

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 46

December 2012

Captain's Log

The first Club Function after the Queen's Jubilee and Olympic Games was the Curry Lunch at Kuti's Brasserie in Oxford Street, Southampton, on the 1st September. The Lunch was as usual well attended with guests being served at table, a regular club 'outing' which remains popular, and it is always a pleasure to see members who find it difficult to access the Club on a Friday Lunchtime.

The Clubroom was full for the Club Supper on the 28th September with John Davis providing a splendid Dinner. Guest Speaker Judge James Hanratty R.D.R.N.R. attended with his charming wife Pam. As a Senior Immigration Judge he gave a very interesting and amusing talk about his experiences on the Court Circuit and when he was the British Government's legal Counsel on the handover of Hong Kong to the Chinese in 1997. He is a keen Yachtsman and is a member of the Royal Southampton Yacht Club and a Life member of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club. I have had some contact with him since and he expressed his and Pam's enjoyment of the night.

On Wednesday 4th October 32 Club members and their wives enjoyed the Bletchley Park trip including Coffee, Lunch and Afternoon tea. Due to Flu, Julie and Lionel Hall could not make the trip. Our Guide explained the History of Bletchley Park and the need for easy access to London. We were shown the memorial to 3 Polish Mathematicians who first developed a system of cypher and decoding, later refined by Cambridge boffin Bill Tutte together with Alan Turing who finally cracked the German Code. Boarders from H.M.S.'Petard' recovered vital Code Books from sinking submarine U559 which enabled the Ladies of Bletchley Park, sworn to secrecy for 30 years, to crack the German cypher codes using the Enigma machines, the forerunner of Telex machines. Cracking the German Codes shortened the Second World War by 2 years. Although Winston Churchill ordered the destruction of the Colossus machines, two were saved and it took Bletchley Engineers 16 years to rebuild the 'Colossus', the first mechanical working Computer.

On Wednesday 10th October John & Louise Noble, Gerry & Ann Cartwright, Margaret & I attended the Annual National Service for Seafarers at St Paul's Cathedral. Club Stowaways H.R.H. The Princess Royal and Admiral Lord West, who wore his 'Whale'pin, attended. The Sermon was given by Monsignor J.R.N.Mullin M.A.R.N. Bristol Channel Regional Coordinator for the Apostleship of the Sea. The Choirs were drawn from Royal Hospital School Ipswich, Pangbourne College, The Royal Merchant Navy School and London Nautical School. The Choirs were conducted by Peter Crompton, Director of Music, The Royal Hospital School. Margaret and I stayed the night in London and decided to explore Canary Wharf. Apart from the huge building housing Reuters Newspapers and City Traders we discovered a newly renovated Museum showing the history of London Docklands from Roman Times thro' World Wars, to the present day.

On Friday 12th October the Club hosted a Coffee Morning in Aid of the Macmillan Cancer Trust. Organised by Judith Peck ably assisted by Members and Wives who made delicious cakes which sold 'Like Hot Cakes'. The Coffee Morning raised £681.23 for the Cancer Trust. Judith arranged for Ken Street on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Trust to receive the Cheque for £681.23 in the Clubroom on Friday 9th November.

To mark his 100th birthday Gerry Dalton climbed the stairs to the Club at Lunchtime on Friday 2nd November, where I presented him with a 100th Birthday Card signed by members and congratulated him on reaching his Century. 'Happy Birthday' was sung when his Birthday Cake, baked by Judith with Numbers 1,0, and 0 candles was presented to him. Gerry stood unaided to thank us all for our best wishes.

The 'Harpooners' enjoyed Dinner of Venison and Ale pie with all the trimmings in the evening of Friday 2nd November, ably provided by John Davis and his staff.

24 Members and their wives including David Carr enjoyed the last Curry Lunch of the year at Kuti's on Oxford Street on Saturday 10th November.

The Christmas season will quickly be upon us. We kick off the Celebrations with the Christmas Dinner at Kings Court Masonic Centre on Saturday 1st December followed by the Christmas Lunch in the Clubroom on Saturday 8th December. We are hoping there will be a good turn out for both Functions.

I hope to see you at the Christmas Dinner and Lunch but for those of you who are unable to attend may I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Peter Grant, Club Captain.



**Left Hand down a bit!
Centenarian Gerry Dalton receives a bit of help with his lavishly decorated cake from Club Captain Peter Grant .
No, it's not a one, but 100 viewed sideways.**

Boatsteerer's Locker

I recall this time last year opening my blog with the exciting news of two new stowaway members, HRH The Princess Royal and Admiral Lord West. We hope that The Princess Royal will join us at our main events in 2013 whilst we enjoyed the presence of Lord West at our 2012 Sea Pie Supper and many of you have since remarked that Lord West has been seen wearing his Cachalot Whale pin.

The organization of the Sea Pie Supper is well advanced and ticket sales are progressing very much as they did last year when we enjoyed the company of over 600 members and guests to the supper. I am hopeful that we can top last years attendance figures and urge you to invite a friend or spread the word remembering of course that all tickets are to be purchased through a member of the club.

Ticket prices this year are £52 for members and £60 for non-members. This will include a drink on arrival and dress is Black Tie and formal evening wear for the ladies.

For those seeking accommodation several hotels have offered a special rate and this information will be available with a wine pre order list when purchasing the tickets. I would like to draw your attention to the opening of Gate 8 which will be open from 1800 to 0100 allowing access on foot to the De Vere and Holiday Inn hotels, whilst Gate 10 is open 24 hours a day.

The Club has had a very successful year in its fund raising and charity giving, we have been able to support Winchester Cathedral, The Southampton Seafarers Centre, Wessex Heartbeat, the Bursary award to a student at the Warsash Nautical Academy and through the efforts of our very own Mrs Judith Peck a sizeable contribution to the Macmillan Cancer Trust. I thank everyone involved in sandwich and cake making the staff at Winchester Cathedral for their help when planning the annual Shipping Festival Service and indeed the many people who help to make this service a success especially the Southampton Seascouts for assisting in both the Shipping Service and the Sea Pie Supper, Thank You.

Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral will be hosting a memorial service to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic. This will take place over the week-end of the 24 – 27 May 2013 and the memorial service is planned for 1030 on the 26th although the time is yet to be confirmed. A charity Royal Marine Band Concert is to take place at the Philharmonic Hall on the 25th and a 1940's themed period event will be held in St George's Hall on the 27th. I have details of the events and may be able to order tickets for the Cathedral if there is interest but as in all things we need to act quickly as I know that other associations are placing their orders.

It remains for me to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

David Stocks

Boatsteerer



70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

THE LONGEST. LARGEST. AND MOST COMPLEX NAVAL BATTLE IN HISTORY

2013 sees the commemoration of World War II's Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous military campaign in history. Events to mark the occasion will be based in Liverpool, the UK centre of operations for much of the campaign; these will include:

Friday 24th May 2013

Receptions and VIP tours of visiting ships from UK, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Poland and Russia.

Saturday 25th May 2013

Charity Concert, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, featuring the Royal Marine Concert Band.

Visiting ships open to the general public.
Maritime related displays at the waterfront.

Sunday 26th May 2013

Cathedral Service and March/Fly Past (Royal attendance).

VIP lunch at Liverpool Town Hall.

Monday 27th May 2013

1940's themed concert at St George's Hall, Liverpool

Further details can be found on our website.

The Club's oldest member, and regular Club Room attendee, Gerry Dalton, has reached the auspicious age of 100. On Friday 2nd November he was given a small party in the Club Room, where he was presented with a large card produced by Terry Clark and signed by all the Club Room regulars, and a birthday cake. He was also treated to a melodious rendering of Happy Birthday by the assembled Cachalots and ladies, to which he responded with a short speech of thanks.

In view of the fact that there was a considerable number of well wishers gathered in the room, and the very important consideration that Gerry likes his cake, this was carefully boxed up and taken home uncut!

BEP

Annual General Meeting

To be held in the Club Room at 1830 on
Thursday 17th January



**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

£681.23 (+) RAISED FOR CHARITY.

Recently the Club hosted a charity coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Cachalots once again demonstrated their generosity by donating a magnificent sum to Macmillan Cancer Support by coming to the event, drinking lots of coffee and eating very large amounts of cake.

Thanks to all the members and wives who made such a lot of delicious cakes and cookies, which just had to be tasted! The diets went out of the window as waistlines definitely expanded, but the pounds are helping people with cancer, and their families, to cope with stressful times.

So many people came. Thank you. The Clubroom was buzzing (i.e. noisy) with everyone proving that helping others and raising money can be fun.

After the washing up and the bean counting was complete, we found that you had raised £681.23 and, with the gift aiding from many of you, over £93.00 was added to the value of our donation.

As a result, on Friday 9th November, Club Captain Peter Grant welcomed Mr Ken Street, a representative from Macmillan Cancer Support to the Club to receive our cheque. Mr. Ken Street, a past Mayor of Southampton, had been a guest of the Club at Sea Pie Supper in 1998 and so was delighted to meet old acquaintances and swing the lamp over lunch.

My sincere thanks go to all of you who contributed in so many ways to the success of this event. Just wonderful.

Having organised this coffee morning for 2 years, I shall now step back.

Is there a volunteer to do something next year? Think about it and if you could help or have any ideas, mention it to a club officer and see what might be possible.

Thank you all again.

Judith Peck.



Mr. Ken Street is obviously pleased to receive, on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support, the cheque for £681.23 from Club Captain Peter Grant.

Burns Supper

If things go as usual there will be Topsy Ladies on the tables as well as Haggis & Clapshaw at King's Court on

19th January

Followed by some other Caledonian Entertainments although the Cachalots Male Voice Choir may have to be held at bay after last years dismal rendition of what sounded like 'My Love has got a Red, Red Nose'

Price held at **£30** per head
Black Tie & Miniatures
Ear plugs optional
1900 for 1930

Curry Lunch

The regulars are still satisfied with the food and service on offer at Kuti's in Oxford Street so the first Curry Lunch of 2013 has been booked there on **23rd February**, 1200 for 1230. Slight increase in price here, to **£12** per head.

Skittles Evening

at the
SOUTHAMPTON (OLD) GREEN BOWLING CLUB
On
Friday, 22nd March
Further details in the next edition
But price retained at **£13** per head.

'A GRAND DAY OUT'

(with apologies to Wallace & Grommit)

TO BLETCHLEY PARK

This miscellany has been compiled by a number of volunteers under the steely gaze of the Editor of *The Cachalot*.

Most of us had only recently become aware of the tasks successfully undertaken at this establishment to reveal the wartime secrets of the German, Italian and Japanese armed forces. However, it was not until we were actually guided around it that we appreciated the enormity of those tasks.

(Mavis & Ian Stirling)

The day began with a car trip eastwards to Chandler's Ford. We had blazing sunshine straight in our eyes, accompanied by as yet unevaporated mist. It didn't make for easy driving but augured well for our outing. We boarded the luxury coach to join our companions who were already in situ from Southampton. The absence of an emergency lavatory was noted by us 'oldies' but we needn't have worried; an appropriate waypoint had been noted for a comfort stop!

The outward trip proved a real joy. We had travelled up the A34 and M40 many times before but I personally had always been driving. This time I could just gaze out of the window and absorb the passing scene. I had never realised just how much fine, open country we still have around us.

Our waypoint came as we left the M40 motorway at Cherwell Services for a ten minute break. This was a revelation in environmental awareness. Such sites are never pretty but this one was completely hidden in dense woodland! From here on we were entering the Midlands, expecting to be surrounded by towns and factories, but still the fields and woods dominated the varied landscape. Even passing the county town of Buckingham was achieved without clapping eyes on it owing to the clever arrangement of wooded roundabouts. In spite of all the signposts for 'Milton Keynes', we only saw a few modern houses and even these were set in sylvan settings. Finally, we needed just a few urban minutes to negotiate the streets of Bletchley before reaching our goal.

(Gerry & Anne Cartwright)

At 0815 on a bright, sunny 4th. October we joined the crowd of Cachalots and friends waiting for the coach to Bletchley. It arrived slightly later than expected as it had diverted to collect members from the Hythe Ferry. We all piled in and settled down for an uneventful journey.

(It was the volume of slow moving traffic in the Avenue that really held us up. but three of our number were more seriously delayed by a major accident at Segensworth and failed to make the Chandlers Ford pick up, even though we waited as long as we could. However, they made their own way to Bletchley and arrived there just minutes behind the coach, Ed)

We thus arrived at Bletchley park slightly late for our slot. Tony, our expert guide, took this in his stride and rearranged his normal schedule to make sure that we saw everything without conflicting with several other groups there that day.

After coffee and biscuits we started the first part of our tour, which included the 'Bombes' (decoding machines designed by Alan Turing). When Tony had finished explaining their purpose Anne mentioned to him that her much older sister had worked on the Bombe in Hut 11 during the last years of the war. Tony took a great interest in this snippet of information. While we were all scoffing our lunch he searched out her sister in the memorial book of all who had worked at Bletchley Park. Her name was Beryl Butcher, subsequently Beryl Martin and she is remembered in the organisation's website. Hut 11 has not yet been refurbished so it was not part of the tour, but after the tour was completed Tony very kindly opened it up so that Anne could see where her sister had worked.



The start of the tour and Tony, our guide, explains the history of the mansion and the origins of the hotch potch of architectural styles.

Recently the Polish Government has justifiably complained that the Polish contribution to the success of Bletchley Park has been virtually ignored by the British media. However, it is only fair to mention that this is not the case at Bletchley itself. We were taken to see the Polish Memorial there. Tony stressed the importance of the Polish gift of their own research into the Enigma coding machines before the Nazis overran their country.

Overall, we had a most delightful day with surprisingly good weather considering the generally damp summer we 'enjoyed' this year. This was an important factor since there was a fair amount of open air walking between different sections of the site.

(A snippet from Roy Martin's book 'Merchantmen in Action')

9 May 1941, Kapitänleutnant Fritz Julius Lemp on the U-110 was attacking a convoy when his periscope was spotted by *HMS Aubretia*, who depth-charged the U-boat. Two other escorts, the *Bulldog* and *Broadway*, joined in the hunt and Lemp was

forced to surface and abandoned ship. The crew left the U-boat believing it would soon sink. When Lemp realised that this was not happening he started to swim back to the boat, but drowned. Lieutenant Commander A.J.B. Cresswell, R.N., Captain of the *Bulldog*, had intended to ram the U-boat but broke off the attack when he realised that it might remain afloat long enough to board it. He sent Sub Lieutenant David Balme and a whaler crew to the damaged U-boat. They recovered the Enigma code machine, cyphers and code books, and the important 'Offizier Code'. The operation was code-named Primrose and Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, the First Sea Lord, sent to *Bulldog* 'Hearty Congratulations. The petals of your flower are of rare beauty'. This was probably the most important capture of the Second World War and the secret was even kept from the crew of U-110. The Hollywood film 'U-571' was said to be 'a thrilling story about an American crew on a top-secret mission to capture an Enigma Cipher Machine from the German U-boat.' It is a work of fiction, in no way were the Americans involved – they were not even in the War at the time!



In a separate action, in Oct.'42, depicted above, *HMS Petard* recovered code books from the sinking U559. The 1st Lieutenant and an AB were unable to extricate the enigma m/c and were drowned as she sank. They were each posthumously awarded the George Cross.
<http://www.secondworldwar.org.uk/petard.html>

(Andrew & Margaret Tinsley)

We did not realise that the raid on Dieppe was primarily to capture an Enigma Machine. Although this was not successful, the main reason for the raid was only recently made common knowledge. Nor did we know of the vital role the three Polish mathematicians played in helping to solve the Enigma Codes, or of all the intelligence received from Poland. This helped to shorten the War by up to two years. We found it incredible that 10,000 people worked at Bletchley Park and lived in the surrounding villages without revealing any secrets even to their closest family or friends over the next thirty years.

A talk about evacuees given during lunch by Joan, one of the volunteers, was very interesting, sad, emotional and thought provoking. It seems she was one of three children looked after for six years by a woman who was unable to show emotion and did not know how to care for them. However, she must have had some good in her as Joan and her family kept in touch with her until her death.

(Robin & Ann Butterfield)

We were impressed by the organisation of the day at Bletchley and by the exhibits. We caught something of the atmosphere and urgency of the tasks that people were performing there. It was an extremely interesting day, brought to life by our guide, with his knowledge and anecdotes. Ann knew a little of what went on there so it was very enlightening for her to see it 'in the flesh'.



Two messages coming across as Tony expounds on yet more fascinating details outside two of the Huts.

The Polish Connection: Not only had the Poles broken the Enigma Codes before the Second World War but they had passed on all their knowledge and information to the British & French prior to the outbreak of war. What trust they put in us! Shortly after our visit, The Daily Telegraph reported that the Polish Authorities felt that their experts' efforts had not been recognised by the British. A reader's letter followed days later, pointing out that a memorial plaque at Bletchley Park, recording the debt owed to these men showed that this was not the case.

The Work Force: It was amazing to learn that 10,000 people were employed within the Park, none of whom actually lived there but were billeted throughout the surrounding area. Even more amazing was the absolute maintenance of secrecy throughout.....even by two schoolgirls living within the campus!

Bletchley Park Mansion: What a quirky building! With so many different styles incorporated! I particularly liked how the copper dome was added by cutting off part of the adjoining roof line...I'm sure there is an architectural term for it! *continued over*

(Peter & Janet Marriott)

For Janet & I it was not only a great day out, it was a great experience. We came away from Bletchley Park far more knowledgeable than when we left the Docks.

So, what struck us about the day? I will limit my remarks thus:-

Secrecy: We knew the work undertaken at Bletchley Park was top secret and that all those involved had to sign the Official Secrets Act. However, one married couple visited Bletchley a few years ago and only then discovered that they had both worked there. They had not even been allowed to say where they had worked, let alone what work they had done.

The Enigma Machine: We all thought that this had been developed specifically for military use. Surprisingly, it was originally invented to allow a bank to transfer sensitive financial information rapidly around the world to give it financial advantage over its competitors. Our guide told us that the banks were 'as narrow in their thinking then as now', and turned down the invention.

Derogatory Remarks by permission of the Editor: We have never come across such an uncomfortable coach; the leg room was terrible. Please don't use Angela's Coaches again.

(Aaah! We had ordered a 34 seater and were 'upgraded' on the day to a 52 seater. Such beneficence perhaps not the blessing it seemed, as they presumably squeeze 52 into a similar sized wheelbase to the 34.)

(Eddie Hunter)

This contribution has been held over for a later edition of the Cachalot owing to its length, complexity and sheer interest value.



**Yes, they have a front too.
The party, or nearly all, at the
entrance to the stable yard.**

*My thanks to Ian Stirling for
putting these contributions
togetherEd*

Piracy

As the adverse Monsoon weather moderated the shipping industry awaited the resumption of piratical activity in the Gulf of Aden and adjoining Arabian Sea but, apart from a few isolated incidents, relative tranquillity reigned and there were few reports of determined attacks on commercial ships. As the days and weeks passed there were some who dared to hope that the pirates had recognised the dangerous consequences of attacking ships carrying armed security guards but, in recent days, the true reason for the apparent inactivity has been revealed - news of attacks on merchant ships has been concealed and there have, in fact, been a number of attacks throughout the area.

It now appears that following the detention of two Italian marines for allegedly shooting two Indian fishermen (having mistaken them for pirates) the PMSCs (Private Maritime Security Companies) and the shipping companies that employ them have recognised the hazards of carrying armed personnel on merchant ships and the possible legal consequences arising from a similar incident -and so neither PMSCs nor their employers were willing to publicise their involvement -much to the dismay of NAVFOR.

A positive outcome of this unwise policy is the recognition that the defence of commercial shipping should be left to naval forces and that there is a pressing need to find a sustainable solution to the piracy menace in the area.

The latter is especially vital if the release of the hostages presently being held onshore and offshore in Somalia is to come to fruition before they die of malnutrition, disease or the brutal treatment doled out by their captors so it is mildly reassuring to read of plans to imbed political and legal stability throughout that lawless country now that a new constitution has been installed there - but the enormity of the task is well recognised.

A recent and most depressing report indicated that currently the pirates are holding some 133 seafarers hostage - 27 ashore and the others incarcerated offshore on their captured ships - but a spokesman was being extremely realistic when he said that the chances of the hostages being released were "pretty dim, and they are probably going to die". He concluded by saying "This is a sad indictment on our industry that nothing can be done to bring them back"

Nothing succeeds like success and, as predicted, the scourge of kidnapping to secure ransom money is spreading rapidly throughout the trade routes of the world and more and more seafarers (and offshore oil workers) are being put at risk. We can but hope and pray that someone, somewhere, sometime very soon will take some positive action to ensure the right of Innocent Passage.

Fifty Years on Salt Water

Leslie (Charlie) Chapman was the son of a Norfolk farmer and he went to sea in the early 1900's. He served his entire four year apprenticeship in one trip on the *Brilliant*, which was then the largest sailing ship in the world and, together with her sister ship *Daylight*, was the largest four-masted barque ever built. He went on to serve with Union Castle and became a Trinity House Pilot with the I.O.W. District. In the between wars years he was choice Pilot for North German Lloyd and latterly for Shaw Savill. He must have retired sometime in the late 50's. Tom Effeny remembers him as Charlie and Tom started in the Pilotage service in 1955.

I have a copy of his memoirs which have been passed down through various interested members of the Southampton Pilot Service. They must have been written after Leslie retired and cover mainly his life at sea before he became a Pilot. There are few dates and names; perhaps he had forgotten many of them by then but it is all very interesting and exciting stuff. I don't know yet whether Leslie was a Cachalot but I would be surprised if he wasn't as most Pilots in those days were. The memoirs consist of 146 pages photocopied from originally typed ones. There are no chapters or natural breaks in the narrative so I will attempt to edit it into serial form as best I can. Should keep us going for at least five years! Here is a taster for you.



I must tell my story in my own way and I do not intend to trim my sails to please anyone.

"Light the binnacle, boy", an order that I do not suppose will ever be given again, as the days of the old square-rigged merchant sailing ships have gone for ever. In those days the compasses were made visible at night by two colza oil lamps, one on either side of the binnacle, and in a gale of wind they had the habit of going out at vary awkward times. Frequently an apprentice was told off to stand by in a gale to keep the lights burning. I was one of those apprentices who had to do it. I have been told, that the girls in Australia, to attract an apprentice's attention used to call out "Light the binnacle, boy". This I cannot vouch for, as sad to say, that is one of the few places in the world that I have not been to.

Anyway, I am a long way ahead of my story, so let me begin at the beginning.

I have been asked many times why, as a son of a farmer in a small village in Norfolk, miles away from the sea, how I came to take up a seafaring career. The only salt water or air in my blood came from a one day visit each year to Great Yarmouth. This was by means of a small steam boat called the "Kangaroo", practically the first one of its kind on the River Yare. The only other connection with boats and the water was a daily crossing of the river morning and evening in a row boat on my way to and from school in Norwich. With my brothers I had to walk three miles over marshland, and the same back in the evening, to take a train to Norwich, starting at seven in the morning and arriving home at seven in the evening. In the winter months each boy carried a lamp, with a candle in it to light the way. This leads me to answer why did I go to sea? One morning when I was about eleven years old, during assembly in school, the head master came into the class-room with a young fellow in a "Brass Bounders" uniform, who had once been a scholar at the school. The boy sitting next to me said "That is my brother, he is an apprentice in a sailing ship - that is what I am going to be. How about you, 'Country'?" - which was my nickname at school. I immediately said I would do the same thing, not having the slightest idea what I was letting myself in for. But let me say here and now after all I have been through during my fifty-two years at sea, I would do the same again. A sequel to the foregoing story is that my son decided to go to sea about forty years later, he had an interview with the Marine Superintendent of the Port Line, who was the boy I sat next to in school the day I decided to go to sea, and later on he actually sailed with the "Brass Bounder" that walked into the class-room; he was then the Commodore of the Port Line.

Time went on, but my idea of going to sea did not change. At the age of fourteen I left school, still having no idea as to how I was to achieve my ambition. Until one night my father came home from Norwich and said a Navy

recruiting officer would be cycling down from Norwich to interview me, to see if I was a likely recruit to join H.M.S. Ganges. Thank goodness he did not come - I expect he found the distance too great, otherwise without knowing I would have found myself as a sailor in the Royal Navy and not on sailing ships. A fortnight later my father came home and said "Pack your gear I have got a berth for you in a small coaster sailing out of Great Yarmouth, to see if you will actually like sea life". In due course I went to Yarmouth and joined the ketch "Plover" a vessel of one hundred and ten tons. The crew consisted of Captain, mate, ordinary seaman and boy, which of course was me. I soon discovered that I had to do the cooking and was immediately called the "Doctor" - by that name all coastal cooks are known.

I was soon taught the rudiments of the job, and became a dab hand at making "Spotted Dog", a pudding we had every day of the week. One other thing I remember is using my cap as an oven cloth, it became so saturated with grease, that I did not need a southwester in rainy weather. My bunk was used as a locker for sails and ropes, a bit uncomfortable at first, but I soon got used to the unevenness of it all and slept well at sea; as our watches consisted of four hours on duty and four hours off - which was very tiring for a young boy.

On my first voyage we sailed for Swansea with a cargo of scrap iron, this strained the vessel so much that we had to pump out several times during a watch. We reached Swansea in about ten days, as we had to shelter in Start Bay owing to some stormy weather. Anchoring off a small village called Hall Sands. Having discharged the scrap iron cargo, we moved under the coal tips and took in a cargo for a small port called Pentewen in Cornwall, this cargo took us less than an hour to load.

While waiting to sail, a large Norwegian barque moved across the dock to the coal tips, the crew hove her over by manning the capstans, I shall never forget the thrill I had on hearing the Capstan shanties being sung as they walked around heaving the ropes in. This was my first real touch with the life I was hoping to live.

After sailing, the *Plover* leaked so badly as the result of the iron cargo, we had to sail to Penarth, and went on the gridiron to have all the seams caulked and pitched. Naturally this eased our work considerably as we had no more pumping to do. It took us three days to reach Pentewen, a small harbour in which we were locked in. I recall one little episode while in dock. The children were coming home from the school and had to pass the *Plover*, as they were passing us I suddenly felt very important and to show off, bearing in mind that I was only fourteen, I decided to slide down the painter into the boat to bale it out, which incidently was as dry as a bone. A puff of wind shifted the boat and I landed in the dock, to the cheers of the youngsters and to make matters worse the mate of another

ketch called out "*Plover* ahoy, your doctor is in the dock, why don't you pull him out". This was done to more cheering from the school kids - was my face red. It taught me a lesson never to show off again.

After discharging the cargo we washed all the coal dust out of the hold, and around the decks, then went outside the dock gate and waited for the tide to ebb, and leave us high and dry. A gang of men then shovelled about fifty tons of sand into the hold, to act as ballast. Having finished, we sailed on the tide for Great Yarmouth, calling at Cowes, Isle of Wight, on the way. Here the captain bought a boat load of second hand yacht ropes for rigging up our own ketch. Little did I think at the time that I would be a Trinity House Pilot for that district many years later. We arrived in Great Yarmouth at the height of the herring season, for we had a charter to take six cargoes of herrings to Bruges in Belgium. A renewal of a charter which the *Plover* had done for the last five seasons. Half the cargo was loaded in barrels, and the other half were loose and had been salted. On arrival at Ostend, two horses took us in tow through the canal to Bruges, towing with a rope fastened to the main-mast head so as to miss the bridges when they were swung open. After discharge the barrels were filled with water to act as ballast, as the vessel was so much lighter in the water; it was now only necessary to have one horse to tow us back to Ostend.

At the end of the season the *Plover* layed up for the winter and the crew paid off. My pay was very small, only five shillings a week, which I think I well earned.

The Captain was a kindly old man, and made allowances for the small faults I committed. I remember he had two bowler hats, one green with age was worn at sea, and the other was for shore going purposes, and it was my job to see that he had the right hat on when he went ashore. I only tripped up once, he came back rather angry. We certainly had not got much comfort onboard, we lived in a small place right forward. The galley was a box affair, just large enough to get into if you stooped down, and was bolted to the deck amidships. When we tacked ship, my first job was to unship the galley funnel before the boom did it.

After a few days at home in our quiet village, life seemed a bit dull, as the time I spent in the *Plover* had more than settled my mind that I liked the sea, and I intended to take it up as a career. I started making inquiries about an apprenticeship in sail, and finally wrote to the "Anglo American Oil Company". They offered to take me if I was prepared to go the America to join a ship, also stating that I might be away from home for a long time. I was, four years and four months to be exact.

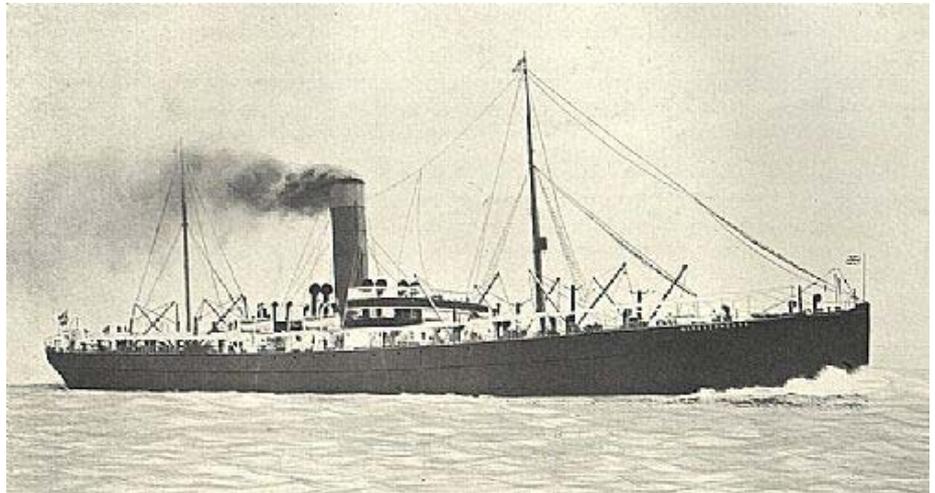
Naturally I accepted, then came days of preparation, getting indentures fixed up and the premium paid. I noted I was to receive four pounds for my first year's work, six for the second, eight for the third and twelve for the fourth. The present day apprentice gets more than that for one months pay. In those days it was no wonder some officers preferred to come up through the "hawse pipe" -an expression used when a man served his time before the mast - and got paid all the time while at sea.

I had to pass an eyesight test, so I went to the local doctor for a check up. I was asked to read the time on the

village clock, and passed with flying colours. I could have been colour blind like one apprentice I knew, he completed his apprenticeship and went to the Board of Trade for an eyesight test before sitting for his examination, and picked out dark brown every time he was told to pick out dark green. Four years of a young man's life wasted.

Having got my uniform, I tried it on and wanted to go to my old school and show it off like the other boy who had come into the class-room and set my mind on going to sea, but I never made it. The village carpenter made a sea chest for me, and after it was packed, I said goodbye to all the family. I cannot remember seeing any tears when I left home. One of my brothers left home for Canada about a year later, it was fifty three years before I saw him again.

I had orders to join the *s.s. Narragansett* in Newcastle, my father decided to go there with me. We arrived just in time to see the Captain, the Chief Officer and Chief Engineer going ashore for an evening out. The Captain told me to go on board, and invited my father to go with them. I heard later they intended drinking him under the table, but the table was turned, he brought all three back in a horse-drawn cab, and helped to put them into their bunks - never underestimate an old Norfolk farmer.



s.s. Narragansett

This was the vessel that took Leslie Chapman across the Atlantic to join his first ship as apprentice.

Built in 1903 for the Anglo-American Oil Co she was 9196 grt and 512 x 63 x 32 ft, then the largest oil tanker in the world.

I was fortunate in having such a fine large vessel, for my first deep sea voyage. At the time the *Narragansett* was the largest oil tanker in the world, and except for war time building, was one of the last to be built with engines amidships. She was also a coal burner. She remained afloat till March 1917, when a submarine torpedoed her off the Scilly Isles, with the loss of all hands. Our voyage to New York took us fourteen days, as we struck some stormy weather during the crossing. There were three other apprentices besides myself, all joining the *Brilliant*. One newcomer like myself, and two who had served two years in the Barque *Lyndhurst*. I was nicknamed Dumpling right away as I came from Norfolk. That was the only name that I was called by the Captain and Officers alike during my time in the *Brilliant*. In fact although sixty years have passed, I still get a Christmas card, using the same nickname. Two other apprentices were from London and one from Girvan in Ayrshire. Needless to say he was called Scotty all the time. I kept watch with the Chief Officer on the Voyage. What a difference to being at sea in

in the little *Plover* whose length was about equal to the beam of the *Narragansett*.

On arrival in New York we were put on a train for Philadelphia, and eventually boarded the *Brilliant* at Point Breeze wharf. Incidentally four years later on completion of my apprenticeship I left the *Brilliant* at the very same wharf.

The *Brilliant* was the largest sailing ship in the world. Her tonnage was 3609 tons nett, and 3765 gross, having a length of 352 feet, and a beam of 52 feet. Height of her masts above the deck line was 180 feet, she carried thirty sails, which was equal to an area of half an acre. The main yard was one hundred and four feet long and weighed over seven tons. This gives some idea of the weight on a mast having six yards decreasing in size and weight as they went upwards, besides the weight of the mast which was in three pieces, the top gallant mast being made of wood, also the royal yard. To hold all this in place there were fifteen backstays on each side of the ship, of varying sizes, and four fore and aft stays to each mast. The *Brilliant* remained the largest British sailing ship, but in 1908 the Germans built the "*Prussian*" and "*Potosi*", which were larger. The *Brilliant* cost £54,000 to build in 1900.

We loaded one hundred and sixty five thousand cases of paraffin for Kobe - Japan, each case containing two cans holding five gallons of oil each. During the loading time, the apprentices were busy preparing the ship for sea. Doing such jobs as taking on board all stores for the voyage, food and otherwise. We soon learned the old trick of slipping a few tins of cabin stores into the half-deck – the name given to our quarters. These were hidden behind a chest of drawers, which was fastened to the bulkhead, the drawers were pulled out and put back again when the tins had been put away. This may sound dishonest, but it was always looked on as borrowing the stuff, and was a practice carried out in lots of sailing ships. They came in very handy later when the food became very monotonous, and I am sure the Captain and officers never missed them. We also took on board thirty tons of drinking water, to last a five months voyage for a crew of forty two. Naturally rain water had to be caught during the voyage to make sure we had enough to

last us out. This was kept in two tanks and was served out at four o'clock each day by the senior apprentice off watch.

When the loading was finished, we were towed to an anchorage off the Navy Yard, awaiting our crew. They turned up in the afternoon and as usual most of them were very much under the influence of drink. Trouble soon started, mostly fist fighting. Suddenly a marine superintendent rushed into the apprentices half-deck and dived under the table, and said, "There is some shooting forward". The senior apprentice bravely rushed out and rescued the Bosun who had been shot in the eye and back. (Six years later, I met the same superintendent, and casually asked him if he remembered the incident, he replied, "Of course I do, it was I who went forward and saved the Bosun". My memory was better than his). The Captain told me to hoist the ensign upside-down, apparently for assistance, this was spotted immediately by a navy launch, the boat came alongside and arrested the gunman, also the Red Indian who lent him the gun. Later the Indian was returned to us, no charge against him. - That was the only time in my long life at sea, that I ever saw an ensign upside down.

This crew was the most assorted one that I came across in the whole of my sea-faring career, we had seventeen nationalities amongst a crew of forty- two, including as already mentioned, the American Red Indian, our cook was a Chinaman, with a shaven head and a long pigtail, to me very intriguing, as I had not seen a chinaman before. We also had a minor Japanese Prince, as an apprentice in our half-deck. This was very handy, as on our arrival in Japan, we were entertained on quite a few occasions in one of the smaller palaces.

Before sailing the mates picked their watches, the first mate was a "Bluenose" Nova Scotian, a very tough man indeed, the second mate was an American, a very pleasant man and fortunately I was in his watch. He taught me a lot of sea-manship, which served me in good stead as years went by. Our captain was a Scot, a real gentleman one of the best sailors I have ever sailed with, needless to say he completely ignored us as first voyage apprentices.

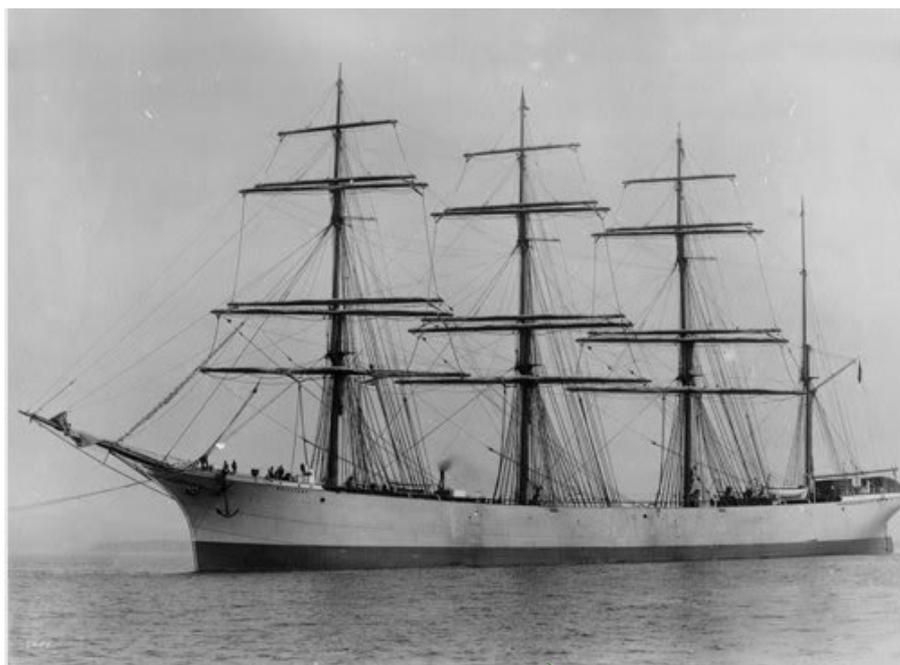
To be continued

Brilliant

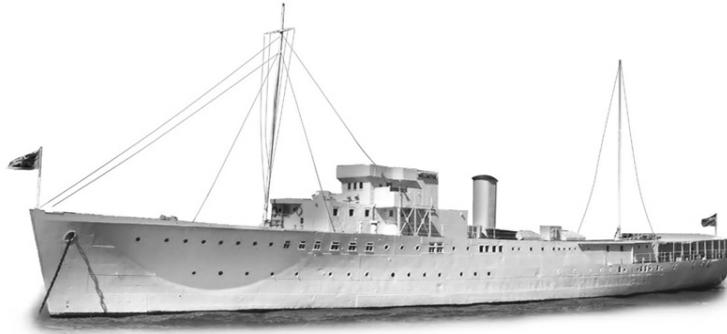
The four-masted barque in which 'Dumpling' Chapman served his apprenticeship.

Built in 1901 for the Anglo-American Oil Co she was 3765 grt and 352 ft long.

Originally a case oil haulier she was suitable for conversion to carry oil in bulk and this was done in 1910.



A space in which to wish our readers compliments of the season from all the editorial staff at *The Cachalot*.



The Wellington

Upholding Britain's Maritime History

The old ex Royal Navy Sloop, WELLINGTON, has been berthed at Temple Stairs on The Embankment in London since 1948. She was purchased by the Honourable Company of Master Mariners (HCMM) in 1946 and converted into their floating Livery Hall. However in 2005 the Company came to the inevitable conclusion that her maintenance and preservation costs were beyond their resources, and the ship was gifted to the newly formed Wellington Trust. The charitable purpose of the Trust is the preservation of the old sloop, and the education of the nation in the history and heritage of the Merchant Navy. The HCMM continue to live on board and pay rent to do this, with all their historic artefacts and models being available to the Trust to help achieve this.

The first move in meeting our charitable purpose has been in setting up school classes on board for Primary Schools, Years 3-6. The Quarterdeck has become our classroom, unique in being afloat and with the regular River Thames traffic constantly passing them. We have a number of freelance teachers who teach the children about the use of the sea for trade, cargoes, and how we were supplied during WWII, all relating to syllabus subjects. They also learn about communications at sea (flags, semaphore etc), and then one of us old Master Mariners runs a session in the wheelhouse pretending to take the ship to sea, with the children all role playing. HRH Princess Anne is our Patron, and has participated in one of these sessions! This is just a start at teaching the young generation how important the sea is to us as a nation. Although most of our schools come from London, we are delighted to host provincial schools, and thanks to support from the Cass Foundation, there is no fee!

Our next plan is to turn the ship into a permanent exhibition, open to the public, which will cover the history of the Merchant Navy and the means of carrying goods and people since around mid 19th century, including the Merchant Navy at war, and ending up with a clear vision of why we need to maintain a professional involvement with the sea. This longer term goal will be supported by our current work in developing a 6 month exhibition starting next May, to commemorate the role of the Merchant Navy in the Battle of the Atlantic (BOA). This is where members may be able to help if you have any artefacts of real interest relating to the BOA. We are also seeking veterans from WWII who could contribute to an oral presentation. I like to think of the Wellington now as the museum of the Merchant Navy and its protection, as epitomised by an ex RN hull which undertook 103 convoy operations during the war, with the Merchant Navy inside her.

As an ex RN Commanding Officer, a Member of the Southampton Master Mariners (since 1992), and a Liveryman of the HCMM, I think I have my feet in every camp!

Captain Stephen Taylor, FNI, Royal Navy
Chairman, The Wellington Trust
www.thewellingtontrust.org.uk
DANDSTAYL@aol.com

Rosa, Juli, where are you?

As reported in the last edition, we were being plagued by computerised attempts to register on our website. It came to a head with over 500 such attempts being made, 30 on one day alone, so the Storekeeper got on to CData Services and they attached a 'Captcha' security function to the Registration page. This generates two words in a slightly wonky font that a computer shouldn't be able to read but a real live person can. If they can't there is the facility to '*get a new challenge*' and generate two, hopefully more decipherable, words. Since then we have had no more siren calls from *ludplutorosa* or *moluxmorejuli* and we now have a system that can both challenge you to see if you are still alive and then promote you to the 'active' list as well.

Wonderful things, these computers!

**SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS
CRICKET SECTION
SECRETARY'S REPORT – THE 2012 SEASON**

Introduction

Following the 2011 season's routine in which the administrative duties of the Honorary Secretary and the duties as Fixtures Secretary were combined under the one title of Honorary Secretary, the same routine was followed during 2012, and with same level of support from the Treasurer and the Club Captain.

Fixtures

An early start was made in confirming and securing the season's fixtures, the fixture list was again effectively confirmed and completed by mid February. The fixture list for 2012 would have provided a strong and varied programme with 4 Sunday matches (40/45 overs) complementing 16 mid-week evening matches. Unfortunately repeated and sustained bad weather caused the cancellation of many matches and of those matches which could be played, some had to be cancelled due to lack of player numbers.

Membership

As in the 2011 season the number of playing members remains low, some leaving the area with a lesser number arriving. Examination of the team sheets shows only a small nucleus of stalwarts, and a reserve pool of guest players drawn largely from the Southampton Community Cricket Club. However, this season that reserve pool has also diminished.

Nets

Three successful and enjoyable net practice sessions were run at the Ageas Rosebowl in April, with an ideal number of players present on each occasion.

The Ground

The expected improvements to the ground and to the pavilion did not take place, although this did have the advantage that the few matches which did take place were played on a natural surface, rather than the planned artificial pitch.

Entertainment

The club is indebted to Garry Bagshaw for her provision of the generous and splendid teas at the home matches.

Social

Following the repeated cancellation of matches during the season it was agreed to have an evening together tenpin bowling in lieu of the cancelled cricket match. Those who turned up with their wives and girlfriends at the Fareham bowl had a most enjoyable evening, and possibly a little more energetic than standing in an umpire's coat.

Peter Starkey (Honorary Secretary)

13 October 2012



Why I want to be a Captain

In number 1 of the Swedish magazine "utkiken" we found the following, written by a 10-year old British schoolboy:

"I want to be a captain when I grow up because it's a cool job that's easy to do. Captains don't have to go to school such a long time. They only need to learn figures so they can read instruments. I think they also have to be able to read maps so they don't get lost when they sail.

Captains have to be brave so they don't get scared when it's so foggy that they can't see and when the propeller falls off they have to know what to do about it. Captains have to have eyes that can see through the clouds and they mustn't be afraid of thunder and lightning which they have closer to them than what we have.

The captain's wages is another thing I like. They earn more than they can spend. That's because most people think it's dangerous to drive a boat, except captains, because they know how easy it is. There's not much I don't like, except that girls like captains. All the girls want to marry a captain, so captains are always having to chase them away to get some peace...

I hope I don't get seasick, because if I get seasick I can't be a captain and I'll have to start working."

Out of the mouths of children!

More Dredgings from the fast-failing memory of Electrical Superintendent Eddie Hunter

The Fire Course

I won't describe all the circumstances - suffice to say that we had an electrical fire on a vessel. I was going to call it a serious fire, but then any fire on a vessel is serious. This particular event was an electrical fire which did a lot of damage to a generator and some large electric motors, principally because the crew did not fight it correctly.

I was in Oldham, I think it was, visiting the switchgear manufacturer Whipp and Bourne to witness proving tests on a replacement circuit breaker for a main generator for the mv "Suffolk Ferry;" our oldest train ferry. To my surprise, I was summoned over a "Tannoy" system to take an urgent telephone call. The caller was Peter Frost, the Superintendent Marine Engineer. "Eddie, there has been an electrical fire. Make your excuses there and hire a car if necessary ..."

Well, I had to deal with the matter very swiftly, arranging for the damaged generator to be unshipped along with a few other large electric motors for rewinding, and for an electrical contractor to renew several main cables and clear up the extensive water damage. For the next three nights, I think I snatched about three to four hours sleep a night stretched out on a settee in a saloon on the vessel as work went on round the clock. The vessel was back in service in three days.

Then came the difficult bit.

"Er, Chief, about the electrical fire .. ."

"Listen!" he snarled, " Don't *you* think you can lecture .. ."

I stood up. "Hold it! Hold it, Chief, not another word."

But he raved on. "I got my Ticket before your arse was the size of a shirt button!"

"I said, not another word." I tried to keep my voice even and my stare glacial. He turned and left, the crash of the closing door a resounding clap of thunder.

I telephoned the Engineering Superintendents' Secretary. "Annie, there will be fire fighting courses for Seagoing Officers in Portsmouth or Southampton, Liverpool and maybe Glasgow. I want you to check them out for me and book me in on the first available place. The very first available, please. Ring me here. Now, can I speak to the boss, please?"

Annie telephoned within minutes. There was a course starting at Speake, Liverpool, the very next day, and I had the last vacancy.

Well, what a course! Hands up those who know Liverpool or at least have worked with Liverpoolians. You will know what I mean when I say that the course should have been called "Fire Fighting Made Funny." Those Liverpool instructors were hilarious, but, unfortunately as most of the humour was very rude, like how to carry - no, no, I cannot, I dare not recount any instances here to spare the blushes of any sweethearts or wives who might read the Club Magazine.

But, despite the humour, we worked like blazes, too. Dressed in sooty protective clothing, we ran out heavy hoses, doused dunnage fires and fought oil fires with water. It was all very well, but we all knew that it was one thing to fight an oil fire with water when the blazing pan of oil was on the ground, but that trick might just be possible at sea only aboard an all-turbine ship in a dead calm. Even so, I got my eyebrows and hair singed and my knuckles burned when the hot oil ignited again behind my fan wall of water.

One very strong opinion I did bring away from Speake - if *I* were ever in the highly unlikely position of being in command of a vessel at sea, and a fire broke out, I think I would opt to row home in preference to fighting it! Yeah, yeah, yeah, I hear you - "the best lifeboat is the ship!" We have all had *that* drummed into us, but, faced with a raging fire, I'm not so sure I believe it any more.

The final exercise might be worth describing. I did find myself in command. (Quite right, too. After all, I was the only one there who knew Ohm's Law - and there is no better qualification than that!) The Trainees were divided into five groups of five. The Chief Instructor assured us that the selection was random, but I'm sure he lied - the obvious senior men, by age and infirmity, were picked as Officers Commanding, and so I became a Captain for a short inglorious spell.

The Teams were led out in turn to our second home - the smoke-blackened, fire-buckled steel mock-up across the yard - and briefed, while a dunnage fire somewhere in the mock-up gained hold. My team was last.

I listened to the briefing, while the clouds of black smoke from "our" fire became thicker and thicker. Our water hydrant and the control station were on the upper deck. Our fire was on the lower deck and could be approached only from above, down a ladder then through a latched door which we would have to cool before we could open it. When we had put the fire out, we were to find a ladder leading upwards. We had to climb the ladder dragging the hose with us and cool the chamber above, then exit up another

vertical ladder. "Oh, and you may well encounter an emergency - deal with it. Do all that and you get your Fire Fighting Certificate. Fail to complete the exercise and well, you fail. OK?"

For equipment we had one fire hose with adjustable nozzle, two "recovery" harnesses complete with steel-cored recovery lines, two sets of breathing apparatus each complete with air cylinders giving twenty minutes of life support and heavy spanners for signalling for water on and water off by clouting the bulkhead., and our grubby Firemen's jackets, trousers, heavy helmets and reinforced rubber boots. And ourselves.

"Right, Captain, your gear's all up there on the deck. When you're ready."

Well, being as ready as we were ever going to be, I gave my preliminary order to move. "Up you go!"

I had already weighed up my team, two young Cadets from a shipping company, two overweight smoking and drinking "professional" Junior Engineers of indeterminate age being bullied by their company on a fire fighting refresher course, and me. And I certainly would make no Olympics team -even get winded playing Chess. So my choice, the two Cadets, was far from ideal according to the psychology of firefighting that we had been taught -send in two 28 to 34 year olds. (Discuss.)

"Right, lads. You two, get kitted up. You two help them. Two knocks repeated, water on, three knocks for water off. Okay?" I must have sounded the part, for they called me "Sir."

BA tested, and the two cadets kitted out, they descended the ladder, smoke billowing from the hatch. The first lad went down dragging the hose. Damn, I'd forgotten to test the hydrant before I committed the boys to the descent. Maybe the Instructor wouldn't notice. His withering look told me he had. I quickly cracked the valve open a touch.

"That's okay. Couple up."

The second Cadet reappeared out of the hatch. He tore off his face mask, gasping for air.

"What's wrong?" I demanded.

"I can't breath. I can't breath. There was this tight band round my chest," he gasped.

"You sure it's not a tight yellow band up yer back?" The Instructor snarled at the boy, before turning to me. "Well, Captain? What's to do?"

I thought, "This is the emergency, the lad's been put up to this." It did occur to me that the Instructor couldn't possibly know who I'd send in. Then again, it was obvious I did not have much choice. I thought, "If I send either of those other two buggers in, I'll have a least one corpse if not two on my conscience." Only one thing for it...

"Get the gear off him. I'll go in myself. Harry, you're in charge here."

Bang bang, pause, bang bang. I turned the water on while the other two practically ripped the BA gear off the boy.

By the time I reached him in the hot smoke-smelling inky blackness, the other Cadet had been struggling alone with the hose for some time. He had located the door. Although he had been directing the water jet on it, you could still fry eggs on the door. I had a bright idea - I knocked the two securing dogs off with my heavy spanner. The door opened with an intense rush of heat as, simultaneously, the water went off. So much for my bright idea.

But it was perhaps a fortunate mistake as it was much easier for me to change places with the Cadet with the hose dead. The Cadet banged the bulkhead and the water started again. I turned the nozzle anticlockwise to make a fan wail of water and the immediate relief from the intense heat was incredible. Of course all this time neither of us could see a damned thing. We advanced cautiously, the Cadet supporting the weight of the stiff hose. Presently, I could just make out the glow of the fire and reduced the wide angle of the water fan slowly and had the joy of seeing the glow diminish and die.

It was damned hard work and I was Garry Packard, but I twisted the nozzle to a jet and still managed to wave the hose about a bit. I remembered where the vertical steel ladder was from an earlier visit to this chamber and prudently played the hose on the rungs, although they were still very hot through our protective rags when we began to climb.

"Off!" I yelled, my voice deafening me inside the smoke helmet. But the Cadet obviously couldn't hear. Somehow I trapped the live hose in some variation of a bear hug, managed to reach the heavy spanner dangling from my belt and clout the bulkhead.

The Cadet and I changed places and he was half-way up the ladder dragging the hose, I was feeding the dead hose up to him, when a sudden glow behind me told me that the damned fire had started again!

"Fred, you're a rotten bugger!" I swore as the Cadet dropped the hose down to me. I grabbed it and he banged for water as smoke closed off the glow of the flames. (Fred was the Chief Instructor. Nice man, but merciless.)

To this day I don't know where I found the reserves of energy, but I fought the fire a second time. As the flames went out, the side doors of the chamber crashed open and daylight flooded in.

"That's it! Enough!" I faintly heard Fred bellow as regular firemen outside directed two jets of water into the chamber.

"Oh, God! I've failed," I thought as I was led, exhausted, from the chamber.

As I was stripped of my smoke helmet, I saw the grinning face of Fred, the Chief Instructor.

"Fred, you're a rotten bugger," I told him. "That was a swine of a trick."

"I didn't do it," he said, and went on to explain that the fire had become more intense than it would have been had we not lost the time due to that Cadet who chickened out. Consequently, the heart of the fire was still hot enough to spontaneously reignite.

"I thought the Cadet was a set-up. I thought that might be our emergency," I said.

"No, no," said Fred. "Your emergency was a body lying on the deck above. The lad genuinely chickened, so he's failed."

"What about the rest of us? We didn't finish!"

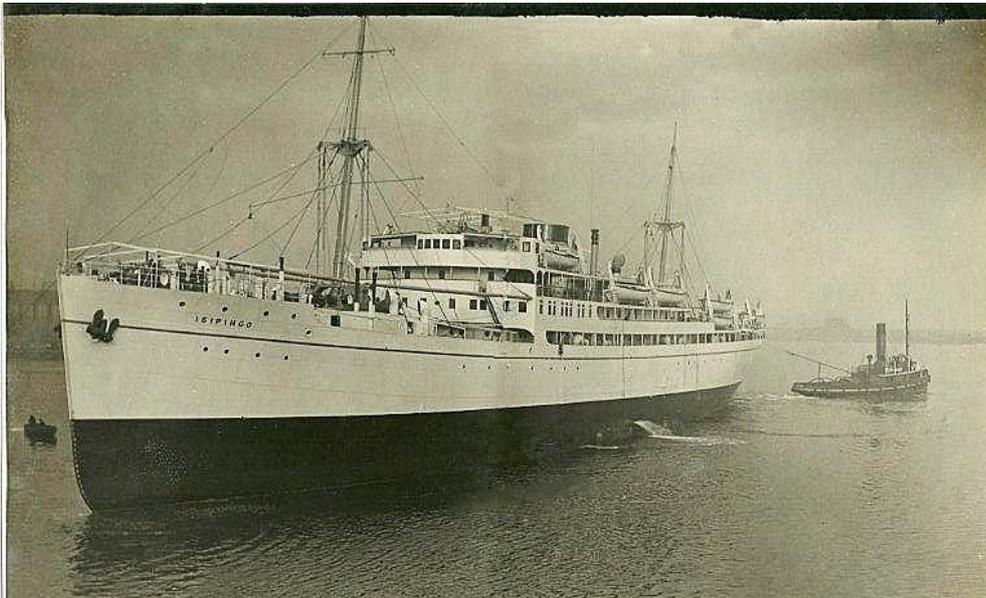
"Nah, you did enough, more than enough." Fred punched my arm, his method of expressing congratulation. (I carry the bruise to this day.)

Well, as this has been an over-long account, and you're probably all bored to the back teeth by now, I shall gloss over the remainder of the affair and my subsequent "chat" with the aggrieved Chief Engineer, whose attitude had sparked (Ha! Good word, under the circumstances) had sparked off the necessity for my Fire Fighting Course in the first place. I will just say that I was not going to allow any bugger who does not understand Ohm's Law to tell *me* that I don't know what I'm talking about - even if he was able to multiply two by two on a slide rule and get approximately four. No, sir.

Oh, and in a fire at sea, I definitely just want to row home. Please, God, just let me row home.



Isipingo



Reading Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles piece "Following the Fleet" in the latest Cachalot, I was intrigued by the reference to the "Isipingo" in which his wife travelled to Cape Town. The "Isipingo" (she had two sister-ships, "Inchanga" & "Incomati") was in fact owned by The Bank Line and operated in their Indian/African Service. Of 7,069 grt, she was built in Belfast by Workman Clark in 1934. She had a cargo capacity of 7,520 dwt, and carried 50 first- and 20 second-class and 500 native passengers.

"Isipingo" was sold for scrap in Hong Kong (where I worked for 19 years for Bank Line) in 1964. Over thirty years she logged 1,314,065 miles in 4,323 days 13 hours 53 minutes, at an average speed of 12.6648 knots!

Received from Cachalot Roger Needell

Rope Ends

New Members

David Carter is a retired 1st Class Engineer who went to sea as a Junior Engineer with Elder Dempster and then served in various ranks with Cunard before becoming Chief Engineer with P&O Ferries. He worked as a consultant in their Fleet Development and became Superintendent with P&O and Princess Cruises. Before retiring in 2002 he was Technical Manager with Airtours Sun Cruises.

His interests are sailing, sea fishing and golf and he joins us to maintain a professional interest in the shipping world.

Marilyn Wilton is the widow of Harold (Rob) Wilton who went aloft in September and she wishes to continue her late husband's membership and her contact with the Club.

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 consecutive monthly draws.

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

250 Club

As we have pointed out before:

Better odds than the National Lottery

&

Our lowest prize (£40) is 4 times greater than theirs!

Latest Winners

September	L.O. Amey	B. Simpson
October	L. Odd (Mrs)	T.A.T. Winsborough
November	P.J. Davies	T. Turner

Section 31 of the Pilotage Act 1987 defines a "pilot" as "any person not belonging to a ship who has the conduct thereof."

ON PILOTAGE

A pilot must a stranger be
And he must navigate,
To bring himself within the law
As written by the State.

A stranger to the ship, that is,
Upon whose bridge he stands,
Whose Master has accepted him
And they have shaken hands.

"She's single screw. A motor ship,"
The Master might admit.
And give the draft. And where he's bound.
And often that is it.

"I'll leave you with the Mate,
Goodnight. For I am going to bed."
The Master then will vanish,
For to rest his weary head,

Confident that he has got
A bloke who knows what's what.
A pilot who is authorised.
To him, it means a lot.

"Good morning, Captain," later,
You might hear the pilot say.
"We're almost there. Please warn the men.
The wind is fresh today."

"Be ready for the tugs, please.
We have half an hour to run.
One each end and one amidships.
That's the way it's done.

Stop her now. The tugs are here.
We're turning short-round soon,
To stem the tide before we dock,
This blustery fore-noon.

Have the fenders ready rigged
Along the starboard side.
The lock, I see, is ready now.
Soon we shall be inside.

Steady as she goes!
She's nicely lined up as can be.
Hard-a-port. A kick astern.
We're nicely on the quay.

What was it that you wondered
That a pilot has to do?
The Master knows. He knows damn well:
As also do the crew.

Why do you ask the questions
When the answers are quite clear
To all who take an interest
In our shipping, year on year?

Times change, but pilotage does not.
The law requires it still.
It's in the public interest.
A role which man must fill.

It's not a thing of magic:
Nor of competence alone:
And lesser still a sinecure
Of mobile telephone.

The State requires a bloke
Who knows the way into each port
For protection 'gainst the man
Who's not as well-informed as ought.

And so it is for pilotage:
And fully understood,
By every merchant mariner:-
The pilot must be good.

BY
01.09.2012

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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 Dec 1 Christmas Dinner, King's Court

Sat Dec 8 Christmas Lunch, Club Room

A Programme of Events (Issue 1) for 2013 is included with this newsletter.

It is subject to change and any changes will be notified here and on our website.

The cut-off date for the next edition will be

15th February 2013

Gone Aloft

Harold 'Rob' Wilton, who went aloft on 4th September, was a well known Shipping Agent around the port, having worked variously for Royal Mail, Escombe Mcgrath, P&O (R0-Ro services) and Macships, among others. Rob was 82 and joined the Club in 1992.