

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

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Post Captain's Log

This is the last entry in the log of my term in office. Grace and I have thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of representing the Cachalots this year and we tried to make it to all the functions we could. We were not slaves to tradition but tried to bring change in little steps. Whenever I have had to double check arrangements or find out about some protocol, I have always found the officers of the club backed up by our very competent administrator, Richard James, to be excellent in understanding my concerns and finding the appropriate answer.

I have been unable to attend as many committee meetings as I would have liked, due to work commitments, but I believe I have attended most of them. From these meetings you get a sense of what members of the club want. Unfortunately those wants vary depending upon who you talk to. The club has taken some risks this year which I hope and expect will have positive effects on the club. The club and its team of officers cannot afford to become stagnant; we need a constant trickle of change, like cress needs a constant trickle of water to grow. How that change is effected causes fierce debate in some of our meetings where the "Club Rules" are quoted and arguments are put forward.

Our first gathering in December was the Christmas lunch. This turned out to be an intimate gathering with a dozen of us meeting in the club room. The traditional Christmas fare was provided by Southampton Seafarers Centre. Due to the small numbers we had had to move the event from the Kings Court Masonic Hall to the Seafarers' Centre but those who did attend had a thoroughly good time in the relaxed atmosphere of the club room.

The Christmas Dinner was well attended and the food was plentiful. The weather brought its seasonal chill so care had to be taken on the journey home.

The first event of the New Year is the Docklands service held this year on the 3rd January 2012 at the Seafarers' Centre Chapel; the number of people in the congregation was impressive considering the adverse weather expected at the time.

On the 7th January there was high turnout for the Past Captains meeting where Peter Grant and John Noble were elected respectively as Captain and Staff Captain for 2012. The executive and finance committee met immediately afterwards. The boatsteerer, storekeeper and membership secretary gave their respective report or had a deputy do it in their stead. The arrangements for the Sea Pie Supper were discussed in full.

Burns night was then upon us; Gerry Cartwright began the evening with "The Selkirk Grace". The "beastie" was then addressed by John Noble who then followed up with "The Immortal Memory". The traditional "Sangs and clatter" was led by Alec Macpherson which drew the evening to a close.

So, as Club Captains have said before, the year is up before you know it and the Sea Pie Supper has become the next event on your calendar. Sea Pie Supper night, this is the

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Your New Captain

Peter was born in 1942 at Busby, Renfrewshire, and after leaving Queen's Park Secondary School he attended the 1958-59 Cadet Course at the Royal College of Science and Technology, Glasgow, where he obtained a 1st Class Diploma. His successful completion of the Outward Bound Course and the award of an Honours Badge led to his acceptance as a Midshipman with Alfred Holt with six months remission of sea service. From 1959 to 1971 he served on Blue Funnel and Glen Line ships, as Cadet to 2nd Officer.



Captain Peter Grant

Peter gained Tanker Experience with 'Esso', from 1972 to 1976, as 2nd / Chief Officer and then moved to C.P. Bulkships as Chief Officer/Master.

His first command was in 1983 when he was appointed 'Master' and assigned as Captain of the 'G A Walker', moored in King William Sound. This vessel carried all the Jet Fuel for the R.A.F. Aircraft involved in the recapture of the Falkland Islands.

After being made redundant by C.P. in 1987 Peter took various 'foreign flag' jobs as Master before joining Fred Olsen's Tankers until 2001 when again he was made Redundant. Thanks to a suggestion from Ian Stirling, Peter then applied to Deep Sea and Coastal Pilots and worked for them from 2002 through to retirement at the end of 2009.

Peter completed a 50 year 'round trip' when he flew back into London City Airport on the 1st December 2009 after Piloting his last ship, the 'DAMAVAND', an Iranian 300,000 DWT crude carrier drawing 22 mtrs, from Cherbourg to Rotterdam. It was from this very dock, then the King George V dock London, that he had sailed, on 30th September 1959, as a brand new "Green behind the Ears" Midshipman, on the M.V 'GLENGARRY'.

Peter had joined the RNR in 1960 and left in '87 with the rank of Lt/Cdr. Based at 'HMS TERROR' during the Malaysian-Indonesian confrontation in 1967, Peter completed a 3 month tour of duty on H.M. ships PICTON and WOOLASTON, patrolling the Malacca and Singapore Straits. In '69 he joined HMS 'RECLAIM' as Navigator for 7 months training, based at Portsmouth and it was during this time that Peter met Margaret, who was a Nursing Sister at 'HASLAR', and they were married in April 1971.

During Peter's RNR service he also served as Watch-keeper on HMS 'HECLA'.

Peter joined the Club in 1992 and served as Sea Staff Captain in 2000 and again in 2005 and was Functions Officer in 2010/11.

In this Diamond Jubilee Year Peter is looking forward to representing and promoting the Club.

evening when the baton is passed from the Captain to his successor.

Thanks to Doug Morrison and ABP we were able to secure City Terminal as the new venue this year. This increased the planning and logistics load for the boatsteerer and his team, as everything had to be planned anew; my thanks to them and all who helped on the evening. The top table could handle fewer guests so that had to be diplomatically handled by the team. Our principal guest, Admiral the Rt Hon Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC ADC was installed as a Stowaway by our new Club Captain. Lord West's speech on "Sea Blindness", in which it was recorded that 90% of our goods are transported by sea, was interwoven with stories of great humour and invention.

I would like to thank everyone who helped me during my year in office; it has been an honour and a pleasure to represent our club.

I.R.Salter.

Post Captain.

Boatsteerer's Locker

This being the end of my first year in which I have taken a new look and approach to my duties, sometimes through not having the burden of history and sometimes intentionally to see what falls out.

I would like to thank the officers, harpooners and fellow Cachalots for their support and for pointing out how it should be done.

Most of all I would like to thank Richard James who beavers away behind the scenes keeping things ticking over principally for both the Storekeeper and myself, although he finds time for others as well.

Review of 2011.

Looking back I find that quite a lot has been achieved during this year, I take no credit for starting the initiatives but I was privileged to be able to pick them up and see them through to conclusion.

Clubrooms. We have come full circle from working towards vacating these rooms to, at this time last year, having an offer on the table from the Seafarers Centre (our landlords) to securing a rent free lease enabling us to continue to enjoy the club room for social and formal meetings. It has also afforded us the ability to assist the Nautical Institute and share joint initiatives.

Bursary 2011 was the third and final year of the original agreement to provide a bursary to a seafarer studying at the Warsash Maritime Academy. The winner was Denzil D'Silva, from Goa in India, who attended the Chief Mate/Master Programme HND Award, a one-year course.

We see the benefits of this both to us as a club and to the candidate as very worthwhile. Peter Marriott must be thanked for his contribution to the Bursary and it has been decided to continue this award on an annual basis, providing funds are available. For this year the applications are rolling in and we should have quite a choice of candidates.

Southampton Ship Owners Association. Once again the Cachalots assisted in the ship visit of local children to view a Whitaker Tanker and a Solent Towage Tug and I assisted Ivor Salter and the ships' crews in showing the children around. Two groups of youngsters visited, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, it was extremely enjoyable and an exhibit of photographs taken on the day were displayed at the reception to the Sea Pie Supper. We look forward to helping with this event again in 2012.

Solent Maritime rises from the ashes of Port and City Futures to support and expand the Solent regions maritime industry with aims and objectives akin to our own. George Angas is Chair of this new forum and we hope to contribute to it as and when we can. We wish George and the new forum the success they deserve.

The Sea Pie Supper As you are aware we changed the venue for this years event and this presented new challenges, but I am pleased to report that another successful evening was enjoyed by all present at The City Cruise Terminal. Our guest speaker and new "Stowaway", or was that "Castaway", Admiral The Rt Hon Lord West of Spithead gave a most enjoyable speech with a serious underlying theme which was interspersed with humour; just what the sea Pie Supper needed. The serious part was a reminder for all of us that "Sea Blindness", in terms of the Strategic Defence Review and the reduction of both Royal and Merchant Navies, to an island nation such as ours is a step too far; we need to keep our fleets for both security and trade.

We are extremely fortunate to also welcome HRH The Princess Royal who has accepted the position of "Stowaway", and although we are disappointed that the Princess Royal could not join us at the Sea Pie Supper we hope that she will join us next year where we can officially welcome her into the Club. In the meantime we will send the Princess Royal a certificate of membership as a Stowaway member and hopefully present the Cachalot broach in 2013.

The final ticket sales at the SPS numbered 548, which was excellent considering the present economic climate, not my 600 but maybe next year? A big thank you to all who attended and supported us at this event and we hope to see you again next year.

Feedback has been received concerning the Supper and the new venue and we shall endeavour to address those points raised in time for the 1st February 2013. That's the date, just in case you haven't yet made an entry in your diary.

Now to 2012

I feel that this year is going to be an exciting one for both Southampton and the Club and wish Captain Grant all the best in his role as club Captain and I hope that he finds it enjoyable. We look forward to the Shipping Festival Service on the 21st of June and hope that as many members as possible will join us. This event is open to the public so please spread the word amongst friends and work colleagues. It is expected that nearer to the date we will produce fliers for Churches and meeting rooms and will distribute these.

May I wish you all a healthy and enjoyable 2012 and don't forget to support your club; we are open both Thursday and Friday lunch times.

David Stocks
Boatsteerer

Costa Concordia

With the welter of ill-informed and irresponsible speculation that has followed the grounding of the *Costa Concordia* I have decided to follow the lead of the Nautical Institute and resist the temptation to add to it until we hear something definitive from some competent authority, should such an entity still exist.

I have posted the link below, on our website:

<http://news.qps.nl.s3.amazonaws.com/Grounding+Costa+Concordia.wmv> This shows the track of the vessel as determined from the AIS data.

Some very unsavoury examples of black humour have also crept into the NOTPCWorld pages but, hey, that's the nature of the beast!

Ed

Sea Pie Supper 2012



Distinguished Guests

Left, from the left:

- Captain Ivor Salter, out-going Captain.
- Captain James Robinson, President, Nautical Institute.
- Captain Terry Jewell, Master, Honourable Company of Master Mariners.
- Captain Sir Malcolm Edge, Stowaway.
- Councillor Mr Terry Matthews, Mayor of Southampton, Admiral of the Port.
- Captain Christopher Fagan.
- Dame Mary Fagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Stowaway.
- Admiral The Rt Hon Lord West of Spithead, Principal Speaker and Stowaway.
- Captain Peter Grant, Captain Elect.
- Mr Nigel McNair Scott, High Sheriff of Hampshire.
- Mrs Anna McNair Scott, Chairman Hampshire County Council.
- Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey, CEO MCA.

Other distinguished guests, not pictured above, were:
 Commodore Tony Radakin, Commander Portsmouth Naval Base.
 Mr Doug Morrison, Port Director, ABP Southampton.
 Mr John Hughes, Southampton Seafarers' Centre.

Below left: The Captains exchange Badges of Office

&

Admiral Lord West is installed as a Stowaway



Above: Captains and Stowaways



Below: After the presentations, time to relax



A Chronic Case of Sea-Blindness



The new Stowaway's speech was well received

After his induction as a Stowaway Member of the Club, Admiral Lord West gave an informative and entertaining speech in which he spoke of his great affinity with the Fourth Service, the Merchant Navy, and his concern about the 'sea blindness' which is affecting the nation. A concern strong enough for him to have cause to berate the government about it from the floor of the House.

As befits an ex sea dog, amongst his own and probably preaching to the converted, his speech was interspersed with many jokes and anecdotes unsuitable to be reproduced here. The serious message, taken from his own notes, can be found in the box on the right.

Before sitting down to a standing acclamation he proposed the toast, "To the Cachalots of Southampton, may they continue and flourish for ever".

Just how apposite his message was, may well be illustrated by our failure to get any part of the occasion reported in the local press. We supplied them with words and pictures, but to no avail.

That one of the largest maritime gatherings in the UK, attended by both The Lord Lieutenant and The High Sheriff of the county, along with The Mayor, (who is also the Admiral of the Port), the Head of the MCA, the Port Director and other maritime VIPs, and a Principal Guest who is not only a Lord, an Admiral and a national hero, but Chancellor of the local University and Maritime Academy to boot, can be deemed to attract such little interest as to be not worth reporting says it all really. If it is not football, 'stenders or c'lebs off the telly, then you might as well forget it!

TEC

In 1945 the Royal Navy had over 1,500 major combatants, including 52 aircraft carriers and several thousand aircraft. Its power and capability with that of the merchant marine had ensured the survival of our nation through the German wars in the first half of the 20 century. In the final analysis it was our maritime capability that – as has been the case for centuries – was crucial for our national survival. However, having fought earlier, longer and more completely than any other of the victorious powers, Britain was broke and the world order had changed.

Indeed the decline of the RN from the most powerful navy in the world had started post WWI. Although in many ways the navy of WWII was only possible because of the huge past investment. So in 1945 Britain embarked on the ruthless liquidation of the organisation that had been central to British identity for as long as she had been a single nation. By 1946, over 840 major warships had been scrapped and a further 727 in various stages of construction were cancelled. By 1948 the home fleet consisted of one cruiser and a handful of destroyers and frigates.

The decline of our merchant marine really started to happen in the 60's but the seeds had been sown much earlier as with the UK shipbuilding industry.

One has to deplore the neglect of maritime history today. To describe the 17th, 18th and 19th century British state without mentioning the Royal and Merchant Navies is quite a feat of intellectual virtuosity –yet it happens. It is almost as if somebody is trying to airbrush out our maritime significance, historically and now.

British dominance of European waters was the longest most complex and expensive project ever undertaken by the British state. Few aspects of national life were unaffected by it. The sea is the lifeblood of a global system that links nearly every nation – the super highway that has enabled globalisation. More than 90 per cent of goods traded internationally are transported by sea. Last year, UK imports and exports were 55% of our GDP, a higher percentage than almost any other nation on earth. Over 95% by volume of that trade is carried by sea. With container ships carrying 5,000 plus containers the price of carrying individual items is laughably small. We live in a just-in-time economy. Disruption would have devastating effects. The maritime sector adds over £26.5 billion and 531k jobs to our national wealth each year.

Notwithstanding all this, the recent SDSR further emasculated our maritime forces to an extent that is changing Britain into a different nation by default. This sea-blindness applies to the merchant marine as well as the Royal Navy.

.... I believe there are real dangers of an extremely chaotic and violent world developing over the next decades fuelled by competition for energy and minerals, pressures on food and water, global imbalance of wealth and demographic pressures, religious intolerance, nuclear proliferation and so on.

In the final analysis our national survival will depend as it always has, as an island nation, on a strong maritime capability.

One example of all these pressures is piracy. Something the RN had effectively eliminated worldwide by the beginning of WWI. Just to give some idea of the scale, -23k ships each year pass through the sea area off Somalia. The cost to the shipping industry so far about £10-12bn--\$274m paid in ransom—and as we speak about 10 ships and 100 seafarers held hostage.

So far 60 seafarers have been killed. With the agreement by UK government to armed guards on ships there is a great deal to be resolved and I hope the Somalia conference in London on 23 February focuses world attention on piracy and where we go from here.

Having been a bit of a prophet of doom, I remain optimistic because of the innate quality and stoicism of the British people.

Reg Kelso's piece on the opposite page is also very pertinent to this particular malaise.

Changed Days.

Our ancestors realised that their island Kingdom was safe from an invading army unless and until they lost command of the seas and in the Stuart period positive steps were taken to improve maritime defence. At that time there was no established "fighting navy" but as the majority of merchant ships were armed as a protection against pirates they could easily be pressed into service – and those without armament could be equipped quickly and cheaply. Legislation to encourage shipbuilding was enacted and in order to ensure a plentiful supply of seafaring men the State encouraged the development of the deep-sea fishing industry. Our ancestors had foresight!

To ensure that the strength of this dual-purpose fleet was not diminished Richard 11 introduced "protectionism" in the form of the Navigation Acts and throughout almost 500 years these Acts were renewed and revised in an endeavour to make them more effective. The stated objective was "the increase of the shipping and the encouragement of the navigation of this nation, wherein the wealth, safety and strength of this Kingdom is so much concerned" but, in actual fact, their purpose was "commercial" - to ensure that English exports and imports were carried in English ships, manned in the main by Englishmen. Due to a shortage of ships and seamen the Acts were quite unenforceable and Elizabeth repealed them in 1559 although the English coastal trade was still barred to foreign vessels. Finally, in 1651 a more workable Act was passed and this remained in force, albeit with numerous amendments and deletions, until the Navigation Acts were finally repealed in the 19th. Century. This final Act defined an "English" ship as one whose Owner, Master and the majority of the crew were "men of England or the Colonies" – a broad definition carried over, in comparatively recent times, to that of a British ship.

The repeal of the Navigation Acts in the early 19th century had little effect on the strength of the British merchant shipping fleet and, for many years, it continued to be the largest in the world. Sail was the recognised method of propulsion but as technology advanced during the 19th century Britain took the initiative in "modernising" its mercantile fleet. The advent of the steam engine had a massive impact on shipping and soon many, but not all, sailing vessels were fitted with steam-driven paddle wheels.

The first Atlantic crossing under power was enacted in 1819 and some six years later the paddle steamer "Enterprise" voyaged to India via The Cape of Good Hope, steaming for 64 days of her 103 day passage. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 marked the demise of sail for international trading and as iron replaced wood, and steel replaced iron, ships got bigger and more economical. Oil replaced coal, the propeller made the paddle wheel almost redundant, the steam turbine ousted the "up and down" steam engine and by the early 20th. Century many of the ships plying the trade routes of the globe were oil-fired steam turbine propelled.

In the case of British ships the entire crew – from Captain to Catering Boy – comprised British or Commonwealth citizens holding the requisite Certificates of Competency issued by the regulatory body within, or responsible to, the United Kingdom. Medium tonnage cargo-carrying vessels carried crews numbering in the 60's and the majority of the maintenance to the hull, fittings and machinery was carried out by that crew under the supervision of the ship's Officers who were, in turn, answerable to their employer's shore-based Superintendents for any failure to keep their vessel "shipshape and Bristol fashion". Today, the largest container ships rarely have a total complement of more than 20.

Year in, year out, this "private enterprise" industry made a significant contribution to the "invisible exports" of Great Britain and, by 1914, nearly 50% of world shipping sailed under the Red Ensign.

The 1914-18 War took a heavy toll of British shipping (and seafarers) but the post-war fleet of modern and well-equipped ships still comprised the largest mercantile fleet in the world albeit smaller in percentage terms as many new marine ensigns were appearing on the world's trade routes.

The 1939-45 War again inflicted great losses on ships and crew-members but, with peace restored, the nation set about restoring the merchant fleet to its pre-war dominance. This was never attained and the steady growth of international competition slowly eroded the commercial advantages enjoyed by the pre-war British ship owner. In an endeavour to combat this the Government of the day relaxed the nationality requirements and today it is no longer necessary for the owner of a ship flying the Red Ensign to employ any British personnel and, many opt for less expensive crews recruited from a variety of developing countries. The cost-effectiveness of this is a matter for debate.

Today, our shipping industry is in crisis with relatively few employment opportunities offering for UK domiciled seafarers – particularly ratings – and with the age-profile of our Officers causing great concern. Changes in the manning regulations now allow a UK registered ship to be manned entirely by non-UK seafarers; officers and ratings from almost any corner of the globe sail in UK registered ships and "multi national" manning is commonplace.

Despite Government assurances that its policy of attracting ships to the UK register (following the introduction, in 2000, of the Tonnage Tax) has been successful few of these vessels employ British officers and even fewer employ British ratings. Regulations relating to the "Tonnage Tax" stipulate that the owners of ships enjoying this benefit must engage in, or contribute to, a training programme but there is no requirement for the trainees to be British and, understandably, many prefer to train their own nationals. Even more understandably, recruitment of young Britons is proving difficult and many initiatives are afoot to show that seafaring is still a rewarding and interesting career.

Chapter 17 of "The Unforgiving Minute", the personal memoirs of Stowaway Member Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles.

Far East Again - End of War

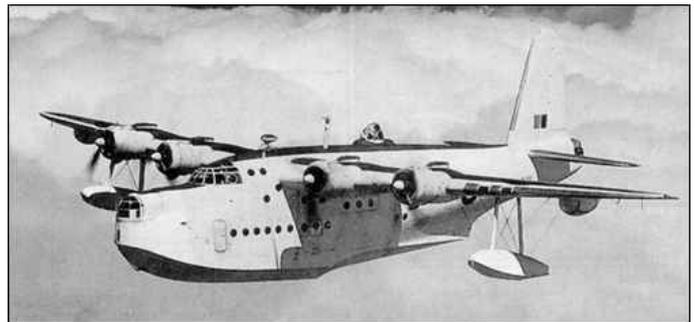
During the Staff Course we had to report to the Admiralty, to the Second Sea Lord's office, to discuss our future appointments. This is one of the many excellent aspects of the Admiralty's personnel management. I personally feel that any organisation employing large numbers of people must offer them an opportunity to discuss what they are going to do next. Without this, individuals are apt to feel that they are just a cork tossed with the waves. Of course, in the Service, one has to go exactly where one is told to go - frequently there is no alternative. But it clearly suits the authorities to know individuals' preferences and domestic circumstances so that, where possible, they can fit a round peg into a round hole. In any case, it means that people feel that they have had their say, even if their wishes cannot be met.

I feel that this is extremely important and throughout my time in the Navy I always sorted out in my own mind what I wanted to do next and made a point of seeing somebody about it. In general I have been extremely fortunate in this respect, and with one notable exception, I have loved every job I have ever been given to do.

In 1945 I knew that HMS Vernon, the Torpedo School, which was responsible for Torpedo Officers appointments, wanted to haul me in and put me into a more orthodox appointment. They felt that half the time I had been in the Mediterranean they had little idea what in fact I was doing! They felt I had been too long "off the lead".

I did not want to go back to being a Torpedo Officer in a big ship, so I went to see Dennis Boyd, who by this time was an Admiral and Fifth Sea Lord. I said "Sir, you started me in this Torpedo racket, and now I want you to get me out of it. He gazed at me in bewilderment. Then he took his pipe out of his mouth, looked up at the ceiling and roared with laughter. "So" he said "What is it you want to do now?" "Combined operations, Sir" I said. And the upshot was that I was appointed as Staff Officer Operations to Force W, which was one of the Forces being assembled in India to invade Malaya and drive out the Japanese. This Force was

being assembled in a great hurry and I was flown out from Poole to Karachi in a Sunderland flying-boat. This was a fantastic trip which I greatly enjoyed. By modern standards it was quite leisurely. For instance, we had time to land on the Nile and have a good dinner in Cairo before continuing the next morning. When I arrived in Bombay I reported to my boss, Rear Admiral Bob Currie - a most delightful man, who I had not met before. Soon we had to move to Madras which we did by crossing India in a train. In Madras we transferred to a small River-class frigate called HMS Nith. She was the headquarters ship for assembling a



large collection of merchant ships and landing craft, all full of British troops. After a short period of organisation and training Force W set out for the west coast of Malaya. About two days before we were due to land, to our amazement we heard on the wireless that the atom bomb had been dropped and that Japan had surrendered. We learned later that the beaches in the area where we were to land had been particularly strongly defended by Japanese troops.

Immediately the whole Force was diverted to Rangoon. I had not been there before - it struck me as a dreadful place. The navigation in the delta, with endless low-lying mangrove swamps, was very difficult.

We were only in Rangoon for a day or two when we got orders to take the whole Force direct to Bangkok: Here we were to land all our military to take over Siam from the Japanese. We had a very large number of merchant ship troopers, a few landing ships, all under the command of Admiral Currie. We anchored off the mouth of the Bangkok estuary. Almost at once a funny, fussy, old-fashioned looking picket boat approached, bringing a Siamese Naval Liaison Officer. I remember saying to a friend "Here goes for a little pidgin English"; but the chap came up the gangway, down into the Wardroom and almost his first words were "Oh, my God, Plymouth Gin". (Numbers of Siamese midshipmen has been trained by the Royal Navy pre-war). But the news he brought was that the Japanese had not been dredging the Bangkok River, and it had silted up so badly that it was now too shallow for the merchant ships to get in to land their troops.

So the landing ships had to run a sort of ferry service transferring troops and vehicles from the anchored merchant ships and take them ashore. This was a slow process and to speed it up we placed some of the smaller merchant ships alongside the others, transferred about half their load temporarily and then they were just able to get up-river. Each merchant ship had to do two trips in this way.

After a few days Admiral Currie and his staff moved ashore and we were billeted in a large house in the outskirts of the city. The Japanese in defeat were completely subservient and did exactly what they were ordered to do without any trouble whatsoever.

We were still busy arranging the discharge of ships. Life in Bangkok was very limited but quite enjoyable. There was an Officers Club. One of the minor compensations of war is that one meets some most extraordinary characters. One of these was an elderly Royal Naval Reserve Lt Commander - I will not name him. He was a very nice chap indeed but in an advanced state of alcoholism. It is not too much to say that he positively radiated brandy! He played a piano almost better than anybody I ever heard. When we went to the Club in the evening we used to say "Give us a tune, old boy". He would stagger to the piano with a glass in each hand, dump them on top of it, open the lid and play quite exquisitely for hours at a time. He read no music - and his hands looked more like a bunch of bananas - quite amazing.

In Bangkok the Japanese had a large cavalry unit. The horses were mostly originally Australian "whalers" sold pre-war to the Dutch Artillery in Java, captured there by the Japanese and taken to Siam. I had a friend who was in an Indian Army veterinary unit. He arranged for me to ride some of these horses round the racecourse in the early mornings; quite enjoyable and good for the liver. One day I heard that there was to be a public auction to sell off all these horses. I asked to buy one in advance at an agreed price. During negotiations I left a note on his desk. An Indian Army Colonel who was passing, saw the note and said "What is this?" "Oh, it's nothing, it's just a horse I'm selling to a Naval Officer". The Colonel asked to see the horse. It was led out. He said "That horse is too good for Naval Officer. He can have any other horse, not that one". So I had to choose another.

I went back to the Mess and found a signal saying that I was to be relieved in Bangkok and to report to C in C in Singapore. Not wanting to be parted from my steed, I arranged passage for myself and my horse in an LST belonging to a friend. We put the horse in a truck, took it down to the docks, blindfolded it, led it around in circles, halted it on a potato net belonging to the ship and hoisted away on a derrick. Its feet stuck through the holes in the net, its belly was well supported and soon it was swung on board. But then, instead of standing up, it lay on its side and groaned. I rang up my vet friend. He came down to see what to do. It was about 11.30 a.m. and he had already had several drinks. In his broad Irish accent he said "Maybe it's a touch of colic he has". Anyway he did various things and got it onto its feet and we led it into a fine loose-box which had been built by the shipwright.

There were many ribald comments as we went down-river with two long equine ears sticking out over the top of the structure on the upper deck. On the way to Singapore the other LST broke down and we had to tow her. I had bought the horse for 750 tickals (about £8 sterling) to include a saddle, bridle, a sack of dried grass and a book of instructions. The delay in reaching Singapore meant that I ran out of fodder so I had to buy the whole Wardroom stock of breakfast food and feed the horse Shredded Wheat for the rest of the way. It thrived on this and was very restive when we tried to unload it. Eventually I was leading it through Singapore Dockyard when a strong monsoon rain began to fall. The horse became dejected and so did I. Suddenly, and totally unexpectedly, my old friend Spider Webb from Vis came round the corner. He said "What in God's name are you doing, Morgan?" I did not know what to do next or where to take the horse. But I knew the Flag Lieutenant, so I took it to the Admiral's office, made it fast to a lamp-post and went in to see him. He said "Oh, the Admiral loves horses", so he took me to see the Admiral who was quite charming. He said "Look, it's your horse, but I am going to send you to Sumatra, you will not be able to take it there, so I will look after it for you from this moment. But it's still your horse and when you ever come back to Singapore you ride it again".

In my presence he rang up Admiral Mountbatten and said "Dickie, I heard one of your polo ponies has died on the way over from Ceylon - could I send one I have just got up to you?" So in no time its standard of living had greatly improved. Instead of boxed up in a landing craft it was in the Government House stables. I did not see much more of it after that. I was quite fond of it. I called it "Caligula" because it had one white sock. (Students of Roman history will know the story about the Emperor Caligula).

Soon I was on my way to Sumatra. The Japanese forces were still in Sumatra, but British forces were completely in charge and all the Japanese had to do was to obey orders.

I had been appointed as NOIC (Naval Officer in Charge) of Palambang, which was quite an important oil port on the north coast of Sumatra - in fact only a few miles south of the Equator. In Palambang I had a small naval staff, living in a requisitioned hotel. There was an RAF airfield and one battalion of the British Indian Army.

As we had found in Bangkok previously, the Japanese were completely quiet and supine. They provided working parties of soldiers for any jobs required by the British. They were very well behaved and gave no trouble. I only remember that one got drunk and fell into a swimming pool. The next morning his officer reported to me, with exaggerated politeness and much bowing and saluting, that his man had been sentenced to 93 days of "severe repentance".

I had a funny little Japanese chauffeur for my very old, very large American-built official car. This chap lived in the car, slept in the car, ate his rice meals sitting on the running-board and each morning washed both the car and himself simultaneously. He never asked for any time off at all. When I got in the car he sat up and drove off. I touched him on either shoulder to go left or right and tapped him on the head to stop. That was our only communication.

The situation in Palambang was quite worrying. Sumatra had been a Dutch colony before the war, until the Japanese invaded and took it over. Now that the Japanese had been defeated the Indonesians wished to become independent and were

bitterly opposed to the return of the Dutch. The local spokesman, Dr Ghani, was the contact through which we were supposed to liaise with the Sumatrans. I did not like him and he did not trust me. He suspected that I had a Dutch Naval Officer up my sleeve waiting to take over again in due course. This was not entirely untrue!

The situation was complicated by the presence of very large numbers of Dutchmen who had been prisoners of war of the Japanese in the area ever since 1941. These people had been businessmen, soldiers, oil refinery officials etc and some had their families still with them - although the Japanese had put the men and women in separate prison camps and allowed no contact of any sort between families - not even any news. The Dutch were very demoralised after years of harsh treatment, and of course the one thing they wanted was to get back to Holland; but for month after month there were no ships available - the shortage of merchant shipping was a world-wide problem at the time. I was rather reminded of Nevil Shute's film "A Town Like Alice". The women were very resolute and had survived rather better than the men. One woman I knew, Mrs Elsy Van der Wilk, had a baby with her, born before the war; when the baby was sick the Japanese would not provide medicine or assistance of any sort. She said she got glass from a broken window, cut the veins in her arm and kept the baby alive by feeding it on her own blood.

Altogether it was rather a miserable time, in a very oppressive climate - and as I have said, most of the people were an unhappy lot.

I was very worried about the security situation of my Port Party, and wished to move my headquarters out of the town and across to the other side of the river into the old oil refinery at Pladjoe. I sent a signal to Admiral Patterson at Sourabaya, who was in charge of the area, proposing to move - but he would not approve. Eventually I got an RAF flight to Sourabaya to see him and try to persuade him -but he would not agree because he felt that no White Ensign that had been hoisted in the sight of the Japanese should be hauled down anywhere - loss of face! An unfortunate sequel was that three of my officers, who had wrongly gone down into the native town after curfew, were ambushed by Indonesians: Two of them were chopped into mincemeat and thrown into the river. The other, although wounded in the stomach, somehow escaped and was able to tell us what had happened. During all this time we had quite good contact with Singapore, which was only about 200 miles away - by occasional RAF aircraft and also by landing craft which brought us our stores and supplies. Admiral Mountbatten, "Supremo", was still based in Singapore.

After several months, with most of our problems unresolved, I received a signal saying that I was to be relieved as NOIC by another Lieutenant Commander - in fact Georgie Pennell, who had been one of our torpedo course pre-war.

I flew back to Singapore and was told to report to C in C East Indies in Trincomalee. I took passage in the old County Class cruiser HMS Sussex - very enjoyable.

To be continued

An Ill Wind

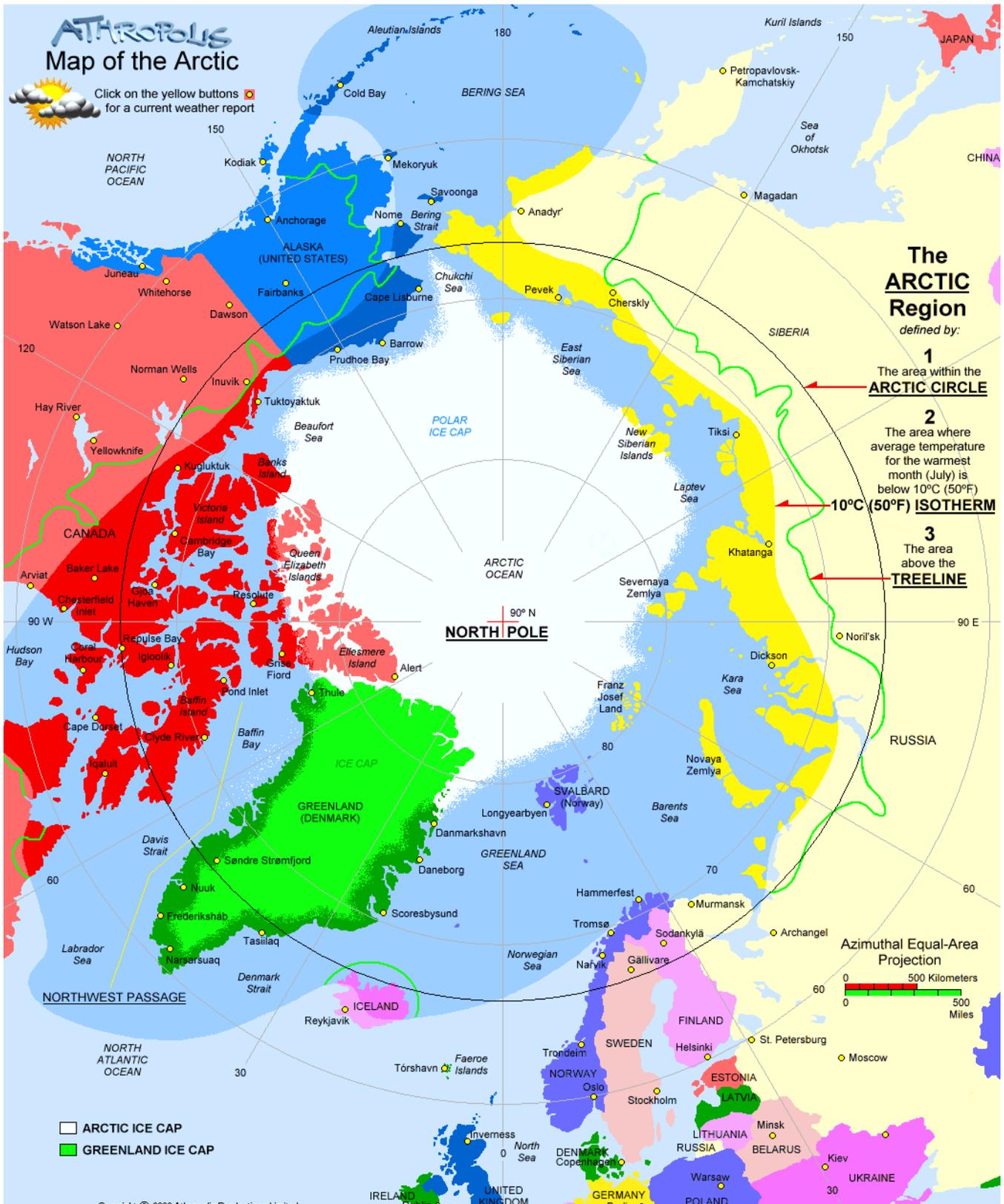
In 1940, the German armed merchant cruiser "Komet" was operating in the Barents Sea but, as her prey declined in numbers, the German High Command decided she would enjoy more success elsewhere and the decision was taken to move her to the Far East.

Undoubtedly, the passage from the Barents Sea to the Pacific would have been a hazardous one and so they decided that the ship would take the Northern Sea Route along the northern coast of Russia to Cape Dezhnev in the Bering Straits and, eventually, the Pacific Ocean. This was the era of the Russo-German pact and the Soviets agreed to provide two icebreakers to accompany the vessel throughout the entire passage to the Pacific. She was the first foreign flag vessel for some 20 years to be granted right of passage by the Russians - and almost certainly the last for another 50 years or more.

For centuries, mankind had sought a more economical route to the Orient from Northern Europe and the "North East Passage" via Russia, the Chukchi Sea and the Bering Strait was preferred to the "North West Passage" via the north of Canada and Alaska. England mounted several expeditions in mid 1500 but none was successful and three ships and their crews were lost. The Dutch explorer, William Barentz, was equally unsuccessful some fifty years later and he, his ship and half of his crew perished in the Arctic ice.

Finally, in 1879 the Swedish explorer Erik Nordenskiöld in the "Vega" did manage to complete the passage from west to east (despite being stranded in ice for one Arctic winter) but it was not until 1934 that the complete route was travelled in one season, without damage, by a Russian icebreaker. Thereafter, during WW2 the Russians used the route frequently for warships returning from the Pacific area and many tons of essential supplies reached ports in Siberia from ports in the United States.

Today, almost certainly as a result of "global warming" the Northern Sea Route is being used more and more and not just by Russian ships specially constructed to withstand the ravages imposed by ice navigation. Indeed, a few months ago - in mid October 2011 - the Norwegian seismic ship "Polarcus Alima" voyaged from the Norwegian port of Hammerfest to Port Taranaki in New Zealand to take up a lucrative charter. The transit of the ice-strewn passage, a distance of some 3000 miles from her home port to the Bering Straits was completed in some nine days. The ship is ice -strengthened and in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Russians in 1990 (Regulations for Navigation on the Seaways of the Northern Sea Route) she holds an ICE-1A class certificate. Had she taken the more normal route via the PANAMA CANAL the passage to New Zealand would have taken an additional eight days and if she had used the SUEZ CANAL an additional thirteen days. As the Arctic ice recedes more and more merchantmen are taking advantage of this fuel-saving (and pirate free) route and a recent report in a UK newspaper suggested that



" a medium sized bulk carrier can save some 18 days and 580 tons of bunker fuel on a journey between northern Norway and China - a voyage that would normally take upwards of 40 days".

Currently the "window" for using the route is about four months during the Northern summer (or seven months if accompanied by a Russian atomic-powered icebreaker) but as the temperatures of the air and sea increase there is optimism in some circles that the route could be used for a longer period. Regular summer passages could save huge sums in fuel bills (estimates have ranged from \$180,000 to \$300,000) as well as the huge premiums paid as a result of the pirate threat AND Suez Canal dues.

It is doubtful if this news - welcome as it may be to the shipping industry - will be universally welcomed and many will be concerned to read that this year has seen a "record" melting of the ice but when we read that the passage cuts nearly 4000 miles off the Suez route from West to East with a saving of 1000 tonnes of bunker fuel -AND NEARLY 3000 TONNES OF CO2 on a passage from Murmansk to northern China it is just possible that some will think

"It is an ill wind"

crk 10/12/11

Out of the Box

Further to the piece on 'Combatting Piracy' in the last edition, in which I included Allan McDowall's remembrances, Allan has since gently chided me for my description of his tales as 'lurid'. I grant that it was not the most appropriate term and will stick to 'out of the box'. Here is Allan's sequel to his previous offering.

What happened next –

In the last brief article, some aspects of the consequences of piracy were touched upon. I mentioned that I, personally, had, as it were, got away with it because I had been extremely fortunate in that I had been a listener to a nasty attack taking place not far from the ship of which I was master in the South China Sea, during which the other ship's money plus the radio officer's young wife were stolen. So we had turned the accommodation from a house into a fort. Nothing happened for 4 years, then we had had a warning letter, again very good fortune, and been attacked 35 miles north of Blanglangkang as warned. Due to our preparations, the attack was not successful.

On passing the Brothers, it was interesting to listen to the Norwegian master of a tanker at anchor off the Shell bunkering station complaining bitterly to the Singapore VTIS that during the night, armed thieves had boarded and used the ship's oxy-acetylene gas equipment, stored in an unsecured bayu on deck, to cut themselves a hole in the accommodation and enter, going from cabin to cabin, ending up in the masters bedroom forcing him to open the safe and give them the ship's money. Then they disappeared by the route they entered. Shortly afterwards, I received an instruction to pack up the ship's cash. The launch exchanging the ship's Chief Engineers would bring the Agent, name supplied, and I was to give him the ship's cash (\$ 8,000 US) and obtain a receipt for it, for carriage to the Singapore office for safe keeping " in case you get raided again." The new Chief Engineer duly boarded, followed by the Agent – I gave the Agent the anonymous package and obtained a receipt. The departing Chief boarded the launch, closely followed by the Agent – who was never seen or heard of again - he succeeded where the pirates had failed. Does this sound familiar ?!

Some years later, I was master of a slightly smaller but brand new tanker trading all around the Pacific Ocean – a wonderful run, on the spot market. I loved that form of trading – one only ever got one weeks notice of one's next port, such an adventure. I joined the ship at Singapore, and our first port was Dumai to load a full cargo for Hawaii, Barkers Point (Pearl Harbour).

Dumai Crude looks like black shoe polish, and has to be kept heated – no failure of the heating can happen because the oil solidifies around the steam heating coils, so once solid, the necessary convection currents cannot operate, and the oil burns on the coils. Sometimes such a situation can be rectified by proceeding to a really hot spot with a double hull, but that ship had a single hull, so failure of the heating would have been a disaster. I knew this because I was once sent to an OBO ship where this had happened after cracks had filled the entire ship's double bottom – it took me 6 months to clear it with boiling hot water and a pipe work alteration to extract it to the slop tanks. (another tale) So very careful testing of the heating was carried out.

On arrival in the late afternoon at Dumai, the Agent came up to the bridge when engines had been rung off, to tell me that the Chief Pilot wanted to see me, and that he had put him in my day-room. I wondered what I had done wrong, could not think of anything, so hurried down to find a tall gentleman in the khaki fatigues of a naval officer – a full Admiral – he was not the Chief Pilot of Dumai, but the Chief Pilot of Indonesia.

So I greeted him as one does such august persons, and asked him what I could do for him.

He said: " About a year ago, I purchased from Japan a fleet of second-hand tugs equipped in the Dutch design of two Schottel thrusters aft." (The devices look like huge outboard motor shafts projecting under the hull, with the propellers mounted within cylindrical ducts. They azimuth independently, and are popular because although less versatile than Voight-Scheider vertical blade thrusters, they are relatively simple, and give more thrust – so their advocated claim.)

" Shortly after arrival, one of the tugs at Dumai dropped one of its thrusters into the middle of the creek. It just fell out of the bottom of the vessel." (If the thruster is not properly secured, and the bolts holding it in place not properly secured also, that will happen.)

I asked him if he know where it was, and how heavy.

He replied : " In the middle of the creek, about 200 metres from your bow. It weighs 7½ tonnes. I have asked 200 other captains, they have all replied that it is impossible, health and safety will not allow them to do it."

Health and Safety is there to keep people healthy and safe, not a magic chest of excuses – if you do something at sea, you have to use your seamanship to ensure it is safe – not use H & S Rules as an excuse not to do something which has to be done.

Old sailing ship saying: " Rules are for the guidance of wise men; and the blind obedience of fools ". But one takes the responsibility for things that go wrong onto ones own shoulders. Outside the box (divergent thinking) yes; but nasty things happen usually outside the box – inside the box is for those things that the devisors of the rules have considered (convergent thinking) – but one cannot consider everything – usually testing situations are unforeseen – in my experience. Operate the rules, but keep a careful eye outside the box in case something not right but not in the rules is going to bite you. The Japanese have a special phrase for it " Sweet as honey is the misfortune of others ...". The Germans call it Schadenfreude. We don't have a word for it

So I said we would do what we could, rang down to the Chief Officer, told him what the situation was and please could he spare the bosun and one seaman for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, to which he readily agreed.

The Chief Pilot and I went forward, where the bosun and seaman were waiting. I told the bosun to get out the new coil of 600 mm terylene messenger, with a UTS of 22 tonnes, plus a coil of tarred marline and all the big shackles, plus 2 x 15 tonne SWL wire strops.

Then I looked over the side. Under the bow was a tug and a dive support craft, and anchored in the middle of the creek was another dive support craft. Astonished, I turned to the Admiral and said: " Were you ready like this for the other 200 captains ?" " No." he said.

First we tightened up the breast ropes. Then we sent away 1 wire strop shackled to the end of the messenger, with a shackle attached to the free eye, with instructions to take a round turn around the shaft behind the propeller next to the leg and shackle it back onto the eye – so that it did not become jammed when the weight came onto the rope. When we received the signal that that was done – it only took about 5 minutes – we heaved away slowly until the messenger was as taut as a violin string – no movement.

Next, we had a spare head rope on the outboard windlass spool with a UTS of 110 tonnes. This was lead through the dolley fairlead close to the messenger with another strop and shackle attached, same as before. This was attached to the messenger in loops with the spare shackles and marlin to stop the loops slipping out of place, and the end of a heaving line attached to the end of the wire to tow it out to the boat on station.

Then we gave the same instruction to the dive boat, and waited for the word that it was ready – again, only about 5 minutes. Then we heaved up the wire very gently, and the weight came on, very tight - then very slowly the wire began to come aboard.

So we heaved wire and messenger together, letting go the shackles on the messenger as they came within reach; and after 20 minutes the rope and wire were vertical. Then the thruster broke surface, very muddy but apparently undamaged. The tug crew hosed it off, no apparent damage.

I asked the admiral to get the tug to come in under the thruster so that it was over the well deck – the thrusters housing is a raised deck right aft, for those not familiar with this tug design – he had blocks of timber ready – and we lowered the thruster onto the tug, the shackles were let go, and we recovered the rope, wire and remaining shackles. My crew hosed off the wire, messenger and the deck.

The Admiral and myself were left alone on the foc'stle in the setting sun. To my astonishment a tear rolled down his cheek – I said: " Its alright, Sir."

He replied: " You don't understand – ."

" No – but why were you all ready this time ? "

He said: " Because, when you were attacked in the north of the Malacca Straits all those years ago, the marines could not get in – I was the Admiral in charge. Your reputation goes before you, Captain."

Astounded, I said: " But there is no reason to be upset, Sir. You have your thrusters back now."

" No - you don't understand. When the thruster was lost, The President (Suharto, an Army General before he took power from President Sukarno) told me that he could not afford failures. If I failed to recover the thruster in one year, he would have me shot. Tomorrow was the last day. "

He said he would invite me to dinner the next time we called.

The next time, he was not there – he did not live in Dumai.

It can be a small world.

There are 5 other people who would have been dead had we not helped – but that is another story – as Kipling would have said - " Oh, best beloved. "

Tambo's Tales

*More reminiscences of Peter's time as a junior officer with Elders & Fyffes, extracted from his memoirs.
This time it's a Carry On Up the African Jungle.*



Discharging passengers using a "Mammy-Chair" at Victoria, British Cameroons

All ships anchored here on arrival to land passengers or clear Customs. The harbour is open to any westerly swell, hence the West African method of landing passengers using a "Mammy-Chair".

Capt. Jack Cruickshank is supervising

The back-drop of Mt. Buea together with the dense forestry makes a pleasing landfall. Volcanic activity was visual from the peak of the mountain.

A New Pilot and a classic departure from Tiko.

The British Cameroons was an ex German Colony, and given a plebiscite to vote in 1960, as to either join Nigeria or the French Cameroons at Douala.

In voting to join the French Cameroons they lost the Sterling Preference in UK fruit sales market and trade in general. This eventually resulted in closure of all E&F Plantations at Likomba together with the Port of Tiko, and sale of half the fleet, which had been designed to serve this West African trade.

As soon as a decision had been announced, the Colonial Development Department (CDC) withdrew the long experienced Pilot. (Captain Thornton).

Visiting the Bush

"Changuinola" was loaded awaiting departure from the wharf at Tiko. I had obtained my Mate's Foreign Going Certificate and was serving as Second Mate.

A young man knocked on my cabin door saying that he was the new Pilot. To me he looked even younger than my twenty-four years, so I asked him the name of his last ship. This turned out to be "France" where he had been the Junior 3rd. Officer. This was his first Act of Pilotage at Tiko. He was escorted up to the Captain's cabin where I introduced him to Captain Cruickshank.

The ship went to stations, and I noticed that we were not leaving in the usual manner, having held on to the after spring causing the bow to swing off towards the mangrove bank on the opposite side of the creek. I was told to let go everything and I thought to myself – This ship is never going to have enough way to get round the first bend – -- Observing almost negative progress from the docking bridge aft, I watched as we approached the volcanic sand bank which formed the bend. Slowly she swung round but not enough to clear, and the bow rose up over the sand. Our single propeller was turning at full speed and the sand was being thrown all over the place. Gradually as the stern approached the bight of this bend I noticed that the water was being sucked off the bank by inter-action.

Moored to this site were a collection of dug-out canoes tied to stakes, however as the water receded at such a pace, the stakes broke causing the entire fleet to be sucked into the area between the propeller and rudder. Whole canoes and stakes entered the gap to emerge as match sticks on our Starboard side. Ashore there was a war dance going on under the trees!

We steamed on down the Tiko Creek, and in order to enter the main fast flowing Bimbia River, it is usual to start swinging long before reaching the main flow of tide. Often the cottonwood trees are touching the ship's side as you cut into the river using the assistance of the flood tide to complete the alteration of course. That day we had passed the usual wheel over position, and I passed my observations to the Master.

"Shut-up" he shouted, so I disappeared into the chart room, opening the small observation sliding hatch between the chart table and the bridge. This enabled me a good vision ahead as by now we were doing sixteen knots.

When well abeam of the entrance to the Creek, I heard the Pilot order "Hard a Starboard". "Changuinola" did not swing a degree, being across the tideway, but carried on until I was watching the Chief Officer and his foc's'le mooring party run for their lives with arms over their heads. The vessel hit the dead cotton- wood trees with the forefoot and proceeded to climb into the forest. The dead cotton wood trees acted as ball bearings to assist the climb into the dense undergrowth. Exiting the chart room by the side door, I told the Old Man that we had a lovely bilge keel on Starboard side but there was no water under it. The same sight was to be observed on the other side. My comments broke a wheelhouse silence, when I was told that if the ship were sinking I would laugh just as much as I was then!

The vessel had come to rest as if she was up on Charles Hill's slipway in Bristol!

It was just as if there was a monkey up one of the trees saying "I NAME THIS SHIP CHANGUINOLA (and God help all who sail in her)", as weight was put on both anchor cables which had been let go on our entry into the bush. We slid back into the

water at a terrific speed which brought water and ropes etc. from the poop up to the after end of the Engine Room. Then BANG!
– An almighty explosion sounded in the engine room.

All the lights went out and there we were, out in the middle of the Bimbia River without electrical power, with two anchors fully run out, with each having eleven shackles of anchor cable attached!

Down below some engineers had a lucky escape as the explosion had been caused by a water carry-over in the steam supply to the main turbo-generator. The whole unit had disintegrated, due to the steep incline of “Changuinola” when halted in the bush, and the failed water trap.

The emergency diesel unit was started which gave sufficient power to lift one anchor at a time, and we struggled down to anchor in Victoria. Orders were received orders to proceed to Dakar, where spare parts would be awaiting our arrival.

On arrival there we were told that the parts were at the airport, and that transport would deliver the equipment as soon as it opened. Later a large timber encased package was placed aboard on deck by the No.3 hatchway, and we left bound for Southampton.

The Donkeyman came up on to the bridge shortly after noon sights, asking if he could raise the derricks above this crate. He was convinced that it was an impossibility to pack generator parts into a case of that size or shape.

On lifting it up, a piece of paper was found hanging from the under side. This addressed the package to the French Admiral aboard the Battle Ship “Richelieu” which was under refit in the port. So it was essential to return to Dakar to discharge this package without delay. What was it? –None other than a complete gyroscopic gun site for the warship!

The Senegalese authorities could not understand the reason for our swift return to port, as the Chief Steward handed over another Crew Declaration using sixty-two copied (forged) signatures.

Curry Lunch

You may still be in time to book for the first Curry Lunch of the year.

Saturday 10th March

1200 for 1230

At Kutis in Oxford Street, again, where we have previously experienced such good food and service.

Price, £11.50, as before.



www.cachalots.org.uk

I understand that some of you are still having problems accessing the ‘members only’ section of the web site, so I will go through it again, trying to keep it simple..

Firstly, you need to complete the registration process, which can seem to be a bit of a faff but access should be straightforward once this is done.

Click on "Register Now" in the drop down menu which should appear when you hover your pointer/cursor over "Cachalots' Deck" in the action bar at the top of any page.

Alternatively, click on "Register Now" in the Navigation box on the right. There is also a blue ‘Register’ link at the bottom of the login box.

Complete a user name (something simple like your first name will do) and a password that you can remember.

Also your email address and your name and initials. This is how your details appear on our membership list.

When you click on "Register" these details are sent to Barry Peck, the Storekeeper, and he will check them against that list to confirm that you are a paid up member.

Once confirmed, your status in the membership box will be elevated from "New User (NO ACCESS)" to "CLUB MEMBER".

You should now be able to log in on the login page, using your user name and password. Most modern browsers and security suites will remember these for you and auto complete if you tick a little box saying something like "Remember me?"

That can present a problem if, at some later stage we do have enter it manually, as by this time we are likely to have forgotten which password we used.

If this happens or you want to change it anyway then click on the blue "Forgot Password" link at the bottom of the login box.

Enter your email address in the box that appears and click on "RESET". This email address must be the one that you originally used to register.

The system will then check your email address against its database and send you, by email, a totally incomprehensible computer generated password, a jumble of characters and figures, which you can then use to enter the "Edit Profile" page.

Here you can change it to something more sensible and memorable. This "Edit Profile" page should also be used if you have occasion to change your email address.

The other address boxes can be ignored because we do not store that information on this system. They are only there because it is a standard form which comes with the package.

If it comes to the worst you might find it easier to re-register but in that case you will have to wait for Barry to give you the thumbs up.

- And the second Curry Lunch (we usually have 4) is scheduled for **Saturday 12th May**, before the next edition of *The Cachalot*. No reason at this time to change the venue unless people are becoming bored with this one. It does tick all the right boxes. Any change will be notified on the web site and on the notice board.

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

MENU:

**Fish & Chips
Ice Cream**



Things don't get more competitive than this, not in the SMMC that is. Members are already limbering up in the hope of winning one of the valuable prizes, the most highly contested one being the wooden spoon for the lowest score. What with *haute cuisine* and reasonable bar prices, what more could you want?

A fun evening for just £13 per head!

Names to the notice board or Richard by 16 March please, so we can advise the caterers of numbers in good time.

Sing-a-Sang of Roses

It was trencher-mens' portions again at the Burns Supper at King's Court on 21st January. At least three generous slices of the Roastit Beef with *all* the trimmings followed the Cock-a-leekie soup and the Haggis and Clapshaw. I declined the Topsy Lady but still found myself 3lbs heavier the following morning.

New Staff Captain John Noble gave a spirited address to the haggis and after the interval was back on his feet with a similarly memorable "Immortal Memory".

Lionel Hall then gave us another very witty and entertaining "To the Lassies", and then it all started to go wrong. At the end of his amusing piece Lionel invited the gentlemen to stand and sing "My Love is like a red, red rose", the words to which I had printed on the back of the programmes. But I had downloaded the words of the *poem*, not the *song*, and had left out the choruses!

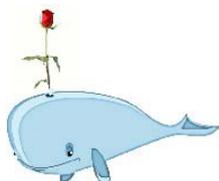
Alec Macpherson, the piper, had anticipated this common sassenach failing and had a few copies of the song, complete with choruses, but too few to go round for each of the 32 bemused Cachalots.

So, *all* had *some* of the words and *some* had *all* of the words. Well, by the end of the second verse the term "singing from another song-sheet" hardly does it credit!

I had just got into what I thought was my stride when Chris Phelan hollered at me that I was singing half a verse out. Put me right off said stride. Alec couldn't help us out because he was, fortunately for him, unable to hear what was going on above the skirl of his own pipes. At the end there were still a few chaps who hadn't collapsed into laughter and were still singing bravely on.

Note for next year, "Must arrange choir practice".

By way of some small recompense for this aural assault, the gentlemen were able to present to their ladies a card with an apt visual joke .



Cachalot, spouting "A red, red rose"

Following this debacle it was the turn of Grace Salter, the Captain's Lady, to respond for the lassies but unfortunately she had left her prepared response at home on the kitchen table, so she too was, in a sense, "lost for words". Having just witnessed the dire results of trying to soldier on without the correct words in front of one, she did the right thing, "fessed up", thanked us all for our support and sat down again. Most sensible speech of the evening.

Next on was Peter Grant, the Captain Elect. He recited some verses that he claimed Burns had scrawled over the fireplace of a pub in Perthshire, *in pencil*. Come off it, Peter. You'll be telling us that he was a drinker and womaniser next.

Then it was on to the sangs and clatter, led by Alec Macpherson who had come suitably equipped with proper sang-sheets with *all* the proper words and choruses. And he got those who claimed Caledonian antecedents, and who were suitably togged out for the occasion, to give us their own special rendition, even if they weren't *really* from Glasgow.

So ended another memorable SMMC Burns Supper with the gathering happily singing along to the songs and shanties that seemed to express their own sentiments. And yet another little lesson from Alec on the niceties of the occasion: *The Queen* first, *Auld Lang Syne* last.

TEC



John Noble gives it to the Chieftan o' the Pudding Race



Lionel Hall gives it to the Lassies



Some common old working chaps give it to the rest of us

Rope Ends

Another Lost Liner

Peter Tambling reports that those vigorously swinging the lamp at table 40 at the recent Sea Pie Supper, whilst discussing the *Costa Concordia* incident, discovered that no less than four of them had been involved in a previous disaster, that of the *Lakonia*. That ill fated liner caught fire in December 1963 and was abandoned mid-Atlantic with the loss of 128 lives. Tambo had two guests who were serving aboard HMS *Centaur* as Pilots. They flew off to sight the burning vessel before guiding the aircraft carrier to lie off the liner. Their Christmas day was spent in Gibraltar landing many bodies. Both Reg the Dredge and Capt. Brian Franklin were ex Blue Star and also involved.

wikipedia.org/wiki/TSMS_Lakonia

Another Lost Cachalot

Also at the Sea Pie Supper, a silver cachalot whale pin was found at the City Cruise Terminal. All those who lost their silver whales during the course of the evening should register claim of ownership to the Club Office. Should no claim be received by the time of the next edition in June we will have it repaired, polished and returned to its pod.



CAPTAINS & OFFICERS 2011

CAPTAIN:	P.Grant
STAFF CAPTAIN:	J.Noble
SEA STAFF CAPTAIN:	I. Odd
BOATSTEERER:	D. Stocks
STOREKEEPER:	B.Peck
POST CAPTAIN:	I.Salter
FUNCTIONS OFFICER:	Vacant
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER:	D.Gates
HON EDITOR:	T.E.Clark
ARCHIVIST:	H.Roberts
MARKETING/PUBLICITY OFFICER	D.Healy

PAST CAPTAINS:

1973 O'Connor B.M.	1977 Corner A.J.	1978 Phelan C.N.
1986 Fenwick M.	1988 Downer I.	1989 Noble J.M.
1990 Moffat J.C.	1991 Thomson I.B.	1992 Kelso C.R.
1994 Moore P.	1995 Stead P.J.	1996 Hall L.W.
1997 Hughes T.	1998 Smart J.C.	2000 Clark T.E.
2001 Carr D.A.	2002 Stirling I.W.	2004 Tinsley A.R.
2005 Harwood S.	2006 Angas G.B.F.	2007 Marriott P.B.
2008 Morris L.R.	2009 Mileusnic J.N.	2010 Cartwright G.

HARPOONERS:

A. Bloor, C.Coote, K.Dagnell, G.Draysey, R.Dunn, D.Gates, D.Healy, P.Leece, A.McDowall, F.Pedersen, R.Pretty, J.Pugh, J.R.K.Smart, M.Wallis, T.Winsborough

GENERAL COMMITTEE: Includes the Captains & Officers, Past Captains and Harpooners identified above. P.Grant (Chair) D.Stocks (Sec)

EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE:

P.Grant(Chair), D.Stocks (Sec), G.Angas*, T.E.Clark*, D.Gates, R.Kelso*, P. Leece, P.Marriott*, J.Mileusnic*, L.Morris*, A.Tinsley*.

* = Co-opted Past Captains

BURSARY SUB-COMMITTEE

P.Marriott (Chair), G.Angas, P.Leece, L.Morris, D. Stocks.

ENTERTAINMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE:

TBA (Chair), D.Stocks (Sec) A. Bloor, T.E.Clark, C.Coote, L.Hall, A.McDowall, F.Pedersen, J.Pugh.

MEMBERSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE:

D.Gates (Chair), D.Stocks (Sec), T.E.Clark, M.Wallis.

The five Officers of the Club and the Post Captain are members of all the above Committees.

HON. CHAPLAINS: Rev'd A.Huckett, Rev'd F.Sahetapy, Father R.Stone.

HON. SHANTYMAN: D.King.

New Member

Andrew Jones is a BSc Marine Geography (Hons) working in the Marine Aggregates Industry. He is presently Marine Operations Manager at Tarmac Marine Dredging, formerly United Marine Dredging, and has been so since 2008. Previously he was with South Coast Shipping/RMC/CEMX. Andrew is a Lieutenant RNR and has enjoyed a number of appointments since being commissioned in 2002. Last year he was mobilised full time with the Royal Navy for 9 months as Battlewatch Captain on the staff of Commander United Kingdom Mine Countermeasure Force. He lives in Southampton.



Peter Warren Fost

Peter Fost, who died on 20th November 2011, was born in Croydon and studied Meteorology at Liverpool University. After completing his National Service with the RAF and working on radar systems, he decided to join the Scientific Civil Service where he worked in the War Office in London, later moving to RAE (*Royal Aircraft Establishment*) in Farnborough, working on RAF Radar Systems and the RAF's nuclear weapons. He was soon promoted to Principal Scientific Officer working at the Ministry Of Defence Headquarters in London.

In the mid 1970's he moved to Hampshire where he worked for the Admiralty Research Establishment and was later directly involved in providing support to Admiral Fieldhouse, the Commander in Chief of the Task Force during the 1982 Falklands War.

He then transferred to the department looking after IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) the method of identifying friendly ship, aircraft or vehicles. Peter and his team were heavily involved in the first Gulf War in the early 1990's.

A keen member of the Southampton Master Mariners Club, he was also a Freemason and a life member of the Friends of St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. He became a Harpooner in 2005 and served on the Entertainments committee.

His funeral was held in Swanmore, where he lived with his wife Rosemary, and took place the day after what would have been his 80th birthday. The membership of the Club extends its sincere condolences to Rosemary and their sons Andrew and Jonathan.

**The Southampton Master Mariners' Club,
(The CACHALOTS)
1st Floor, 12-14 Queens Terrace,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3BP**

Tel/Fax: 023 8022 6155
E-mail: office@cachalots.org.uk
Editor: te_clark@tiscali.co.uk
www.cachalots.org.uk

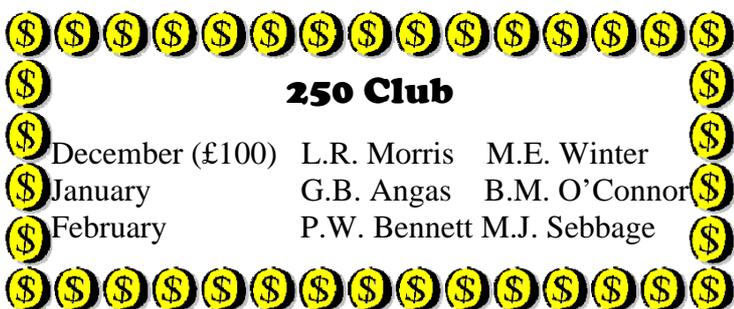
captain@cachalots.org.uk
staffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk
seastaffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk
boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk
storekeeper@cachalots.org.uk
postcaptain@cachalot.org.uk
functions@cachalots.org.uk
archivist@cachalots.org.uk
legal@cachalots.org.uk
membership@cahalots.org.uk
editor@cachalots.org.uk

The Club room is currently open **two** days a week, 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.

Dates for your Diary

- Sat Mar 10 Curry Lunch, Kutis
- Fri Mar 23 Skittles, So'ton Old Bowling Club
- Sat May 12 Curry Lunch, venue tba
- Fri May 25 Club Supper, Speaker tba
- Thu June 21 Shipping Festival, Winchester Cath.
- Fri July 13 Club Supper
- Sat Sep 1 Curry Lunch, venue tba
- Sun Sep 2 MNA Mem. Service, Holyrood Ch.
- Fri Sep 28 Club Supper
- Sat Oct 13 Curry Lunch
- Thu Nov 1 Sale of Sea Pie Supper tickets
- Sat Dec 8 Christmas Lunch, King's Court
- Sat Dec 15 Christmas Dinner, King's Court

**Cut-off date for the next edition:
18th May 2012**



250 Club

December (£100)	L.R. Morris	M.E. Winter
January	G.B. Angas	B.M. O'Connor
February	P.W. Bennett	M.J. Sebbage

Gone Aloft

T.W. Grieves

D.B.C. Morris