

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 42

December 2011

Captain's Log

On behalf of myself and the Officers of the Club, I am pleased to announce that the two very eminent persons we invited to become Stowaway Members this year have both accepted to do so. The Club and its members are extremely honoured and looking forward to welcoming **Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal** and **Admiral The Lord West** in joining the distinguished list of Stowaway Members.

Her Royal Highness needs no introduction here and the work that she does too numerous to mention. In the maritime world we probably know her best as "The Master of the Corporation of Trinity House", a title I believe she took over this year from her father, our most senior and longest serving Stowaway.

Admiral The Rt Hon. The Lord West of Spithead, GCB DSC PC, had an impressive career in the Royal Navy including being Naval Secretary, Chief of Defence Intelligence, Commander In Chief Fleet, NATO Commander Allied Naval Forces North and First Sea Lord. He became the First Chancellor of my own university (Southampton Solent) SSU of which Warsash is a part. He is also on the board of the Imperial War Museum, QinetiQ, a defence contractor, and patron of the Docklands Sinfonia, a symphony orchestra. We should not forget that he was Guest of honour at the 2005 Sea Pie Supper (Captains Tinsley and Harwood) and he will be joining us again at the SPS this year.

On Saturday the 3rd of September a Curry Lunch was held at Kuti's Brasserie in Southampton. As usual each dish was superbly prepared and when a particular dish ran short we managed to get a top up. The lunch appeared to be well supported, conversation flowed easily, Grace and I had a good time as I hope we all did.

On Sunday the 4th September attended the Merchant Navy Memorial Service at Holyrood Church in Southampton. On the way to the service the heavens opened, it was one of those times when the cars windscreen wipers could not cope. It was a grey day last year so umbrellas were at the ready, however during the event itself it stayed fine. We wish to convey thanks to, Southampton Sea Cadets for providing the guard of honour. The Mayor of Southampton laid a wreath, followed by the Merchant Navy Association and then I laid a wreath on behalf of the club. The service had just closed when the rain made an unwelcome return.

On Friday the 9th of September the second club supper of the year was held, our thanks to John Davies for the catering. The speaker for the event was Nicci Pugh who was a Nursing Sister on board the Uganda which became a hospital ship during the Falklands War. The lecture took us through the conversion of the ship for Hospital Ship duties. How the helicopter landing pad allowed the rapid transport of injured servicemen and women to the ship. How the surgery was set up on board and the team of people who made this all possible. Nicci's audience really appreciated the effort and detail she brought to the presentation. Ex nurses in the audience

dominated the question and answer session after the main event. I was one among many who purchased her book *White Ship Red Crosses*.

Unfortunately we could not get enough support for the Autumn Dinner Dance which we intended to hold at the Royal Air Force Yacht Club on October the 8th.

However I did manage to attend the inspection of Southampton Sea Cadets by the area officer. The cadets performed various sets which showed off what they had achieved this year and the Mayor of Southampton presented one of the cadets with the honour of being the Mayors cadet for the year. This may well become very significant next April. I hope the inspection went well an interesting development is they are forming a band at the unit and some drummers and a percussion player, played on the evening.

The Harpooners Dinner was held on the 4th November, our thanks to John Davies for the catering. Tradition is the captain of the club thanks the officer's, committee members of the club for their efforts during the year. It is also when we make announcements of importance to the future of the club. That was followed by the usual 'Seafarers Tales', mine was more like a 'Shaggy Dog Story'.

Remembrance Sunday saw us at the Cenotaph in Southampton due to civil works the various representatives met at the Central Library and Art Gallery. In the Art Gallery we were formed up in order before the march across the park to the cenotaph. The weather was fine and we were in position as the Last Post sounded across West Park. As the call ended I heard the final two ticks of the clock to 11 and then from the port, one ships horn sounded a deep long blast. That ships horn brought home the purpose of being there. The service led by the Reverend Julian Davies was well attended not only by the representatives but also by the public.

On the 14th of Nov, I attended SMMC Cricket Clubs AGM. I would like to congratulate here the team on their performance this year. They played 16 out of their 19 fixtures winning nearly two thirds (63%) of their matches. I personally would like to thank the long standing umpires for the team Ian Bagshaw and Peter Starkey not only do they umpire but they also support the team in many other ways. David Turner the president was voted player of the year and awarded the Sutton Trophy. Nick Salter and Raza have also play key parts in keeping the team together. The officers of the club were re-elected without change except Emeka Ahuchogu who decided to give up his lead role as Baggage Master. Last but not least I would like to thank Gerry for opening the club for the Cricket Club AGM.

At the Nautical Institute meeting on the 15th November I gave a lecture on Enclosed Spaces. My lecture is not on how to enter exposed spaces but why people enter them and the unfortunate events that often follow. The lecture took an hour and a half to deliver but those who attended seemed to enjoy the lecture; it stirred up some discussion which continued for some time after the lecture had closed.

I hope to see you at the Christmas Dinners, if not I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ivor Salter, Club Captain



Boatsteerer's Locker

Introduction

This is my fourth Blog since taking office and the future is most exciting as we are to welcome not one but two distinguished Stowaway members, you will have already seen in the Captain's Log that we are extremely privileged to welcome **Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal** to be a Stowaway and **Admiral the Lord West**. This splendid news will surely make 2012 a year to remember.

I attended a lunch onboard HMS Bulwark hosted by the Captain; the vessel lay by in Southampton supporting the Boat show and was open to the public for quite a few days. The lunch was excellent but unfortunately my fellow guests were working people and a planned tour of the vessel was abandoned due to pressure of work, which for me was disappointing.

HMS Bulwark is an Albion Class landing platform dock in other words an amphibious assault warship shortly after visiting Southampton she was placed operational and on immediate readiness for a period of 4 years quite a challenge for her crew to keep the vessel in top condition for that length of time. The vessel also became the Flagship of the Royal Navy.

The Sea Pie Supper 2012

The planning moves forward and as you will all be aware we have opened for the sale of tickets which I am pleased to say are in great demand this year, for those of you who haven't placed your order I recommend you get in quickly. A pre order wine list will be supplied with tickets and the order can be made direct with the caterers and paid for by cheque or credit card. The Caterers have generously promised a donation to the club for all orders placed prior to the event. Although throughout the evening there will be an at seat drink service for those of you wishing to purchase individual drinks I do recommend that you place your wine order prior to the event so as not to be disappointed and of course to benefit the club.

Club opening hours

The club was to open again in the evenings as from September one Wednesday a month it was apparent quite early that this wasn't going to work and therefore we have cancelled the planned opening. I do have good news for those of us who have difficulty negotiating the stairs up to the clubroom in as much as we have been granted permission to erect a second hand rail and this should be done the week starting 21st November. I hope that this will prove to be of value to you.

The club remains open Thursday and Friday Lunchtimes as usual and I have noticed an upsurge in attendance on a Thursday I think we are now receiving more than one member! Please do make an effort to support the Thursday opening, many thanks.

I have to thank everyone who made the effort to attend the Macmillan coffee morning it was a really good turn out and the cakes were excellent, thanks also to all those who made cakes for this occasion. The event raised the princely sum of £500 for the Macmillan charity.

The Clubroom has had seen some interesting talks through the joint venture with the Nautical Institute and hopefully will be used more often.

Finally

George Angas chaired a preliminary meeting of the Solent Maritime forum at which I attended, many of you will remember George explaining the workings of the Maritime Integration Project, mapping the Solent maritime businesses this is a follow on to that project and aims to increase growth and awareness of the maritime industry in this area promoting it both nationally and internationally. Solent Maritime will have the backing of major players within the industry whilst promoting the Solent as an internationally recognised centre of excellence for the maritime industry. I am sure George will keep us informed of progress and hopefully I will also remain a member of the group and will report as appropriate.

And last but not least, this being the December issue, it just remains for me to wish all our membership a very merry Christmas, I hope that wherever you spend it this year that you have an enjoyable Christmas with lots of the right stuff.

David Stocks
Boatsteerer.



Sea Pie Supper, Friday Feb 3rd

Have you booked your ticket yet? We now have bookings for well over 400 tickets!

Don't be disappointed, pick up your ticket this week from Richard on a Thursday or Friday at the club office in Queens Terrace.

Why not get a group together and book a table of ten. We have a new venue, free parking, easy drop off and access to nearby hotels through gates 8 and 10. Help us to make 2012 a year to remember and buy your ticket now.

Stair rails

Extra hand rails have now been fitted to the stairway from the ground floor to the Club Room, giving a secure hand hold on each side.

Curry Lunch

Following the good food, service and ambiance that we have experienced at Kutis in Oxford Street, we will be returning there on **10th March** for the first Curry Lunch in 2012.

Expect the price to be much the same, at £11.50, but allow for any galloping inflation.



Annual General Meeting

to be held in the Club Room at
1830 on

Thursday 19th January

Burns Supper



It will be Haggis & Clapshaw time again at the King's Court Masonic Centre on **21st January**.

Followed, no doubt, by some more Caledonian entertainments &
Sangs & Clatter

Price tba but expected to be around £30 again.
Black Tie & Miniatures

Skittles Evening

at the

SOUTHAMPTON (OLD) GREEN BOWLING CLUB

(The world's oldest bowling green,
Lower Canal Walk, Southampton.)



ON



FRIDAY, 23 March at 1900

Further details in the next edition

250 Club reminder

With this newsletter you should receive your membership subscription form which includes an invitation to participate in the 250 Club. The benefits of this scheme to the Club have been explained many times in the past and can be found re-iterated on the appropriate page of the website. The benefits to you are two £40 prizes monthly and two £100 prizes in December. Each £5 share gives you participation in 12 monthly draws. Better odds than the Lottery but a smaller prize-pot.

www.cachalots.org.uk

The new club website has been up and online for three months now with most of what you might want to know about the club, both past and present, available. The members only section, called the "Cachalots' Deck" contains the club-specific and domestic stuff, as explained in the last edition. All of the previous editions of *The Cachalot* are now posted there, while articles from them deemed to be of some public interest are being extracted and posted in the public pages, under "Club Journal". Some 64 such pieces have been transferred to date and others will be as time allows. The "Gallery" page is also yet to be addressed. It is also intended to create an "Archives" section in the public area for copies of some of the more interesting (or maybe not) papers that our Hon Archivist Hamish Roberts has filed away and may otherwise never see the light of day. This involves sorting, scanning, copying and filing digitally and so may also take some time.

So far less than 70 members have registered for the "Cachalots' Deck" and I understand that the *log in - user name - password* - procedure can seem daunting and off putting at first. Hopefully the instructions on each of the "Log in", "Register Now" and "Edit Profile" pages are sufficiently clear and understandable. Once registered though, subsequent log ins can be achieved with usually just a couple of clicks. The "Blogalog" section is where you will find the latest information and directions.

With subscriptions becoming due, here is a reminder of the procedures if you wish to use electronic banking:

INTERNET BANKING

Any members who wish to use this facility are welcome to do so. However, please remember that we are not clairvoyant, many payments will be identical, and we will not be able to guess the origin of payments that are not clearly identified. Please therefore put in your payment reference line your name, including all initials, and if possible with the reason for the payment (eg Sea Pie Supper, subs, 250 club, etc) and if that is not possible then send to the office (office@cachalots.org.uk) an e-mail explaining that you have sent the payment and why. This is very important if you are paying for a function, especially Sea Pie Supper, as it may be some days before the bank statement is next inspected.

Payment details are: Sort Code: 56-00-68 Account Number: 00037869
Account full name: Southampton Master Mariners' Club (The Cachalots)

MEMBERSHIP STANDING ORDERS

For many years the Membership Secretary has encouraged new members joining to set up a Standing Order to pay the annual fee. This has been very successful, and saves the office a considerable amount of administration. However, this is not so successful if the member is not clearly identified, as this causes time wasted checking records. Please make sure your name is clear (all initials and surname) in the reference.

In addition, please remember you have a Standing Order. Once again we waste valuable time when members pay by cheque or cash when the SO has been paid and we have to write out cheques refunding fees double paid.

Chapter 16 of “The Unforgiving Minute”, the personal memoirs of Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles.

RETURN TO U.K.

In January 1945 I was on leave at home in Devonshire with my Father. My brothers and sister were still away. My brother Michael, as a Royal Engineer, was in charge of a Port Operating Company in Venice. My sister Hebe had been in the ATS. Christopher was still in the Navy. Robin was the engineer in a high-speed motor launch working for the RASC in Plymouth.

Having been away for four years, I had very little idea of the difficulties and privations which the civilian population had suffered in the UK. Everything was still very severely rationed, and nobody knew when the war might end.

There were many tales to tell and to hear. My Father's yard had built over 100 craft for the Admiralty - from Inshore mine sweepers, motor torpedo boats, assault landing craft, and various other smaller types.

Earlier in the war, as I now heard, the yard had been bombed by a single German aircraft which sneaked in from seaward. The bomb must have been released a fraction of a second too early because it demolished the Hotel on the other side of the road, but the effect of the bomb was to pull out the whole side of the yard and create dreadful damage. Apparently my Father and Robin had been on the other side of the river when the raid took place and dashed across to see what had happened. Robin was stationed in the road to prevent anybody stealing the stores and equipment which were scattered about everywhere. He told me that he had very vivid memories - including the fact that a complete double bed from the hotel was lodged on the roof of the largest building shed in the shipyard. (See <http://www.morgangilesyachts.org.uk/shipyard.html>).

I used to go for long walks upon Dartmoor, an area which I remembered from my youth, and it was such a severe winter that snowdrifts were higher than the hedges beside the lanes - so it was easy to get lost. This was certainly a contrast from four years in the Mediterranean climate.

After my leave I was ordered to report to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich to do a Naval Staff Course. In peacetime this was a 12 months course - but now it was very much reduced and lasted only three or four months. I found that the Commodore President of the College was my old friend Captain Augustus Agar VC. I had a great reunion with Gus Agar and his wife "Shrimpo" and daughter Diana and they were extremely hospitable to all the students.

It was a delight to live in the magnificent surroundings of the Royal Naval College. Our conditions of living were indeed a great contrast compared with four years of active service. We all had our meals in the magnificent Painted Hall, which before the war had been a museum. I found that a system of scaffolding was actually inside the Painted Hall, and supported a huge wooden platform, with a thick layer of felt on top, which was only inches from the famous painted ceiling. This was in case bomb damage from a "near miss" dislodged the plaster - it would have been easier to restore it afterwards. One became quickly accustomed to having a large steel scaffold-pole between oneself and one's neighbour at mealtimes!

N.B. Fifty years later I met Lt Donald Pepper, who had married the Wren Officer who had been in charge of the catering department of the Royal Naval College foremost of the war - a busy girl having 500 hungry young officers to feed at every meal. My friend Donald Pepper, as a dashing young Officer, rode a 500cc motor cycle. At a fancy dress party at the College he met a Wren Officer dressed, he recalls, as a Spanish girl in an eye-catching mantilla. Two nights later he took her for a ride on his motor cycle to Blackheath and down towards Rochester, and she was clearly impressed. Sensibly, he says, he sold the motor cycle for £45 and bought an engagement ring. "It was" he declares "a good exchange" - and who will argue with that!

The end of the war in Europe came while I was still at the Staff College. I remember very vividly indeed that Gus Agar invited me and some others to a celebration dinner party. After dinner we all embarked in his Flag Officer's barge, and went up the Thames as far as Westminster. As we emerged from under the bridge in the darkness, suddenly the floodlighting was switched on to illuminate the entire frontage of the Houses of Parliament. This was one of the most breathtaking sights that I ever saw in my life. We stood there in the barge in our uniform greatcoats against the evening chill, well fortified with Gussy Agar's excellent port, and I remember a tremendous glow of wonderment.

So ends Sir Morgan's account of his war time experiences. I shall resume with his post-war account in the next issue. Ed.

The Western Ocean

In 1835, Isambard Brunel and a group of business men in Bristol formed the Great Western Steamship Company with the intention of introducing steamships to replace the sailing ships on the North Atlantic run to New York. This was the era of steadily increasing emigration and New York was the accepted entry port to the “New World” Almost simultaneously, another group –The British & American Steam Navigation Company –appeared on the scene and in accordance with advice given in an article in an American railroad journal that company elected to run to New York from London.



Brunel’s first ship the oak-hulled “Great Western” was built in Bristol by the firm of William Patterson as an auxiliary with four masts carrying sails and although the sails contributed marginally to the vessel’s “propulsion” their primary purpose was to act as “stabilisers”. The ship was a paddle steamer and in heavy weather the sails helped to keep her on an even keel with both paddles submerged and thus propel her in a more or less straight line.

Following her launch in July 1837 the ship sailed from Bristol to London where, to drive the paddles, she was fitted with twin side-lever steam engines producing some 750 t.h.p. The work done, she left London for Bristol in March 1838 but on passage she sustained an engine room fire in which Brunel sustained serious injuries. News of the fire soon leaked out and many intending “maiden voyage” passengers cancelled their bookings having decided that sail was a safer bet and when she departed Avonmouth for New York on April 8th.1838 she had very few passengers.

The British & American group had laid down a competitor but in an endeavour to make up lost ground they chartered an Irish Sea paddle steamer ferry called “Sirius” which usually traded between Cork and London. This short sea passage meant that she had a very limited coal bunker capacity and for the Western Ocean run this was increased by the simple expedient of stowing coal in the vacant passenger accommodation.

The fire had delayed the scheduled departure of “Great Western” and this allowed “Sirius” to sail some four days before her. Her voracious appetite for coal took its toll and to complete the passage to New York her crew fed her boilers with cabin furniture and anything else that might burn. Her outward speed was just over 8.0 knots but this was beaten by the “Great Western” with a passage speed in excess of 8.5 knots.

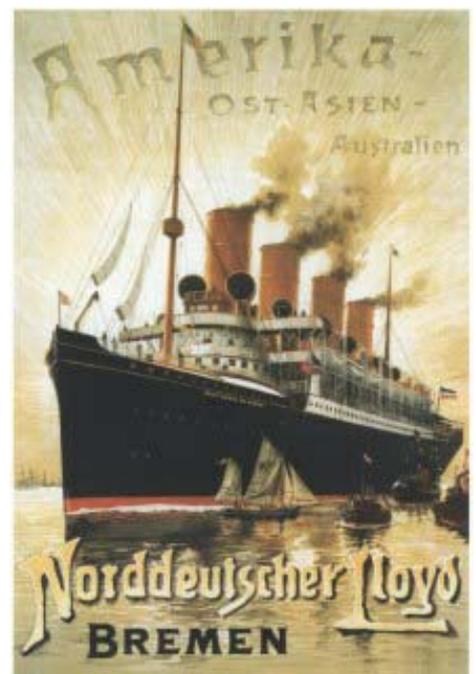
Despite misgivings about the use of paddle propulsion in trans-Atlantic ships these proved to be misplaced and “Great Western” continued to trade profitably taking some 16 days on the outward passage and 13.5 days homeward although, on some crossings, she reduced the passage time by several hours.

New tonnage was needed and in 1845 the single screw steamer “Great Britain” started trading in tandem with “Great Western” but the new ship ran aground a few months later and the company ceased trading. “Great Western” was sold to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company in 1847 and some years later she carried troops to the Crimean War before going to the breakers in 1856.

From the outset SPEED was considered to be an essential feature of Western Ocean travel and although the “Blue Riband” had not yet been “officially” introduced owners boasted about the average speed of their latest acquisition (and claimed to have “won” the mythical Riband and fly a blue pennant at the masthead).

Presumably, intending passengers were suitably impressed and the competing companies spent large sums of money on faster and faster ships but with little regard to economy.

For many years Cunard held the title but then White Star took it (with a brief interruption from Inman Lines). Invariably, the record was held by a British owned or a British flag ship so nobody really minded but then – in 1897 –the German flag “Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse” entered the arena and immediately took the title that Britain had held for some 60 years. This NDV vessel was not only the fastest ship on the Western Ocean trade – she was also

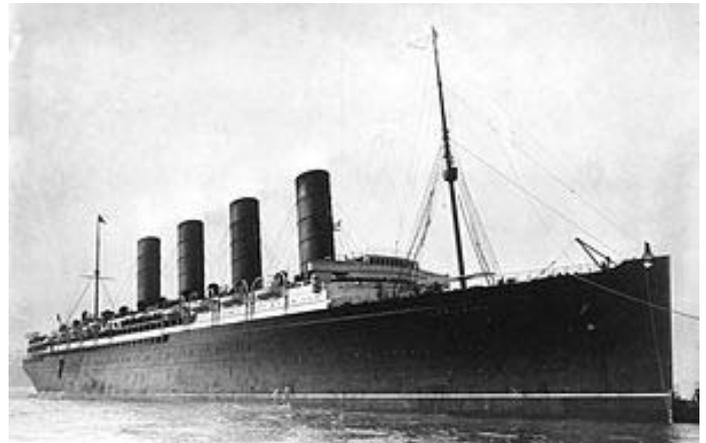


the biggest ship afloat and as she carried fewer passengers she claimed to be the most luxurious. This German domination persisted for almost five years with the Germans building faster and faster ships and – to add insult to injury – many of the finest British ships ceased to be British when the American ship-owner, J.P.Morgan, bought the White Star Line.

Now the British Government demonstrated its pragmatism. These fast German ships could, in time of war, wrack havoc with the ships of their enemies. They were faster than the vast majority of the warships operating at the time. The sale of White Star meant that many ships were now unavailable for wartime duties as they could not be requisitioned. By now, J.P.Morgan had his eye on Cunard and quick action was needed if their ships were not to fall under his control. In mid 1903 the Cunard Chairman, Lord Inverclyde, approached the Government with a request for assistance (despite an embargo on direct Government financial support) and he made it clear that two big, fast and luxurious ships were needed urgently if the German threat was to be countered. The Government saw the logic and agreed to lend Cunard a huge sum (for those days) at a special rate of interest to run for some 20 years. In turn, Cunard agreed that the Government would have use of these ships in the event of hostilities and that the ships would be built under Admiralty supervision to ensure their speedy transition for military use. The new ships would be capable of 25 knots and they would maintain a weekly mail service from Liverpool to New York. In all respects the ships must be “British” and the Master, Officers and about 80% of the crew members had to be British citizens.

Soon work on the most revolutionary ships in the world got under way – “Lusitania” in the Clydebank yard of John Brown and “Mauritania” in the Newcastle yard of Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson.

Laid down in mid 1904, “Lusitania” had 190 furnaces to heat her 27 boilers making her the largest steam turbine vessel ever built. With a tonnage of 31,550 she carried some 2,100 passengers and within a month of entering service in 1907 she had regained the Blue Ribband for Britain and held it until the entry into service of “Mauretania” in 1909.



RMS Lusitania

Shortly after the launch of “Lusitania” the Chairman of the Belfast firm of shipbuilders Harland & Wolff, Lord Pirrie, had a social get-together with his friend J.Bruce Ismay, the Chairman of The White Star Line. For many years all the White Star ships had been Belfast built and they were not a little concerned about the threat posed by the new Cunarders. Although the American owned White Star vessels flew the British flag the British Government did not really see them as British ships so Ismay could expect no help from that quarter.

During pre-dinner drinks Ismay enthused on his desire to build the biggest and fastest ships afloat but Pirrie was lukewarm and repeatedly warned him of the economic penalties that would result from this. To achieve a higher speed the steam turbines would have to be immense, the ships would need more boiler rooms and furnaces and the impact of this on the cargo and passenger carrying capacity would be massively punitive. After dinner, over brandy and cigars, Pirrie played his trump card and – very quietly – said “Why not revert to what you have always prized – comfort and elegance?” Ismay thought for a moment and then he said “You are right”.

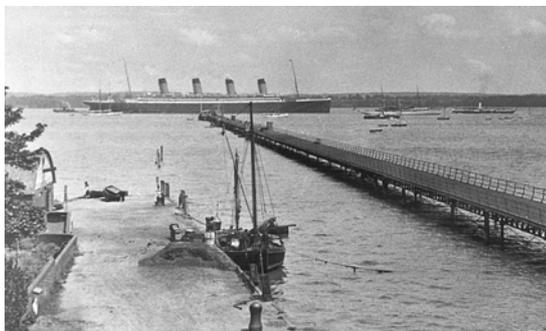
The two men then started to sketch the outline of a mighty four-funnelled ship and soon the floor was littered with outline drawings which Pirrie would later give to his draughtsmen in Belfast.

Later reports said that the two men talked late into the night –as their wives sat downstairs talking of domestic matters – and the rough sketches drawn by the two men are, reputedly, still preserved in Belfast today. Ismay said they would need two ships but Pirrie said that to ensure a schedule and allow for regular maintenance three ships were needed and eventually Ismay agreed,

There was just one snag; the ships outlined by Ismay were much too big for the slipways in Belfast but after some cast-iron guarantees from Ismay, Pirrie started a massive redevelopment of his Queen’s Island yard, bought new cranes and gantries and soon he was ready to start building the new “Olympic” class ships. Even with the massive reconstruction the ships were too huge to allow the simultaneous construction of all three and so the construction of two was started – with the third to be built at the earliest opportunity. Fortuitously, through the foresight of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners the port already boasted the largest dry-dock in existence.

The first ship “Olympic” was launched on October 20th. 1910 but the second ship “Titanic” still had some way to go. The first ship was to take some seven months “fitting out” but on May 31st. 1911 the “Titanic” was launched in a spectacular ceremony attended by the great and the good and watched by almost the entire population of Belfast.

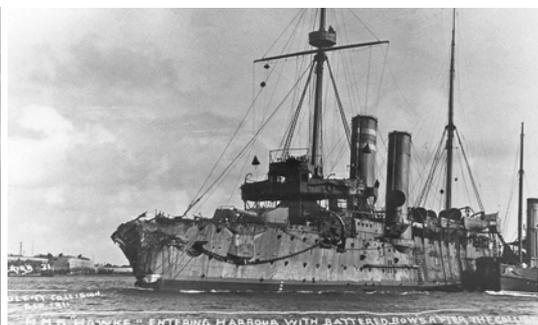
“Olympic “ entered service from Southampton in June 1911, under the command of Captain Smith, and, almost immediately, she was engaged in controversy. On entering New York the interaction between the huge ship and others moored alongside the wharves caused great concern and at least one ship struck the new arrival. Worse was to follow and in September 1911 the “Olympic” had a collision in the Solent with the cruiser HMS Hawke and both vessels sustained severe damage.



Olympic passing Hythe



The hole in the Olympic

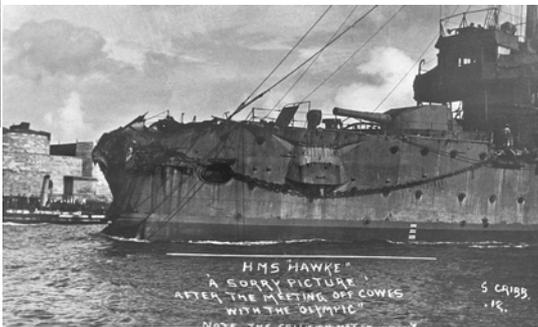


HMS Hawke entering Portsmouth



Port quarter of the Olympic

Pictures of the Olympic - HMS Hawke incident



Damaged bow with collision mat

The ship returned to Belfast for repair, berthing close to her sister-ship, now nearing completion and then re-entered commercial service - but her ill fortune continued to dog her and, in February 1912 she shed a blade from her port propeller after striking an underwater object in deep water. There was but one place to go and she arrived in Belfast on March 1st. to find the dry-dock occupied by the “Titanic”. After much juggling she entered the dry-dock and a new blade fitted to the propeller BUT ...as she left the she took the ground in the narrow approach channel and had to re-enter the dock for inspection. Those building “Titanic” waited with growing anxiety for the next incident but finally the dry-dock was clear and she re-entered to prepare for sea trials.

Finally, all was in readiness and almost the final act of completion was the fitting of the lifeboats.

The boats – all built by her builders – had a total capacity of approx. 1200 (a greater number than that demanded by the existing Board of Trade regulations).

Early drawings for the ship indicated that she was intended to have many more lifeboats but the decision was taken, at Board level, that this number would reduce the appeal of the Boat Deck as a Promenade Deck and so the number was drastically reduced. and, in the end, only one person in three of those aboard could expect a place in a lifeboat.

“Titanic”, under the command of Captain Smith who had transferred from ”Olympic”, left Belfast on the evening of April 2nd.1912 but her scheduled publicity call at Liverpool was cancelled and she made for Southampton..

When the sun rose on April 10th. she was “in all respects ready for sea” and at noon she departed for Cherbourg where she embarked more passengers and after a short time resumed [passage to Queenstown in Ireland where she arrived at mid-day on Saturday, April 11th. She embarked a few more passengers – and a large quantity of mail and by the early afternoon the mighty ship headed out into the Atlantic – and the rest is history.

“Olympic” later made happier history by being the only merchant ship to ram and sink a U-Boat during WWI. but, understandably, the third triumvir, “Gigantic”, was never built.

"Must be some sort of control trouble," said the Chief, fixing me with a baleful stare, from which my befuddled mind concluded that the engine controls must clearly be in my bailiwick.

"Let's have a look," Peter decided, and lead the way below.

Although the Danish Aquavit that I had consumed, and to which I was not accustomed, was dulling my senses more and more with each passing moment, and I longed for nothing more than the release of oblivion, I struggled manfully to stand upright and think.

As the berthed ship pitched and rolled beneath my feet, I dimly decided not to follow the others down to the engineroom - the problem, I felt certain, was up on the bridge, so I followed the Captain and the Mates up there, ignoring their *where-the-hell-do-you-think-you're-going* stares. There were, I vaguely remembered from my one visit to her sister ship, engine control consoles on the port and starboard bridge wings and one about amidships in the wheelhouse. Ah, I had been right - she *was* fitted with bridge controls -and, on the top of each control console, was a large red emergency stop button.

"Anybody fiddle with these?" I asked the Captain, who was watching me sceptically. "Not that I know of," he answered, disdain sounding in every syllable.

"Excuse me, Sir," said the First Mate, "we did have that visit before lunch, from those school children from Mayflower Primary."

Ah ha, I thought, through the alcoholic haze that surrounded me. I pressed the emergency stop on the port bridge wing. It emitted a faint "click, clock" sound. I put my ear closer and pressed the button again. "Clock, click."

"Do you know what you're doing, young man?" the Captain asked, managing both insult and compliment in one sentence.

I was about to fire the question back at him, but fortunately alcohol doesn't make me querulous. But he was asking for it -I mean, it was *his* damned ship which was still tied to the wall more than two hours after she should have sailed. Giving him merely a mild look of scorn, I walked to the wheelhouse console and pressed the emergency stop.

"Clock, click." And again - "click, clock." Definitely an "ah ha!" But not quite "Eureka!" Not yet, anyhow, but my feeling was for "click, clock" as the Stop Position and "clock, click" as the Reset. So I pressed the wheelhouse button once more.

The starboard console button confirmed my intuition - it went "click, clock" followed by "clock, click."

I lifted the wheelhouse / engineroom intercom and pressed the call button.

The Old Man and all three Mates were looking at me, their faintly disapproving expressions betraying their collective opinion. I ignored them. At sea they and the ship's Engineers had command, but in Port, and particularly in circumstances like those prevailing at the time, the Superintendents were in charge.

"Chief Engineer speaking."

"They will start now, Chief," I told him, with the total conviction of the totally inebriated.

Seconds later, first the port and then the starboard engine rumbled into life.

"What happened? What did you do?" the Captain demanded, thereby placing himself in the same category as Senior Commercial Administrative Types in the uptake stakes.

Now, I know and admit that I should have answered, but, he had managed to get under my skin, so I ignored the question and turned instead to the Chief Officer.

"Mishter...*hic!*...Mister Mate," I said. "Next time you entertain school children on the bridge, do make sure the little buggers keep their hands in their pockets."



South Atlantic Medal Association (1982) Falklands Memorial Appeal

In May 2012, there will be a memorial unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) at Alrewas in Staffordshire commemorating the Falklands Conflict of 1982. Operation Corporate as the military operation was known, was a success for many reasons not least of which was the task force of Merchant Navy and RFA ships that were requisitioned to take part. Ships Taken up from Trade, or STUFT as they were known, were a crucial part of the operation without which it could not have been mounted. Merchant ships of many different types took part from Cross Channel and North Sea ferries to container ships, bulk carriers and tankers.

The South Atlantic Medal Association (1982) Trustees agreed at their meeting on 29th July 2010 to construct a Falklands War Memorial at the NMA at Alrewas. The memorial will be constructed on the SAMA(82) site by Young Johnson, Monumental Masons of Westbury, an experienced company who have built a number of outstanding military memorials in the NMA. The dedication ceremony planned for 20th May 2012 will commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the landings on the Falkland Islands.

The Memorial proposal was approved by the NMA Trustees in April 2011. The Chief Executive and the Curator both feel that the Memorial will make a valuable contribution to the Arboretum, being an attraction in its own right.

The Falklands Memorial will be distinctive by reflecting the Falklands' landscape. It will be a memorial that veterans and their families deserve, and inform visitors of this important event in our history. The design and construction will be based on the memorial and cemetery at 'Blue Beach' San Carlos, where the landings took place, by imitating the wall of memorial plaques on a smaller scale.

Whilst many Falklands veterans and their families have visited the San Carlos Memorial during the major pilgrimages and personal visits, the majority have not had this opportunity and are unlikely to in the future. By creating a similar atmosphere in the NMA, it is hoped that veterans and their families will feel it is somewhere in the UK where they can connect with the Falklands and feel at peace.

The Memorial will comprise a curved stone wall approximately 30ft wide by 7ft high in the centre, sloping down to 4ft at both ends, constructed in rough Cotswold stone. Two stone buttresses on the rear will provide the necessary stability. A rock structure using rock from the Falkland Islands approximately 3ft high by 4ft wide by 5ft long will be placed 20-25ft in front of the Wall. Two benches with Granite seating on Cotswold supports will be placed on either side, between the Rock and the Wall. The area enclosed by the Wall, Rock and Benches will be paved with natural paving to define the Memorial space.



A number of engraved Granite plaques will be mounted on the Wall, Rock and paving. Granite will ensure that the engraving does not deteriorate over time. The Wall front will have seven plaques reflecting the San Carlos design. The Main Plaque, in the centre, will be flanked on each side by three smaller plaques, and comprise an engraved Joint Service Operations crest over an inscription using similar wording as at San Carlos. The six flanking plaques will each be engraved with a crest of the participating military and civilian forces: Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy. A Dedication Plaque will be set below the Main Plaque. A circular plaque depicting the South Atlantic Medal will be placed on the rear of the wall; below this will be a small plaque stating that the Memorial was commissioned by SAMA(82).

The Falkland Islands rock structure will be the entrance point for visitors to the Memorial space. A plaque mounted on the front will comprise an outline map of the Falkland Islands with, above the map, the words 'Falkland Islands 1982' and below the map 'From the Sea – Freedom'. The rear will have a matching plaque to remember the three Falkland Islanders who lost their lives.

A Granite Plaque will be set into the paving stones in front of the Wall. It will show an outline map of the Atlantic Oceans with broad arrows showing the distances from UK and Gibraltar to Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands. South Georgia will also be shown. This plaque will inform visitors where the islands

are in the world, and the vast distances the Task Force sailed before engaging in combat with the Argentine Forces.

This is an exciting project which will provide a memorial that Falklands' veterans and their families will feel is theirs, and visitors to the National Memorial Arboretum will expect to see. For more information please visit the SAMA 82 web-site, www.sama82.org.uk or contact the SAMA office on 01495 791592.

Mike Bowles, Chairman SAMA 82

Somalian Piracy: An Insight

Somalia was created in 1960 when the British protectorate, British Somaliland, and the Italian colony of Italian Somaliland merged and, in 1970 President Siad Barre announced the formation of a "socialist state". The resulting close ties with the USSR brought little advantage other than ready access to weaponry to enable it, in 1977, to wage war on its neighbour, Ethiopia. Unfortunately, someone forgot to tell President Barre that Ethiopia was a proclaimed Marxist state and the aid that Somalia had expected from other socialist states failed to materialise and it was defeated. Fourteen years later, in 1991, the President was overthrown and the country reverted to its tribal origins - and clan warfare.

Years of tribal warfare (leading to the killing of thousands of men, women and children) were interspersed with numerous attempts to form some sort of a government and, in 2004, some progress was made - a new Government was established and a President appointed.

Militant Islam saw an opportunity and by 2006 it controlled a large area of the country - principally in the South - and despite fierce resistance from Government forces the Islamic Al-Shabab organisation made substantial territorial gains. By the end of 2009 Al-Shabab - now openly allied to al-Qaeda - had consolidated its position as the "ruling body" but, without an effective Parliament, Somalia again descended into lawlessness.

Today, the Somalian "Pirates of Puntland" pose the greatest threat to merchant seafarers since that posed by the U-boats of WW2. Operating from captured merchant ships converted into "mother ships" they roam far and wide across the Indian Ocean covering an area much too big to be effectively "policed" by the meagre naval forces sent to protect the merchantmen.

Buthow did it start?

For years the waters of the Indian Ocean have been recognised as one of the richest sources of fish and thousands of young Somalis eked out a living that enabled them to survive in a country that offered them little else. Soon, as fishing technology developed, these rich fishing grounds attracted the attention of fishermen from other nations many of whom paid scant attention to the supposed limitation of "territorial waters".

Hundreds of deep-sea fishing trawlers - equipped with nets and devices that enabled them to scoop tons of fish for storage on factory ships - invaded the area and, very soon, the relatively ill-equipped Somalis found that their catches were diminishing drastically. Further South, off the coast of Kenya the fishermen from Malindi found that they, too, were suffering lower and lower catches and soon the problem spread to other areas.

Few of the affected countries had adequate naval power to enable them to enforce their territorial claims but eventually, a few Somalis, driven to desperation launched a night attack on a Taiwanese fishing trawler and took it and its crew to a nearby anchorage.

Spurred by their success they repeated the operation and soon they were holding three trawlers and some twenty fishermen hostage.

Not surprisingly, the owners wanted the return of their valuable vessels - and, probably, the crew members -

so they appointed a negotiator and after weeks of wrangling a ransom (EXTREMELY modest by later standards) was paid and the ships were released.

At about the same time reports were circulating that many ships on passage to and from the Indian Ocean and The Gulf of Aden were pumping sludge overboard as they transited the coast of Somalia and that this was having a deleterious effect on the fishing grounds.

Later it was reported that some ships were deliberately dumping toxic waste in the same area and that this was effectively killing off the fish stocks and preventing replenishment.

One dark night a skiff full of armed Somalis boarded a tanker lying stopped off the coast, overpowered its meagre crew and instructed them to proceed to the inshore anchorage. A few weeks later a larger ransom was paid and the tanker proceeded on passage.

Thus, the self-styled "Somali Coastguard" was created and many local residents saw a vast improvement in their local "economy" with their new-found wealth contributing handsomely to their meagre living standards. The Somali fishermen recognised their potential to make huge sums of money at very little risk -and to serve their community at the same time - and soon they started to hi-jack ships indiscriminately - and their ransom demands escalated enormously. The illegal fishing by foreign flag trawlers ceased so other sources of income had to be found and passing merchantmen were easy prey.

The rest is history but a recent report outlined some of the positive and negative effects of the pirates economic success. Many locals complain of the presence of gangs of khat-smoking or drunken men whose wild spending has destabilised local prices and created even greater shortages. However, others welcome the spending power of the pirate gangs with local shopkeepers, and others benefitting from the huge sums of ransom money, by buying things like electricity generators, affording all-day powera hitherto untold luxury.

Fishermen in Kenya have recently reported a return to near-record catches (as have those fishing in Somali waters) but the foreign flag poachers have now moved to Tanzanian waters and there the catches are noticeably diminishing : Tanzania does not, as yet, have a pirate "coastguard" to take such effective action as its neighbour further north.

Somalia is awash with cheap, effective and lethal armaments with some coming from Yemen but the majority come from arms dealers in Somalia itself. Al-Qaeda is not averse to funding those who want to establish a pirate business and some years ago the late Osama bin-Laden used the news channel al-Jazeera to praise the pirates and to promise support. Today, there is a fear that some of the sophisticated weaponry supplied to the Libyan "liberation" forces will eventually find its way to this lawless country and then be available to the pirates. Many seafarers wonder how the khat-fired pirates acquired the skills to operate some of the sophisticated ships as "mother ships" and there are many who think that their crew members are co-operating with the pirates either through fear or for reward.

CRK 21.11.11

Combatting Piracy

Further to the joint meeting and presentation, "Pirates' Playground", held with the Nautical Institute, Solent Branch, in the club-room on 18th May, another joint discussion meeting on the subject is to be held there at 1900 on the evening of 8th December.

A DVD on the piracy issue was commissioned by Steamship Mutual P&I Club and approved by a number of bodies including UKNAVFOR, IMO and the MCA. The meeting will consist of viewing the DVD followed by a discussion on the issues arising from it. http://http://www.nisolent.org.uk/?page_id=70



In March 2011 a group of 30 maritime organisations joined together to start the Save Our Seafarers campaign which is calling for unified action to raise awareness of the human and economic cost of piracy. Visit <http://www.saveourseafarers.com/>

At a Luncheon held by The Merchant Mariners Of Wight in September, which several Cachalots attended, piracy was also on the menu, but this time the focus was on the humanitarian response. The Speaker, Dr Peter Swift, is the Steering Group Chairman of a pan-industry alliance of ship owners, unions, managers, manning agents, insurers and welfare associations (maritime, labour, faith or secular) which has come together to establish the "Maritime Piracy: a Humanitarian Response Programme" (MPHRP). <http://www.mphrp.org/>

Locally, together with the Solent Branch of the N.I., Captain Reg Kelso has been at the forefront in trying to bring the subject to the attention of the public and to keep it in the spotlight. Copied in the box below is his latest letter to be published, this time in the November edition of *Seaways*, the journal of the Nautical Institute.

In 'Piracy Solutions' (*Seaways*, October 2011), Steven Jones hits the nail very firmly on the head when he writes 'The time for saying that piracy is too difficult to stop is over' and it is heartening to read that, at long last, several countries are making strides against piracy. Most welcome is the involvement of the United States focussing on security, prevention and deterrence.

Undoubtedly, years of procrastination have allowed piracy to develop into the highly profitable global industry that it is today and what started as an ad hoc disorganised criminal endeavour has become a major threat to the trade routes of the world with pirate 'mother ships' operating thousands of miles from their bases - and insufficient naval power to deal with them.

Undoubtedly, the use of mother ships is the key factor in the expansion of piracy and without them the area under threat would be massively reduced and, probably, manageable.

In February 2011, Richard Meade and Gavin van Marie gave the names and type of some 17 hijacked vessels now acting in this capacity in *Lloyds List*, quoting NATO as their source of information.

The ship types ranged from fishing vessels (7) to chemical tankers (2), general cargo (2), an asphalt tanker, a product carrier, a ro-ro, an LPG carrier and two container-ships and the name of each was given. Almost unbelievably, their report states that the pirates are 'operating the fleet in the full knowledge of anti-piracy naval forces which routinely track the vessels but are prevented from mounting rescue attempts due to strict Rules of Engagement'.

It is said that the Rules imposed on ships of the Royal Navy preclude the detention aboard of captured pirates and

that this is a source of considerable embarrassment to their crew members in their dealing with other seafarers working with EU NAVFOR.

If these absurd operational restrictions still apply the instructions giving rise to them should be rescinded forthwith to enable the anti-piracy forces to deal with the roaming mother ships, thereby curtailing their operational area. The belief that the pirates will use the hostage crew members of the mother ships as human shields is almost certainly accurate but, as has been said before, these young Somalis are not suicide bombers and when presented by overwhelming force it is unlikely that they will harm their captives or resist too strenuously.

Somalia has been ungoverned for some twenty years and until such time as the present system of tribal control is replaced by a more democratic one (and gainful employment found for many thousands of young Somalis) there will be no end to the criminal activities. If, as reported, the coastal waters of that country are being used as a dumping ground for toxic waste (thus decimating the fishing industry) steps should be taken to ensure that those responsible cease their activities and lodge adequate compensation for payment at a later date.

None of this should be seen as in any way justifying the criminal actions of the pirates and the eradication of their criminal activities must take priority over every other consideration. Already there are fears that Kenya is being destabilised by the influx of cash-rich Somalis buying properties with the proceeds of ransom payments. If the scourge of Indian Ocean piracy is not to spiral out of all control, the time for positive action is now.

Captain C R Kelso FNI, Bursledon, UK

And here, out of the box, as it were, is the latest offering on the subject from that independent thinker Allan McDowall who, over the years has enthralled us with lurid tales of his piratical encounters. This is proffered solely to provoke discussion at our forthcoming in-house seminar on Piracy and the SMMC neither endorses nor promotes the views expressed ; they are solely those of Captain McDowall who will, no doubt, expand upon them during our discussions.

Allan McDowall's remembrances:

I myself was attacked by pirates 5 times, numerous attempts also, which adjusts one's view somewhat.

The advice to masters at the time, January 1992, could only be described as fatuous. After the first attack on my ship - we had repulsed them by having made the ship impregnable by a bit of simple but cunning engineering (*the main point is that we engineered the controls so that they*

could be switched to the engine-room and the steering flat from the engine-room; and we isolated the bridge from the rest of the ship, and used the safety locker in the wheelhouse as a refuge - it had a door which opened outwards and was lockable from inside. We steered by communication with the engine room by radio from remote spots, depending on reception on each ship. Cabins which were accessible from outside were abandoned and secured from inside) - I was summoned to DoT Marsham Street and bawled out for not welcoming them and giving them a cup of tea and a scone. I replied by politely telling the assembled room-full of civil servants exactly why the advice to masters should be changed - which, after the Navy had had a word in their ear, they did. (The change was in effect to keep a layer of steel between you and them at all times.) My attitude was, and remains, just that; to treat armed robbers like very strong quick cunning baboons, and not allow them to get anywhere near anyone on board. Also to prevent them boarding if possible - which is where the arms would come in, were the ship to be armed. Much best to get them to go away; and better to disable their boats and mother ship, without equivocation. Tut, not allowed.

Recently the advice was changed back again, but I understand that very recently again it has been put back to what I and others who have had the same experience pointed out. Now the advice is rich in vague terms, but very thin on what one can do about it in detail. I will go through the rules, but they are made by people who have not had a 'nasty' attack themselves - or no attack at all. This because now, if you give specific advice, you could be held responsible. Sure, you could. So make the advice good, workable and carefully thought out, based on the experience of yourself backed up by the experience of others. Good designers are very cautious people. I once asked Dr. Stan Butler, who designed the Concorde and did the stress calculations - on a slide-rule, as calculations were done in those days, in the tradition of R.J. Mitchell - "Do you have a Pilot's licence, Stan?" Long pause - "No - but I do have a glider silver C" "Why?" "Engines fail, you know." Which was exactly what my father said to me when invited for a flight in a little aeroplane.

I would say:

- a) You are on your own for sure unless you are in a convoy - policing the ocean is impossible, except in convoy - hugely expensive. That has always been my experience.
- b) Arming merchant vessels in principle and theory would seem to be 'good', but the practice raises some hideous problems, all of which have been experienced before. Which is why ships are not armed at all nowadays - (except those who disobey and somehow cache their arms). One can have a faultless AK47, but one cannot design the hands that hold it. It works if the arms are right for the situation, the crew trained and brave, and not asleep - unlike one master who was awakened with a cup of tea by a strange man who said: "Captin, my Captin - I am the Captin now!" Not edifying.

A fairly heavy gun works well (the more the better) for keeping aggressive craft away in my experience in the South Atlantic, but they need to KNOW you are armed or the psychology does not work too well until they find out the hard way. Not all aggressors run away, but I have never seen one who has not yet. It takes such a lot of fuel to catch them too. So the trick is to be between them and their home port if one needs to board them.

Therefore being armed needs to be effective, in every way, with the appropriate weapon / s. Properly chosen persons, properly trained in their weapons; calm, determined attitude, and training to give awareness of the ways the robbers use; and the right mind-set. A general solution sounds fine, but it only takes one crewman/woman to destroy the safety of all. It is normal to be afraid, but one has to learn to control that, and that takes mind-set and some help from ones senior officers, and training. Which is what the Navy is about. Merchant seamen do not get that, we have to draw on our own character resources.

I did ask the RN C/O at the time whether he locked all the arms up when a warship engaged pirates, and he replied "Of course not!" So I said; "But that is what you ask of merchant seamen - where is the

difference?". He said, "There isn't one, really. I had not thought of it quite like that". No, there is not.

Being unarmed in the face of a heavy gun is quite intense for the concentration - I once had an Iranian Corvette fire his fore-deck gun 5 shots 1 foot over my head at range of 50 metres because he, the Commander, wanted me to move a gassed-up, dead-ship 275,000 tonner from her location near Sirri Island, and I had not done so within the 24 hours he had demanded the previous day - we were just making fast the 1 hour late tug when the Corvette arrived (we had 5 men on board, including myself) - the tug slipped his line to us and scuttled off, keeping the VLCC between tug and warship. That was a bad idea - the ship was not moved, and the Captain (me) had to change his shorts. Not too often have I had to do that.

I asked the office to send another tug, but that we would have to slip the anchor because the compressed air would not lift the anchor. (I had heaved the cable out of the locker and parted the Kenter shackle, all ready, with the cable on the guillotine arranged to slip remotely: No, No, they said, anchors and cables are expensive - we will take you off and send some-one who can lift the anchor instead, you incompetent fooooll!!!).

So at 0200 a little pinnace came and took us 5 craven people off, and they later sent another 5 someone elses who tried to lift the anchor, but could not. So divers were sent, where it was found that the ship had swung round and round and the coral had grown into the cable knot, so that there was a ball of steel and coral of 100 tonnes on the bottom. - so they had to operate my slip and drop anchor and cable after all, which enabled them to tow the ship towards Taiwan to the breakers yard. They managed to get as far as the Western Anchorage at Singapore for a rest - and left her there 'for a while'..... - only the ship being dead-ship and 5 men lacking in imagination, there were no lights on board A visiting Korean master thought - "Chosi-middah! (jolly good) - that big, black space is a nice open bit of channel for me to anchor in," - so, without looking at his radar, he proceeded into the black hole; there was a bump, closely followed by a bang, and then another, very big bang. No more VLCC. Korean ship? I have not found out what happened to her. Annio-middah! (really quite bad). VLCC did not get any further. (That is it, roughly - the exact details need filling in, to find out.)

- c) The alternative is to engineer the ships to be impregnable. Not too difficult for some, impossible for others. The fort option I called it - the Navy changed it to Fortress Option (has more ring to it, said Deputy Director Naval Defence Captain Toby Elliott, OBE. RN.)

I was exceedingly lucky because 4 years before I was attacked for the first time, another master had his ship's money and the radio officer's wife stolen south of Singapore, near Putau Sambu. All this on the VHF. We could not help, shallow water in between, so had to listen to the screams. She was never heard of again.

4 years tater, I had a letter from Captain Tom Houlder, Chief Pilot of Umm Said, from the intelligence authorities, saying that my ship's name had been mentioned on an un-authorized communication between Singapore and Djakarta, we were apparently the planned target for a pirate attack, and should take extra precautions, and they wished us good fortune. We already took precautions, but tightened up and drilled. They came, -armed with AK47s and dressed in balaclavas - could not get in, so went away again. 3/O on watch had a heart attack from fear, had to go home, never to sail again. But we were all ok. 4 more attacks, none quite as bad as that one; two were quite bad, though, and illustrated the need that in a siege situation, it only takes one person to let the whole side down.

There was a post-script. Some years tater, I met the Malaysian admiral who had been in charge of the Malacca Straits at the time on an un-related but interesting matter. He knew of this episode, which was why he had asked me to do the task he needed doing.

The cure for terrorism is to terrorise the terrorist absolutely. You want to win, to expunge the activity? Then "Never mind hearts and minds, Grab 'em by the Balls." (Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz)

Allan McDowall (retired Master)
M.Sc(eng), C.Eng, MIMechE, MRINA, FNI, master mariner (current)

More Tales from the Orient

Some of you might recall that back in *Cachalot 18*, December 2005, I started to include a series of anecdotes from ships of the Orient Line. They came from a contributor who wished to remain anonymous (not that it did him much good, I think he was soon sussed out) and ran through to *Cachalot 23*, March 2007.

Shuffling through an ever increasing heap of papers in my so called filing system I came across two tales that I don't seem to have included. I don't think I was being censorious as I am only too happy to publish whatever comes my way (*hint*), so here they are below. A tad late perhaps, and my apologies to the contributor, whose identity will, no doubt, come under renewed speculation.

(And I am now even more embarrassed to have discovered another three, which I shall hold over for another time.)

THE SUEZ CANAL DURING THE VIET NAM WAR.

During the Viet-Nam war we frequently seemed to transit the Canal astern of a French troop ship (usually MM).

Frequently young soldiers would jump over the side, swim or walk to the bank and wait to be picked up by a military jeep and taken to Port Said where they were handed over to their Consul.

These lads were of all nationalities who had signed on for the French Foreign Legion but, while they didn't mind chasing arabs in north Africa, they did not think very highly of the far east!

On the homeward voyage after we left Port Said we called at Naples, Marseilles, Gibraltar and Tilbury. On arrival at Port Said the Agent would board with several European Consuls in tow all asking if the Captain would carry these lads to Naples, for which they would pay full fare. The answer was usually 'yes' but even so the consuls were always worried that, for some reason, we might miss the Naples call. We said that had never happened and was most improbable.

On arrival at Naples we handed the chaps over to their local representative and, on one occasion, asked why their colleague in Egypt was so worried that we might miss the Naples call. They explained that if any of them went to a French port they would be arrested by the French military, taken ashore and shot! (desertion in the face of the enemy).

THE LIFE OF A LIFT BOY

In the ORION there was only one passenger lift which went from F deck up 5 decks to B deck (the original 1st class restaurant/lounge) and was manned by one bell-boy.

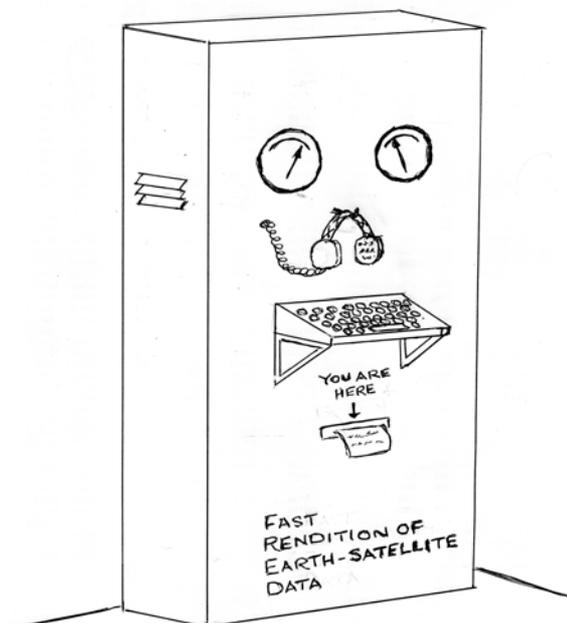
I had a routine of meeting the Chief Steward about 1800 and we would have a wander round some of the less used public rooms, just to see what was going on.

On one occasion my phone rang and the Chief Steward said, 'come along to the forward square, sir (we were on E deck), be as quick as you can. I shot along and found him standing by the lift, looking downwards through the window, he stood aside and when I squinted down, I could see that the lift was stopped halfway between decks E and F. It was occupied by the lift boy and a female passenger of about the same age, (about 16 or 17) and they were apparently about to engage in an advanced course on 'birds and bees therapy' The C/Stwd banged on the door with his fist, and shouted through the crack 'bring this lift up to 'E' deck at once' which the lad did and we got the pair of them. If he had only shot up to B deck we would have had the boy but the girl could have got clear away ! The maxim should have been 'when in doubt always plan the escape route'.

The complete collection of the anecdotes can be found on our website, Club Journal/ Tales from the Orient.



Fred



I first met Fred in Hong Kong on the first world cruise of the QE2. He was a solid looking wardrobe shaped piece of equipment. He had one appendage similar to a type writer; sometimes you could assist Fred in his task manually by listening to him with ear phones. Through the ear phones you could hear a whistling sound which you had to fine tune as the satellite passed overhead. Yes you have probably realised that Fred was the first ever Sat Nav on a merchant ship.

Once Fred had acquired a satellite after some internal rumblings the appendage would click away and then spit out a credit card like piece of paper with the latitude and longitude of the ship. MAGIC! Outer space brought to your very own chart table.

Unfortunately Fred was superseded by a piece of equipment the size of a cigarette packet.

Captain David Carr

Rope Ends



Breath In

Boatsteerer David Stocks (Rt) and Cachalot Geoff Lock (Lt) support Administrator Richard James after their charity walk to raise funds for the **Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation**. He doesn't look *that* tired and obviously they are all very happy to have raised

£325

for the cause.

Richard says no, he is not wearing his t-shirt back to front, it was a special one issued to those with flat stomachs.

Pirates- the ultimate deterrent

(The last word on pirates, for this issue, from Captain David Carr)

Some forty years ago, we were taking the CHUSAN on her scrap voyage from Southampton to Koahsiung.

After a call at Durban we set course for the Malacca Strait and one dark tropical night the OOW and myself were dazzled by a strong search light on the port bow. The search light and vessel passed down our port side while we both watched from the port bridge

wing and saw activity at the after end some three hundred feet away and what appeared to be people scrambling up the ships side one by one. On fire patrol that night was an Indian seaman who had with him a fairly heavy brass fire clock - every fire point he visited had a key which he inserted into the clock and the time was recorded on to a roll of paper so in the morning there was a check of where he had visited and at what time.

The time of the first head over the bulwark coincided exactly with the arrival of a surprised fire patrolman who had the presence of mind to swing his clock at the pirates head sending him seawards, with his pals following in a domino effect.

The moral of the story is that every crew member should be issued with a fire clock.



New Members

Robin Butterfield went to sea as a midshipman with Blue Funnel in 1950 after attending an Outward Bound Sea-school and then, with a 2nd Mates ticket, served with P&O. He came ashore in 1964 and gained a diploma with the Institute of Marketing & Sales Management. In 1990 he gained a diploma in osteopathy. He has been a Samaritan and involved with Hospital Radio and enjoyed sailing motor craft in the past, as well as being a supporter of Lymlington Lifeboat. He has been Chairman of both Round Table and 41 Clubs. He retired in 2006 and lives at Hordle, Lymlington.

Martin Phipps is an old Worcester boy (1968/9) and served his sea-going career, from cadet to master, with Buries Markes. In 1990 he became a Southampton pilot with ABP. In 2010 he was appointed Pilotage Manager and now in 2011 Harbour Master, Southampton. He was RNR from 1974, retiring in 1995 as Commander. He lives in Swanmore and enjoys sailing, hill walking and caravanning.

Mike Robins is a re-joiner who went to sea with Turnbull Scott in 1960, gaining command in 1975. After being made redundant in 1981 he spent 10 years teaching ship operations and ship handling at Warsash Maritime College. In 1991 he co-founded Transas Marine which is now a world leader in ECDIS simulation. Mike lives in the centre of Southampton.

