

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 55

March 2015

Post Captain's Log

As I make this, my last, Captain's log for The Cachalot, I have to wonder where my year as Club Captain has gone. It has been a very fulfilling year for me and I have enjoyed many functions some of which Lesley was able to enjoy as well.

The Harpooners Dinner held in November was well attended and a very convivial evening was enjoyed by all. Even my attempt at telling a joke did not go down too badly, much to my surprise Joke telling is certainly not my forte!

Our Christmas festivities started with our Christmas Dinner at Kings Court on the 6th. December. 39 of us enjoyed a very good meal. As is becoming the norm now, the portions, especially of the Turkey were large to say the least.

Christmas lunch was held downstairs in the Seafarers Centre. Steve and his team did an excellent job and 29 of us sat down to enjoy it. We met for drinks in the Club Room upstairs before dining. It was decided that dining downstairs was the better option as it made it so much easier to cater for us rather than face the hassle of sending our food upstairs.

Burns Night was again a very popular and memorable occasion. Our thanks to Alec, on the pipes, and an excellent sword dance performed by Imogen Smart. John Noble addressed the Haggis and Ian Stirling read the Immortal Memory. Lionel gave us his usual excellent address to the Lassies. Lesley replied for the Lassies and was rewarded with a bunch of flowers from Lionel. It was Lionel's 80th. birthday and we embarrassed him by singing 'Happy Birthday' and presenting him with a Birthday cake in the form of a Cachalot. The Hall family kindly assisted with the Sangs and Clatter afterwards, ably lead by Alec.

Raffles were held at these last three functions and an excellent sum of £444 was raised for my chosen charity, Cancer Research UK.

Curry lunches continue to be very popular and remain very reasonably priced. My thanks to Peter Grant, our Functions Officer and all those who serve on the Entertainments committee for their efforts throughout the year.

My year as Captain has been made relatively simple due to the strenuous efforts of the Club's Officers, Harpooners, Functions Officer and his committee members, not forgetting the excellent work done by Richard in the Office and, of course, Liz who looks after us so well in the Club Room. We are also very fortunate to have Terry to edit *The Cachalot* as well as preparing the menus for our various functions and assisting in helping to make these such memorable occasions.

My final function of the year was, as always, the Sea Pie Supper. As the Cruise Terminal was not available this year we investigated other venues. Unfortunately, the Guild Hall is no longer deemed suitable for this function so we elected to try St. Mary's stadium instead. This can only seat 500 but it is a much nicer setting. It also the base of Halo, the caterers we used at the Cruise Terminal. So it was far easier for them to cater for us here. The night went very well and I heard nothing but praise for it although, as always, we have a few things to address before our next Sea Pie Supper. It was a pleasure to meet our VIP's including Nigel Atkinson, the new Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire. It was also good to see Stowaway members Dame Mary Fagan and Captain Christopher Fagan as well as Lord West. Councillor Susan Blatchford attended in her role as Mayor of Southampton and as Admiral of the Port. Sir Alan Massey was our Principal Guest. He gave an excellent and witty speech which was enjoyed by all. Sir Alan is CEO of the MCA. Finally it gave me great pleasure to invest Jeremy Smart as the new Club Captain for 2015. Jeremy is well used to this role as he was our Captain in 1998. An injured leg, due to a skiing accident, did not stop Jeremy from taking up his new post.

The Southampton Ship Owners Association once again were kind enough to donate a prize for the prize draw started last year. This year an impressive £3882 was raised for the Southampton Seafarers Centre. Thanks to everyone for contributing.

Special thanks go to Ken Dagnall, our new Boatsteerer, for his efforts in arranging the SPS. Quite a steep learning curve for him but fortunately he had the assistance of his predecessor, our redoubtable Reg Kelso to help break him in.

Ian Odd,
Post Captain, Southampton Master Mariners



Skittles Evening



at the
SOUTHAMPTON (OLD) GREEN BOWLING CLUB
(The world's oldest bowling green, Lower Canal Walk, Southampton.)
On

Friday, 27th March

Another popular and relaxed evening and to keep it simple we have decided to stick with

Fish & Chips

again for the main and this year there will also be the selection of delicious sweets for you to choose from.

Price retained at **£13** per head.
1900 onwards

Names to the notice board or Richard by 13 March please,



Curry Lunch



As we go to press, the first Curry Lunch of the year was well enjoyed by 30 regulars at Kuti's in Oxford Street on 21st Feb. and the next one was booked there and then

25th April, 1200 for 1230.

Price held at **£12.50** per head.

A Club Supper has been arranged
in the Club Room

On

Friday 29th May

We haven't yet arranged a speaker, or even the menu, but when we tell you that the caterer will be John Davis, you know that you won't be disappointed.

1900 for 1930

Price expected to be around **£26** per head
and numbers limited to **38**
on a first come basis.

THE SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE

Thursday 12 June 2014

7.15 pm latest for 7.30 pm

Preacher

The Right Rev'd Tim Dakin

Bishop of Winchester

Southampton Albion Band

Everyone is welcome to attend this
historic service



Distinguished Guests at the Sea Pie Supper

Jeremy Smart (Captain Elect); Dame Mary Fagan (Stowaway); Admiral The Lord West (Stowaway); Capt Christopher Fagan; Rear Admiral John Lang (President, Winchester Sea Cadets); Sqn Ldr David Le Mare (Cdre, RAFYC); Cdre Jeremy Rigby (Naval Base Commander, Portsmouth); Mrs Sally Thompson (CEO Business South); Mr Alex Campbell (Chairman, Southampton Seafarers' Centre); Mr Nigel Atkinson (Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire); Mrs Christine Atkinson; Cllr Sue Blatchford (Mayor of Southampton & Admiral of the Port); Mr Gregory Thorne (Mayor's Consort); Capt Ian McNaught (Deputy Master, Trinity House); Capt Robert McCabe (President, Nautical Institute); Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey (CEO MCA, Principal Speaker); Maj Gen Jamie Balfour (High Sheriff of Hampshire); Mrs Lorna Attwood; Commodore Rob Dorey (Cdre RFA); The Very Rev'd James Attwell (Dean of Winchester); Capt Ian Odd (Club Captain).

Sea Pie Supper 2015



The Sea Pie Supper is the occasion when, traditionally, the new Club Captain is installed by the old. This year, on 6th Feb., in the new (to us) shiny venue of St. Mary's Stadium, 503 members and their guests gathered in the Mike Channon Suite to enjoy our unique mixture of pomp and informality and we don't think that many of them were disappointed.

After the meal of *Crew Soup*, followed by *Sea Pie* (no longer layers of whatever-may-come and broken biscuits, but now a delicious beef, red wine, mushroom and tarragon pie) Captain Ian Odd handed over the Club Collar and installed Captain Jeremy Smart as his successor. Jeremy, not a novice to the role (he was Captain before, in 1998) responded by presenting Ian with his Past Captains medal and proposing the toast to 'Our Guests'. He then introduced the Principal Guest and Speaker, Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey, CEO of the MCA and therefore Jeremy's boss.

Sir Alan's speech was both informative and amusing and hit all the right notes for such an occasion. After which he responded with the toast to 'The Cachalots'.

Following a short break a prize draw was held for an i-Pad device, generously donated by the Southampton Shipowners Association. And they weren't the only generous ones, for the draw had raised a magnificent **£3882**, all of which will go to the Southampton Seafarer' Centre. We would like to think that this generosity reflects the participants' satisfaction with the evening thus far. The prize was won by an 'Old Codger' on table 42 and, no, I don't understand it either, I just print the place cards as requested.



It was then on to the Sea Shanties, led by our Honorary Shantyman, David King. And this year we had jettisoned *The Leaving of Liverpool* (only a mere folk-cum-pop song after all, *sniff*) and taken on board a more traditional shanty, *South Australia* (lots of *heave aways* and *haul aways* to keep us bellowing). I don't think there were any Aussies present but it seemed to go down well. The evening's entertainment ended with another tradition, a rousing rendition of *Land of Hope and Glory*, followed, of course, by *The National Anthem*.

By the time the Boatsteerer called 'Who Goes Home', there was many a man there that had drunk up his full bumper but I suspect that the bitter NE'ly wind outside the stadium had a sobering effect.

Our new venue is blessed with spacious parking and a safe pick-up point, just another of its attractions.

On which subject, those members who attended the SPS will find a brief questionnaire accompanying this newsletter. We would value your input on your experiences of the event so that we can, hopefully, improve on it where required.

Over the page you will find reference to our event in an article from Lloyd's List of 16 February. It comes courtesy of its author, Cachalot Michael Grey MBE, who is a past editor of Lloyd's List and an internationally respected maritime commentator.

It is one of two thought provoking articles by Michael that will resonate with many fellow Cachalots and that I am pleased to be able to include in this edition. Elsewhere you will find other informed and pertinent pieces about current maritime happenings, also from respected maritime experts. Which you might find a welcome change from the 100 year old ramblings of ancient mariners but, hey, I've said it before, you give me the copy and I will print it (within reason).

I will use this space to remind members of the *Cachalite* bulletin service. Occasional emails (57 to date) are dispatched to those on the list to keep them updated and reminded of club happenings between editions of this newsletter. The list is drawn up from addresses as supplied to the club, with the option to withdraw if preferred. If you would like to be included in the list, please advise us of your current email address, either to myself or to the office at the addresses on the back page.

Editor

New Members

Anthony Birr is the recently retired head of the Hampshire Constabulary Marine Unit, where he was instrumental in the procurement and putting into service of the four bespoke vessels that now form the unit. After 5 years in the RN and having served 27 years with the police as a detective specialising in maritime intelligence and marine investigations, he now has his own maritime security consultancy. Tony hopes that his membership will bring a different background to the maritime industry.

Paul Compton rejoins us 'now that he has more time'. He originally joined in 1990 and is currently Captain of the TS *Pelican*, a three masted sail trainer based in Weymouth. Paul has also served in *Royalist* and *Astrid* and was a Sea Cadet officer for over 30 years. He has also worked in the mega yacht industry. A Lt Cdr RNR, he is now Rear Commodore of the Royal Dorset Yacht Club and sails a 28' Shipman.

Roderick Brandon Johnson is a Master Mariner and currently Marine Manager for Admiralty Law practitioners Stephenson Harwood LLP. He is an Associate Fellow of the Nautical Institute and a Member of the International Institute of Marine Surveyors. His interests include the arctic, yachting and maritime safety policy. He joins us to remain in contact with former ship-mates and current colleagues. He says he is not getting any younger but that is just another club that we are all affiliated with. Rod did attach details of his career for our interest but unfortunately it somehow became detached and our apologies to him for that.

Phillip Anthony Messinger is another re-joiner and a Master Mariner with a Post Graduate Diploma in Management Studies. Also Commander RD* RNR and a Fellow of the NI. Now retired he has more time to follow his maritime interests, gardening, history and grandchildren. He values the friendship of many members and wishes to re-ignite such relationships.

John Parsons is a Master Mariner, Managing Director of JP Marine Consultants Ltd and a SIRE ship Inspector. He is Member of the Nautical Institute and has interests in cars and boating. He joins us for the social aspects of the club and to meet with fellow maritime professionals.

Leslie Street is a Master Mariner who attended Boulevard pre-sea training in Hull and first worked on trawlers before serving his time as a cadet with Bank Line. He progressed his career through to Master with Manchester Liners, Post Office Cable ships, Court Line and Blandford Shipping, serving on cargo ships, tankers, bulk carriers and passenger ships. After three years as Master with Thome Shipmanagement he came ashore and tried hotel and public house ownership without success before working in port control in Poole. Then on to Colchester as Harbour Master/Pilot before ending his career with 16 years as a Thames Pilot with the PLA, 13 of them as 1st Class. He retired in 2007 and lives with his wife in Sherborne. Les says that he enjoys being in the company of people in the same profession because hearing them talk helps to jog his failing memory.

Lee Wartlier is a BSc (Hons) who, after a 'short lived RN career', worked on hydrographic ocean survey vessels before specialising in cargo survey work for container lines and terminals, specifically involving yacht shipping. He is a member of the International Institute of Marine Surveying and the International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association and a registered expert witness. He recently set up his own company, SG Marine. He is also a powerboat instructor and joins us to expand professional and personal links.

The Shantyman's Chorus

I was at two shipping dinners last week, although not, I should point out, on the same evening. On the Friday evening, members of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club (known as the Cachalots) and their guests crammed into Southampton Football Club for their fabled Sea Pie Supper, an important element of the maritime calendar in these parts.

Our new Club Captain was installed - Captain Jeremy Smart of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, who might be described as the "chief enforcer" and the terror of maritime malefactors who stray into these waters. We listened to his boss Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey, giving a very upbeat speech about the agency and why it punches so far above its weight in the world of maritime administrations, which it undoubtedly does. He also emphasised the credentials of the MCA as a friend of dogs, with the Coastguard teams rescuing literally hundreds of these furry friends from cliffs and quick sands around our coasts and reuniting them with their grateful owners.

Then it was on to the sea shanties, which is always one of my favourite parts of the evening. "Spanish Ladies" invariably brings a lump to my throat as I try and "rant and roar like true British sailors", but somehow fail, when I think how relatively few of these people there are, these days. But it is not an occasion for such maudlin thoughts, with 500 of us being - "jolly to drown melancholy" - as the shanty so crisply advises.

The previous Monday I had attended the annual dinner of the UK Chamber of Shipping, where nobody, at least officially, sings, but is a large gathering of the maritime good and great. This too was an upbeat affair, despite all the uncertainties brought about by both political and hydrocarbon volatility and the consequences of the traditional over-optimism of ship owners. There are other traditions alive and well here, with the shipping minister telling everyone how brilliantly the government is doing in supporting shipping with its "maritime growth study" and the President telling the shipping minister that more oil is needed to lubricate the wheels of industry. It is the formulae, most years.

The President, Marcus Bowman nevertheless managed to enthuse about the "massive opportunities that exist in global shipping", but suggested that there really was more room for Brits to get out and grasp a few more of these. More entrepreneurs from the UK, recommended Mr Bowman, should cast their bread upon the waters, in the way they once did, in the anticipation that it would return, buttered on both sides.

You might agree with the President, that it would be great to see something of a maritime renaissance in a land where there was once such an affinity with the sea. But you only have to ask yourself why there are not more marine adventurers, and the answer immediately pops up, in the precarious finances of so many of those presently involved.

Your streetwise UK entrepreneurs are arguably too clever and well informed to take a punt in shipping, if you consider this is primarily about marine transport, rather than merely speculating in ships with borrowed money. They can see the endemic overcapacity in most sectors and discern the very real reluctance among those who use ships to pay a reasonable rate for their employment. They see ship operators racing around the world, seeking the cheapest possible labour to man their hugely complex ships, the everlasting squeeze on costs and the attitude of shippers, who think all their birthdays have come at once as they torture those operating the tonnage they employ.

Chamber of Shipping presidents are required to demonstrate a certain optimism, but I would suggest that a lot of water must pass under the bridge before we see the sort of maritime bravado that was prevalent in Victorian times, when shipping was a genuinely rewarding business. It would be interesting to see what would happen in the TV show "Dragon's Den" if some bold person racked up to ask for a substantial sum for a share in a ship! A fast retreat down the elevator, I would suggest.

There is, said the President, "a global shortage of seafarers" with an obvious need for "a new seafaring generation", which offers a link between my two dinners; seafarers of every generation being present at the event in Southampton. Mr Bowman is absolutely right, but as long as the rewards in the industry remain squeezed, the real demand is for cheap, rather than UK seafarers.

We can still find people interested in the maritime industry, even a sea career, where there is enormous technical challenge and genuine interest in essential and socially important work. But we still have well trained and educated cadets struggling to find a permanent position once qualified, a shortage of training places aboard ship and an insufficient number of employers willing to pay the going rate for a British seafarer, when cheap and cheerful foreign crews can be employed, on British ships, under the red ensign. If we are to produce genuine maritime "growth" with employment for a new generation, who may just possibly number an entrepreneur or two among them, we have to square this circle. Otherwise, we will all "rant and roar" in vain.

Michael Grey MBE

Lloyd's List ,Viewpoint, 16 February 15

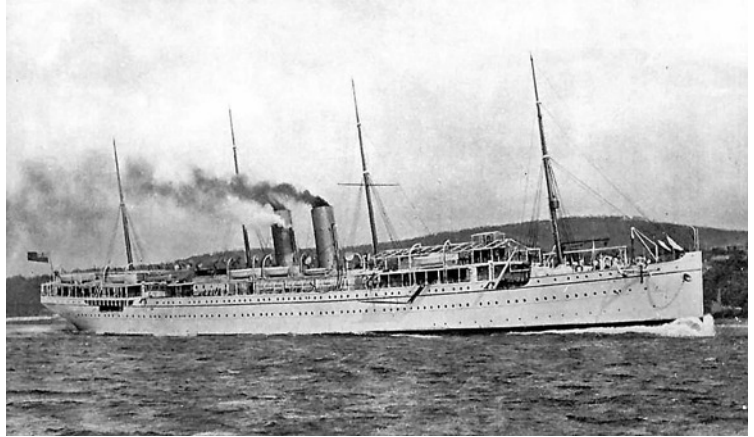
Fifty Years on Salt Water

Episode 10: After the trials of war, Charlie Chapman resumes a more relaxing seafaring life, but continues to be dogged by the spectre of the Llandoverly Castle incident.

After my leave was up I joined the *Kenilworth Castle* in Southampton, on the mail run to South Africa. This was a complete and pleasant change, to be able to see old friends at the Cape Ports again, but unfortunately this did not last long.

After two voyages I was appointed to the *Huntscastle*, as Chief Officer. At the time she was in Suez and I had to join her there. This meant travelling across France by train, joining the P&O liner *Caledonia* in Marseilles, then on to Alexandria, in Egypt, and by train again to Suez.

This was the first and only time I had been a passenger on a liner and I must admit I did not like it. I was cooped up in a small cabin with three other people, the weather was bad, so the port holes had to be closed, and a couple of them were sea-sick, which did not make things any pleasanter. One was a High Court Judge, in Sudan, and he remembered me as an officer on the *Llandoverly Castle*, when he was a passenger on her maiden voyage. He was very interested to hear the story of the sinking of the *Llandoverly* as a hospital ship, so much so that he told Lord Allenby, who was also a passenger, about it. I was later introduced to him and had to tell him the story all over again. He seemed keen to hear all the details as he was still an active army officer.



Charlie, by now a Union Castle man, did not enjoy his enforced passage on the P&O *Caledonia*.

The *Caledonia* was a very old ship, long and narrow, a single propeller ship, having four masts and two funnels and was a good hand at rolling and pitching. Consequently there was a good bit of sea-sickness around which didn't help to make things happy.

The train journey to Suez was very uninteresting; sandy desert nearly all the way, occasionally passing through large villages, not large enough to be called towns, with camel caravans making towards them.

On arrival in Suez I boarded the *Huntscastle*. She was previously a German ship, captured in the early days of the war and converted into a 'Horse Transport'. She was now being prepared to carry 875 horses, from Suez to Basra in the Persian Gulf. These were embarked the day after my arrival, with about 250 troops of the 'Hodson's Horse', an Indian regiment, to look after them.

We sailed just before dark and set course down the Gulf of Suez. I had just finished my watch, which was from 4pm to 8pm, and preparing to turn in when there was that dreadful call of 'Fire', the most dreaded call at sea. I dashed on deck in the dark and was informed that the engine room was on fire. For a time I felt lost, as I had only been on the ship just over 24 hours and had no idea where the hose connections were. The Second and Third officers were also newcomers.

Fortunately the Boatswain and some of the crew were old hands on board and they got the hoses going quickly. There was such a lot to do at once, the engine was stopped and the ship lost steerage way and, as we were near the shore, anchors had to be got ready. I could hear the Chief Engineer down below, yelling to the men on the hoses to keep the water away from the dynamos. My chief worry was I was afraid the horses might stampede, when they got the smell of fire, also one hold was stacked right up to the deck with hay and fodder. Fortunately the fire was soon brought under control and the engine started again, slowly, till the damage had been cleared up. We then signalled to the ships who were standing by us, that we did not need their services and they proceeded on their way.

I dread to think what would have happened with all those horses down below if we had not got the fire under control. The troops with their white officers were excellent, both with the assistance they gave us and in keeping the horses quiet. Eventually things were straightened up in the engine room and we worked up to full speed again. This was only eight knots, hardly fast enough to give the horses any air down below, in spite of windsails down each hatch.

The Red Sea is very hot at any time of the year but, in spite of this, we only lost one horse during the whole journey and that was shot for some reason or other.

We put into Aden for coal bunkers and evidently we did not take on enough, as later in the voyage we suffered coal fever, that is, being worried at not having sufficient coal to reach port. It really was a nasty feeling, as nowhere on our route could we find any mention in the 'Sailing Directions' of a coaling port. Only hundreds and hundreds miles of sand hills, with an occasional small port for dhows to put into.

Enquiries were made over the wireless about any place where coal could be obtained. We eventually received a message, to the effect that there was some coal at a small Island called Henjam, if we could reach it, as it was well up the Persian Gulf. We made it. Two lighters were brought alongside but there was no labour to work it, so we had to do it

ourselves with the help of the troops. This took some time, as there was a heavy swell and the lighters were rolling heavily alongside, causing the people is them to be sea-sick. The Island was just a desolate sand hill, with one or two buildings and not a tree or blade of grass in sight.

Unfortunately our Third Engineer died while we were there and, owing to the very hot weather, arrangements had to be made right away to get him buried. I informed the carpenter that the body measured five feet six inches, but being a Greek and not understanding much English, he made the coffin six feet five inches. In the meantime I had sent a party ashore to dig a grave, which was really only a hole in the sand. I hurriedly sent a man ashore and told them to make the grave longer, this being quicker than making the coffin shorter, as everything was ready for the funeral when I found out the mistake. The coffin was lowered into a lifeboat and a second boat towed it ashore. Half way from the boat to the grave, I realised the lowering ropes had been left in the boat and a man was sent hurriedly back for them. I slowed the funeral party down to a very slow walk, and the man caught up with us before we reached the grave, where our Captain was waiting to read the service. On the way back to the ship he congratulated me on the slow and reverent way in which we approached the grave. We never let on about the real reason for this. After all, we were professional sailors and not undertakers. We marked the grave with a wooden cross made out of two lengths of teak wood, used for keeping the horses apart in the holds, suitably inscribed by the carpenter with his mallet and chisel.



The only picture of the *Huntscastle* that could be found. She doesn't appear in the Union Castle ship list either. Built in 1902 as the *Louisiana*, she returned to the German East Africa Line in 1921 as the *Sultan* and was broken up in 1933

When bunkering was finished we proceeded on our way to Basra, picking up a pilot at the mouth of the river Euphrates. The journey up the river was very pleasant, both banks of the river were overgrown with date palms and other trees, which was very pleasing to the eye and restful after having seen nothing but water and sand for days on end.

On arrival we were ordered to a military wharf to be greeted by a sergeant-major, who asked, when will we be ready for the horses? I informed him that they were all ready to walk ashore. He replied, I thought you had come in for a load, we have hundreds of them here. Anyway, we landed them and left them to sort out their own problems.

The stay in Basra was pleasant, we spent Christmas there and had a couple of invitations to parties on shore and we gave one in return. The most notable thing was the weather; by day the heat was intense but the nights were quite cold, in fact in the early morning when the crew were washing decks, the water came out of the hose in an icy slush.

Having discharged the troops and all the horses, the remaining fodder was landed and the ship generally cleaned up. We then received orders to proceed to Bombay to be dismantled, our work as a horse transport had come to an end.

The holds were completely gutted out and made ready to load a cargo of wheat in Karachi, for the United Kingdom, much to everybody's delight.

The ship was swarming with rats, as there had been such a lot of fodder for them to feed on. Now they were hungry and easy to catch. I sat on a hatch one evening and lowered a cage trap down on a piece of rope, with a piece of bread in, and before the evening was out I had caught over one hundred, sometimes as many as ten at a time.

I recall the storekeeper had an owl in his storeroom and it caught one or two a day for months, for which the storekeeper received payment at so much per rat. A recognised thing.

Dismantling having been completed, we proceeded to load but we had to wait for some of the wheat to come from up country. During this stay we had the opportunity to go turtle hunting. As the moon was at full it was a good time to go, as the sandy beaches were well lit up and it made things easier. The boatman who was to act as guide called for the party at nine in the evening and, with his assistant boatman, rowed across the harbour to a lonely beach where we all landed. As we did so we saw several jackals running among the trees, occasionally giving a yelp, which sounded very eerie in the stillness of the night. After walking about two miles we came to a camel caravan which had settled down for the night. The camels were tied together head to tail, in a large circle, and lying on the ground. Inside the circle were several men, women and children, also several sheep and goats. Apparently there were several hyenas in the district and this was their method of protection against them. We eventually aroused sufficient interest in the men to come with us and bring three camels. We travelled quite a distance on foot, across a peninsular to a sandy beach on the sea shore. Some of us tried riding a camel but we couldn't stand the motion. Combined with the smell, it made us feel sea-sick, or perhaps land-sick would be a better description.

After walking two or three miles along the beach we saw a flat smooth track leading up from the sea. We followed it and came across a turtle which had dug a hole in the sand and was busy laying eggs into it. As we approached, some jackals ran away; they apparently wait till the turtle has finished laying her eggs, covered them with sand and returned to the sea. Then they uncover them and have a good meal. As soon as the turtle spotted us, she started making her way back to the sea but we prevented this by turning her on her back, thus making her helpless. A camel was brought along and made to lie down close to the turtle. Several of us lifted it up and lashed it to the camel's back with ropes. This operation finished, we all let go, whereupon the camel fell over, with it's legs in the air and nearly on top of the turtle. Quite a weird sight in the moonlight. The guide said, "Sahib, turtle too big, camel not strong, better let 'em go in the sea". So we took all the lashings off and headed her for the sea. She was so large that four of us stood on her shell as she crawled back into the water.

After wandering a bit further along the beach, we came across another track and carried out the same procedure, but this one was not so large and we managed to fasten it on to a camel's back. As the night was getting on, we decided to return to the ship. Some of us, feeling footsore and weary, were inclined to lag behind a bit, till the guide said, "no go slow, hyena watch 'em", which was enough warning for us to keep up.

We returned to the ship just as it was coming in daylight, weary and tired but everyone was pleased and delighted with our trip. That is, all but the poor old turtle which was painlessly killed and made several helpings of turtle soup. We also had a bucketful of eggs from her which were about the size of golf balls and quite round. The shells were soft but tough and could be bounced on the deck without breaking. But not if bounced too many times, as I found out when I was demonstrating this to the Captain. It broke, much to the detriment of his clean white uniform.

I still have the shell of this turtle after nearly fifty years and it makes a very good fire screen.

On completion of loading a full cargo of wheat, we sailed for 'Land's End for orders', the port of destination would be sent to us by wireless when we entered the English Channel. As the *Huntscastle* had been a long time out of dry-dock, our best speed was about eight knots and consequently it took over five weeks to reach the Channel, where we received orders to proceed to Hull. The voyage home was uneventful, except for a very bad sand storm in the Suez Canal; so bad that all ships had to tie up as the visibility was so poor. It took days to clear the sand out of all the nooks and crannies, the machinery suffering quite a bit. The cabins were very hot while in the Canal, as the doors and ventilation had to be shut down to keep the sand out.

On arrival in Hull, we found there was a coal strike on and dozens of ships were laid up. This did not stop us from discharging our cargo, which took about two weeks, as every bag of wheat was weighed on deck as it was hoisted out of the hold. On completion we joined the ranks of the laid up ships and the *Huntscastle* was put on the list of ships for sale. The crew were paid off and sent to their various homes, mainly in Greece. The four officers, including myself, were retained on board, which was very pleasant as it was springtime, and I had my wife and daughter living on board. The weather being fine, and the docks practically in the country, we had many picnics on a farm nearby, where they bred small ponies.

We had about six weeks of this when I suddenly received a message to report at the Head Office in London and prepare to go to Leipzig in Germany, for the trial of the submarine officers for sinking the *Llandovery Castle*.



The Ultimate Nightmare

By Cachalot Michael Grey MBE.

For years after I came ashore, I used to have recurring nightmares about running a ship ashore. No sandy beach – huge razor-sharp rocks sticking out of the sea to port and starboard and worst of all, dead ahead. It never worried me unduly while I was at sea, but maybe, buried in my sub-conscious, it was the worst thing I could ever have imagined.

None of us can possibly imagine, unless we had been standing in his shoes, what must have gone through the mind of Captain Schettino, as the alarms and damage reports came flooding in to the bridge of his mortally wounded *Costa Concordia*. Would anyone be capable of rational thought as the lights and power died, the list increased and the full import of what those thousands of souls aboard were facing, registered in his mind? It was, without a doubt, the worst thing that he could have possibly imagined in his dreams, but in terrifying reality.

Would any training, during his career from cadet to cruise ship captain, have prepared him for this frightful moment? He would have had sessions on simulators, where sadistic instructors pile the pressure on, producing one navigational or technical crisis after another for the pressurised bridge team to solve. There would have been damage control exercises, with the ship's teams reacting to a range of "paper" emergencies. But these were exercises and it is doubtful that anyone would have fallen apart as a result of such evolutions. And it is one thing to make errors in an exercise- the magnitude is multiplied unimaginably, if the emergency is real, desperately serious and it is -arguably- all your fault.

The armed forces, perhaps, are the only organisations which train their personnel to cope with the worst things human beings can possibly comprehend. They employ the very best technology, realism to the extent of mortal risks, but also draw heavily on their traditions, their history and the culture that makes the laying down of one's life just part of the price that may have to be paid as the cost of victory. The training of character, the evaluation of courage, in addition to judgement, all feature in the preparation for leadership in armed forces and the selection of those potential leaders who might be faced with those frightening decisions.

Life is expected to be rather less dramatic aboard merchant ships, although tradition has it that the master does not easily give up his ship and is expected to be the last to leave her, if the battle to save her has been lost. Curiously this is recognised officially in the Italian Navigational Code, which was used to convict the *Concordia's* late master, in addition to the manslaughter charges he faced for the 32 people who lost their lives in the tragedy off the island of Giglio.

Criminal charges were once very rare in maritime accidents, but have in recent years become quite routine after serious incidents. Marine professionals, naturally enough, worry about this trend, although it is reflected in society at large, where the definition of an "accident" is far more widely drawn and has become something that should not be tolerated, in the public's expectation of "perfect" safety. A fatal road accident, a disastrous mistake by a gas fitter resulting in an explosion, or even an error in a medical diagnosis or surgical procedure, can now lead to criminal charges and custodial sentences. It might be considered part of our changing social mores, in an intolerant age with a delight in litigation, and the merchant marine is on the receiving end, but no more than any other job or profession which might be considered vulnerable, by its very nature, to make fatal mistakes.

It could be argued, quite reasonably, that a long custodial sentence is an inappropriate reaction to anyone who has made an "honest error", even when the consequences have been so horrendous. Admiral Byng, who failed to accomplish a military task, was shot by firing squad, according to Voltaire, "to encourage the others", but it is doubtful that fear of execution has ever been part of the subsequent decision-making process in the ordinary conduct of a ship of war.

Will a cruise ship master, who is required, by nature of his role, to take greater risks with his ship than the master of a vessel which can routinely stay well clear of the land, bear in mind the fate of Captain Schettino, as he and his navigator program their computers for the upcoming voyage? Does a long gaol sentence – to further punish a man who has the deaths of 32 people on his conscience, the loss of his job and a lifetime of professional disgrace to be faced, fulfil any purpose whatsoever? It is very difficult to answer such questions without stoking up the fires of controversy.

Perhaps the relatives of those who died and were seriously traumatised by the events of that evening expect nothing other than a lengthy custodial sentence for the author of their misfortunes. That, perhaps, is the real reason for the criminalisation of accidents in this era, not so much "revenge", as society's proper recognition of their loss and their role as victims. It is the way of the world in the 21st century and it is unlikely to be changed, even if it should be.

With permission of 'Ship Management International', where it appeared in Michael's column, Alternative Viewpoint.

Lack of a U K Marine Salvage Capability

Roy Martin expresses his concerns

Press interest in the recent salvage of the *Hoegh Osaka* in the Solent overlooked the total lack of a U K salvage capability.

In the early part of the nineteenth century Britain pioneered the development of both steam tugs and salvage vessels; this meant that most salvage contracts were governed by English Law, with disputes being resolved in London. In turn this led to the development of the Lloyd's Standard Form of Salvage Agreement 'No Cure – No Pay'. The contract was often called the Lloyd's Open Form, because the parties left the reward to be decided by Lloyd's Arbitration Branch. Many U K solicitors and barristers came to specialise in Admiralty Law and many other maritime professionals were UK based.

In peacetime the British tended to neglect the actual performance of salvage, only to suddenly rediscover the need at the outbreak of war. In 1914 the Admiralty found that there was a desperate shortage of all types of salvage craft. They had new salvage tugs built and handed the provision of other salvage services to what was then the Liverpool Salvage Association. After the war the craft were sold off in stages. British operators saw no need to develop better vessels, when they could acquire ex Admiralty plant cheaply. The result was that their continental counterparts soon overtook them. The Dutch particularly saw the possibilities of rescue towage; in 1933 Smit took delivery of the first diesel powered rescue tug, the *Zwarte Zee* of 2,400 BHP.

In 1939 Britain again found itself with a very limited salvage capability. The Admiralty requisitioned those tugs that were available. They were fortunate that the French Les Abeilles company had set up a British subsidiary, Overseas Towage and Salvage, which had built new tugs in Britain. They were doubly fortunate that the builders of those ships, Henry Robb, had designed a new diesel tug to complete with the *Zwarte Zee*, this later became the Admiralty 'Bustler' class of eight 3,000 BHP tugs. In 1940 many of the Dutch tugs escaped to the UK to join the fleet.

A salvage fleet was cobbled together and managers were appointed, each being responsible for salvage on part of the British coast. Many of the vessels were old, the oldest dating from 1880! The last of the managers to be appointed was Risdon Beazley of Southampton, who took over the management of more vessels than the rest put together. Metal Industries Ltd provided the Principal Salvage Officers.

Two new classes of salvage vessels were built. Most of these were put under Beazley's management and, when D-Day was planned, this Southampton company became responsible for the salvage vessels off the three British landing beaches. They also made a significant contribution to salvage work off of Utah and Omaha and then the clearance of the port of Cherbourg; which had been deliberately blocked and booby trapped by the retreating troops. This task was to have been an all American effort; but they recognised the need for the British lifting craft, a type of vessel that they did not have.

After the war it was agreed that Britain would never again leave itself without a salvage capability. The war-built units were put under Admiralty management, with some being bare-boat chartered to commercial firms. Risdon Beazley took two of the salvage ships and kept an enormous stock of salvage equipment at its Southampton base. The company also tried to venture into ocean towage, with a Bustler class tug, but were soon overtaken by various continental companies, who were able to work freely in Britain. Beazley went on to concentrate on salvage and wreck removal, plus cargo recovery.



Parbuckling Magdeburg, Thames 1965

Harms brochure one

Two British companies continued in rescue towage, Overseas Towage and Salvage of London and United Towing of Hull. OTS was acquired by Smit Internationale of Rotterdam and was sold abroad in the early 70s. United Towing's last ocean-going tug remained in the Falklands until 1991, when it returned it was sold and the company wound-up.

In 1965 the East German cargo ship *Magdeburg*, with a cargo that included forty two buses destined for Cuba, capsized in the Thames after being in collision with the Japanese *Yamashiro Maru*. The task of removing this large casualty was beyond the Port of London Authority lifting craft and a new type, the sheerlegs *Magnus*, was mobilised from Hamburg. Up-righting this large ship also needed the newly built *Magnus II*, which came later. Both cranes were owned by Ulrich Harms GmbH, which had been formed in 1962. Wreck removal was changing and neither the British nor the Dutch had equivalent vessels.

By 1969 Risdon A Beazley was in poor health and he decided to put his company into voluntary liquidation, it was said that this was to prevent the Dutch gaining control. He was persuaded that a joint venture with Ulrich Harms was a better option. Harms took a controlling interest in the Southampton company. In 1973 Smit bought Ulrich Harms, and with it Risdon Beazley Ulrich Harms, which closed in 1981. Harms soon followed.

As far as the authorities in Britain were concerned none of this mattered. Smit and Wijmuller had a fleet of rescue tugs and Smit Tak now controlled a large fleet of salvage cranes. Additionally the Admiralty still had a salvage organisation; but by 1994 that had also been run down. In May of that year Lord Donaldson's report 'Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas' led to the deployment of a fleet of four large salvage tugs as Emergency Towing Vessels. This contract was terminated in 2012 following the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010. One vessel, under the Swedish flag, remains based at Orkney; it is locally funded.

The combined bollard pull of the berthing and terminal tugs in the main ports might seem to be adequate to provide the required coverage, but berthing tugs have little salvage capability. They have crews of three or four, who work on a shift system, so there needs to be a crew change several times a day. They have no pumping capability, nor patching materials; most cannot lay out anchors to secure the casualty and none have additional accommodation for salvage crew or divers.

At this point it should be said that even rescue tugs are often not the best craft to render salvage. As we have seen the clearance work following D-Day was achieved by lifting and salvage craft rather than tugs – though the tugs did fantastic work towing the Mulberry harbour units and assisting casualties at sea.

Previously Britain could rely on back up from the continent; but the principal Dutch tugs have now been scrapped and the German and French tugs are funded by their governments and committed to protecting their own coasts. The Danish company Svitzer are now the only ones in northern Europe providing salvage teams. Their Salvage Masters and crews are former Wijmuller men based in Ijmuiden, though it seems that they no longer operate salvage tugs (or salvage vessels?).

This should be a cause for concern. Though it will not matter if there is another war: our merchant fleet, which sustained us through two world wars, is now but a shadow of its former self, so we could be starved into submission within months.



Parbuckling *Hornland*, Rotterdam Waterway 1969?

Harms brochure three

Hoegh Osaka

Some immediate thoughts on the successful salvage operation

The dramatic grounding of the large car carrier *Hoegh Osaka* on the 3rd January raised the spectacle of first, how did it happen and second, how would it be removed. As I write this piece the salvors, Svitzer, have successfully brought the ship into Southampton, the cargo has been discharged and the *Hoegh Osaka* has been moved to Falmouth.

The ship sailed from Southampton at about 2020hours on the 3rd January. It has been reported that soon after leaving the berth she developed an alarming list. The Master and pilot became extremely concerned and just after passing the notorious Bramble Bank located between the mouth of Southampton water and Cowes on the Isle of Wight a decision was made to deliberately beach the ship on the bank. This action prevented what was seen as a possible



capsize situation and allowed the local RNLI and other rescue services to take all the crew off and to safety. Two crew were injured, but suffered non-life threatening injuries and were duly treated in hospital. The casualty lay aground away from the main navigable channel so the port was able to run normally with some speed restrictions near the *Hoegh Osaka*. The ship lay where she was grounded at a heel angle of 52 degrees. The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch has started its own investigation that will examine every aspect of the ships sailing condition to try and determine exactly what led to the situation arising. Given the ship had on board some 1400 high value cars (Jaguars and Land Rovers) plus a sizeable consignment of heavier plant (JCBs) the value of the cargo is likely to exceed US\$ 80million.

The Bramble bank is known to be somewhat fluid. An early attempt of refloating had been planned for 7th January, but the discovery of water on board led to it being postponed. The ship had been reported to being “lively” at high water, giving salvors some encouragement that an early refloating was possible. Indeed, the *Hoegh Osaka* refloated the next day in an unscheduled moment when strong south-westerly winds combined with a high tide and took the ship off the bank. To many this might suggest the salvors were unprepared. First, the ship was brought under control rapidly and second, it is not unusual for grounded ships to refloat unaided. It is not known exactly what did occur, but the strong tides and associated scouring effect may have played a part in creating conditions suitable for refloating.

The next two weeks saw the ship placed, moored and connected to tugs, in the Solent between Lee on the Solent and Cowes Isle of Wight. While bad weather did threaten, she held her own and the salvage operation was able to continue once the weather settled down. Progress was initially slow; not surprising when getting about the ship initially at an angle of over 50 degrees is a slow and very dangerous operation (don’t try this at home!). Gradually water was pumped out and the ship slowly came nearly upright.

A decision had been made to leave the 500 tons of bunker oil on board. Clearly insisting on the oil removal would have put salvage workers in great peril, trying to access tanks, rig pumps and piping at 50° is extremely hazardous and all credit to the UK SOSREP (Secretary of State’s Representative) and the Salvage Master for agreeing that leaving the contained bunkers in situ was the preferred option.

Once nearly upright, the ship was towed into the port of Southampton where there will be a flurry of activity on many fronts. I suspect many surveyors and other experts will be busy on the following issues:

Salvage – the award

Cargo – What will happen to the 1400 cars and other heavy plant?

Causation – the MAIB (Marine Accident Investigation Branch) investigation will have priority so lessons learned can be put into effect

Causation – P & I, Shipowners, cargo interests and H & M surveyors will be busy, At the end of the day it will be all about “who pays”.

Finally, the salvors and UK authorities are to be congratulated in the success of the salvage especially in the challenging weather conditions that sometimes prevailed.

Past Captain John Noble

This article has appeared in the journal of the INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MARINE SURVEYING.



The Burns Supper this year featured a display of sword dancing from Imogen Smart as well as the more usual offerings. Past Captain Lionel Hall proved that even at 80 he could still make some of the Lassies laugh. A sharp flensing knife soon rendered his surprise Cachalot cake into suitably sized pieces for the 62 who were present. After all that clatter, an a' that, the sangs could have done with a bit of fine tuning (or a Gareth MacMalone) but by that time of the evening nobody was that bothered, least of all the self professed Glaswegians below.



Rope Ends

AGM Thursday 15th January 2015

26 Members attended the AGM and the following officers were confirmed for 2015:

Captain:	Jeremy Smart;
Staff Captain:	Leslie Morris;
Past Captain:	Ian Odd
Boatsteerer:	Ken Dagnall
Storekeeper:	Ian Odd

There was a vacancy for one Harpooner and of the three names that had been properly proposed and seconded, J. Noble, L.W. Hall and C.R. Kelso, John Noble was elected.

The five other Harpooners: G. Angas, G. Cartwright, T. Clark, C. Coote and D. Gates, have one more year to run.

Harpooners Douglas Gates and Terry Clark continue as Hon. Membership Officer and Hon. Editor respectively, Peter Grant continues as Hon Functions Officer and Hamish Roberts as Hon. Archivist.

John Mileusnic agreed to take on the function of Bursary Co-ordinator.

The proposal to amend the Rules, as published in Cachalot 50 but unfortunately overlooked at the AGM in 2014, was formally approved.

1. Rule 1 now reads: The name shall be "The CACHALOTS", also known as "THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB.

2. Rule 11 was amended to read, '..... and all Cachalots and Honorary Life Members shall be entitled to attend and to vote, but no Cachalot shall be entitled to vote....' etc.

'1' will allow members to use such title as they deem appropriate and '2' will hopefully encourage our senior HLM to continue to participate in the demographic processes of The CACHALOTS/Club.

These changes have been applied to the 'Rules' as posted on the web site.

It is not intended to print and distribute a copy of the Rules 2013 to all members, unless requested. As well as being posted on the web site, they were published in full in Cachalot 49, Sept 2013. A small number will be produced, for Officers and new members, and any member who would like a personal copy can apply through the office, sae preferred.

From the **DAILY ECHO**, Tuesday, December 30, 2014:

Sea rescue veteran is honoured

A TRIBUTE has been paid to a stalwart figure in sea rescues along Hampshire's coast, who has stepped down after 30 years' service.

Captain Lionel Hall, chairman of the operational committee at the Solent Sea Rescue Organisation (SSRO) was officially thanked by

county council chairman Colin Davidovitz for his dedication to the life-saving service.

Councillor Davidovitz said: "Her Majesty's Coast-guard and the volunteer independent life-saving units have all recently thanked Captain Hall for his support over 30 years.

"Now the exceptional

voluntary public service that Captain Hall has given is also recognised by the county council with a certificate of appreciation."

The SSRO was set up by the county council in 1977, as an umbrella organisation for eight independent rescue operations along the beaches of Hampshire and the I.O.W.

The report was accompanied by a picture of Lionel receiving the certificate from Cllr Davidovitz

The cut-off date for the next edition will be 15th May 2015

Gone Aloft



Captain David Arthur CARR, RD, RNR. FNI.**

Died: 13.1.2115.

David was a Yorkshireman, born in Leeds on the 11th. February, 1942, and educated at a grammar school in that city. Various childhood visits to the 'bracing' Yorkshire coastline determined him to become a seafarer.

He began his career in 1959 as a cadet at what was then called the School of Navigation at Warsash, near Southampton. This was a one year, concentrated mix of rigid discipline, practical seamanship and classroom navigation training. He then joined the P&O Steam Navigation Company as a cadet in 1960. During the third year of his cadetship he joined the Royal Naval Reserve as a Midshipman.

After obtaining his Second Mate's Certificate, he re-joined P&O as a junior deck officer and, in addition to his professional duties there, he undertook various Naval Officer's courses. He obtained his Master Mariner's Certificate in about 1969 and progressed through the ranks until 1973, when he decided to switch to Cunard Line.

His first appointment was to the cruise ship *Cunard Ambassador* as First Officer but by 1980, when he was enrolled into the Southampton Master Mariners' Club, he was Chief officer of the *Cunard Countess*. His membership application form shows that, by then, at 38 years old, he was already a Lieutenant Commander, RD. in the Reserve as well as a Member of the Nautical Institute.

During 1982-3 he made four troop carrying trips to the Falkland Islands as chief officer of the 'Countess'. In all, he spent eight years in the cruise ships as either chief officer or Staff Captain.

His final ten seagoing years were spent in the *QE2*, where he joined as Chief Officer but soon rose to Staff Captain. In 1995, he received the honour to be appointed RNR ADC to HM The Queen, in the rank of Captain. He served as Acting Master for four months when the Senior Master was seriously ill. Sadly, his own final appointment was as Cunard's Port Operations Manager, Southampton when he became unfit for seagoing duties.

He became Captain of the Club in 2001 and carried out his duties with aplomb in spite of his declining health. David remained irrepressibly cheerful throughout the last decade of his crippling disability.....We salute a good friend and fine shipmate!

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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

Fri	27 Mar	Skittles Evening, So'ton (Old) B C
Sat	25 Apr	Curry Lunch, Kuti's
Fri	29 May	Club Supper, Club Room
Thu	11 June	Shipping Festival Service, Winchester

Further to the obituary, left, by Ian Stirling, David's funeral was held at the Church of St Michael & All Angels, in Cheriton, on 30th January.

An estimated 250 mourners squeezed in to the ancient parish church for a very moving service, which included readings from his daughters, Fiona and Alison. It seemed that nearly as many joined Janet and the family at the Alresford Golf Club afterwards.

The Cachalots was well represented, with at least 25 members attending to pay their respects.

Gone Aloft

R Bennett

Captain D A Carr