enjoyable Christmas, good health and a successful new year.

George Angas



Southampton Master Mariners Cricket Captain's Log - 2010 season



2010 Team Performance

Format	Played	Won	Lost	Drawn	Cancelled
20/20	10	5	5	0	4
40/40	2	2	0	0	1

Back Row left to right

Jon Bennett (Bag Mstr), Emeka, Keith Edwards, Tony Gill, Ken Warren, Richard Paddock, Nick Salter (Vice Capt),

Front Row left to right

Raza , David Turner (Capt), Steven Bell, Tushar Naik

2010 squad (not at this match)

Edmund Hughes (Hon Sec), Prasad Panicker, James Foster, Krishnan, Simon Oakley, Ted Banks , Mehmood, Surya, Jinnoy, Yusef, Sudhagar, Prashant, Ali, Shimmi, Sinnoy.

Umpires

Ian Bagshaw, Peter Starkey

President

George Gifford

Note: The new short sleeve team sweaters with SMMC crest

Match reports for 2010

Full match reports, team photographs and directions to the different grounds can be found on the Southampton Master Mariners' website: <http://www.cachalots.org.uk/Content.aspx>

In summary

Our Hon Sec, Edmund Hughes had a bit of a baptism of fire coping admirably with a new home ground and having to organise a season of 17 matches in 3 months so well done there and good luck in your new role at IMO.

Our new hosts at Otterbourne have been excellent and we have adapted to the new ground's logistical requirements, helped by a new team bag with wheels and a much better handle. Thanks go to everyone who has helped with all the different tasks be it scoring, umpiring, taking the kitbag home, and all the other things which have to happen to make things go smoothly.

Our umpires have been the smartly turned out and very professional although a "Tourette's moment" was narrowly averted when, after a mix up regarding the order of retired batsman returning to the crease, I took my guard to an appeal of "Howzat?" from the opposition skipper. Umpire Bagshaw quickly raised his finger and gave me out for taking more than 3 minutes to get to the crease – luckily for me it was a stitch up! ;-)

In all another excellent year playing some of the most enjoyable games of cricket I have ever played. After our inaugural "snatching defeat from the jaws of victory" against Shirley, we seemed to settle into a rhythm of win one loose one for a while and then finished off the season with 4 straight wins in a row. I am sure our opposition are now putting out stronger teams, which is a real compliment; however, it was not the results that made it special for me but the way in which we really pulled together to make things happen. In particular, I shall always remember our two openers Raza & Emeka getting centuries at Swanmore and then the whole team "grafting out" the opposition with the most attacking field I have ever seen, to win off the last ball!

If I could sum up our performance this year it would be to say that I think we have given our best, played to win, sometimes lost our concentration, always shown support for each other, especially in the field, but most of all we have enjoyed ourselves.

My two year term as skipper has been an absolute pleasure and it has, and continues to be, a privilege to be a part of a team which is now "prepared for all things".

David Turner
(SMMCC Captain 2009-10)



The Club's popular **Burns' Night Supper** will take place, as usual, at the King's Court Masonic Centre in Chandler's Ford on Saturday **22nd January**. The traditional, filling menu, including Haggis & Clapshaw, can be anticipated and the expected ticket price will be around £30.

Whether the entertainments committee can come up with something new to improve on last year's ritual humiliation of the Tam O'Shanter recital and the *skrieches* of the witches remains to be seen, but no doubt they are working on it.

I'd be happy to catch a glimpse of a *cutty-sark*.

Black tie & miniatures.

1900 for 1930



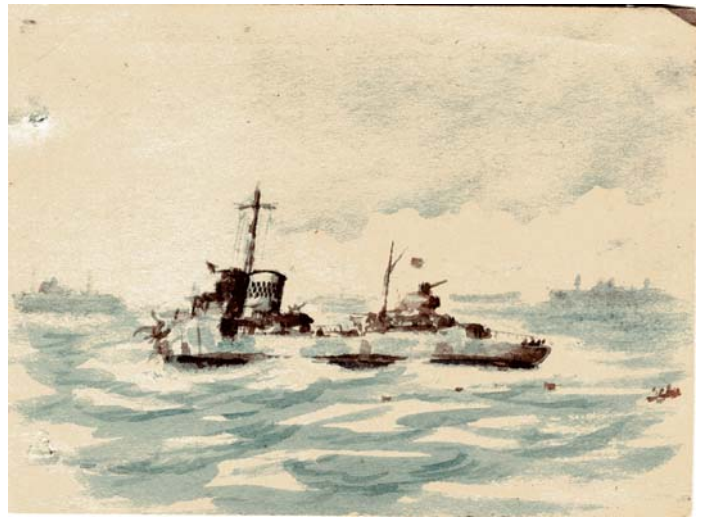
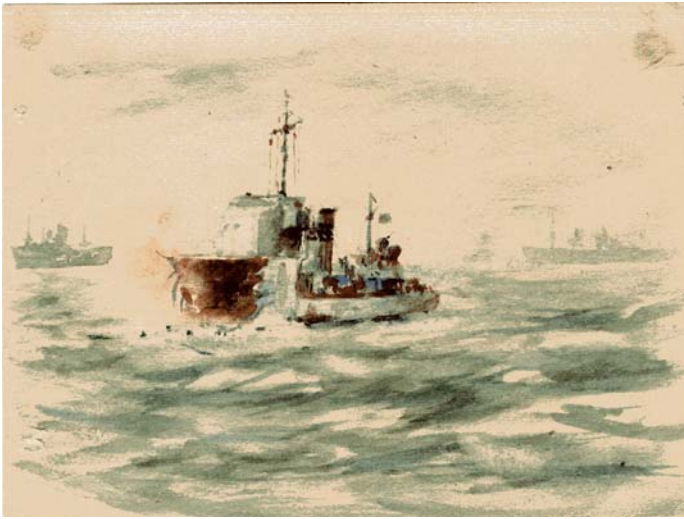
HMS Orchis

The recent story here of the convoy SC 94 has jogged the memory of Cachalot, Major Bill Wynn-Werninck, who writes:

I was so interested to read about the Flower Class Corvettes in *Cachalot* 37. What splendid ships and crews they were. The article brought home with a bang my first experience with a Flower Class Corvette.

I had sailed over to Arromanches from Tilbury with my unit, 19 Company RASC (MT) of some 250 vehicles, aboard the Canadian built Liberty ship *Fort Brandon*. We anchored about 2 miles off Arromanches on the east side of the Mulberry Harbour. That evening about 1000 pm a German bomber flew over us. There was some speculation about what the plane was up to, the feeling being that she was dropping acoustic mines. That night, from a flat calm evening, it blew up Force 5-6, causing the Captain concern that *Fort Brandon's* anchor chain could set off a nearby mine.

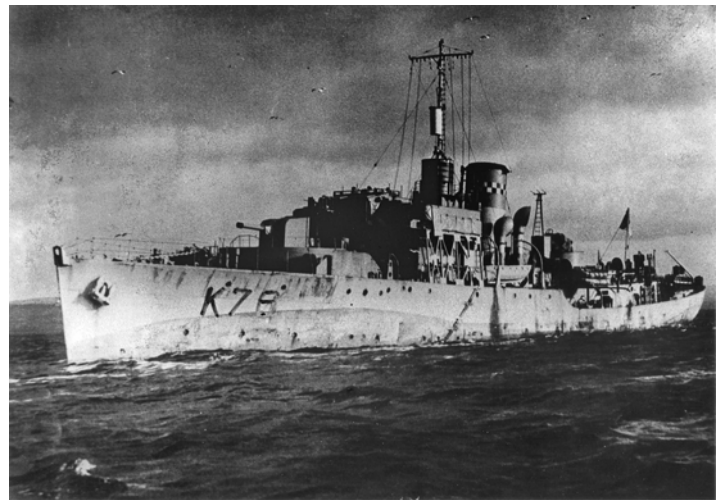
Next morning I watched our vehicles being unloaded onto the big Rhino barges run by the Sappers and went back to my cabin for a wash and brush up before breakfast. I was just doing this when there was a heck of a bang. I shot out on deck where I was appalled to see, 2 cables away, a corvette type of ship with her bows blown off to the 4.7 gun mounting. She was blowing off clouds of steam but slowly got under way, having eased the survivors away, and started heading for the beach adjoining the Mulberry caissons. We were all saddened on deck as no lifeboat was lowered to help those in the water and, in particular, one sailor who was manfully swimming towards the beach a long way ahead. Lifeboats were not lowered for fear of mines. I then hurried back to my cabin and did three small water-colour sketches of what I had seen.



In July 1994 I found these sketches and wrote to Navy News to ask if anyone could identify the ship. To my delight the next Navy News had several letters in it which gave her name as HMS Orchis (K76).

Naval Historical Branch stated that she was torpedoed by U-992 which, 14 days later, was sunk in the Dover Straits. Fifty of *Orchis's* crew were killed or missing. Survivors were picked up by *MLs* 150 and 196, and landed in Normandy. The injured men were later sent to England in the hospital ship *St. Julian*. *HMS Orchis* was surveyed but found to be beyond economical repair and was broken up on site.

Mr Gordon Dibble wrote one of the letters, having been her sickbay attendant. He was having a shower at the instant of the explosion and was badly wounded from which he never really recovered. I had the great pleasure of meeting him and seeing the keys of the sickbay which he always carried. He very kindly gave me a photograph of *HMS Orchis*. I had met him at a meeting of the Flower Class Corvette Association, South Cerney in Gloucestershire and at the next meeting he was not there. I met Mrs Dibble who sadly told me he had died. She told me that in his final moments he was talking about something the nurses couldn't understand. She knew only too well that he was recalling the disaster of *HMS Orchis*. For myself, having read that she was torpedoed, I am eternally grateful that *Fort Brandon* was not selected as the next target. She could have been sunk with the loss of most of our 6 ton vehicles.



Could I mention the excellent book by Chris Howard Bailey, "The Battle of the Atlantic" (The Royal Naval Museum). I met Cyril Stephens, Seaman ex HMS Orchis, who became a good friend. His house in South Cerney is named "Orchis". He too has since died.

Bill Wynn-Werninck

I found the web site of the Flower Class Corvette Association, www.fcca.demon.co.uk, and have since contacted them and directed their members to our own site and the earlier newsletters posted there. Ed.

**Continuing Chapter 14 of "The Unforgiving Minute",
the personal memoirs of Stowaway Member
Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles.**

One of the British Army units on the island was No. 111 Field Regiment Royal Artillery. The CO was a splendid old Indian Army Colonel, Elliott. His nick-name was "Elbow" because he had a somewhat deformed arm, allegedly resulting from a struggle with a bear in a cave in the Himalayas many years ago. This Elliott was the brother of the Air Marshal William Elliott in charge of the "Balkan Air Force". He was a splendidly energetic old man and always seeking opportunities to carry out raids on the German garrisons in the other islands. Two I remember in particular....

The first was on the town of Korcula on the eastern end of the island of the same name. We loaded a number of his 25 pounder guns into some "Ramped Cargo Lighters" - slow-moving wooden craft. We sent them to the small island of Skedro by night to hide up until the following morning. At dawn next day they were landed on a shingle beach on the south side of Korcula within range of their target which was a densely packed enemy garrison. The target was not visible from the guns, so indirect fire was controlled by a couple of gunner officers, landed previously, who were working in the vineyards, dressed as local girls, with their radio sets concealed in the baskets on their backs into which they were throwing the grapes. This worked wonderfully well and the 25-pounders had a good day's shooting. In case the enemy should discover where our guns were beached, a covering force of Highland Light Infantry were located a little way inland from the cove.

But to further confuse the enemy, we sent LCI(L) 254 - a large infantry landing craft - to steam up and down off the eastern end of the island where it could be seen by the enemy. This LCI had a scaffold pole rigged up on the bow to look like a gun and kept setting off flash grenades. She was situated just beyond the extreme range of the enemy guns which we knew because Partisan intelligence had told us their calibre. At this long range the German army, not experts in ship recognition, were effectively fooled and spent a long time firing at the LCI. Later in the day our whole force was withdrawn without casualties - and "Elbow" Elliott returned having had an enjoyable day's shoot.

On another extraordinary occasion we sent the gunners to the Peljesac Peninsular to bombard the same target. But this time the enemy could see our guns, so moved his artillery a little way away outside the garrison area and began to shoot back very effectively. I was horrified to see that our own guns were dreadfully vulnerable and that the enemy shells bursting seemed to have set the whole area on fire - smoke from burning undergrowth etc. I felt that our gunners would be decimated, so I suggested to Elbow Elliott on a portable radio that his men should withdraw to the other side of the narrow spit of land where our landing craft were hidden, and that they should return to recover their guns after dark.

I think that in my life I had never previously received such a blistering reply. Apparently to leave their guns is the last thing that the Royal Artillery will do under any circumstances whatever. So by nightfall a battered group of men and guns were embarked for the return to Vis. But to my amazement they had suffered very few casualties. I learned that they routinely dug slit trenches round their gun positions and that these had been effective.

On this occasion our gunfire had been assisted later in the day by a very wild Rhodesian Army Captain, Dizzy Ross, belonging to the "Raiding Support Regiment". Climbing into a small single-seater training aircraft and flying over with a radio set on his knees he identified the location to which the German guns had moved.

A garrison on its own, without much contact with the outside world, tends to build up a wonderful "garrison spirit". This was certainly the case in Vis. There was excellent fellow-feeling among the units of all three services. In June, Brigadier Tom Churchill, Commander of No. 2 Special Service Brigade, had come to the island as Garrison Commander and to take command of all the Army units. Tom was the younger brother of Colonel Jack Churchill, CO No. 2 Commando, who worked under his younger brother's orders. They were the greatest of friends, but very different personalities. Jack, whose earlier career we have already described, was a wild daredevil character - and above all an absolutely inspired leader of men in battle. Tom, by contrast, was much more of a thinker. He was an excellent organiser and quickly gained the respect of the entire garrison. I got to know him extremely well because we were in almost daily contact, planning the various raids, large-scale and small-scale, in which the Army and the Navy obviously had to cooperate very closely.

Tom was a very delightful balanced and cultured individual. We became great friends on the island and continued to see a lot of each another post-war until his death in 1996. Our families knew one another and I am the god-father of his son Toby. Tom Churchill wrote an extremely good book - "Commando Crusade". This was published by William Kimber & Co in 1987. I was asked to write a review of it and I said...

"This book is the personal record of a remarkable, exciting career and it also makes a most colourful contribution to the vast kaleidoscope of modern history. But let intellectuals and theorists beware - it is about Soldiering, not about Defence...The young Tom Churchill, within months of leaving Sandhurst, was on detached duty helping to suppress a rebellion in Burma. He had single-handed responsibility for all operations in an area in which the principal bandit leader was eventually ambushed and killed; life and death powers as a Second Lieutenant!..."

The chapters in this book describing the events in Yugoslavia in 1944 in fact give by far the best account yet published about this campaign. British involvement in support of the Partisans was on a scale which is not generally realised; but it undoubtedly determined the whole post-war history of Yugoslavia — for better or for worse!...The book is crammed with anecdotes about strategic discussions with the great and the good - Mountbatten, Alexander, "Monty", McCreary, Fitzroy Maclean, Tito, et al, as well as about the earthy good sense of private soldiers."

A very great influence upon events in Vis during that remarkable summer was the presence of Marshal Tito himself. His HQ were in a very primitive cottage on the lower slopes of Mount Hum and allegedly he slept in a cave.

As the months went by, many Allied visitors came over for consultations with Tito, all arranged by Fitzroy Maclean. Two of the most important were Sir Ralph Stevenson (the former British Ambassador to the Royalist Government in Yugoslavia) and Vladko Velebit, who after the war became Yugoslav Ambassador in London and to the U.N.

Fitzroy Maclean, who was in effect the British Ambassador to Tito, came to the island at the same time as Tito himself. All diplomatic dealings and communications between Tito and the Allies were carried out through him.

In contrast to Tito's sparse accommodation on the island, Fitzroy was given a magnificent villa on the seashore near Ravnik. Here Fitzroy had his Chief of Staff Vivian Street, his expert Signals Officer Hilary King, an Administrator Gordon Alston and others. Fitzroy received many visitors for longer or shorter periods. Phillip Broad from the Foreign Office frequently came. Also Evelyn Waugh (who was a personal friend of Fitzroy) and of course Randolph Churchill. Whatever else may be said about Randolph Churchill, he was a very brave and courageous man -he almost seemed to enjoy danger. His great value to Fitzroy was that by various means he had, so to speak, a private line to his father in London. Anything which Tito and Fitzroy planned together almost immediately reached the ears of the Prime Minister - and was frequently put into effect. Thus Tito felt that Maclean could work wonders - as indeed he could.

This diplomatic background was of little concern to us on the military side in the garrison: We just had to get on with the war. But there were some curious events. One must remember that Tito had been the leader of the illegal Communist Party in pre-war Yugoslavia and that his rebellion was basically Communist inspired. Tito was really engaged in the old diplomatic game of playing Moscow vs the West -even though they were Allies at the time. Squadron Leader Tony Le Hardy, who was the RAF Liaison Officer on the island, began to be pestered by the Partisans to light the runway lights night after night to enable a Russian Dakota to practice night flying. This was a nuisance because all the lights had to be lit by hand. After a week or more, one evening a jeep arrived at high-speed containing Tito who climbed into the Dakota, which immediately took off and did not return. Only later was it known that Tito had gone to Moscow, without any warning at all to the Allies. I cannot remember how long he was absent, but certainly several weeks. Churchill was very angry when Tito "levanted".

I remember other incidents concerning Tito. One day, for the first time, my boss Admiral Charles Morgan from Taranto, came to Komiza in a destroyer for one day. He was invited to lunch with Tito. I was invited too. It was a large lunch and we were waited on by Partisan girl soldiers. I heard Admiral Morgan invite Tito to come out to sea that afternoon in the destroyer to watch a practice naval bombardment of a suitable rock. All this was through the interpreter: Tito accepted. Then there was much whispering through the interpreter from the Russian general at the table. Then I heard Tito say "Can my friend the Russian general come too?" Rather surprisingly Admiral Morgan said No, it was a personal invitation to Tito, not for anybody else.

There was much more whispering and then Tito said "If my friend the Russian general cannot accompany me, it won't be convenient for me to go". More whispering still, and then Tito asked was it to be an official bombardment or an unofficial bombardment. Again Admiral Morgan was non-committal. After a short interval Tito said that if it was understood it was an unofficial bombardment he would come on his own.



Allied Commanders on Vis after luncheon given by Tito, June 1944. Borovic.

L to R Standing: Russian interpreter, Air Commander Carter, Lieut-Colonel Street, Major Maud, 40 Commando, General Arso Jovanovic, Chief of Staff; Major Cox, 64 HAA Regt; Commander Josip Cerni, Partisan Navy, Lieut-Colonel Tod, 9 Commando, Lieut-Commander Morgan-Giles, SNO Vis, Lieut-Colonel Elliot, OC 111 Fd Regt, Lieut-Colonel Simonds, OC 43 Commando, Flight-Lieutenant Le Hardy RAF, Lieut-Colonel T Flynn, 2 Commando. Sitting: General Korniev, Head of Russian Mission; Brigadier T.B.L. Churchill, Commander Allied troops on Vis; Admiral Sir Walter Cowan; Marshal J.B. Tito; Admiral Morgan. Flag Officer, Taranto, and Colonel Sve Orevic.

After lunch Tito and the Admiral drove down to Komiza in a jeep. The bombardment passed happily, Tito came back, Admiral Morgan and the destroyer returned to Italy. Two days later the Russian general asked Brigadier Tom Churchill to see him. He plied him with a lot of vodka. When the interpreter fell under the table Tom Churchill thought it was time to go. He got up. The Russian caught him by the lapels and in very broken English said "Tell me, my friend, one thing". "What do you want to know?" "Tell me, when Marshal Tito went out in that destroyer, did he meet King Peter?"!! Of course the whole idea was absurd. King Peter was in Claridges Hotel in London. But this incident shows the extraordinary suspiciousness of the Russian character and their absolute obsession with political intrigue.

To be continued

If you haven't already done so, you may just have time to contact the office and book for the Christmas Lunch or Dinner.



I was going to use this space to declare this publication to be

Royal Wedding free

But now, of course, It's not

This space has been specially reserved by the editorial staff so that we can wish all of our readers a very

Merry Christmas

The Birth of Naval Aviation.

Some five years before the outbreak of WW1 a French engineer –Clement Ader- published a book entitled “L’Aviation Militaire” in which he wrote “An airplane-carrying vessel is indispensable. These vessels will be constructed on a plan very different from what is currently used. First of all the deck will be cleared of all obstacles. It will be flat, as wide as possible without jeopardising the nautical lines of the hull and it will look like a landing field”

Most military experts ignored these prophetic words, but not the US Naval Attaché in Paris who had read many of Ader’s previous papers on aviation and who recognised their worth. He sent the full report to Washington but it provoked scant interest until, in 1910, a civilian named Eugene B.Ely persuaded the US Navy to erect a temporary deck on the fore end of *USS Birmingham* to accommodate his Curtis biplane. The ship steamed slowly out to an anchorage and Ely flew off the ship and returned to a shoreside airfield. A few weeks later he again persuaded the navy to build a rather longer deck at the after end of *USS Pennsylvania* and, with the ship again at anchor, he flew from a nearby airfield and *landed* on the ship.

The navies of the world were, by this time, taking a very great interest in “naval aviation” and, early in 1912, Lieutenant Samson R.N. flew off a deck built on the forward end of *HMS Africa* in his Short S38 biplane with the cruiser secured to a buoy. Later that year he confused the sceptics who refused to accept that an aircraft could fly off a ship when she was underway by flying off *HMS Hibernia* when she was steaming at some 15 knots.

Now, the Admiralty needed no further proof and they converted a merchant ship as a *seaplane* carrier –and called her *HMS Hermes*. The flight deck was approximately 100 feet in length and the aircraft were stowed in a hold abaft this served by a number of cranes capable of lifting them up to the flight deck and subsequently recovering them from the sea after landing. The concept was developed and in the early months of WW1 a bigger merchant ship, Cunard’s *Campania* of 18,000 tons, was converted for the carriage of a dozen seaplanes. Her flight deck was rather longer but the aircraft took off using a trolley system – the trolley falling away as the aircraft became airborne.

Later that year another merchant ship was converted and she entered service in December 1914 named *Ark Royal*. This ship remained operational until the outbreak of WW2 but by this time she had been renamed *HMS Pegasus* to facilitate the naming (in 1937) of another *HMS Ark Royal*.

Undoubtedly, the Admiralty was convinced that shipborne aircraft were here to stay and early in WW1 several merchant ships were converted to aircraft carriers. Tests had proved that faster ships were better suited for the role and so a number of ferries were converted. Research continued apace and now it was agreed that it would be much more advantageous to construct a vessel on which conventional land-based aircraft could land – and take off again as needed.

HMS Argus entered service as WW1 ended but prior to her commissioning the Royal Navy had adopted a take-off system known as the “gun turret system” whereby a short deck was erected over the full length of a forward turret and from this the small Sopwith Pup fighter aircraft took off and engaged the enemy – and returned to ditch close to a friendly ship. Indeed, this wasteful and dangerous system prevailed in a broadly similar manner throughout WW2 when naval aircraft were catapulted from specially equipped merchant ships and, after engaging the enemy, they also ditched in the midst of the convoy with the hope that someone would stop and rescue the pilot.

Development continued and this led to the construction of the carrier in the form familiar to those who served during WW2 and thereafter. Long flight decks, arrestor wires, steam catapults and many other innovations were introduced leading eventually to the introduction of the “through deck cruisers” equipped with the famous Harrier (Short /vertical take-off and Landing) aircraft which contributed so much during the Falklands campaign.

WW2 saw the introduction of the Escort Carrier – popularly known as Woolworth Carriers to reflect the meagre budget allocated for the construction of some 30 in the USA and 6 in the UK.

Merchant Aircraft Carriers were built to supplement the “Woolworth carriers” (some of which spent long periods being repaired and refitted) and these were modified bulk carriers and tankers. The advantage of using ships like these was that they were easily converted for the carriage and operation of aircraft but could also carry cargo. They were manned by merchant seamen augmented by Fleet Air Arm personnel and RN gunners.

As a boy growing up in Northern Ireland our farm adjoined HMS Shrike, the RNAS base at Maydown, Co.Londonderry and it was from here that the aircrews and aircraft of the “MAC ship Wing” operated. Some of them were Dutch (there were several Dutch flag Mac ships).

I clearly recall my parents and our neighbours entertaining aircrew members on many occasions and it was probably this early association that made me consider a career in the Fleet Air Arm – an ambition which soon dissipated when I joined HMS Conway in 1944.

Today there is considerable confusion surrounding the future of the two super-carriers being built for the Royal Navy at a time when the Defence budget is being drastically curtailed. The two huge aircraft carriers are being built in sections throughout the United Kingdom and will finally be assembled in Scotland but there are fears that only one will enter service – and that that ship will not be equipped with fixed-wing aircraft for at least ten years. Happily, the French and United States navies have indicated that they will supply aircraft for operational use from the Royal Naval carrier -subject to numerous controls and restrictions – but not everyone is convinced that this is the best option.

Despite the reservations of most Royal Navy members and many others involved with the defence of the realm it is probable that Monsieur Ader and Mr. Ely would have greeted the news with acclaim!

CRK 31/10/10



Empire Macrea

One of four such “MAC” ships managed by The Hain Steamship Co. on behalf of the Ministry of War Transport. Hains lost all but one of their 27 pre-war fleet and, unable to re-build fast enough, were entrusted to manage 30 vessels by the MoWT.

New Members

COMMODORE W M WALWORTH OBE RFA

Bill Walworth was brought up in rural Wiltshire and joined the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service in 1978 after ten years in the BP Tanker Company.

In his early RFA career he served in a variety of seagoing and staff appointments, including a period as logistician on the staff of Flag Officer Third Flotilla under Stowaway, Admiral Sir Julian Oswald. Following Joint Service Defence College in 1992 he was appointed to the newly formed COMRFA command as Staff Operations Officer and in 1994 was promoted to captain and appointed to command RFA SIR GALAHAD. The ship was part of a United Nations peace-keeping deployment to Angola, for which he had the honour of being awarded an OBE. After eight years in command of various RFAs operating all over the world he attended the Higher Command Staff Course in 2002 followed by two years on the staff of Commander in Chief Fleet as Deputy to the Commodore RFA. In 2004 he conducted a study into joint logistic support to the NATO Response Force before taking command of RFA FORT VICTORIA for two years, a period which included a Maritime Strike deployment to the Indian Ocean in 2006, ending in the evacuation of UK citizens from the Lebanon. In March 2007 he returned to the staff of Commander in Chief Fleet to lead the Afloat Support Capability Integration Group. He was promoted commodore and appointed Head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Assistant Chief of Staff Afloat Support in September 2008.

Bill Walworth lives in Purbrook Heath in Hampshire. He is a Younger Brother of Trinity House, Fellow of the Nautical Institute, member of Bath Rugby Old Players Association, and the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. A governor of a school for children with special needs, he is also on the Merchant Navy and Education Board of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets. He enjoys the performing arts, reading, walking, cycling and sailing.

He has been a top-table guest at the Sea Pie Supper for the past two years and joins us in the hope of contributing to what he sees as the good that the Cachalots do for shipping in the Solent area.

CAPTAIN P WHYTE MBE

Paul Whyte joined the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in 1978 from British & Commonwealth Shipping Company, an organisation that was in rapid decline. After gaining Masters in 1985 and passing the RN Specialist Navigation Course in 1986 he was appointed to Flag Officer Sea Training at Portland Naval Base (1986-88) seariding UK and foreign warships and naval auxiliaries. In 1994 as Chief Officer of RFA GREY ROVER patrolling icy South Georgian waters, he led the rescue of a badly damaged Chilean fishing boat and was subsequently awarded a Commodore's Commendation. After two spells in RFA HQ heading the manpower desk (1994-1996) and operations area (1998-2000) he was promoted Captain. In 2001 he examined the placement of RFA Engineering within the new Naval Command and refreshed the wider understanding of the RFA legal status. Reverting to type, in 2003 he headed a Review of RFA Navigation Standards and Bridgeman ship that complemented a similar review undertaken by the RN. He remains a champion of RFA Navigation Standards. His most recent commands have been RFAs DILIGENCE (x3), ARGUS (x4) and FORT VICTORIA. Following his command of RFA DILIGENCE in 2005 he was honoured with an MBE for her

participation in Operation GARRON in support of humanitarian relief off the east coast of Sri Lanka following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. He is a keen motorcyclist and member of the Institute of Advanced Motoring. He is addicted to gadgets, enjoys the odd game of squash and has played cricket with Southampton Master Mariners for some 25 years. Paul also joins us in the hope of making a contribution to the club, where appropriate, and to "achieve an aspiration of joining the main club after many years playing with the cricket section".

J A DOYLE

Jessica Doyle, BA (Hons), lives in West Sussex and is the London/South West Area Sales Manager for Jotun Paints (Europe) Ltd., (manufacturers of marine coatings). She is a keen sailor and is currently studying for her RYA Day Skipper qualification. She is also a supporter of the Sea Pie Supper.

MRS A CARTWRIGHT

Anne met an Assistant Purser in 1963, on board the Union-Castle Line vessel "Braemar Castle", where she was employed as Nursing Sister, and in 1964 she foolishly accepted his proposal of marriage and they came to live in the Southampton area.

When he returned to sea she registered with a Nursing Agency, and worked in various places in the New Forest. This meant that she could be unavailable for work when he was on leave. When family came along she took a career break from 1966 to 1977.

In 1977, being unable to rid herself of the "nursing bug", she returned to the NHS and trained as a District Nurse, working in Winchester and Chandler's Ford.

Round about 1980 she hurt her back, possibly the result of falling off a horse, and to avoid further lifting of heavy patients, she applied for a position as District Nurse Manager. Much to her surprise she was duly appointed and asked to train as an Assessor of Supervised Practice, (a period of three months required at the end of the District Nurse training), in order to ensure that the NHS had safe practitioners.

In Management, in conjunction with a Community Physician and a planning officer, she became involved with service provision for the young physically disabled, (YPD 16-65 years in NHS terms), across the Winchester Health Area, which stretched from Wickham to Tidworth.

In 1983 as part of a NHS shake-up she was promoted to Community Nurse Manager, based in Andover, with responsibility for District Nursing, Health Visiting and Family Planning whilst retaining responsibility for ongoing involvement with service provision for the YPD.

By 1986 this post had become increasingly political, which did not appeal to Anne, as she preferred a more clinical role. She, therefore, moved base to Eastleigh and became Health Care Manager for YPD services, which included assessing the needs of patients across the district, and putting them in touch with the appropriate service providers. She was also very involved in the setting up of a Rehabilitation Service for this group.

She took early retirement in 1993, and, together with her husband, who had retired in 1992, went sailing around the north Brittany coast for about six weeks.

About six months after retiring, the Winchester Branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society sought the benefit of her experience and her NHS network. After sixteen years of voluntary work, she has finally retired, and was presented with their Shining Star award by the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Dredgings from the Memory of an Electrical Superintendent

More dredgings (and more to come) from retired Electrical Engineer Eddie Hunter.

Eddie is the Membership Secretary of The Seven Seas Club and these tales have previously appeared in their magazine.

German Water sports

As I didn't have much to do with the foreign vessels that used our berths at Parkeston Quay, Harwich, I can't remember all their names. I think it was the M.V. *Hamburg* that was tied up astern of *Sea Freightliner 1* on a summer afternoon.. The German ship was port side to, pointing up the river, the *Sea Freightliner 1* was starboard side to, and I was out on the port bridge wing testing something or other. (I was fond of testing things.) From the warbling alarm sounds and the casual activity aboard the "Hamburg" it was apparent that her Crew were indulging in their equivalent to our Board of Trade Sports, you know the routine - Fire drill, ponce about wearing yellow life-jackets, abandon ship, i.e. lower the odd waterside lifeboat whose engine invariably fails to start, row about a bit, hopefully missing the over-side discharge, lose an oar or two, recover the boat, disperse and have a couple of beers.

Presently the German ship's starboard lifeboats three, five and seven were swung out on protesting davits and the embarrassed Deck Engineer, swearing and sweating, gave up on the failed electrical starters and vainly tried throwing the engines over using their cranking handles. (This *never* happened on any of my ships, of course. Well - hardly ever.)

Eventually, in reluctant response to some guttural "*Achtung! Achtung!*" type command from the bridge barked through an over-amplified loud hailer, some of the *Hamburg's* crew clambered into a lifeboat. From what I could see, the lifeboat was being manned by two or three sailors who knew what they were doing and a large group of white-coated catering staff who probably didn't, if they were anything like most British stewards. With the ominous squeal of tortured metal and an uncomfortable-looking jerky motion, the lifeboat began to descend. As it jerked towards half-way between its davits and the water the stem fall suddenly broke and the boat swung like a maritime pendulum from its still-intact bow fall, spilling its screaming human cargo, oars and other loose equipment into the river.

I drew breath and opened my mouth to shout, but somebody else beat me to it.

"The Germans are in the water!" he bellowed, and diverse members of the *Sea Freightliner 1* 's crew rushed on deck.

"What do we do?" someone asked.

A grizzled older Deck Officer grinned and said. "Machine-gun the bar-stewards!" (Er.. I *think* he said "bar-stewards." It was some word very like that, anyhow. Perhaps the Deck Officer had been short-changed in the bar on a week-end trip to Germany.)

But to their credit, the *Sea Freightliner 1's* men had their accident boat in the water minutes before the Germans managed to launch theirs. I don't remember reports of any casualties.

Personnel Problem

I have yet to meet a Sea Officer or the Ship's Engineer who does not have an eye for detail and so there is no need for me to describe the neat symmetry of exposed electrical wiring on ships.

In the first few weeks of my employment as an Electrical Superintendent I took passage on each ship for whose electrical "health" I would be responsible. Those voyages were all-round makee learnee experiences, giving me opportunity to get to know the ships and their Deck and Engineer Officers, and giving those gentlemen a look at me.

During one such trip on the train ferry mv "Essex Ferry" I was invited into the Chief Engineer's cabin for a pre-lunch aperitif.

I could not fail to notice the appalling surface-run wiring to a bunk light. The wiring round the cabin was like a dog's hind leg, cable clips were poorly made and did not fit properly and were unevenly spaced. Right-angle bends were much too tight, compressing the insulation on the inside of each bend and stretching it on the outside, I frowned and shook my head in disbelief. The other wiring in the cabin was perfect.

"Who the hell installed the bunk light? One of the Junior Engineers?" I asked.

"No," said the Chief, with a broad grin. "One of your Port Workshops Electricians! You'll find wiring like that in all the Officers' cabins. Come, I'll show you."

And he took me on a conducted tour. The ship originally did not have bunk lights, and these had been retro-installed, but in an appalling manner.

"Come on, Chief, give," I pleaded. "Who? I have got to know."

"Dunno. Tall, fat chap, with a Friar Tuck haircut."

My heart sank. Tiny Ben, definitely one of mine. But how? Where was the Electrical Charge Hand? The Electrical Foreman? And, an even more horrifying thought - where had my illustrious predecessor been? Did all three need to have their eyesight tested?

The more I thought about it, the more troubled I became. Clearly, if a shore-based Electrician was so totally inept, what other unseen damage was he inflicting on the ships?

Back in the office, I sent for Tiny's personnel file. He had been employed by the Company for three years and some months, clearly having survived his one year probationary period.. And he was a married man, with a small family and a large mortgage - well, I ask you, what would you do? Not the man's fault. He should have been invited to leave the Company's employment within a few weeks of being recruited.

The Charge Hand, the Foreman and my predecessor had all slipped up. But what, morally, could I do? The man had worked for Sealink for about six years. Under the circumstances, I could hardly say, "I'm sorry, Tiny, but you are not exactly what we are looking for."

My subsequent (urgently arranged) chat with Tiny confirmed my worst fears - if the man had one more brain cell it would be lonely. Electrically speaking, the man was a maritime menace. But a simple and ethical solution seemed obvious - at least the shore plant and equipment did not sail away from me, and I would make the Foreman find simple work that would be within Tiny's tiny sphere of competence.

So I told Tiny as kindly as I could that I wanted him to apply for a transfer to the port maintenance gang. He refused point blank. He would lose money. He wasn't going to ... You can't make me ... It was time to get tough.

"Tiny, look," I opted for the Dutch uncle approach. "At least you will still have a job."

But no, he wasn't having any of it.

"Go away for half-an-hour and talk it over with your Shop Steward, but, know this, Tiny, I *cannot*, I *will not* allow you to work on any of the ships." I told him and ordered him to be back in thirty minutes with either his application for a transfer or his Trade Union Representative. He left in high dudgeon, muttering not-so-veiled threats.

Presently Tiny was back, with his Trade Union Rep. I explained the position and told Tiny that I knew, and he must know if he were honest with himself, that he lacked the necessary skill and knowledge to work on the ships. All I needed to do was merely tell him, not that he was incapable, but that his work had deteriorated, warn him that he must improve, both of us knowing that he couldn't and that, after a few warnings escalating in severity, I would have the power to terminate his employment. Alternatively, if he applied for a transfer, I would personally ensure that the Port Maintenance Charge Hand would find work that he could do and his employment would be secure.

And that was before we all saw "The Godfather," and learned about "an offer that you can't refuse."

Fortunately, Tiny didn't refuse and worked on for a number of years changing lamps and inspecting temporary cables for visible mechanical damage, until the poor bugger died of some horrible wasting disease several years later.

At Tiny's funeral, the Union Rep, noted for his hard-line approach to labour disputes, actually thanked me for my delicate handling of the matter.

Strange, that - never thought of myself as a diplomat.

Curry Lunches

The first curry lunch of next year is scheduled for **Saturday 5th March**, 1200 for 1230.

That will be before you receive your next magazine and what with the demise of the Gurkha Kitchen and no indication of what the replacement "Oriental Buffet" might be like we feel it prudent to keep the P.O.S.H. Restaurant as our venue of choice. We enjoyed two very nice curry lunches there in September and October with excellent service.

Tambo's Tales

Cachalot Peter C. Tambling, Master Mariner and Commander RD, has written his memoirs, which he has titled **Memories of R589281** and, comprehensively and modestly, has sub-titled them **From School-Boy in Steam (1946), to Master, Marine Superintendent, Ship Surveyor, Port Manager & Harbour Master, Shipping Agent and back to Master in Steam (1996 - 2008)**. They are due to be serialised in **Shipping Today and Yesterday** magazine, starting in January.*

Peter has kindly given me permission to reproduce what I can here and at 190 pages long I will only be able to delve into just some of the incidents and stories that Peter can recall so prodigiously. I was going to start with some entertaining tales of his time with Elders & Fyffes but think we may have had enough of 1960's seafaring for this edition so am opting for something a bit more up to date: his time as Master of the "Shieldhall".

A return to Portsmouth for the third Festival of the Sea .

The next involvement with the Festival of the Sea took place in Portsmouth in 2001, when we berthed in the Inner Basin for a week. Shortly after the Pilot had left, I noticed one of the small dockyard tugs removing a large paint scow from a Canadian warship. I have been told that I raced up the quay not unlike a cat chasing a rat, as the ship needed a spot of TLC oversides.

Hailing the tug I asked him where he might be taking his tow. "Why, do you want it" he called. On telling him that we had a desperate need to make use of it, he said I should ask the QHM. Not having a radio with me, I asked him to make a call for me. Thus the ship received the tool for a complete hull repaint above the waterline

Our Bosun Mr. Brian Dimmer quickly set the deck crew a "Job & Finish" task of "Paint Ship".

No sooner had the men showed their aptitude in the handling of a paint roller, when a party of Naval Painters boarded. This Bosun had the knack of getting juice from a stone! Explaining that as volunteers working for a Charity, the ship might look much better if given some TLC with paint brushes but funds were rather restricted. This is a common feature amongst any ship or boat owner, as a hull in the water is no better than sitting in a hole, into which an endless stream of money flows! Model boats suffer from the identical ailment!



IFOS 2001. Berthed in the Inner Basin in Portsmouth Naval Dockyard.

receiving a little TLC in the photo taken from HMNL "Rotterdam". On deck she looked at her very best, which did not go unnoticed by visitors. *"Ship Shape and in Bristol Fashion"*

At 2230 each evening a special fireworks display took place from the decks of a large barge, which was moored off the Northwest corner of the Base. On completion of the illuminations and explosions, all ships were invited to join in a "Whistle Competition". Initially "Shieldhall" failed to compete. Walking around the quays during this noisy interlude, I noticed that the ground beneath my feet was vibrating from the onslaught, caused by unknown air pressures feeding the horns on warships trying to drown each other in sound! The battle between a Pakistani and a Russian warship was incredible to say the least.

Returning aboard I asked the Chief Engineer if I could have steam for the final competition on the Friday night. "Shieldhall" duly joined the commotion using both siren and whistle. Gradually the sounding of horns ceased, and then it was my turn. Using the siren, I sent "BT" (Break) "Well done all. AR" (End of message). Little did I expect such a response, as every vessel within the Festival sounded "R" (Received). Then just for fun I sent "BT" "Good night all". "AR". My watch showed the time to be nearing 2300 with all sorts of horns sounding "R". I fear that the sleep of Portsmouth may have been delayed somewhat, and we might not be invited again. However, what a remarkable ending to that Festival of the Sea?

One wonders that if due to EU Legislation, ships may be prevented from making a comparable noise in the future, as limits concerning the levels of decibels allowed under "Health & Safety" Regulations are due to be introduced by the EC.

Our visitors, who had never been given a guided tour of a steamship, went ashore promising to investigate solutions to our nearly empty shelves within the paint locker.

Later that morning we watched two electric dockyard vans arrive at the gangway. They were loaded to absolute capacity with the contents of a paint store, and we were informed that all shelves had been stripped as of being "Out of Date Paint!", but they could not carry the cans aboard!

The first important task on berthing back in our home port, was to sort out and stow the vast number of assorted paint tins in the Paint Lockers. That gift was the answer to the Bosun's prayer !

As Master I must place in print my gratitude to the fantastic sparkle given to the vessel, which looked superb on leaving, being a credit to the volunteer staff, who enjoyed the task working together as an exemplary team, enjoying having many amusing incidents under the leadership of the Bosun. The immediate change of hull colour was as startling as the surprising gift of paint! The funnel sparkled from my own frantic exertions from a ladder! The sparkle shows after



"QHM, finished with the scow Sir, and thank you".

Filming.

Fortunately "Shieldhall" has been used to make T.V. documentaries and in major film productions, as the charter money greatly assists in the viability of operating a historic steamship. Fuel costs and having to comply with all of the ever changing maritime regulations are a constant headache, even when manned and maintained by volunteers.

The filming of many scenes in "Angela's Ashes" and "Terra Nova" being but a few, but what fun it was being at sea under the instructions of a film producer?

"Terra Nova" was an Argentinian Soap concerning emigration by Italians to South America, when we carried 450 passengers into the Solent. This was after informing the MCA to obtain their approval. We suggested that as we were only certified to carry 150 passengers, perhaps the remainder could be transferred from a launch in the Solent. The letter in reply allowed us to leave with the whole lot required by the producer, but asked us what the extras would be doing and where they might be during the filming. One question to cause merriment was, "Will the extras be climbing the masts, standing on one side or being herded into one of our cargo tanks?"!

One scene depicted a burial at sea with several men dressed as priests. To ensure an old time scenario, and not have any modern plastic gin-palaces interfering by steaming close to us, an exclusion zone was set up. Solent Coastguard had been detailed of our intentions and the first filming of two would be passengers being buried at sea was made. Two dummies covered in Italian flags were deposited into the water in due form and we thought all was well. However the producer had other ideas and wanted a repeat performance. Unfortunately during the repeat filming, a large motor cruiser broke into the exclusion area just as the two dummies hit the water. Then the fun started as a frantic radio call was made to Solent Coastguard stating that two persons were in the water by "Shieldhall"!

On another occasion, while filming for "Angela's Ashes", we were not in steam for that particular part of the filming, so two small tugs were used to make speed. Once sufficient way through the water had been achieved, and wash created, both tugs hid on the side away from the cameras.

As the sun was setting off the mouth of the Beaulieu River, suddenly the Producer asked me to turn from our Easterly heading and sail into the sunset. "Tugs- take her round as fast as possible to head towards Lymington". The cameras were filming from a large motor cruiser astern off our starboard quarter. There we were in a flat calm sea with Newtown Creek on the port beam, and the shoreline of the New Forest extending towards Keyhaven on our starboard side.

The final scenes in the film of "Angela's Ashes", shows us entering New York Harbour. Where the Creek had been abeam, this now appeared as "The Statue of Liberty", and at the arrival in port, the "Irish Oak" is coming alongside a jetty in North River with my face in the Bridge Cab window. The wonders of computerised magic against the scenery of the Solent! This was the result of the Producer's order for a quick turn into a sunset!

A few days earlier we had been steaming in circles between Peveril Ledge and Poole Fairway Buoys. Our Producer wanted shots of the steamer approaching chalk cliffs and one does not have to steam far to find a photogenic site here. The cameras were fitted between the landing wheels of a helicopter, with control by persons sitting as passengers. One wonders just how much clearance the camera had as it passed over the masts, often passing through considerable black smoke. All went well until I received a radio call

from Portland Coastguard. A 999 telephone call had been received that there was a ship on fire, heading towards Ballard Point. As they had been advised about our filming programme, it was just another call to see what we were up to. On the normal close inshore passage between Weymouth and Anvil Point, we often had enquires from the same Radio Station asking why we were using the steam siren or the whistle. When passengers are waving back to people standing on cliffs, it is tremendous publicity for the ship and fun for those ashore. "If you do not advertise, you will not sell" or as my Father in Law (former Managing Director of Selfridges London) always told his staff -"He who shouts down a well of the things he has to sell, will not make as much money as he who climbs a tree and hollers". This is a voluntary and charitable organisation and the Society depends on raising funds in the ever increasing expenditures within the world of shipping.

The BBC used the vessel to make a documentary concerning the sinking of "Titanic". We were given a month's notice and I had to grow a beard to represent Captain Smith dressed in a White Star uniform of the time. All parts of the ship were used, but as we had similar engine telegraphs, much of the filming was centred around the wheelhouse and engine room. (Even with a bag of coal!)

I was asked to imagine that as Master of "Titanic", I was to use an antique pair of Liverpool patterned binoculars to seek the navigation or deck lights of "Californian". This sequence caught me following the lights of a car as it neared Hythe village on Shore Road travelling through the edge of the New Forest!



The Testing of the effects following the dropping of a black smoke bomb into the funnel – In Southampton! On a wash-Day?.

With the City of Southampton being covered by this "Black-Smoke", at the after end efforts were being made to simulate and produce "Fog".

(Albeit with the Stars & Stripes hoisted on the staff!)

The foot of the person causing this air-pollution can be seen on the ladder under the smoke!



Dressed as Captain Smith for BBC film concerning "Titanic"



BISS Chaplain Rev. Bill MacRae with myself at the Rededication Service.

In 2005 a rededication Ceremony was held at Berth 101 in the Western Docks to commemorate "Shield hall's" 50th Birthday . Accompanied by the Bournemouth Male Voice Choir with a Brass band, the Chaplain of the BISS conducted a short memorable service.

As soon as the shore parties had boarded, the vessel left her berth for a short cruise escorted by tugs with fire nozzles at full force spraying into the air to the NW Netley Buoy, where "Medusa" escorted us down to Fawley Oil Terminal with the Mayor of Southampton and Admiral of the Port aboard. This was the start of many special events planned in advance to celebrate the launching on the River Clyde in 1955.

Due to the tireless leadership displayed by the ship's Bosun, the vessel looked her best, being a credit to the volunteer deck crew, who had spent many hours painting for the event in June.

The birthday girl had a long celebrating season ahead. The first honour by being invited to attend the International Fleet Review at Spithead. We carried out two trips daily to the Review anchorage from Southampton, being fully booked for the national event.

"Shieldhall" was assigned an anchorage position, which was just to the West of the West Ryde Middle Ground buoy for the Review. We arrived with passengers on the Dress Rehearsal Day to find an Oil Tanker anchored in our position. Following a radio call to Control, the tanker was removed prior to our return next day. All aboard were able to follow this historic occasion under blue skies, watching the fleet assemble by steaming into position from the Eastern Solent.

We left our berth in Southampton with a full compliment of passengers, and as we steamed down towards the assigned position, I explained to all aboard my proposed routine for "Cheer-Ship" to honour and salute the Her Majesty the Queen. Small blue Birthday flags were being sold in the Ship's Shop showing a "Happy Birthday" motif, and all aboard were asked to have one to hold in their right hand at two o'clock. On hearing the order "3 Cheers for HMQ" the whole ship's company being lined up along the starboard side would raise their right hand holding a flag.

This was similar to the '53 Coronation Review, all hands being lined along the passing side and having been drilled by a Naval Chief Petty Officer. Everybody held their caps with the white cover at right angles to the water and made circular movements with right arms! This time there would no instructions on what HMQ wanted to see or hear! However at the critical moment around the Fleet, I noticed that nothing had changed in the circular movements of caps since that far off day, even aboard foreign warships!

We watched the inspecting parade of vessels pass down the line of anchored vessels, before "Endurance" turned to come close between "Cable Challenger" and our anchorage position. The tide had just about won a battle with the wind allowing "Shieldhall" to face the flooding tide. The engineers had been asked to be ready in case of need, but fortunately steam was not required, but the space available between "Challenger" and us was restricted as she had not swung to the tide. A near miss had been sighted between two warships during the practice run on the previous afternoon. Emergency action had to be taken then with one vessel coming out of line.

Satisfied that all was well I climbed up onto the Monkey Island with pride.

A Cadet RNR at my first Spithead Review in Coronation Year 1953, and now master of the very last steam passenger/cargo vessel to fly the British Flag at that moment on this spectacular occasion. But there was something missing in the Review fleet. Here following the inspecting red hulled vessel, no passenger liners followed with VIP guests such as "Edinburgh Castle" or "Orcaades". The liner "QE II" was completely out of sight being anchored to the east by the Forts.

Standing alone on the Monkey Island I gave the order "Stand-Bye" using my full tenor vocal strength.

As Her Majesty the Queen's inspection vessel "Endurance" approached abeam of our foremast, I called - "Shieldhall - Three Cheers for Her Majesty the Queen". Our ship's company raised their right arms straight into the air at "Two o'clock", to give their response. This was the proudest moment of my career!

On witnessing this we were privileged to observe Her Majesty walking to the starboard side of "Endurance's" Monkey Island and wave to "Shieldhall" as the reviewing vessel passed close by at slow speed.

The Duke of Edinburgh and the First Sea Lord are using binoculars, looking down at an elderly Master standing to attention on our Monkey Island!

"Who on earth is that?"

To me this photograph records the peak of my career. "Shieldhall" was showing her sparkle, and I was the proud Master of the oldest and only steam powered seagoing passenger/cargo vessel, to fly the British flag at the Review. 1953-2005.



Her Majesty the Queen waving to the "Shieldhall"

Rope Ends

Westward Ho!

Cachalot George Lang, FNI, MRIN, Harpooner and Webmaster of our original web site, retired last year from his position as Principal Lecturer at Warsash M.A., and has now decided to relocate to Plymouth. We wish him well in his retirement and thank him for all that he has contributed to the Cachalots. *We hope not to lose you completely George, so you will find a subscription renewal form with this edition! (As will all other members of course, along with a "250 Club" reminder, more of which below.)*



250 Club

Yes, with this edition you should find your subscription renewal form and a reminder exhorting you to "invest" in the 250 Club.

This scheme has enabled the Club to keep subscription levels down to a ridiculously low level for this day and age. *(At a recent General Committee meeting none of those present could remember when the subs last went up, but this might just reflect on their mental agility)*

It also enables those members who recognise that fact and feel that they would like to contribute more, to do so in the hope that their benevolence might actually produce a return.

Here's how it works:

For each £5 contributed a number is allocated and this number goes into the bag for 12 monthly draws.

Towards the end of each month the Membership Secretary dips his hand in the bag *(this is all so high-tech)* and draws out two numbers. Each wins £40, and in December each wins £100.

You will notice below that the same name, that of your editor, appears twice.

Now it happened that the gruff individual who pulled out my number in September *(he was SO pleased)*, was away on a world cruise or some such in October and it was Past Captain

Peter Marriott who I have to thank for pulling out my number again, exactly the same one, 359.

You will also notice that the November winners have yet to appear. I think that said gruff individual couldn't bear the thought of my name appearing three times so he put off the draw until after this edition went to press.

Who knows? Maybe my name will appear *four* times in the next edition.

Sept.	T.E. Clark	M. Fenwick
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October	T.E. Clark	J. Bowden
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I buy 10 numbers a year and my £50 investment has thus returned £80 so far. That's a 160% return, or 72% interest over 10 months, about 71½ % more than I get from the bank.

It worked for me, it could work for you!

Actually, some of the more fiscally astute among you might detect a slight flaw in my arguments but, believe me, it's as honest advice as you might get from some so called Financial Advisors.



Editor's Lament

"Here he goes again", I hear you cry, "pleading for more copy." Well, yes and no. All original contributions from Cachalots are most gratefully received and I edit little out. This edition I have actually pulled two pages of my own dodgy seafaring reminiscences to make way for other content. But you haven't escaped them, I shall probably have to resort to them in the next edition or so. I am acutely aware of the danger of getting stuck in the rut of bringing you just wartime and immediate post war stories but that is the era that a lot of us enjoyed and remember. I know I have said it before but something must have happened to British shipping and seafarers in the past 30 years that we can tell. That is why I started Tambo's Tales in this century rather than in the last. But there is a lot of stuff there from 40 to 50 years ago that I can revert to, much of it very amusing. And with 196 pages it could last me up to 15 years! Of course, there are also a lot of Cachalots out there without actual seafaring experience but with a deal of knowledge of the industry and of which most seafarers are totally ignorant. So it would be interesting to hear from some of you, too.

GONE ALOFT

Francis Charles Murphy



Frank, who died on November 9th, was born in 1923 and educated at St. George's College, Weybridge. He joined Eagle Oil as a cadet in 1941 and had the distinction of joining his first ship at Purfleet from a small boat from the Kentish side of the Thames. His wartime service was mainly on the East coast between Purfleet and Grangemouth.

After the war Frank obtained his Extra Master's Certificate and at 30 years old was in command with Niarchos Tankers. Within three years he was their Marine Superintendent - a shoreside appointment. In 1959 he became Tanker Adviser with P&O Group and in 1962 a Director of their Trident Tankers when that was set up. By 1965 he was Managing Director. In 1971 he was appointed

Fleet Manager of the fledgling P&O General Cargo Division.

In 1979 Frank came to Southampton with the Union Marine Group and then became Managing Director and owner of South Coast Port Services.

At this time he joined the Cachalots and was elected and served as Captain in 1982.

Frank was also a keen small boat man and had his own motor boat, *Calendula*, which he had bought as a hull with engines and fitted out himself. He regularly visited the French rivers and canals in her. Several Cachalots can recall a memorable trip to Cowes with him, in foul weather, in response to one of our early invitations from The Mariners of Wight to join them for lunch.

Frank was a member of the Royal Southern Yacht Club from 1980 and served as their Commodore from 1993 – 95.

He became a liveryman of The Honourable Company of Master Mariners in 1957, and a liveryman of The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights in 1988. Frank was a regular attendee in the Club room and the single stool that has graced the corner of the bars in our last four premises has become known as "Frank's Stool".

He will be remembered as a true gentleman and be sadly missed.

Our condolences to his wife Joan, his stepchildren Victoria and Andrew and his grandchildren George and Harry.

A.R. Howard

Tony Howard, a retired Southampton pilot, went aloft on 15th September.

R.H. Thornback

Richard Thornback originally joined as a Messmate in 1977 and died on 12th October. He was a consultant for Viva-Law Solicitors.

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

Sat Dec 4 Christmas Lunch
King's Court

Sat Dec 11 Christmas Dinner,
King's Court

***Please see the enclosed
Programme of Events 2011
for a provisional list for next year.***

***Amendments will appear here
and on the web site.***

Cachalot 39

Your editor will be away from 9th until 25th February so any contributions for the next edition should reach me by 4th February. Last minute stuff should be ready for my return on 25th so that I can, hopefully, get it to the printers at the beginning of the following week for posting on 4th March.

**Cut-off date for the next edition:
4th February 2011**

Sea Pie Supper

Friday 4th February

Tickets are now on sale