

# ***The CACHALOT***

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB**

**No 53**

***September 2014***

## **Captain's Log**

I would not really expect to be writing this on a hot sunny afternoon even if it is August. Normally such an afternoon warrants time spent in the garden or in other outdoor pursuits. A lack of rainy days, apart from the odd shower, means sacrifices have to be made unless I want our esteemed Editor on my back.

The past few months have been very busy for both Lesley and I. The Club Supper held on the 30th of May was very well attended. As usual a very good meal was provided by John Davis. Our guest speaker was Peter Yeoman who gave an interesting talk on the Lively Lady Project which involved taking under privileged youngsters a chance to crew on a stage of the round the world voyage on the late Sir Alec Roses 'Lively Lady'. This vessel has now been retired but the charity, now named 'Around and Around', hopes to undertake similar but shorter voyages with Claire Francis's old yacht 'Robertson's G'.

We attended the annual Mayor Making ceremony in Southampton on the 4th of June. Councillor Sue Blatchford is the new Mayor. This ceremony included the appointment of Linda Norris as the new Sheriff of Southampton. We also witnessed the arrival of the Queens's Baton in Southampton. This was part of the Baton's relay around the world for the Commonwealth Games which has now been successfully completed.

A glorious sunny evening made the Shipping Festival Service on the 12th June a very memorable affair. The service was followed by a delightful gathering in the Dean's garden. I do not think any one of us ended up shivering, a pleasant change from the chill a lot of us experienced waiting to be introduced to HRH last year. My thanks to all who took part in making this event run so smoothly. I felt the Sea Cadets from Southampton and Winchester performed very well under the excellent guidance of Geoff Matthews. Carolyn Lee co-ordinated the catering very efficiently as always. My thanks to Carolyn and to all those who, not only contributed food, but who also helped out with the distribution of the tasty offerings and not forgetting the wine as well.

Reg, our hard working Boatsteerer, and I felt that our wives deserved a treat following the SFS and, coincidentally, we had both booked cruises sailing from Southampton the day following the service. Reg and

June enjoyed a good weather cruise around the UK whilst Lesley and I cruised the Baltic in somewhat indifferent weather.

It gave me great pleasure to present a cheque for just over £3247 to The Mission to Seafarers in the Club Room on the 4th July. This cheque was received by John Attenborough, the newly appointed Chaplain for the Seafarers Centre. You will recall that the Southampton Ship Owners Association put up a prize for a raffle at our last Sea Pie Supper. This cheque represented the excellent response we had. No doubt the amount of wine consumed at the SPS helped to ease many a purse string. John Noble's charity for his year as Club Captain was also The Mission to Seafarers and he took this opportunity to present his cheque (£831) at the same event. It was our pleasure to also see representatives from the SSOA and John Hughes, Chairman of the Seafarers Centre at the ceremony. *(Picture on p.5)*

The Curry Lunch at Kuti's on the 12th July was well attended. This time no one had trouble getting in despite the continuing road works in the area.

Lesley and I attended the Internment of Iris Brooke at St. John's Church, Alresford, on the 18th July. Her daughter, Lynne, invited us to attend as Iris Brooke was a member and past Chairman of the Watch Ashore in the 1980's. Her 90th birthday was celebrated at the Club two years ago. Her husband was Captain J.Stuart Brooke, a former Cachalot, who sailed in Furness Withy ships. Lynne was also at sea as a Lady Assistant Purser on the 'Queen Mary' and her brother was a Senior 1st Officer on QE2 until his untimely death. Very much a seafaring family.

Ian Odd,  
Captain, Southampton Master Mariners

## **Merchant Navy Day Service**



Captain Odd will be laying a wreath on behalf of The Cachalots at the service to be held at Holyrood Church in Southampton on

**Sunday 7th September at 1200**

The service is organised by the Solent Branch of the Merchant Navy Association and will be conducted by Chaplain John Attenborough. In attendance will be the Mayor of Southampton, the Southampton and Netley branches of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association, other branches of the MNA, the Southampton Sea Cadets and other local maritime organisations. The Mayor will arrive at 1150.

## Boatsteerer's Locker

Happily, since my last scrawl, the Club has sailed in tranquil waters, the trauma of finding a venue for the 2015 Sea Pie Supper has dissipated and, as you will read elsewhere, (*back page*) the new venue is The Mike Channon Suite at St. Mary's – the home of "The Saints". The suite will have a slightly reduced capacity but, the amenities are superb with an abundance of free parking, a choice of bar facilities, good cloakrooms and better toilet facilities. We envisage a long queue, with cheque books in hand, at 1100 on Thursday, November 6th., when tickets are offered for sale.

On the domestic front, we are currently in discussions with "downstairs" about the quality of the food served at lunchtime – and what steps can be taken to obviate the long waiting times – and the indications are that there will be a very successful outcome. (*New menu now available.*)

Peter Marriott has made sterling progress in the distribution of the Bursary awards and two very worthy candidates from the Winchester Unit of the Sea Cadets will shortly undertake their sail training. On completion, they will be invited to the Club (hopefully, with their parents) to tell us of their adventures... We await notification of the choice of two candidates from the Southampton unit who would be eligible for the next awards.

Brilliant sunshine ensured the success and enjoyment of The Shipping Festival Service (as the attendance in the Deanery Garden testified). The Curry Luncheon was another enjoyable occasion and attracted its usual gourmet attendance.

Club attendance – on a Friday – averages 15/22 but we will always welcome more – so why not pay us a visit and sample our improved menu. IF you prefer a quieter day then Thursday must be your choice – it is usually VERY quiet.

As ever, I close with my thanks to Liz, Richard Ian, Barry, Peter Grant, Peter Marriott, Terry Clark and the others whose hard work and dedication make my job so undemanding.

CRK 12/8/14



The major road changes around Queen's Park are progressing and the main road outside Dock Gate 4 is now two-way, as is Queen's Terrace, outside the club. At the time of writing, Queen's Terrace is closed at the Terminus Terrace end. This would appear to be a permanent change but there is still access to the car park there. Parking bays have been established along Queen's Terrace, 15 opposite the club and 4 on the same side, just before where the bus stop was. They are charged at £1.20, £2.50, £3.60 and £4.70, for 1 - 4 hrs, respectively. Access from Latimer Street and the north end of Orchard Place remain the same and these are still one-way.

## From the Editor

In this edition, prior to our planned visit to the *Great Britain* at Bristol, Roy Martin has written a specially edited version of the chapter in one of his publications which dealt with the salvage of the ship in the Falklands. He is preparing a second part, which will cover her return to Bristol, for the next edition. Meanwhile, the complete unexpurgated chapter will be posted on our website.

I hope you have been following 'Charlie' Chapman's memoirs. Episode eight, at five pages, is longer than usual as I didn't want to interrupt the narrative just as Charlie finds himself in mortal danger in one of WW1's worst atrocities. In my enthusiasm, I have even added a page to cover the aftermath. After surviving the Gallipoli landings, Charlie must have considered that a berth on a hospital ship would be much safer but it didn't work out quite like that. I don't think you will find such a first-hand witness account of the outrage published anywhere else. How one 2nd Officer and a canary called George, which was confined in its own cigarette tin 'lifeboat', evaded death at the hands of the Hun.



We have booked the main room in the Seafarers' Centre for the Christmas Luncheon. This should make it easier for the food to be served and there should be no problem with numbers. Also suitable for those who cannot make the stairs.

The idea is to muster in the Club room for pre-meal drinks and then to decant downstairs for the main event.

Names and numbers for both functions in good time please.

Terry Clark, Editor

### Christmas Events

The **Christmas Dinner** will be held  
at King's Court Masonic Centre  
On  
**Saturday 6th December**  
1900 for 1930  
**Black Tie**  
**£30 per head**

The **Christmas Luncheon** will be held  
In the Seafarers' Centre  
On  
**Saturday 13th December**  
1200 for 1230  
**£24 per head**

Traditional Christmas Fare

A Club Buffet Supper  
will be held  
in the Club Room

On

**Friday 12th September**

Once again, there will be a focus on the *Costa Concordia* and, although we understand that Captain Schettino is now giving talks on his expertise in panic control, we will stick with our own Captain John Noble for a less biased account of recent happenings.

1900 for 1930

Catering by John Davis

Price will be **£18** per head  
and numbers limited to **40**.

### Ladies that Lunch

Further to the inaugural lunch in April, which was enjoyed by 16 of our ladies, another such occasion is arranged at the same venue:



on the corner of Oxford and Latimer Streets.

<http://medbarandkitchen.co.uk/>

1200 for 1230

on

**Friday 19th September**

The proffered menu may be slightly different to last time and will be circulated to those expressing an interest before the event.

The price, to include a soft drink and a tip,  
remains the same, at:

**£11.50**

Guests are welcome and names and payment should be directed to Lesley Odd at the time of booking:

[lesley.odd@btinternet.com](mailto:lesley.odd@btinternet.com)

Mob: 07780 586073



### Coach Outing to Bristol

**Thursday 2nd October**

A day trip to visit the **ss Great Britain** at Bristol is being organised and a 34 seater coach has been booked.

There will be just one pick-up, 0830 at King's Court, returning around 1900.

The price per head will be **£40**, to include entrance and a guided tour but not lunch.



### **Coffee & Cakes**

(The home-made sort)

**Friday, 10th October**

**1100**

**In the Club Room**

This has proved to be a popular event and all donations to help the wonderful work done by

### **Macmillan Cancer Support**

will be gratefully accepted .

Can we beat the record **£688** that you raised last year?

**Tabnabs to taste - or take away**

### Trafalgar Dinner

A Club Supper is to be held  
in the Club Room

On

**Friday 17th October**

With a theme to commemorate  
Trafalgar Day.

Past Captain and Boatsteerer Lionel Hall will  
give the toast to the  
'Immortal Memory of Lord Nelson'

*Trio of Smoked Salmon*

*French Onion Soup*

*Roast Beef*

*Poached Figs with a Chocolate,*

*Rum & Raisin Ice Cream*

Catering by John Davis

**Black Tie**

**£27** per head

numbers will be limited to **39** on a first come  
basis.



### Curry Lunch



A good turn-out of 40 members, wives and guests in July confirmed that Kuti's in Oxford Street is still a popular venue for our Curry Lunches.

The next one has been booked there on

**15th November, 1200 for 1230.**

Price held at **£12.50** per head.



*This cautionary tale has no maritime connection and it should not be seen to reflect The Cachalots' - a non-political organisation - view on any current or coming events. It is included here purely to fill one of those 'white spaces' that the editor has previously complained about... honest!*

While walking down the street in Edinburgh one day a Member of the Scottish Parliament is tragically hit by a bus and dies.

His soul arrives in heaven and is met by St. Peter at the entrance.

"Welcome to heaven," says St. Peter. "Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see a high official around here, you see, so we're not sure what to do with you.

"No problem, just let me in," says the MSP.

"Well, I'd like to, but I have orders from higher up. What we'll do is have you spend one day in hell and one in heaven. Then you can choose where to spend eternity."

"Really, I've made up my mind. I want to be in heaven," says the MSP.

"I'm sorry, but we have our rules."

And with that, St. Peter escorts him to the lift and he goes down, down, down to hell. The doors open and he finds himself in the middle of a green golf course. In the distance is a clubhouse and standing in front of it are all his friends and other politicians who had worked with him.

Everyone is very happy and in evening dress. They run to greet him, shake his hand, and blather about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the Scottish people.

They play a friendly game of golf and then dine on lobster, caviar and champagne. Also present is the devil, who really is very friendly who has a good time dancing and telling jokes. They are having such a good time that before he realizes it, it is time to go.

Everyone gives him a hearty farewell and waves while the lift rises. The lift goes up, up, up and the door reopens on heaven where St. Peter is waiting for him.

"Now it's time to visit heaven."

So, 24 hours pass with the MSP joining a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, playing the harp and singing. They have a good time and, before he realizes it, the 24 hours have gone by and St. Peter returns.

"Well, then, you've spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now choose your eternity."

The MSP reflects for a minute, then he answers: "Well, I would never have said it before, I mean heaven has been delightful, but I think I would be better off in hell."

So St. Peter escorts him to the lift and he goes down, down, down to hell. Now the doors of the lift open and he's in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and rubbish.

He sees all his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the rubbish and putting it in black bags as more rubbish falls from above.

The devil comes over to him and puts his arm around his shoulder "I don't understand," stammers the MSP. "Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and clubhouse, and we ate lobster and caviar, drank champagne, and danced and had a great time. Now there's just a wasteland full of rubbish and my friends look miserable. What happened?"

The devil looks at him, smiles and says, "Yesterday we were campaigning. .... Today you voted."

This poem circulated among the shipping and stevedoring fraternity in the port during the 1960's and reminds us how so many things changed with the advent of containerisation. Some members who were working in the port at that time may remember it.

Terry Winsborough

### **The Damaged Cargo Blues**

*It is much to be regretted  
That your goods are slightly wetted  
But our lack of liability is plain,  
For our latest Bill of Lading  
Which is proof against evading,  
Bears exception for sea water, rust or rain.  
Also sweat contamination,  
Fire and all depreciation  
That we've ever seen or heard of on a ship,  
And our due examination  
Which we made at destination,  
Shows your cargo much improved upon the trip.*

*Furthermore, the protest shows  
That the Master blew his nose  
And the hatches were demolished by the gale.  
Thus we all will stick together  
And will prove it's heavy weather,  
For we've got the cargo owner by the tail.  
So, reserving all defences,  
Alibis and false pretences,  
We're suggesting that your Underwriter man  
Is the guy that's out of luck,  
For we always pass the buck,  
Yes, we always duck the issue if we can.*

*'Tis a cause of grief sincere  
And we always weep to hear  
You are claiming for your cargo wet by rain,  
And it really is a crime  
That you're wasting all your time  
For our Bill of Lading clauses make it plain  
That from ullage, rust and seepage,  
Water, sweat or just plain leakage  
Act of God, Restraint of Princes, theft or war,  
Loss or damage or detention,  
Lock-out, strike or circumvention  
Blockage, interdict or loss twist ship and shore,  
Quarantine or heavy weather,  
Typhoon or hail or both together  
We're protected from all these and many more.  
And it's very plain to see,  
That our liability  
As regards your claim is absolutely nil,  
So, try your Underwriter  
He's a friendly sort of blighter  
And is pretty sure to grin and foot the bill.*





### **The Shipping Festival Service at Winchester Cathedral, 12th June 2014**

Those members and guests who attended Winchester Cathedral on the evening of 12th June were treated not only to the Parade, the Procession and the moving service, but were able to enjoy the post service snacks and drinks in the delightful setting of the Dean's garden in what was the most pleasant summer weather we have experienced on this occasion for quite a few years.



### **Presentation to The Mission to Seafarers** In the Club Room on the 4th July

On the left, and from the left:

John Attenborough, Chaplain, The Mission to Seafarers

Roger Thornton and Ashley Jenkins, Southampton Shipowners Association

Club Captain Ian Odd

Post Captain John Noble

Captain John Hughes, Chairman, Seafarers' Centre



*Cachalot Roy Martin and his friend and colleague, Lyle Craigie-Halkett, both worked for Risdon Beazley and co-authored a history of the company, Risdon Beazley: Marine Salvor, which they self-published. The chapter in the book devoted to the salvage of the ss Great Britain was written by Lyle, who was personally involved with that endeavour on site. Roy's first job on the management team of Risdon Beazley was to organise getting the required salvage equipment to the Falkland Islands.*

*Roy has kindly given his permission for us to reproduce the chapter but it is too long to do so here. So Roy has edited it down to a manageable length for us, the first part of which is printed here, with the second part to come in the next edition. I have posted the complete chapter on our website and if you enjoy this excerpt then I would urge you to visit the site and savour the flavour of Lyle's original rendition.*



**The launching of the S.S. Great Britain at Bristol by the Prince Consort in 1843.**

## **The salvage of the S.S. Great Britain**

Early in 1970 Leslie (Bill) O'Neil, the senior salvage officer of Risdon Beazley Ltd, was sent to the Falkland Islands to look into the feasibility of salvaging the *Great Britain*.

When O'Neil returned he reported that there was no chance of the vessel surviving the tow to Britain; but he believed that there was a 60/40 chance that she could be re-floated and moved onto a submersible pontoon. Ulrich Harms of Hamburg used pontoons to transport tugs and dredgers; but such a large vessel had never been salvaged this way and the tow would be the longest of its type.

Harm's submersible pontoon *Mulus III* (2,667 grt), towed by the former stern trawler *Varius II* (724 grt), was delivering dredging equipment to Guinea. The Master, Hans Hertzog, was instructed to tow the *Mulus* to Montevideo, where a Risdon Beazley salvage team would join.

During the war O'Neil had been a Shipwright on *HMS Exeter*. After she was badly damaged during the Battle of the River Plate he was billeted ashore in the Falklands. He had kept in close touch with his hosts, as they had "treated him like one of the family". The other team members were Bob Light, from the well-known family of 'Hard Hat' divers. Bob had trained in the Royal Navy as a shipwright. Stuart Whatley, also ex-Navy, was one of the new breed of 'Clearance Divers'. Don O'Hara was also an ex-services diver. He specialised in carpentry and his skills were used to the full on the *Great Britain*. I was picked because I was a Falkland Islander and my local knowledge might come in useful, my speciality was diving and rigging.

We arrived in Montevideo the day before the tow, where we helped the agent to find scrap steel and labourers. The following days were spent preparing the *Mulus*. We joined two jumbo derricks together as a sheerlegs; this was welded to the bow ready to lift the masts out of the *Great Britain*. We had long vertical tubes welded to the deck to form dolphins for the ship to be braced against and keel blocks for the bar keel. We sailed from Montevideo cheered on by a surprising number of people.

The 1,000-mile passage to the Falklands was quite rough, but the *Varius* offered a lot more comfort than a tug, our accommodation was very clean but down in the forepeak, where even the most seasoned seafarer could not help but feel a bit queasy in a heavy head sea, especially after a couple of Schnapps. We took a westerly route to keep us closer to the Argentine coastline and averaging 4-5 knots, which was reasonable in the stormy South Atlantic.



**The Great Britain at Sparrow Cove**

We shortening the tow passing Cape Pembroke Light very early in the morning of the 25th March 1970. When abeam of York Bay the *Varius* moved alongside the pontoon to 'hip tow' it through the 'narrows' into Port Stanley. As is usual in the Falklands the wind increased and we got closer to a lee shore than was healthy.

I had explained the leading marks only to find that both the vertical 'Land Marks' were missing. Later I found that they had collapsed in the diddledee bushes. We berthed alongside the public jetty; close to the Falklands Islands Company jetty, which incorporates the hulk of the *Egeria*.

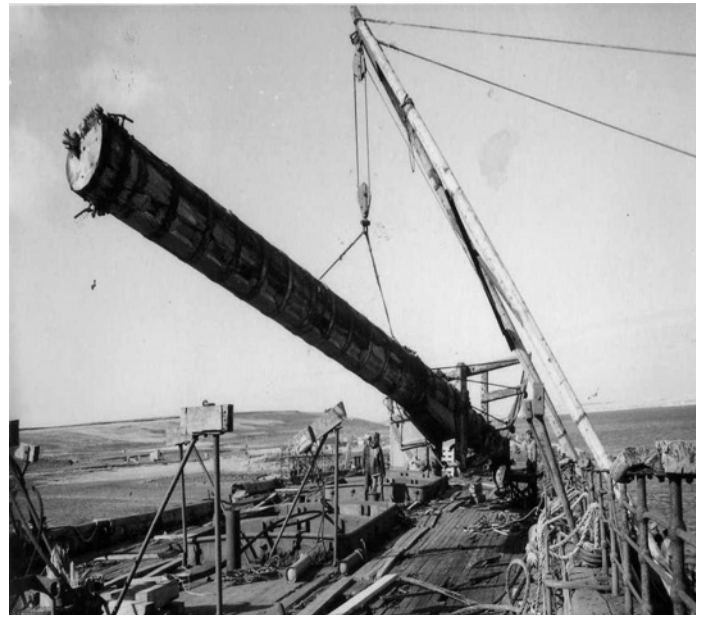
After the formalities had been completed we left for Sparrow Cove. We put the *Mulus* end on to the *Great Britain's* port side, with the *Varius* alongside; then we laid a couple of anchors.

We were dismayed at the condition of the old ship. The remaining weather decking was completely rotten; the only safe places to walk were on top of the beams or the large box section that ran fore and aft each side. The tween decking had gone, so placing the pumps etc. was a bit hairy. The fo'c's'le was reasonably intact and the anchor winch was still operable, despite years of neglect. Inside the bottom there were a couple of metres of mud and debris.

The most ominous damage was a huge split in the starboard side, where a kind of gun port door had been cut. After years sitting on the seabed, and with the scouring action caused by wave surge, the vessel had twisted slightly. The split ran down from the sheer strake to the keel. The weakened hull was only held together by the port side plating and all the visible plates were riddled with wastage holes.



**The crack, after it was closed up.**



**Lowering the mast with the home made sheerlegs.**

One of the first jobs was to bring down a yardarm from the main mast. The Royal Marines stationed near Port Stanley helped us with the fetching and carrying and one of the sergeants volunteered to climb up the mast and attach rigging for us to bring the iron yard down. It was about 100ft long and weighed around five tons. The masts had to be removed to reduce the weight and to assist with stability during the re-floating and the long tow back. Our home-made sheerlegs was too short to attach a sling as high as needed on the mizzen: it pulled out of its bed very easily, but fell on to the shelter we had built on deck. Luckily no one was inside. To avoid a repetition we hired Willie Bowles, a local carpenter, to cut the other masts at the weather deck. They weighed around 20 tons and were 4 feet in diameter. The cuts took quite a while as the masts were laminated from about eight tree sections, pegged and strapped together.

Stuart Whatley and I started plugging the smaller wastage holes in the hull and making patches for the larger ones. The patches were made with 3-ply with a bolt to go through the hull with a strong back or 'T' piece to secure it in position. We used rubber strips or oakum and tallow to make a seal, we must have covered at least 200 holes. In places the ship's side was so thin we had to be very careful not to enlarge the holes whilst plugging them.

We then turned to the crack. We put a call out through the local radio saying that we needed old mattresses, the response was staggering. Foolishly, we had not specified that we only wanted flock or stuffed hair mattresses, so although we did receive enough of the type we wanted we were left with lots of interior sprung mattresses. We stuffed the mattresses from the keel to well above where the maximum draft should be. It was hard going, pulling the mattresses under the ship, as it took ages before the air would escape, particularly from the rubber foam ones. We put plywood over them and used hook bolts to hold everything in position.

The other two from Beazley's salvage team, and the crew of *Varius*, were drilling holes through steel over one-inch thick by 30 feet long and three feet wide, with an antiquated air driven drill. These were to bolt to the longitudinal stringers near the deck edge bridging the split on the weather deck and both tween decks. When drilling the stringers they found that the *Great Britain* was far from a rusty heap of scrap. The drill bits had to be sharpened dozens of times before the holes were finished. The engine room bulkhead was so wasted that there was no point in patching the holes; this meant that no compartments could be sealed to aid re-floating. We rigged a couple of mooring ropes to large boulders ashore.

On Sunday 5th April all looked well, so we started the pumps and, after the air hoses and bottom valves had been prepared, the *Varius* moved the *Mulus* into deeper water and gently let her sink on the seabed. It was many hours before we could see any difference in the water level inside the *Great Britain*. We encountered the usual problems of blocked suction inlets and the difficulty of keeping the engines topped up with fuel. The most exhausting part was having to shift our large pumps. They were mounted on steel wheels, but we had no deck to pull them along, so we used a multitude of rigging to get them in a better position. When the water did start to go down many more holes appeared that required patching. It was blowing a gale and the business of getting into the water with patching gear was neither easy or pleasant, especially on the weather side (starboard) of the ship. At one stage the rising tide actually started to lap over the top of the mattress patching, and Bill O'Neil became concerned that the draft would be deeper than he had calculated.

We had been without sleep for two nights. As it was laborious to get out of our diving suits and scramble on the *Varius* for a sit down meal, the five of us made do with sandwiches and as much coffee as they could bring from the ship. The situation was looking bleak; the water level inside had gone down considerably, but there was no movement on the *Great Britain* and the



gale raged. O'Neil suggested that we should go back to the *Varius* for a decent meal and a shower, then split into pump watches. He warned us that the ship should have been afloat by now, and that our work and effort may well have been in vain.

We had just sat down to a very welcome German breakfast, enough to keep a family going for a week, when there was a shout that the *Great Britain* was moving. Breakfast was abandoned. We got back via our work boat to see that she was floating, but starting to get blown off shore. Our mooring ropes would not hold her for long. Fortunately the *Malvinas*, a 75 foot MFV, arrived. We got Chris Bundas, her skipper, to nudge the ship with his bow to check the drift. Our work boat also did its best, plus the small tug *Lively* from Port Stanley. The *Varius* had been unable to assist as she was anchored close to the pontoon.

As the wind was gusting to storm force 10, we couldn't attempt to dock the *Great Britain* over the *Mulus*. We stopped the pumps and let her take to the seabed; about 30 feet from her grave of over 30 years. The suction on the sea bed must have been broken with the slight rocking movement caused by the gale. Had we not responded quickly, and without assistance from *Malvinas* and *Lively*, the *Great Britain* would have been wrecked on the rocky outcrops nearby, or drifted out of Sparrow Cove to meet her end in Port William. Few people, including some members of the project, were aware just how near to disaster the project had been. To fail on re-floating was a possibility, but to float her and then to lose the ship was unthinkable. The gale did not abate, so we decided that two men would keep a watch, 4 hours on and 4 hours off, to service the pumps. We felt confident that we would be able to float her again, that in itself was a tonic. As usual in similar situations we were unable to sleep. We carried on preparing for floating and docking after a hot shower and a hearty meal of curried Falkland Island mutton.

It was two days before the wind eased sufficiently. We restarted the pumps on the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> April. The next morning the *Great Britain* was floating nicely. With assistance from *Malvinas* and *Lively* we moved her to the *Mulus* without incident and manoeuvred between the dolphins; only to find that our draft was too deep to get further than 30 feet over the pontoon. There was no time to try anything else as we had to get back clear of the *Mulus* before the ebb tide caught us.

The *Mulus* had to be re-floated and moved into deeper water. This was done with the minimum of fuss and some nice ship handling from Hans Hertzog and Chris Bundace. We got back to the pontoon early the same evening, but this time the wind was gusting force 11. We had no choice but to keep all the pumps running, with mooring ropes on every conceivable protrusion, and ride the storm out. Had we not been so tired the experience would probably have been very exhilarating. The rudder, which had been stuck fast at 30 degrees to port, freed itself and helped in keeping a reasonable heading throughout the worst of the storm.

The following morning the wind had dropped enough to try again. This time we did manage to get over the *Mulus*, but we had to shift more mud and debris from inside to get that couple of extra inches of freeboard. A great deal of diving followed to position the ship's keel exactly over the docking blocks, and to make sure that the bilge keels met the side blocks. With pulleys and chain blocks from the weather deck to the tops of the dolphins, we held the old ship in position as the tide ebbed and she settled nicely upright on the deck of the *Mulus*. Just after midnight, there were two very loud bangs, like gunshots; the plates bolted over the split had buckled and a couple of the bolts had sheared. This was encouraging, as it indicated that as the pontoon was taking the 2,000 tons weight and the ship was straightening herself.

Early on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April the Germans started de-ballasting the *Mulus*, with the divers assisting with the air hoses and operating the valves to keep everything on an even keel. The valve wheels were not exactly diver friendly and our arms ached for some time afterwards. By mid-day we knew that we had succeeded, as the bow of the *Great Britain* started to rise above the surface, as she emerged more and more we began to realise the enormity of our achievement.

No one could fail to admire the lovely lines of this old lady as she rose above the water. To me she looked like a clipper or yacht. Great sheets of scale and mussels fell off, revealing iron that looked as good as new, until it rusted in the air. It was 33 years to the day since she was scuttled in Sparrow Cove. We still had mounds of work to do securing the ship for the short trip into Stanley. We moved several of the dolphins firmly against the *Great Britain*'s sides, and put a couple of runs of weld at the bottom to hold them in place. We managed to get inside the double bottoms and pump more water out. It was very pleasing to note that the split had closed as well as if it had been done mechanically. All that showed were tufts of mattresses.

*To be continued*

*Lyle,  
dwarfed by  
the bow.*



*One of the attempts at docking.*



## Fifty Years on Salt Water

*Episode eight of the memoirs of Leslie (Charlie) Chapman continues his experiences in WW1, experiences which he describes, unsurprisingly, as the worst that he had to endure during his long seafaring career. This excerpt is longer than usual as I wanted it to include all of the notorious Llandoverly Castle incident.*

I was next appointed to the *Cawdor Castle*, a sister ship to the *Alnwick Castle* which, shortly after I had left her, was torpedoed and sunk. Some of the boats were picked up in a day or two, and one was adrift for over a week, in very bad weather. (See *Cachalot* 52) The *Cawdor* eventually sailed empty for Marseilles, where we were to pick up some Indian troops, to take to Mesopotamia, via the Suez Canal and Persian Gulf. On the way we spent a week in a small French port called Cette, where we were entertained quite a bit by the local inhabitants. This I was to regret a week or two later.

On arrival in Marseilles we embarked the "Ninth Gurkhas" and part of a Sikh regiment, and sailed for Alexandria. When off the Island of Crete, we were attacked by a submarine, who opened gun fire on us, from the port quarter. We returned the fire with our twelve pounder gun, and he broke off the engagement. Little did he know that we only had twelve shells on board, or he would have kept at it. The Chief Engineer went below and stirred things up, I don't think the old *Cawdor* had ever travelled so fast. The first shell had burst over us, and a small piece hit the cook, otherwise there was no damage.

After arriving in Alexandria I felt ill, and I could not keep my watch. Two doctors diagnosed "German Measles", of all the things to get. No doubt caught at a childrens party in Cette.

On arrival at Port Said, I was immediately landed and sent to the new British isolation hospital. As this complaint was unusual amongst Indian troops, it was thought best to get me off the ship. The hospital consisted of about six small wards, with a single bed in each, with a veranda on each side of a long building, situated on the sea shore, close to the main hospital. I found out that I was the first and only patient in the building, so I had nobody to talk to, or mix with. This I found a great hardship, as I felt very lonely knowing I was to stay there for two weeks.

After a few days a naval sailor was put into the next ward with mumps. I could not care less and at the first opportunity I went into his ward, by the off side veranda, as I could not be seen. When the matron, who looked after us, was coming over, she usually said in a loud voice, "I wonder how my lambs are getting on". By the time she arrived, I was back in my bed, and covered up. I think she guessed what was going on but, if so, she did not show it. Anyway I did not get mumps and I hope the sailor did not get German Measles.

After leaving hospital I spent a month in Port Said, waiting for the *Cawdor Castle* to return from the Persian Gulf. This enforced holiday was very enjoyable, as I stayed at a first class hotel, at the Company's expense, and free from all the worries of the war. I made a trip to Cairo, and visited the Pyramids, and had a long boat trip on the Nile, things I could not have done in the ordinary run of life.

All good things come to an end, I rejoined the *Cawdor Castle* on her arrival from the Canal, and next day we sailed for London. Fortunately, we met no trouble on our way home.

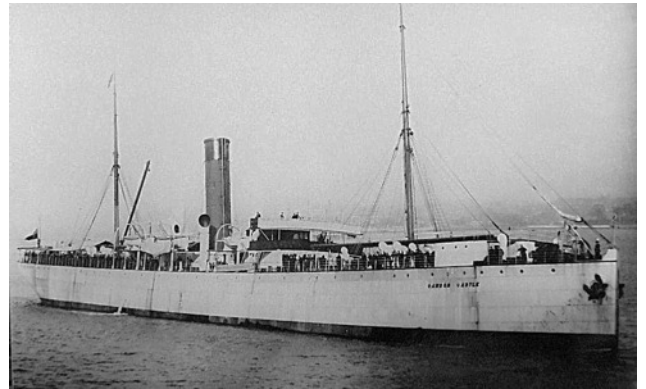
I was then transferred to the *Galway Castle*, and did two round voyages, right round Africa, during this time nothing very exciting happened, which was as well, as we were full of passengers and not sailing in convoy. We saw very few ships, and if we saw one, we had to turn our stern to it, and make off at full speed, in case it was an armed raider, and in each case the other ship did the same, as at a distance it was not possible to tell if the ship was turning towards or away from you.

At the end of the second voyage the Chief Officer and myself were transferred to the *Guilford Castle*, a hospital ship and sister ship to the *Galway Castle*. Again my luck was in, as on a later voyage, the *Galway Castle* was torpedoed and sunk. We fitted out in London and sailed for the Mediterranean. This was to be my longest spell away from home since my sailing ship days. We were away exactly one year to the day. During this time we travelled over a very large area. We started off by taking sick and wounded from Salonika to Malta, spending some time in Salonika as a base hospital ship.

One unusual thing I saw there was a funeral procession in the street, the coffin was being carried along by four young men and a beautiful girl could be seen in the coffin, as the lid was off.

After about two months, we had orders to proceed to Mombasa in East Africa, from where we made several trips down the Coast to Durban taking back mostly sick soldiers of the South African Forces.

We had very few wounded, as the fighting had died down a lot by the time we arrived out there. We had quite a lot of tricky navigation to do, calling at ports that we had not visited before, such as Tanga, Kiliva, Kiswani and a couple of other places, of which I cannot remember the names. Also Dar-es-Salaam, this was the only place in which we had a pilot, we had to find our way into the other ports by ourselves. There were no jetties or wharves in any of the ports we called at. The soldiers had to be brought off in lighters, and the cot cases hove on board in a wooden tray, made especially for the purpose. In Dar-es-Salaam a German liner had been sunk to block the entrance, but had been moved to the side of the channel, leaving a space of a few hundred yards for ships to pass in and out. In the harbour two German gunboats had been sunk, by gunfire from British men of war, at the time the town was captured. One I noticed was called *Moewe*.



***Cawdor Castle***

**Built in 1902 she went ashore off the SW African coast in July 1926, while bound for Mauritius with a cargo of coal, and was a total loss.**

On one voyage, we had to embark several hundred Seychelles Island Porter Corps. They were a very sick crowd of men who could not stand up to the rigours of the African climate and diseases and had to be sent home. We buried quite a few of them at sea, on our three day trip. This seemed a delightful place, every thing just jogged along at a sleepy pace, nobody in a hurry at all. We had several sharks swimming around us, at anchor. I thought at the time, they were the largest I had ever seen. After disembarking, we sailed for Mombasa where we were to pick up the last load of patients, a very mixed crowd, some whites for Durban and quite a number of blacks for West African ports. We were homeward bound at last, life had been quite pleasant and people in the South African ports had been very kind to the *Guildford Castle's* crew, with entertainments and outings.

Having a few days to spare in Durban, before sailing on our homeward journey, we decided to use one of them to take a trip down the Coast of Natal, to a place called Amanzimtoti. A mixed party of ship's officers, doctors and nurses, went by train to this small place where we were met by a bearded man, who supplied us with two boats to row up the river to his hotel. Practically the only building in sight, the scenery was perfect, with all kinds of trees lining the river banks, with quite a few iguanas bobbing up out of the water. Having completed a good lunch, we rowed back to the beach, and lazed around till the lunch had settled down.

Then some of us decided to go in for a swim, as it was a very hot day and the sea looked inviting. Having finished my swim, I was standing on the beach when a very small native boy appeared, he looked about seven years old. He started pulling at my bathing costume and pointed to the heavy surf where I saw the fourth officer with one of the nurses, waving his hand. I waved back thinking he was enjoying himself but the little boy pushed me and pointed again. I then realized they were in trouble. The little boy had heard them calling when he was in the quiet sand dunes, the roar of the surf being too loud for us to hear them calling from the beach.

I dashed in and got hold of the pair of them, and with the assistance of the fourth officer, managed to bring the nurse to the beach. While struggling back, I saw one of the other nurses, on her knees, praying. I yelled out to her, never mind doing that, come in and help. But again the surf was too loud for her to hear. Anyway we managed without her and I was never sure if it was her prayer, or my help, that saved the nurse. Personally I thought the little black boy deserved all the praise that was going, for drawing my attention to a situation which could have been disastrous.

When we told the hotel keeper about it, he cheerfully said, oh yes, we lose seven or eight people every year here, what with the surf and the sharks. It evidently did not dawn on him to warn us. After this frightening episode we decided to call it a day, and anyway it was near the time for the train to leave.

We were only too pleased to think we had not lost two of our party now that we were homeward bound, after being away for nearly a year. We kept pretty quiet about this when we returned to the ship, as we all felt rather foolish, having taken such a risk with our lives. Especially when I think of the two horses that were seized by sharks and drowned, while exercising on the sea shore in Durban.

The bathing beaches in Durban have piles driven in the sea bed and wire netting spread in between them to keep the sharks out. This in itself should have been a warning to us not to go swimming from an open beach.

After calling at Cape Town, we proceeded up to Lagos, Accra and Secondi, where we had to land the patients by cot in surf boats for, I should think, a rough ride through the surf. Then on to Sierra Leone, where we landed the last of our patients in the quiet harbour of Freetown.

After bunkering and washing all the coal dust off the ship we sailed for Avonmouth, feeling safe from submarine attack, in our hospital ship colours, and a mass of lights at night. We arrived home, after an uneventful voyage, having covered several thousands of miles in our travels, and carried a few thousand sick and wounded.

After signing off we were all sent on leave, and when this was up several people were sent to different ships. I was promoted to second officer and appointed to the *Llandoverly Castle*, a vessel I had served in on her maiden voyage. She was now a hospital ship, the same Captain and Chief Officer were still in her, as on the maiden voyage.

We sailed from Avonmouth to Alexandria and embarked a full compliment of patients for the United Kingdom. On the way back a German submarine surfaced off our port bow and signalled us to stop. We did this at once and he then signalled for us to send a boat. We lowered the port accident boat, with four men and myself in it, and rowed over to it, making fast alongside. Fortunately the weather was quite calm at the time. The Commander from the conning tower asked several questions, and then said, I am sending an officer over to inspect the ship. Quite a young officer and two men boarded the boat, which was rowed back to the *Llandoverly*. I informed the officer that we had a Spanish Naval Officer on board, as had been requested by the Germans to guarantee the ship was being used for hospital cases only. This officer met him as he boarded the vessel, and escorted him to the bridge, where the captain was waiting to meet him. With the Chief officer and Spanish officer he then went through all the wards, escorted by the senior Medical Officer. In the meantime the two men were posted either side of the bridge, as lookouts. I stopped in the boat, with the crew, to make a quick return to the submarine if anything suspicious should show up. After a while one of the lookouts blew a whistle, he had seen some smoke on the horizon. The trio immediately returned to the boat and were ferried back to the submarine, quite satisfied that everything was in order. The officer spoke very good English, also the Commander, and both were quite pleasant in their attitude towards us, and wished us goodbye.

We then proceeded on our homeward voyage, dropping our Spanish officer at Gibraltar. On arrival in Avonmouth, and having landed all our patients, we were transferred to the Canadian Medical Service. The British medical staff were replaced by Canadians, but the crew remained the same. It was winter time when we made our first trip to Halifax, Nova Scotia, but the *Llandoverly* was built for the East Coast of Africa run, everything for a hot weather service. So it is not hard to imagine what conditions on board were like, as it was very wintry in Halifax, with water pipes and winches getting frozen up. We made two trips from Halifax to Alexandria in Egypt, picking up the same Spanish Naval Officer each time, fortunately we were not stopped again.

On our return voyage to Halifax, we heard of the terrible explosion which had wrecked a large part of the town, when an ammunition ship was in collision with a grain ship. The scene was terrible, it was as if a knife had cut up one side of the street, leaving houses standing and on the other side for a considerable distance everything was flat. The stench from the grainship was awful, she was moored at a quay not far from the berth we used for discharging our patients.





**Galway Castle**  
from a Company postcard

Built in 1911 and outward bound for S.Africa, she was torpedoed by U-82 about 200 miles SW of Fastnet on 12th September 1918. In heavy weather and in imminent danger of breaking up, she was abandoned with the loss of 143 of the 950 souls on board. She sank 3 days later.

More at:

[http://www.unioncastlestaffregister.co.uk/SHIP\\_GALWAY\\_CASTLE1\\_01.html](http://www.unioncastlestaffregister.co.uk/SHIP_GALWAY_CASTLE1_01.html)



**The sinking vessel**

had happened until a brother officer came running off the bridge and said we have been torpedoed. The vessel commenced sinking by the stern quickly and the Captain gave orders to abandon ship, and send out S.O.S. on the wireless.

This was not possible as the apparatus had been smashed by the explosion. We had a difficult job getting the boats into the water, as the vessel took a starboard list, rendering some of the port boats useless. The ship was still moving through the water, slowly, as we could not use the engines to take the way off her. The torpedo having hit us in the engine-room, the most vital spot. This put all the machinery out of action, including the dynamos. An attempt was made to start the emergency dynamo but this was situated in the steering engine room right aft and as we got the first flicker of light, her stern went under and stopped the machinery, so all the boat launching was done in the dark, not making things any easier. We eventually got five boats clear, full of people. Two of these were dragged under and the people thrown into the water. The Chief Officer met me on the boat deck and informed me that he had kept an accident boat till the last for the people who had lowered the boats to get away in.

Knowing we did not keep food or water in an accident boat and not relishing drifting around the Atlantic without these, I said I was going down with the ship, to get it over. How lucky I was, that boat was never heard of again. Soon after this I looked over the port side and saw a boat hanging stern up in one davit, the bow just touching the water. I made the forward fall fast, just as a man came along and I explained to him what I intended to do. I lowered the aft fall and the boat levelled up about three feet clear of the water. I yelled to lower away at the same time as I did. The launching was successful as the ship was now still in the water but sinking fast.

All the gear was intact, including water and biscuits, as everything had been lashed to the thwarts and could not tip out. I then called as loud as possible, to find out if there were any more people on board, and said I had a boat in the water. Ten men came along, amongst them was the Captain, who had stuck to the bridge to the last. The man who had helped me to launch the boat was a very small bed-room steward who had never lowered a boat

It was very noticeable among the people of the town, the marks, a blue-black, showing up on their faces especially amongst the school children. Our next trip from Halifax brought us back to Avonmouth, on the way we received a message to search for some members of a ship that had been torpedoed. Apparently the submarine stood some on his deck and, not having room for them below, dived and left them to their fate. We did not succeed in finding anyone.

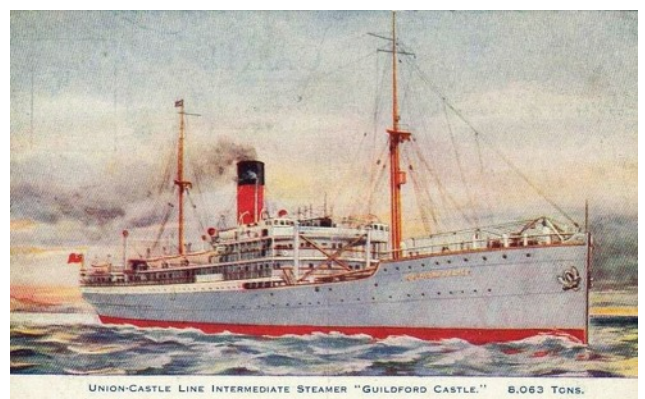
Again, we loaded a full complement of patients, some very bad cases, armless, legless and blind. Also several mental cases, which were kept under guard in wire netted wards.

We had an uneventful voyage to Halifax and, after our usual storing and bunkering, we left for Avonmouth. In port I had received a cablegram announcing the birth of my daughter and, as the ship had no patients on board, the Canadian nurses started knitting woollen garments for me to take home. Sad to say, these never reached the place they were intended for.

*Dawn! Not a thing in sight, only our own boat bobbing up and down like a cork on a boundless ocean. Only too well had the U-86 carried out his plan of wiping out all trace of his dastardly act of sinking a regulation hospital ship. Not content with this, he had done his best to sink all the lifeboats with their occupants. But he did not succeed. Our own boat with 24 men still survived the terrible ordeal.*

A few hours previously, in the darkness of night, the *Llandovery Castle* had been steaming along, everybody on board thinking she was free from attack, having a band of green lights amounting to approximately 500 lamps, right round the ship, in addition to four illuminated red crosses consisting of 70 red lights, to indicate to friend and foe alike that she was a hospital ship on her errand of mercy, fortunately returning from Canada with no patients on board.

But this was not the case. At 9.20 p.m. (27th June 1918) I suddenly found myself blown out of my bunk and landed on the floor of my cabin. On my rude awakening I did not grasp what



Also built in 1911 and s sister ship to the *Galway*, the *Guildford Castle* was beached after a collision in the Elbe with Blue Funnel's *Stentor* on 1st June 1933. She became a total loss.

before, he did a wonderful job. At the last moment I remembered "George", my pet canary, and dashed back into my room, where, with the help of my torch, I found him amongst the wreckage, still in his cage. I put him into a cigarette tin by bending his tail round. Fortunately it was the one I kept his daily supply of seed in, so he did not go hungry, and I put it in my pocket then rushed back to the boat. We had barely pushed off when there was a tremendous explosion, the funnel crashed down and the vessel stood bolt upright then went down like a stone. I could not help exclaiming at the time, "what a wonderful sight under any other circumstances". The Captain replied, "there goes my diary that I have kept all my seagoing life." He was over sixty and felt very sad. The noise was deafening, the boilers bursting, the crockery smashing and hundreds of tons of coal and sand ballast shifting all at once. But it was over quickly. Ten minutes from the time she was struck she had disappeared beneath the waves, leaving only wreckage floating on the surface. To lend weirdness to the sight, several calcium lights were burning attached to lifebuoys which had floated off as the vessel sank.

So I had seen the last of this fine vessel, in which I had sailed with the same Captain four years previously on her maiden voyage. After the noise had ceased, cries for help could be heard all round us and we immediately pulled towards the wreckage and started picking people up from the water. We succeeded in picking up twelve men, one was the Purser, Evans, whom I think I am right in stating was a brother of "Evans of the Broke".

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Evans,\\_1st\\_Baron\\_Mountevans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Evans,_1st_Baron_Mountevans)

He was a lucky man, I heard his call and said, that is the old sergeant major, we will save him next, and it was not till daylight in the morning I found the purser was the last man we saved, thinking it was the sergeant major.

After we had picked up the twelve men from the water I saw a lamp flashing. Thinking it was another boat I answered with my torch. Imagine our surprise on receiving an order to "come alongside at once, you Englishman." At the same moment we saw the dark outline of a German submarine coming towards us. I hailed him and told him to wait as we had several people alongside of us in the water. I was answered by the contents of two revolvers, which were fired in the darkness, and we were then threatened with, as he called it, the big gun if we didn't come to him at once.



**U-86, which sank the Llandoverly Castle**

During this time the Captain, being an elderly man and a bit shaken, had left things to me, the next senior officer in the boat. He said we had better pull alongside, to avoid any further trouble. Compelled to leave our shipmates to drown, we went alongside the submarine, which proved to be the U-86, and in very good English I was ordered to come on board. Not being very anxious to do so I pretended not to hear him. The officer then flashed a torch on to me and said, "Come quickly, you with the white hat, or I will shoot you". There now being no doubt as to the one he wanted, I hoisted myself on to the U boats deck, my heart, I must admit, feeling much lower than it usually did. I was immediately questioned about the ship and the lieutenant showed no surprise when I told him it was a hospital ship and there were fourteen nurses in the boats. In the meantime, the fourth officer was also ordered on board for questioning.



## **Llandoverly Castle**

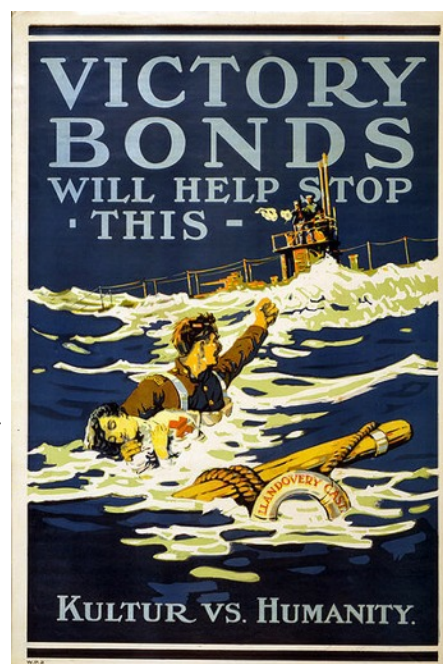
**by Maurice Randall, Imperial War Museum 5605**

During my cross-examination I inadvertently took the tin with "George" in out of my pocket. This was seized immediately and I was looking down the muzzle of a revolver, the tin having been mistaken for a bomb. I quickly told him it was a canary and, after making sure, he handed the tin back. Eventually the fourth officer and myself were told to get back into the boat with the parting words, "Don't get wet, you may be a long time in the boat, but you may not." While showing us the way with a torch, they suddenly saw the Captain and a Canadian doctor in the boat and ordered them on board. The doctor was handled rather roughly when being helped on board, and one of his ankles was broken. The Captain said, "Good-bye, you know what course to steer for Fastnet." But, thank goodness, after questioning them, they were both put back into the boat again. The reason for this soon became obvious. No sooner had we pulled away than the submarine tried to swamp us, and at the same time opened fire at point blank range with his gun, fortunately missing us, as we were too close for his gun to bear. The shells went over our heads and, before he could bear on us again, we were lost in the darkness. Finding other boats, however, he carried out his ghastly work and, as it transpired later, we were the only survivors, numbering twenty four out of a total of two hundred and fifty eight crew and medical staff.

We hoisted sail as soon as possible and set course for the Irish Coast, some 200 miles away. I then discovered the rudder head had been broken off, in the after fall, when one end had been lowered on board. Fortunately there was a piece of rope through the rudder and this enabled us to steer the boat, by pulling which way we wanted to go.

By daylight the wind had dropped and we lowered the mast and sail in case the U-86 was still looking for us but, thank goodness, there was no sign of him. We now took stock of our situation.

Myself in the meantime, wondered if I would ever see my





wife and new born baby. Gone were all the little presents the nurses had knitted for her and, sad to say, although we didn't know at the time, all the nurses had gone too.

There were twenty four of us in the boat, of whom six were in a damaged condition, one with a broken ankle, the others with torn hands and legs, caused by sliding down the boat falls into the boat.

Our provisions consisted of one tin of biscuits and one keg of water to last goodness knows how long - either till we met land or were picked up by some passing vessel. This was very doubtful as the *Llandoverly* was sailing on a direct course, being a hospital ship, all other ships avoiding this route, owing to the submarine menace.

Fortunately we had eight blankets in the boat, also the boats cover, which came in handy when it began to rain. I remember having an orange in my jacket pocket, the Captain and myself had sucked it once or twice during the night. At daybreak I offered it to him again but, unfortunately, it had collected up all the odd bits of fluff in my pocket and he remarked, "I would rather die first." I kept it and chewed the peel when I was feeling hungry, in fact that was the only thing I ate while I was in the boat. As there was no wind we decided to row, dividing our watches into six men in each watch. We rowed for ten minutes and rested twenty minutes throughout the whole day. This was very hard work, as the oars were very heavy. Our progress was poor, the heavy Atlantic swell hindering us and, in addition, we were a very mixed crew - officers, sailors, firemen, stewards and hospital orderlies, some having never used an oar before. When night came, rain came with it but no wind, so we all huddled into the bottom of the boat under the sail and boat cover, to try and keep warm and dry, one officer keeping a lookout. He was given one of the blankets to wrap around himself and try and keep warm. I personally had on my pyjamas, with a uniform coat and trousers over them, shoes with out socks, and a uniform hat. When daylight came, it looked peculiar to see the heads of the men all propping up the boat cover, like some prehistoric monster, and what a feeling of loneliness on looking round, with miles and miles of empty ocean, and with only our small boat on its own. At six in the morning, rations were served for the day, consisting of half a dipper of water, that was about half a tea cup full, and one hard biscuit, with the promise of another half dipper of water, but no biscuit. I did not eat mine, in fact I still have it in my home, practically as good as the day it was issued, after fifty years. A few years ago I put a coat of varnish on for protection, I also have my rowing watch list and a box of matches, dipped in pitch to keep them water-tight. George, my canary had his drink out of the palm of my hand, I had to spit in it, so he could have something to drink, he was allowed a little from the keg. He was flying around in the daytime, and fed out of my hand, fortunately I had a little seed in his tin. I had tamed him on board and he would come to my finger when I held it out. To think he was saved, when so many good people were lost. George died four years later and was appropriately buried at sea in a cigarette tin.

The next day was a repetition of the first, and only once did we sight the smoke of a steamer. At dawn we could smell the scent of new mown hay drifting towards us from Ireland and this raised our hopes of soon making land, for little did we think we were still over fifty miles off. As the day wore on we had a shock - we saw what was taken for the outline of a submarine making our way.

But imagine our delight when we recognised the good old white ensign flying at the stern of a destroyer. She steamed at right angles to us and did not attempt to come

direct. We thought they had not seen us but wisely he took a roundabout way, in case we were a decoy.

The destroyer steamed by us, asked how long we had been in the boat and had we seen a submarine since daylight. We told him no. The Commander sung out, stand by to board us and we will come round. The destroyer was soon alongside of us and we all started to climb on board. The Captain unfortunately fell overboard but we managed to get him out of the water and on the destroyer, which turned out to be *H.M.S. Lysander*.

They tried to tow our boat but their speed was too much and it had to be cut adrift. Our troubles were over. After being picked up we were given a hot bath and a good meal. I had no idea that hot coffee could taste so good. George was given a much larger biscuit tin.

The Commander of the *Lysander* immediately sent a wireless report to Queenstown and it was not long before we met a flotilla going out to search for survivors but, alas, with no luck. We were the sole survivors and, strangely enough, twelve of us were the last to leave the poor old *Llandoverly*, after getting the other boats away. We were lucky in getting picked up, as the *Lysander* was running short of bunkers and had deviated from her original course to obtain some in Queenstown. She had been escorting the *Olympic*, with three other destroyers. In a few hours we arrived in port and allowed to send a short telegram home, just saying "Am safe". After bunkering, the Admiral said take these poor devils on to Plymouth, as they are a long way from home here. This was only an overnight journey for such a fast ship as the *Lysander*. The Commander had orders to look out for a submarine working off Land's End but did not find one.

What a delight to see the green fields of England at daylight, as we entered Plymouth Sound, knowing the terrible ordeal we had been through was over. We were all very tired, as we had not slept worth talking about for three nights. It was difficult to get to sleep on the destroyer as the wardroom was right over the propellers and, to me, sounded very loud, not being used to it.



The officers and crew of the *Lysander* were very kind to us and went to a lot of trouble to make our involuntary stay with them as comfortable as possible. The Midshipman, who lent me a white muffler, was a cadet from Clan Line, a man I was to meet again, many years later. The Company showed their appreciation for saving us by presenting the ship with a gift, but I cannot remember the character of this.

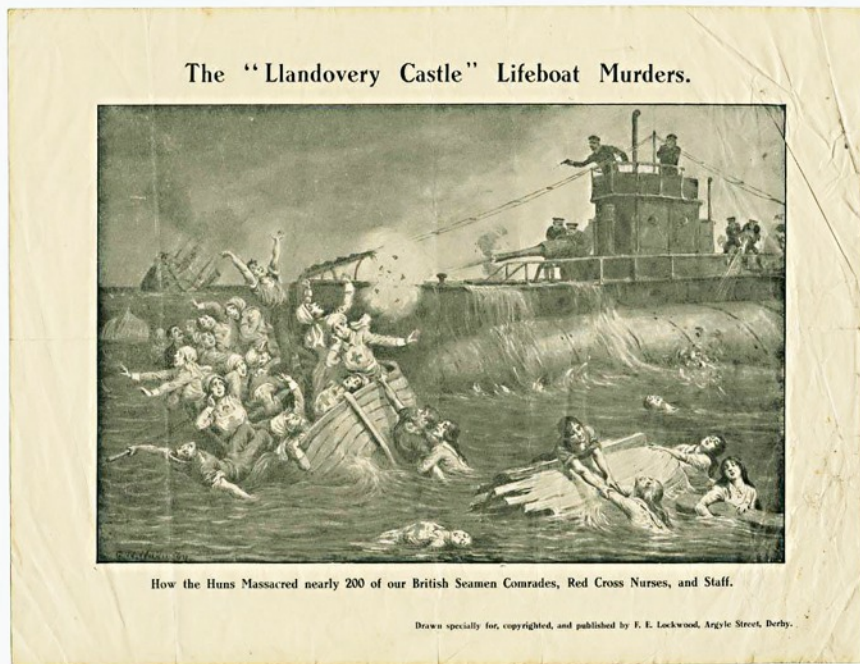
On landing, we were sent to our various homes, still not knowing if any more survivors had been picked up. I must say all the people in the boat behaved in a wonderful manner and did exactly as they were told, when they were told.

So ended the worst experience that I had to endure during my long seafaring career. I was mighty glad to get home and see my wife and new born baby, which at one time I had given up all hopes of doing. After a couple of trips to the Admiralty, to give my version as to what had happened, I was given leave and then joined the shore staff for a while, relieving other officers so they could go on leave.

*To be continued*

## The Aftermath of the Llandovery Castle Incident

Charlie Chapman and Captain Sylvester may have had a misplaced faith in the Hague Convention, which gave an enemy vessel the right to stop and search a Hospital Ship, but not to sink it. The German High Command was convinced that American airmen and ammunition were being transported under the cover of hospital ships and declared unrestricted submarine warfare at the beginning of 1917. It appeared to be a specific policy to target British Hospital ships for destruction and at least nine were torpedoed and sunk, including three other Union Castle ships. At least five others fell foul of mines laid by submarines, including the *Britannic*, a sister ship of the *Titanic*, which was completed after war broke out and never carried a fare paying passenger. But none, it would seem, other than the *Llandovery*, were subject to the barbarity of survivors being fired upon. It raised much anger and outrage in both Britain and Canada, and provoked such illustrations as shown here and the Canadian propaganda poster on page 12. Two of the fourteen Canadian nursing sisters who died were from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and the Canadian reaction was typified by Brigadier George Tuxford, a former homesteader also from Moose Jaw, on the eve of the Battle of Amiens: "I gave instructions to the Brigade that the battle cry on the 8th of August should be 'Llandovery Castle,' and that that cry should be the last to ring in the ears of the Hun as the bayonet was driven home."



No bayonet for Helmut Patzig, the commander of U-86, who was credited with sinking 24 vessels during WW1. He was awarded the Iron Cross, 2nd class, on 11th May 1916 and the Iron Cross, 1st Class, on 6th March 1917. On 11th July 1918, just two weeks after the *Llandovery* atrocity, he was decorated with the

### **Royal House Order of Hohenzollern.**

Ironically, this was an order of *chivalry* of the House of Hohenzollern (a noble family and royal dynasty of Prussia, Germany and Romania).

It should be said that these awards were common to U boat commanders, 403 of the 2nd class and 288 of the 1st being made during WW1. The Royal House Order was an intermediate award, between the Iron Cross and the highest honour, *Pour Le Mérite*, and 83 of these were awarded. Patzig went to lengths to conceal his crime and it is probable that the German government was unaware of the extent of the incident at the time that this latest decoration was awarded.

After the war, the Allies submitted 900 names of individuals accused of committing alleged war crimes but the Germans refused to extradite their nationals to allied courts and eventually it was agreed that a much reduced number of 45 would be tried, at Leipzig, in 1921. In the event only 12 were brought to trial, 5 of whom were found not guilty and the rest mostly receiving sentences of a few months. The harshest sentences, four years hard labour, were handed down to Ludwig Dithmar and John Boldt, the officers on U-86 who had stayed on deck and manned the guns. Patzig could not be found and was never brought to trial and a fourth man, the boatswain's mate Meissner, who was the best 'gun-layer' on board and also thought to have participated in the firing, had by this time died.

The Court found that "the act of Patzig is homicide", and condemned his two officers for their participation, even though they would have been obeying their commander's orders. Both men had refused to give evidence and it was reported that "*when the judges had withdrawn, several members of the public were seen to go up to the condemned men and sympathize with them. There was an electric atmosphere both in the Court and amid the crowd outside. The British Mission retired quietly to its private room, and then left the Court by a side-door, closely guarded by German police. Thus the possibility of any unpleasant incident was avoided.*" The two men 'escaped' while underway to prison and it is unclear if they were ever recaptured, but it is certain that they never served more than 4 months. It is reported (Wikipedia) that at the Court of Appeal, both lieutenants were acquitted on the grounds that the captain was solely responsible.

Helmut Patzig resurfaced, if you'll forgive the expression, when the Second World War broke out, and served the Nazi regime in several staff positions until he took command of the former Dutch boat (submarine) UD 4 on 28 Jan 1941. He commanded that boat, no patrols, until 15 Oct 1941 when he again served in staff positions until retirement in 1945. He died in his bed in 1984, aged 93.

Extracts from the court proceedings record that: *Chapman, who was second officer on board the "Llandovery Castle" has impressed to the Court as a quiet, clear-headed and reliable witness. The evidence has also shown that he did not lose his head while the ship was sinking, but that he coolly took all the necessary measures.*

You can read much more about the sinking at <http://www.gwpda.org/naval/lcastl11.htm> and a very comprehensive account of the trial at <http://www.gwpda.org/naval/lcastl12.htm>



**Helmut Patzig in Kriegsmarine uniform**



# Rope Ends

## New Members

**Roman Domanski** is employed by DNVGL Noble Denton, the group formed in 2012 with the merger of Det Norske Veritas and GL Noble Denton, where he is Global Marine Casualty Investigation Co-ordinator. He joins us to expand networking and further his maritime knowledge.

**Mark Inkster** qualified as a Master of business administration at Henley College and is now a Company Director with interests in timber import and shipping salvage. He is Past Commodore of the Royal Southern Yacht Club - the youngest ever - and is a Representative of the International Council of Yacht Clubs. As Commodore of the RSnYC he has been a guest at the Sea Pie Supper and enjoyed the company and ethos of the Club.

**Andrew G Moll** is a Captain RN (Rtd) and currently Deputy Chief Inspector of the MAIB. When he joined the RN in 1978 he initially specialised as a Fighter Controller and was in that capacity in *HMS Coventry* when the ship was lost during the Falklands conflict. His naval career was largely sea-going, spent in destroyers and aircraft carriers. His commands included: the Omani fast patrol boat *SNV AL FULK*; the Type 42 destroyer, *HMS YORK*; and the Type 22 frigate, *HMS CHATHAM*. Ashore, he completed two appointments in the MOD; in the Directorate of Naval Operations and as the Secretary to the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

After 27 years of naval service, Andrew joined the MAIB in 2005 and was appointed to his present position in September 2010. He is also Chairman of Trustees for Southampton Sea Cadets, an RYA Powerboat Trainer and Advanced Powerboat Examiner and Yachtmaster. He is a member of the Nautical Institute and of the British Psychological Society. For relaxation he and his wife Frances enjoy cruising the south coast area in their motor cruiser and long distance touring with the Triumph Owners' Club. Andrew gives two main reasons for joining us: firstly he feels he has reached a stage in his career where he is ready to 'give something back' to help others get on and develop; secondly, as he becomes increasingly immersed into Southampton's marine community, joining the Club seems a very good way to continue making professional connections.



From "Scanner", the newsletter of the Solent Maritime Society:

"It has been reported that a recent MCA inspection of the *Calshot* revealed her hull to be so corroded, that a maximum of three persons are to be allowed on board at any one time. The likely conclusion to this saga is that she will be taken for breaking in the near future. Very sad, indeed - a pity we don't have similar success in preserving old tugs as the Dutch. Also in trouble is *Hotspur IV*, currently at Saxon Wharf, again with her hull in a sad state of repair."

## 250 Club

Here is a corrected list of winners for the past six months. (The names shown in the last edition were nearly right but in the wrong order).

March M R Donaghy J M M Noble

April E T H Perry D F Swayne

May F N Pedersen I W Stirling

June N Kaaber R J Pilley

July P Grant P Marriott

August G F Cartwright P J Davies

## Gone Aloft



Past Captain Peter Moore, RN, (Rtd) who went aloft in June, aged 89, was Captain of the Club in 1994. He had the distinction of being one of the few officers who served in both the Royal and Merchant Navies, having left the RN with the rank of Commander and later joining the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. He joined the club in 1987 and resigned in 2012 due to health reasons.

## The Sea Pie Supper 2015

As you will have read in a previous edition of "*The Cachalot*" circumstances have dictated that the 2015 Sea Pie Supper venue will change from The City Cruise Terminal to *St. Mary's Stadium* – the home of the "Saints".

This delightful venue – with adequate free parking – has many attributes but it can seat a total of 500 only, whereas the Cruise Terminal could cater for some 600+

SO ....considerable thought has been given to the allocation of tickets for this much sought-after event and it has been decided that as it would be unfair to penalise our "corporate" guests (who have supported us so faithfully) there will be no reasonable limit on the number of tickets that a Cachalot may purchase and it will be a matter of "First come – First served"

Please note ticket requests will be recorded but places are not guaranteed until payment has been received, subject of course to the limits of the seating capacity.

Tickets will be available to purchase from 1130 on

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6<sup>th</sup>. 2014.**

**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](mailto:office@cachalots.org.uk)

Editor: [te\\_clark@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:te_clark@tiscali.co.uk)

Web site: [www.cachalots.org.uk](http://www.cachalots.org.uk)

[captain@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:captain@cachalots.org.uk)  
[staffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:staffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk)  
[boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk)  
[storekeeper@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:storekeeper@cachalots.org.uk)  
[postcaptain@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:postcaptain@cachalots.org.uk)  
[functions@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:functions@cachalots.org.uk)  
[membership@cachalots.org.uk](mailto:membership@cachalots.org.uk)  
[editor@cachalots.org.uk](mailto: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

Sun Sept 7 Merchant Navy Day service, Holy Rood  
Fri Sept 12 Club Buffet Supper, Club Room  
Thu Oct 2 Coach trip to Bristol  
Fri Oct 10 Macmillan Coffee Morning, Club Room  
Fri Oct 17 Trafalgar Dinner, Club Room  
**Thu Nov 6 Sale of Sea Pie Supper tickets**  
Sat Nov 15 Curry Lunch, Kuti's  
Sat Dec 6 Christmas Dinner, King's Court  
Sat Dec 13 Christmas Lunch, Seafarers' Centre

### **Due to an anticipated break**

**The cut-off date for the next edition will be  
two weeks earlier than usual, on  
31st October 2014**