

# The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 60

June 2016

## Captain's Log

It seems ages since I walked into our Clubroom to be greeted by a rather stern looking Boatsteerer (he always looks like that). "Good morning, Ken" ...OK, it was afternoon, but I didn't check my watch. "You'd better look at this" .....I did what I was told (I've done this job before – you don't cross the Boatsteerer!). At the third time of reading, I managed to digest that the Seafarers' Centre was to close at the end of April and, although we were not given "Notice to Quit", it would only be a matter of time.

Luckily, many – most? – of the Management Committee were in the Club Room that day, so it was easy to float the idea of an MC meeting the following Friday in order to consider our options, in case we had to leave the premises in a hurry. This was duly done. A sub-Committee was formed. Some of these options had already been considered by those who took it upon themselves to do so, and this provided much scope for discussion at the outset. It also gave us a base upon which to begin the process.

At this point, having instigated proceedings, our Boatsteerer and his good lady took themselves off to the West Coast of the United States by air in order that that they could come back by ship. It's called a cruise, apparently! No, we were not upset, we were just envious!

In the event, we were subsequently advised by our landlords (Mission to Seafarers) that although the Seafarers' Centre would close at the end of April (and did), it was unlikely that our tenure of the building would end so dramatically. So we were all able to draw breath a little. I refer you the *Cachalite* 87 which, thanks to our Honourable (*sic*) Editor, has been distributed widely, and gives a brief summary of events that is still valid at the time of writing this log (mid May). Needless to say, the sub-Committee is still hard at work and will report to the Management Committee at their general meeting on 26th May. Updates will be provided as necessary via *Cachalite*.

Meanwhile, life as Club Captain continues in its usual manner. The usual superb Curry Lunch was enjoyed by all on 20th February. I often miss this event for reasons I have long been unable to understand. Something else seems to turn up on the domestic horizon, but they are well worth attending – good food (providing you like it spicy!), good beer and good company!

On 9th March I was invited to the Court Luncheon at "The Honourable Company of Master Mariners" on "HQS Wellington" in London. Another splendid affair, to which I was made most welcome. I was surrounded by several Members who were also Cachalots. These were unusually well-behaved, so a wonderful time was had by all. Thankfully, "the train took the strain". By the time I got off at Winchester, discussion centred on one of our number who was enjoying a late afternoon nap. Some of the others were tempted not to disturb him when they got off at Southampton. Far be it for me to say.....!

In my opinion, one of the highlights of the year is our visit to the Southampton Old Bowling Green for our annual Skittles Evening on 18th March. Ann and I always enjoy it,

possibly because it enables us to catch up with so many Cachalots and their partners. Sadly the numbers were down this year, but that was made up for by sheer effort and no shortage of skill. Well the last bit is not quite true! It was Ladies against Gentlemen (?) this time and the Ladies showed their skill by thrashing us. Lesley Odd was the highest scorer and well deserved the "vintage" wine she received as her prize. As for the Gentlemen, well it is too embarrassing to even think about it!

Thankfully the following evening (19th March) was not embarrassing at all. This was because Ann and I were invited to the Annual Southampton Royal Navy Officers Association Dinner at the University of Southampton Officers' Training Club at Carlton Place in Southampton. It is a superb venue; one I never knew existed, despite having had an office close by many years ago. The SRNOA were their usual excellent hosts, making Ann and I very much at home, and I only had to "sing for my supper" a little by proposing the toast to "our hosts".

Broadly in the theme of "the Services", our next event was at the Royal Air Force Yacht Club at Hamble on 15th April. This was the occasion of the inauguration of the new Commodore. Yet again they were wonderful hosts and both reception beforehand and supper later went with a swing.

This year is of course Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday and the people of Hampshire were well represented at Winchester Cathedral on Sunday 24th April for the County Thanksgiving Service. The former Bishop of Cheltenham (now retired) gave a very amusing sermon, most appropriate for the occasion. One of his former Royal positions was Keeper of the Queen's Closet, so that gave him ample material! Incidentally, The Cachalots also sent a special greetings card to Her Majesty on her occasion of her actual birthday, 21st April. I understand that a postal misunderstanding prevented my receiving reciprocal greeting on the occasion of my birthday a couple of weeks later.

Although not an official event, it was good, and slightly poignant, to see so many turn out for former Store-keeper Barry Peck's presentation of "The History of Strick Line" at the Club Room on Thursday 28th April. "Good" because it enable those of a certain age to reminisce about all those shipping companies that wore the Red Ensign with honour all those years ago. "Slightly poignant" for the same reason - and for the fact it was probably the last time our present Club Room was used for such a lunchtime event.

On a final note, sadly the Cricket section closed down this year. It was perhaps inevitable; it just becomes embarrassing when players are so limited that opponents are sometimes asked to make up the numbers, or a full team cannot be raised. Sadly I was unable to be at the Club Room for the presentation of the Sutton Trophy back to the Club on Friday 6th May, but I understand Staff Captain Robin Plumley stood in for me. I would, however, like to thank those of you who tried to keep the SMMCC running for so long and for the dignified way you faced up to the inevitable. Thank you all.

Leslie R Morris Club Captain

## This 60th Edition

Yes, this newsletter is now 15 years old and still going strong. More contributions are always welcome, of course, but that is just every editor's perennial refrain.

The editorial policy is still to try and keep the content unique to us and not repeat too much of the stuff that you can find in other, bigger and better, nautical publications. Having said that, I have reproduced another of Michael Grey's articles from his column in *Lloyds List*, but he is a Cachalot and it is very timely.

Following the Boatsteerer's Locker, I have included, without comment (nearly), a photograph supplied by him of his favourite spot.

In this edition you will also find the penultimate episode of past Southampton Pilot 'Charlie' Chapman's memoirs, *Fifty Years on Salt Water*. When I came across them they were just 146 pages of rather indistinct photocopies of the original typed ones. My Optical Character Recognition program struggled to recognise them so I had to copy them the hard way. There were no chapters or natural breaks, just paragraphs presumably written just as Charlie remembered it, and in the vernacular of the early 20th century. The only editing that I have done is to apply some modern punctuation to some of the more lengthy sentences.

The 'My First Trip' piece in *Cachalot 57*, by Captain Les Morris, stirred a few memories and the latest offering is by Richard Olden, who was also a Clan Line cadet. There must be some other recollections out there of other first trips in other companies and I will be pleased to print them.

On another page Cachalot Phil Messinger is in reflective mood and I will be similarly pleased to receive any suchlike contributions.

We also have the final report from the Cricket Section, as mentioned in the Captain's Log.

The imminent loss of our Club room has necessitated some changes to our programme, notably those events scheduled to be held in the Club room and catered for by John Davies.

The first of these is the Club Buffet Supper on the 9th September and we have made tentative arrangements for it to be held at Chilworth (Village) Hall - see the notice on the opposite page. The hall is a modern replacement of what some of us remember as 'Scout Huts' and has all mod-cons and ample parking. We hope to have a speaker and the projected cost reflects the hire of the premises and inclusive drinks. That's progress for you.

We are also in the process of securing suitable alternative venues for the Macmillan Coffee Morning on Oct 7, the Trafalgar Night Dinner on Oct 14, the Harpooners' Dinner on Nov 4 and the Christmas Lunch on Dec 3. The intended Club Trip on Sept 29th has been cancelled.

It should be noted that as we are also searching for a new venue for our Club room, any successful outcome there will probably impact on these events, which are subject to change. We will endeavour to notify you of any such changes by *Cachalite* and on the web site. (The *Cachalite* is our email bulletin system and if you would like to be added to the mailing list just send me your email address.)

My thanks to Ian Thomson and his magic iPhone for some of the colour photos herein.

*Editor*

## Boatsteerer's Locker

Well, we all knew that sooner or later it would happen and I believe that we have been lucky to have had this Club Room for the last 10 years before the landlords closed the Centre and put the building up for sale.

As stated in the Captain's Log your Management Committee formed a sub-committee from its members to find another venue for the Club and their investigations of suitable premises available is continuing.

*On a bright note as no doubt you are aware our Landlords have agreed to continue with our utility services except that food will not be available nor the cleaning of public and sanitary areas.*

Shortly after we received the news of the closure I thankfully cleared off and flew to the West Coast of U.S.A to join a ship returning to the U.K. from a World Cruise, via the Panama Canal.

We joined at San Francisco after 2 nights in a hotel which gave us time to explore that city, ride the trams and see the sealions at Pier 39 (some of them managed to board our ship and could be seen most mornings at sea, well oiled and full of flatulence, occupying sun loungers near the swimming pool.)

On board I soon found that the ladies gathered in the swimming pool and exchanged the latest gossip so I quickly enrolled my good lady into that Club.

At her first meeting she learnt that at that moment seven passengers had died on board during the cruise, another had just been landed into hospital after an appeal had been made to the passengers, while crossing the Pacific, for blood donors of a certain blood type. Two ladies had been landed ashore after fighting in the laundrette due to one removing the other lady's damp clothes out of a dryer and replacing them with her own. To show her discontent the lady with the damp clothes placed two pieces of bedtime chocolate in the dryer amongst the other's washing. Earlier on in the voyage another two ladies had been landed ashore after fighting in the laundrette when one was found putting her own 'out of order' sign on an empty washing machine while she went to her cabin to get her dirty clothes.

Six passengers had been removed from the ship due to shoplifting (mainly photographs).

When we reached Mexico one man was removed for hitting another in the face with a tray in the self service due to being slow in helping himself to the food. Previously on the voyage another had been removed for fighting in the self service.

We managed to have a swim in the Pacific while in Mexico, but leaving, the sailing away party was delayed for an hour waiting for a hearse to remove body No.8. We safely traversed the Canal aided by a running commentary from a retired American Panama Canal Pilot who on learning that I was a member of the world famous Cachalots installed me with due ceremony as a fellow Pilot and presented me with a cap.

Her Majesty's 90th Birthday was passed in the Panama Canal without any ceremony or official announcement although Anzac Day a few days later had commemorative ceremonies - maybe it was because we had Bermudian Registry and some Antipodes passengers.

After the Canal, brief shopping stops at Aruba, St.Maarten and the Azores were made on the homeward leg.

In all we had excellent weather, food, entertainment, service and fellow passengers and it wasn't too long before I was thankfully home in my own bed dreaming of the Hythe Ferry trying to demolish its pier.

Ken Dagnall



### **Dreamland?**

As the Club's happy ten year tenancy at Queen's Terrace draws to a close it was probably appropriate that the well-attended Club Supper on May 20th. was deemed to be "The Last Supper"(in our present venue,at least.)

After dining on John Davis's excellent offerings we were entertained to an interesting and amusing account, with projected photographs,of Terry and Meryl Clark's Burmese adventures on an Irrawaddy cruise.

Then, just as we thought that our evening was over, Club Captain Leslie Morris stepped forward - and after a few words of thanks to Terry for his talk ( and projectionist skills) - delighted all of us by presenting Terry with a Certificate bestowing upon him Honorary Life Membership of The Southampton Master Mariners' Club "In recognition of his exceptional services to the Club". After briefly outlining Terry's past and ongoing extensive contributions to the Club's administrative and social needs - not least his years as Editor of "The Cachalot" ..Leslie recalled the axiom "behind every fine man there is a fine woman" by thanking Meryl for her years of tolerance and understanding in allowing Terry to labour so tirelessly on the Club's behalf ...when the washing-up called!.

Appointment as an Honorary Life Member is the highest accolade the Club can bestow and its award to Past Captain Terry Clark was greeted with sustained acclaim.

CRK



WINCHESTER  
CATHEDRAL

## **THE SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE**

**Thursday 9 June 2016**

7.15 pm latest for 7.30 pm

Preacher

**The Rev'd Reg Sweet**

Master of St. Cross

**Southampton Albion Band**



Everyone is welcome to attend this historic annual service for the re-dedication of the National Ensigns and flags of the Merchant Navy and Missions to Seafarers.



### **Curry Lunch**



Our third Curry Lunch this year has been booked at our favourite hot-spot,

Kuti's in Oxford Street.

Join us if you can.

**Saturday 9th July, 1200 for 1230.**

Price held at **£12.50** per head.

### **Club Buffet Supper**

**Friday 9th September**

**Chilworth (Village) Hall**

**Catering by John Davis**

**Speaker TBA**

**Price: £30 per head**

**(Includes wine and/or soft drinks)**

## The Last Supper



Scenes from the Club Supper on 20<sup>th</sup> May, probably our last in the Club room at the Southampton Seafarers' Centre.

Below, the Boatsteerer, who has added 'Honorary Panama Canal Pilot' to his list of titles, and has the cap to prove it, regales fellow Cachalots Barry Peck, Reg Kelso and John Noble with tales from his latest nautical exploits on his voyage back from Californ-I-ay.

## Better off where?

### Lloyd's List Viewpoint 21 March 16

*with permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey*

Would a turkey vote for Christmas, if it understood the practical significance of the upcoming date? Would the chairman of a Footsie-100 company, recommend that the UK should leave the comfortable cocoon of the European Union, via the forthcoming referendum? Nobody, barring the bold or the far-sighted, will take any action that will involve navigation into the unknown, even when the many unpalatable aspects of the known are recognised and understood.

So when senior industry figures align themselves with the government's "Project Fear", they are merely reverting to type and doing what comes naturally to anyone who sees a fork in the road offering a choice of route between the familiar and what is not. Judging by many of their pronouncements, they would appear to be little better informed about the realities of "Brexit" than anyone else. The enormous reward package and the remarkably uninspiring share price which is a common characteristic of these seers, one might suggest, is a reason for caution about their dire warnings.

What is equally difficult to comprehend is the future of the UK if it elects to remain in the EC, which faces as many uncertainties as any ex-member state on its voyage into the unknown. Which "remain" voting politician or captain of industry alike would put their hand upon their heart and declare their faith in the future of the Euro? Who would forecast the continuation of the Schengen agreement beyond the next few months, let alone a longer term, as the siege of the dispossessed gains momentum?

The answer to every doubt and every question is said to be "more Europe" despite the endemic scepticism in every one of the 28 member states at the ability of Brussels to provide good governance? The European Commission, almost from the day of its inception, has been described as anti-democratic and dictatorial, even though its members would doubtless suggest that the principal function of its officials is to harmonise our chaotic national lives. But inquire about Brussels in any street in any town from the Baltic to the Black Sea and you will be told that it is the home of the bureaucrats which prevent our elected governments from giving us what we want. Brussels spends heavily on public relations, but to little effect, it seems.

But are we not promised a "reformed" Europe? Refer back to those turkeys once again and ask yourself whether this sixty year old mission to impose continent-wide integration would ever reverse the direction of its inexorable travel? The 1993 Single Market has been regarded as largely positive, but it was seen by powerful federalists (who tended to conceal their ambitions) as just one further step along the road to total integration, subsequently speeded by Schengen and irrevocably boosted by the Euro.

The integration of Europe as a federal superstate might be described as a grand plan, but it is one that cuts across all our human inclinations. The grand planners throughout history, from Julius Caesar to the Great Khan, from Napoleon, to more recent examples it is better not to recall, have had to put up with the very limited horizons of most men and women, who, regardless of governmental (or regional) assurances, tend to relate to what we can comprehend in human scale.

In order of importance, we consider families, home towns, football teams, counties, regions and countries, with gigantic constructs like a 28 nation Europe as being well off the grid. I suppose you might grudgingly accord some respect to those Europhiles who have developed and grown their dream of a United States of Europe, *despite* human nature. But it doesn't mean you should not work hard to prevent them succeeding.

Would we be "better off out"? I suppose you could equally well argue that as a country that has rarely been governed well, it might be quite a struggle, as the "governing classes" have become accustomed to tugging their forelocks and implementing directives from Brussels and may not have much native initiative or creativity left.

It is certainly not my role to advise anyone how to vote when facing the ballot box in June. One is slightly concerned at the various BBC *vox pop* interviews with people who don't even know such an important event is to take place. One hopes they might be better informed when the time comes, but I wouldn't put money on it.

I shall certainly vote to leave, ignoring (or perhaps encouraged) by all the dire warnings from people who think they know best. I shall vote this way regardless of the unknowns because of the above; the impossibility of reform, the difficulty of producing sensible consensus among so many, the idiocy of Brussels' prescription that one size must fit all, the deep democratic deficit and the belief that world's fifth biggest economy really ought to be master of its own fate. You might also think about all the corruption, the inability, year after year, to balance the books, the whole sidings of gravy trains, the reckless adventure of monetary union, the treatment of poorer, ill-advised member states, which amounts to rather nasty bullying. Is the next Euro-crisis survivable? It's anyone's guess.

And with the borders being hastily resurrected in so many countries as the migrants and refugees pour northwards, there really is a spectre of continent-wide instability emerging. You will give me no credit but I would suggest a considerable majority of UK citizens do not wish to have others dictate whom we must admit.

Finally, it is my heart which will secure my vote for the "leave" camp. I have been married for fifty years to a New Zealander and whatever the Prime Minister, Lord Mayor of London, central bankers, or various spectral people trying to frighten us might say, I love her too much to alter my firm resolve.

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## Fifty Years on Salt Water

*Episode 13: Charlie transfers to the Outward Pilot Service but with the onset of another World War there is a reduced demand for pilots in Southampton so he volunteers to go to the Clyde, where demand is much greater.*

The work (as an Outward Pilot) was different, to a certain degree. It meant the docking of ships that had been piloted to Netley by the Inward Pilots, and it was not fun going up the Itchen River on a dark night and finding the berths, which were not lighted up very well.

The dock walls were very hard at times, as I found out on two or three occasions; still the work was very interesting, as you hardly ever knew which ship you would handle next.

In those days we used to do a few days each month on a pilot vessel called "Jessica", anchored off Hythe. She was very old and in her early days had been a yacht and had ventured as far afield as the Mediterranean Sea. Although she was old she was very snug and warm in the winter and we had a marvellous cook, known throughout dockland as George. He was quite a character and could almost tell the name of a ship coming round Calshot by its smoke and, strangely enough, he was hardly ever wrong.

Time went on, and one morning, several of the pilots were in the Pilot Office, with the wireless switched on, waiting for the Prime Minister's broadcast about whether there would be a declaration of war with Germany. Of course, it came, and this made quite a difference to the pilots' work in the port. Gradually falling off, with little to do at times except to dodge some of the bombs which fell on the docks.

As there have been many books written about things that happened during the war, I do not intend to go into too much detail about this period. As work was getting heavy on the Clyde, with so many ships calling there after the Americans came into the war, the Pilot Master sent to Southampton asking for volunteers to pilot ships in that area. Six pilots went from here and stayed there for three years and three months, coming back to Southampton a week before D-Day. I was one of those to go, taking my wife with me, and I often think of the reception we got in Glasgow, on a cold, wet and windy night in March. We had difficulty in finding a room for the night with nearly every hotel booked up. Eventually I found one that had a spare room and I said I wanted it for my wife and myself, and that I also had a dog. The receptionist replied, 'never mind the dog, let me see your wife.' Eventually my wife went in to be inspected, against her wishes, but I was so tired after driving all day in the rain, I did not want to look elsewhere. The receptionist then explained to us that they had so many men coming in, in uniform, with doubtful characters that they had to be very careful.

The following morning I reported to the Pilot Master and he wanted me to start right away. I informed him that my knowledge of the Clyde was one trip from Glasgow to Gourock, as third officer of the *Kinsfauns Castle* after the first world war, and that I saw nothing of the river as I had to stand in the wheelhouse and reverse all the pilot's orders to the quartermaster, as the steering gear had been connected up the wrong way. He replied, learn as much as possible in a week and come up for an examination then, as you have already had many years handling ships you have not got to learn that. I then proceeded to Gourock and reported to the Duty Pilot for instructions. He said find yourself some digs first but you will find it difficult. It was but we eventually landed up at a very nice place in Skelmorlie, a house standing in its own grounds with several acres of land. It used to be the dower house of Skelmorlie Castle years ago. We were so satisfied that we spent the whole of our stay in this one place. Two nights after our arrival the Clydeside blitz took place. This was the first bombing there and people said we had brought it up from Southampton. It was terrible while it lasted and was followed a little later with the Greenock blitz. I was on an Isle of Mann steamer anchored off Gourock when this took place and it was very uncomfortable.

In the meantime, my son, having completed his studies at the Southampton Navigation School and obtained the position of Cadet Captain, joined the Port Line as a cadet and was fortunate enough to come through the war without any serious mishap.

My daughter also kept up the nautical tradition by joining the Wrens, training at Portsmouth and later stationed in Southampton. We were fast becoming a sea-faring family.

The Pilots' work on the Clyde was very interesting and varied, as such a large area had to be covered, including as far afield as Inverary. This trip usually meant a night at the pier and returning next day. The size of the ships varied too. One day I was ordered to take a ship called the *Caledonia* from Albert Dock, Greenock, to a small place called Fairlee, just south of Largs. On arrival at the dock I asked a policeman if he knew where the *Caledonia* was, as I had to pilot her to Fairlee. He pointed to a fairly large ship in the next dock, I think a training ship, and said, 'there she is but it can't be her as she hasn't moved for thirty years. On looking round we saw a very small fishing boat close up against the quay, called *Caledonia* and evidently the ship I was looking for. I hailed her and a man came on deck who turned out to be the captain. I informed him what I was there for and he laughed, saying he had been in the neighbourhood all his life and knew every inch, but as I had been ordered by the Naval Transport Office I had better come aboard. Evidently they did not know the size of the vessel. The crew consisted of three men, captain, engineer and deck hand and when they were aboard we left for Fairlee. I offered to steer and the wheel was so small I had to sit on a small stool to do so. The engine room hatch was just in front of the wheel and the engine was very noisy. I asked the captain how he let the engineer know what to do when going to a quay. He said the engineer sits by the engine with his head level with the deck and you hit him on the head to indicate what you wanted: one tap to go ahead, two to stop and three to go astern. This may sound like a far fetched yarn but it is absolutely true and the captain was not pulling my leg. The vessel was empty and I never found out why she went there.

The pilots did a considerable amount of work on the ships that were built as cargo/aircraft carriers and which carried three or four planes of the Swordfish type. Some of the ships were tankers and others grain carriers, with the landing deck built over the main deck. During the course of a day the planes made several flights off and on in different kinds of weather similar to the kind they expected to meet when escorting Atlantic convoys. I made one flight, having signed a paper to the effect that I

would not claim any compensation if I was injured. It was quite a thrill, especially when coming in to land as the deck looked so small on approaching from a height. A young New Zealander piloted the plane I went up in, unfortunately he was killed the next day when a depth charge he dropped went off too soon and wrecked his plane. Till you got used to them they were difficult ships to pilot, as the very small bridge was right over on the starboard side. I remember taking one to sea on a very dark night and she was swinging back and forth quite a lot. On speaking to the helmsman he said he had never steered that class of ship before. 'In fact', he continued, 'I have never steered any ship before'.

On one occasion we had quite a lot of excitement, a Norwegian ship called the *Bergensfjord* was due. She sent in a message about a number of troops and the cargo she had on board, and in the message it stated several cases of smallpox to land. This caused a lot of excitement amongst various departments, and dozens of people who were going to contact her had to be vaccinated. As I had previously taken a ship up to Glasgow with a smallpox case on board, and been vaccinated, I was told to stand by to take a hospital ship alongside to receive the patients, I think it was the *St. Julien*. The *Bergensfjord* was due off Gourock about two in the morning. I woke up at about six o'clock and asked why I had not been shipped, and was informed the vessel had gone up the river to Glasgow, as there was nothing wrong on board, the message should have read, "small boxes". If this was a code word or had another meaning, I never found out. Then again, as it came from a foreign ship, it would be easy to make a mistake in the transmission.

I do know that several dozen people breathed a sigh of relief when the whole episode was over. Especially amongst the younger pilots who had young families and thought they might have to board the ship.

A few nights later I boarded a large liner which was to go out in convoy with several other ships of her class. She was an "Empress" but I forget the other name. At midnight we started to heave up the anchor and the Chief Officer reported to the bridge that the anchor was foul of something. After a lot of groaning and jumping of the cable he reported the anchor was through the top of a deck house painted with red lead. Eventually a third report came through saying the deckhouse was attached to a ship, and what should he do about it. I suggested lowering it to the bottom and give a few up and down heaves to shake it clear. Before doing this an inspection was made to ascertain what type of vessel it was. It turned out to be a brand new landing craft but apparently nobody had mislaid one. The first two lengths of the cable had to be condemned, as they had been stretched and strained out of shape.

I have heard of a good many things like coils of wire and rope being picked up on an anchor, but that was the first and only time I have heard of a ship. After two hours delay we managed to catch up with the convoy, which had slowed down waiting for us.

There were quite a number of London Pilots on the Clyde, beside those from Southampton, and at times we had difficulty in understanding some of the messages from the hailing stations on the river. Once, on passing Bowling, a man shouted "There's a nither yen foreby the twa", at least that is what it sounded like to me. The Captain said, what is he talking about? I replied I have not got the faintest idea, we will just carry on.

On arrival back at the Pilot Office I repeated it to the duty pilot and asked what it meant. He asked if there were two ships coming down the river, if so it meant there was another one besides these two. Quite a weight off my mind.

While on remarks like that, I once said to an American captain, the Scots up here hate the English like the very devil. His reply was, who in Hell don't. We had a number of American troops at the time and as we passed close to another ship full of British troops, both lots cheered as our bows passed each other, but by the time our stern passed theirs, our troops were booing and jeering the Britishers and hurling insults. I just said to the Captain, evidently your remark is correct but he made no reply.

When I gave the order "half ahead", the third officer replied in his Yankee accent, "hoarf" ahead, and turning to the Captain he said, "where do these dog-gone Britishers get their Limey accent from", which rather amused me.

Referring to my remark about the Scots not liking the English, I recall an occasion when on one of my days off, I was working in a harvest field by the side of the Firth of Clyde, when I heard calls for help. I ran out of the field and across the road and saw two men struggling in the Firth. I took off my shoes and dived in and managed to struggle ashore with the two men, one could not swim and the other very little.

I later found out they were twins, 21 years old and lodging only a few hundred yards from the house in which I was staying. The point in telling this story is that they both walked off without saying "thank you", evidently the Scots still not liking the English.

In spite of this incident we really found the Scottish people we came in contact with were very kind, and as the time had now arrived for us to leave the Clyde and return to Southampton, we were very sorry to leave all the friends we had made during our stay of over three years.

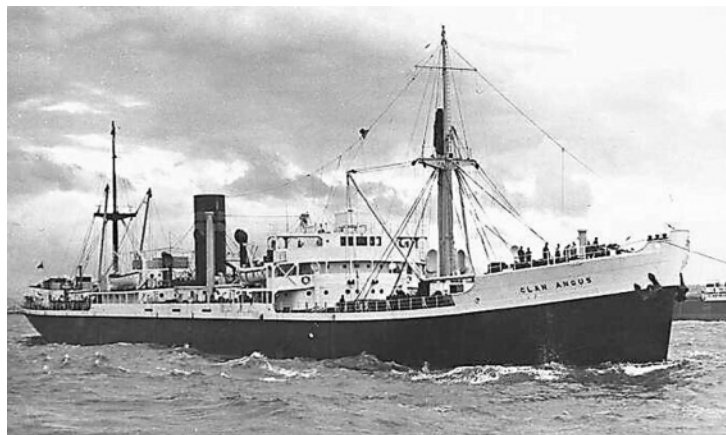
I well remember one act of kindness, just before we left the Clyde. It happened at a small place called Sandbanks, I was waiting to take a ship to sea from the Holy Loch and, owing to a delay, I went on shore to look for a meal. It was early closing day and all the shops were shut, so I called into two of the local pubs and asked for a beer and some bread and cheese, to be told the dining room was closed. On walking back to the ship I saw a baker walking down his garden with a tray full of cakes and tarts. I went in and asked him if I could buy some as I was very hungry. He replied "No, but go into the house." There I met his charming daughter, who soon brought in a tray of cakes and a large pot of tea. The baker came in later and asked if I was enjoying myself. I said yes, very much and he replied, eat up as much as you like, it is "free gratis and all for nothing". I realised then what he meant when he said I could not buy any. I offered the daughter a handsome tip and told her to go to the pictures at my expense but she said that her father would scalp her if she took it. That was one Scots family that nobody could accuse of being mean.

*to be concluded*

## **My First Ship**

*Another 'first tripper' account, or perhaps a 'first shipper' one, this time from **Richard Olden** and yet again with Clan Line. His ship was very similar to the CLAN ALPINE, which ended up in a paddy field near Chittagong during a cyclone. (Captain Les Morris's brother John was third engineer on her at the time and his account was published here in issues 27 & 28.)*

My cadetship was spent mainly in the SS "CLAN ANGUS" (ex "EMPIRE PRINCE"), a 1942 utility-built 7,030 GRT general cargo vessel. She had a triple-expansion steam engine, coal-fired boilers, and a speed of 11 knots. Her officers were British, consisting of the Master, three Deck Officers, five Engineer Officers, Radio Officer, Chief Steward, Carpenter and two Deck Cadets. And like all Clan Line ships, she had a Lascar crew.



I had had pre-sea training at "Pangbourne", and after a successful interview at Clan Line's head office in London, I joined the "CLAN ANGUS" in Govan Dry Dock, Glasgow in October 1946. As I boarded her, a new Clan Line funnel was being fitted, and gun mountings and other war fittings were being removed. Unbeknown to me then, I would be in her for four voyages - nearly two and a half years - including a voyage of twelve months. Also, I would be sailing with the same Master, Chief Officer, Chief and Second Engineers, Radio Officer and Carpenter. The Second and Third Deck Officers would also be the same for nearly two years.

I had been kitted out by my parents, who paid my travel expenses to Glasgow, where my career began. During WWII Merchant Navy personnel received "war risk bonuses" – officers £10 per month, cadets £5 – which shipowners, at the end of hostilities, tried but failed to stop. My pay initially was £7 per month (£1 income, £5 war risk bonus while abroad, and £1 differential – reason for the last-mentioned I never discovered), and increased annually, up to £10 10s in my last year. Until Articles of Agreement were opened, officers were being paid weekly. My first pay packet, after deductions for National Health & Pensions Insurance, amounted to 2s 6d! (*That's 12½ p to all you youngsters reading this....Ed*)

After dry-docking, in daytime, we loaded general cargo for Ceylon and India. At night, for a few days, we took bunker coal, involving the time-consuming job of warping across the dock evenings and mornings. Cargoes from Glasgow included heavy machinery, often railway locomotives and rolling stock. A particular memory I have of that cargo is of being in a 'tween deck watching whisky being stowed. Stevedores "so-called accidentally" dropped an occasional wooden case, ensuring a bottle or two broke. They caught and consumed as much neat whisky as they could, ensuring their mates in other holds got some too. No wonder we now have Health & Safety regulations, and cargo became containerized!

For navigation, "CLAN ANGUS" had magnetic compasses, a radio direction-finder, a poor echo-sounder, a Walker's Log, hand lead lines and a patent sounding machine, sextant and chronometers, and, of course, British Admiralty charts and publications. She had no gyro compass or radar. I've always considered this was ideal for learning to navigate. But, in fog, and without radar, cadets were so often on double (4-on, 4-off) watches, as they often were in coastal waters.

From Glasgow we sailed to Birkenhead - my first sea experience. "CLAN ANGUS" had a closed wheelhouse, and bridge wings fitted with canvas dodgers. Cadets, on 4-on, 4-off watches, stood out in the cold on a bridge wing, as an extra lookout. My first night watch seemed endless, I felt seasick, and wondered why ever I'd chosen to go to sea.

At Birkenhead we completed loading cargo, apart from consignments of Ammunition, which had to be loaded at Crosby Anchorage in the River Mersey. This took four hours on a Sunday morning, for which stevedores each received £16 (including Sunday overtime & danger money), plus £1 for going out to the ship. I spent the morning in the hold, sitting on boxes of ammunition, to ensure nobody smoked!

Our outward cargo included four horses, in wooden boxes on the after deck, for Madras, the first race horses exported to India after WWII. They were mares in foal (2 for the price of 1, Tesco-style!). Cadets, on day work, looked after them. Later, as Chief Officer and Master, I sailed in ships that frequently carried horses, so the experience was to prove useful. On that outward voyage we went through the Suez Canal, bunkered at Aden, and discharged cargo at Colombo, Madras, Vizagapatam and Calcutta.

Christmas is when seafarers feel separation from their families most. My first two Christmases were totally different. The first was in Calcutta. After a convivial dinner on board, I was in a party of officers that went ashore to a nightclub. Unfortunately, someone took in a hidden bottle of spirits left over from dinner, and was caught topping up glasses. We were all ejected on to the street, and had difficulty finding our way back to the ship in the middle of the night. The second was in Egypt, on sea watches. Having transited the Suez Canal during the night, we were moored to buoys in Port Said, preparing to sail. Suddenly, in the middle of the afternoon, there was an explosion. The ship shook violently. By instinct everybody rushed out on to open decks. A



bomb had exploded in a barge under the stern of an Israeli vessel, berthed immediately astern of us, causing considerable damage to her rudder. (This was a few months before the Declaration of the State of Israel.) Fortunately, we sustained no damage.

On the homeward voyage from India, my work included looking after two young leopards, two bears and four monkeys, all consigned to Hull Zoo. There was also a large Great Dane dog, we housed in an empty horse box, which I enjoyed exercising up and down the foredeck. The dog's owner - a returning British army officer - had given instructions for it to be fed 4lbs of beef daily. This for some reason annoyed our chief steward, who somehow acquired 160lbs of best-grade American beef, in the most unlikely of places, Chittagong. The officers ate the dog's beef, and the dog had our Indian mutton! For looking after animals, cadets were always handsomely rewarded by shippers, or their representatives - a welcome boost to our finances.

We arrived back in Europe in February 1947 in one of the worst winters on record. After discharging part of our cargo in London, we proceeded towards Hamburg. It was exceedingly cold. Deck officers and cadets were on "double watches" working "dog watches" (the 1600 to 2000 watch split into two, enabling watch-keepers to rotate watches evenly). We passed through buoyed channels to avoid areas yet to be cleared of war mines. The River Elbe being frozen over, we anchored outside, awaiting an icebreaker. The sea froze over at every slack water, and as tides flooded and ebbed we dragged anchor a mile or two in each direction. Visibility was poor, so we often had little idea of our position. The master was under pressure to get to Middlesbrough for our next cargo. After a couple of days, we followed an icebreaker into the Elbe, and a pilot boarded us off Bremerhaven. In proceeding up the Elbe, from time to time we got stuck in thick ice, and had to reverse engine to get clear of it. The ship frequently shuddered from hitting ice, and at Hamburg we had difficulty getting alongside our berth. During discharge of cargo, some German men came on board selling valuables in exchange for cigarettes. I acquired a virtually new pair of Zeiss 7x50 (ex U-boat) binoculars, for a few shillings-worth of duty-free cigarettes. They lasted me for about twenty years.

At Middlesbrough, an examination showed our bow plating heavily indented, with many rivets leaking, and also some propeller damage. Leaking rivets were in way of the lower forepeak tank, and the leaks were stopped by fitting 26 cement boxes. Permanent repairs had to be made at the next dry-docking.

My second voyage, with outward cargo for South Africa and Mozambique, was anticlockwise round Africa, calling at all main ports between Cape Town and Mombasa, and then Aden for bunkers. My fellow-cadet and cabin mate was taken ill in the Red Sea. He was treated by a doctor at Port Said, but it became necessary to land him to hospital in Malta. He was found to have a serious type of malaria, remained there for a considerable time, and apparently never returned to sea. We discharged some cargo at Genoa. The harbour was littered with sunken ships from WWII, and, once again, we used duty-free cigarettes as currency.

My third voyage commenced with crossing the North Atlantic in ballast, to load newsprint in Newfoundland and manufactured goods at USA east coast ports, for South Africa. Night-lighting in the UK had yet to recover from WWII's blackout, but New York, where the lights had never gone out, was an amazing sight. I spent my 19th birthday in New York, where, for about 1 US\$, I had a good evening ashore. The British Apprentice Club, off Broadway, was a popular haunt for cadets.

After discharge in South Africa, at East African ports we loaded a general cargo for Europe. At Dar es Salaam's inner anchorage I was put on night watch, alone, in charge of the bridge, with a Quartermaster on gangway duty. Supposedly it was study time, but I felt the anchorage was 'tight', and kept checking our position with magnetic compass bearings. Compass deviations were changing as our heading adjusted to wind and tide, which gave me some useful practise. One night, in the early hours, the Quartermaster appeared on the bridge, shouting "jaldi, jaldi, Sahib!" (quickly, quickly, Sir!), and then rushed back down to the gangway. I followed him down, thinking something dreadful had happened. He pointed to an enormous fish in the water that he'd caught on a thin line. He had carefully tired it out before coming to get me. Together we got it on board.

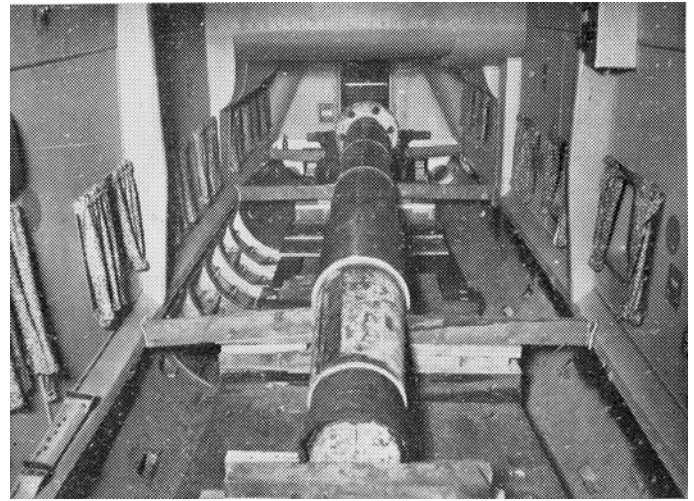
My fourth and last voyage started with a cargo from the UK to South Africa. Then, in ballast, we crossed the Indian Ocean to India, expecting loading instructions by radio. On passage, the Radio Room receiver broke down. The Radio Officer, an ex Post Office communications "morse-tapper", who had joined the MN in WWII, had only a limited knowledge of electricity. Failing to rectify the problem himself, I was asked to help (electricity being one of my better subjects). Every component inside the radio was numbered and was identifiable on a circuit diagram. Two heads proving to be better than one, we located a faulty very small capacitor. On disconnecting it, the radio came to life. Our homeward loading instructions were duly received. However, "CLAN ANGUS" was about to experience something much more serious.

At Calcutta, we moored very securely in the River Hooghley, in preparation for "bore tides". A specialized mooring gang hung-off our two bower anchors, removed three shackles from each cable, and secured us fore and aft with anchor cable to buoys - the after cables through fairleads, wrapped around our stern bitts. Tidal bores in the Hoogley estuary can exceed 7 feet (2.1m) in height, and frequently destroy small boats. Vessels "whistled" as a bore passed them, warning vessels upriver of its approach. Routinely, we were at mooring stations while cables took the heavy strain.

From Calcutta we headed downriver towards Chittagong. About 120 miles from Calcutta, while I was at the helm getting steering experience in pilotage waters in a buoyed channel, the Second Engineer in the Engine Room rang "Stop" on the telegraph. The engine, which had been on full ahead, instead of running at about 65 RPM, was running like a sewing machine. We had lost our bronze propeller! We anchored and a couple of days later were towed back to Calcutta. An inspection showed our tail shaft had sheared outside the boss. Fortunately, the falling propeller hadn't damaged our rudder. We had a spare (iron) propeller on board, but no spare tail shaft. Locally there was no replacement tail shaft, and it became necessary to get one from Glasgow. It was found to be cheaper sending it by air rather than by sea. Transporting such an item (6 ¼ tons and 19' 6" long) by air had



**It's quicker by air mail**



**The prop shaft in an unusual setting**

always been by hanging it beneath an aircraft from the bomb beam, but the maximum capacity of such beams was 5 ¾ tons. Clan Line chartered a Liberator, and from Prestwick Airport, with the shaft stowed inside it, the flight took three days, requiring nine refueling stops. The replacement shaft and iron propeller were fitted in dry dock at Calcutta. By then, our homeward cargo for Europe had been cancelled.

At Chittagong and some Indian ports we loaded a cargo for USA east coast ports. At New York there was a shortage of dockers (longshoremen). The Chief Officer gave cadets time off to work as casual labour, shifting bales of hemp cargo from the quayside to sheds, using hand-trucks. We did this for a couple of days, getting paid cash in the hand, which was helpful in New York. I spent another (my 20th) birthday there, managing by train to visit relatives in Pennsylvania. On completion of discharge, we loaded a cargo of manufactured goods, similar to the previous year, for South Africa. Sea trips from New York to Cape Town took 26 days. In calm weather, at 11 knots, we often saw whales swimming at our speed, nearly alongside the ship.

After discharging the second USA cargo, in Mozambique we loaded cashew nuts for discharge and processing in India – a regular Clan Line cargo. We passed through the Maldives, which had to be in daylight because of no lighthouses. Our whistle was sounded as we approached a small island, and a white man and a few coloureds ran to the water's edge and waved. In those days nobody would have contemplated tourism or an international airport in the Maldives. Only recently, mail had been sealed in barrels and placed on board Clan ships in Durban, and by arrangement dropped overboard to waiting boats as they steamed through the Maldives. After discharging our cargo of cashew nuts, we loaded a cargo in India for the UK.

The Chief Engineer, our only certificated engineer, nearing retirement, was very experienced. Daily, after breakfast, he and the Chief Steward met outside the Cold Store in the 'tween deck beneath the Officers' Pantry, to remove frozen food for the day. The refrigeration plant was inefficient, and opening it just once a day helped to maintain the temperature, and minimize food having to be condemned. The Chief Steward and Cook were shut inside, to select what was needed, the Chief Engineer waiting outside to let them out. After removing the food, the store was closed and relocked, probably both Chief Engineer and Chief Steward having a padlock on it. I think the same performance happened with the Chilled Store next to it. Occasionally, a rumpus ensued when something extra was needed, and the Chief Engineer refused to reopen a store. When food was condemned, it had to be checked and recorded with witnesses, before jettisoning. I recollect arguments occurring over the reason for frozen/chilled food having to be condemned – the Chief Steward blaming store temperature, the Chief Engineer blaming poor quality of food, and/or the length of time it had been in store. In the tropics we occasionally got chilled water to drink, but never ice or ice-cream.

Domestic fresh water storage consisted of two 11-ton tanks in the 'tween deck, with a hand pump on the Main Deck outside the officers' galley. The After Peak was a reserve fresh water tank. Daily, an engine room pump was used to fill a header tank, for officers' use, from any of these tanks. I think the Lascars, because there were so many of them, hand-pumped all of their water - normally unlimited. If we ran short of fresh water, the hand pump was locked. Lascars were then rationed, cadets being put in charge of unlocking the pump twice a day, and issuing a certain number of 5-gallon (old paint) drums of water. During long periods of heavy rain the opportunity was taken to top up the two domestic tanks. The steel-plated Boat Deck (we had no wooden decks!) was thoroughly cleaned, and rain water was directed down into the domestic tanks through a hose attached to the bottom of the Boat Deck drainpipe, at Main Deck level. In those days fresh water wasn't chlorinated on board, and I don't remember drinking-water ever being boiled. Fresh water storage tanks were regularly cement-washed.

When "CLAN ANGUS" hove to in heavy weather for a prolonged period one heard stories about ships running out of coal and having to burn furniture to reach port. To ensure we never ran short of coal, the Chief Engineer kept a "bit up his sleeve". At sea, he and the Second Engineer regularly measured bunker spaces to check our remaining coal. Coal originating from two sources occasionally caused a spontaneous combustion fire. This would be well below the surface, and was extinguished with fire hoses, with the bilge pump running. Such fires were never a cause for serious concern. When bunkering to capacity, an amount of coal equal to the "up the sleeve" reserve, had to be stowed on deck for a few days. This would be against the forward bulkhead on port and starboard sides of the amidships house, usually covering the larger of two portholes of the Chief Engineer and Cadets cabins. Understandably, cadets suffered the longest! Our cabin had asbestos-covered steam pipes running through it, no forced

draught - just a small fan – making it unbearably hot, in and departing from, say, Aden, in mid-summer. Bunkering methods varied enormously. At Glasgow, railway trucks were raised, whole truck loads tipped down a shoot into the bunker saddleback and sidepocket, beside the cadets' cabin, always at night! At Aden, coal was loaded in baskets, passed up the ship's side on staging from barges, tipped into the bunker hatch, and trimmed into the wings, by hundreds of coolies. These coolies would steal anything. Cadets, whose job it was to lock away fire-nozzles and brass sounding caps and suchlike, were in trouble when afterwards things were found to be missing! At Visakhapatnam, coal was loaded by women carrying baskets on their heads, up one gangway and back down another. Coal received from barges or on-shore yards was always stacked cube-shaped beforehand to enable our engineers to check quantities. Typical of the USA, at Newport News, bunkering was quick and clean. Conveyor belts fed coal down into the hatch, shooting it everywhere, making manual trimming unnecessary.

Rat and cockroach infestation, in those days, was part and parcel of carrying general cargoes from India. In the UK, while holds were empty, Port Health fumigated holds and accommodation with cyanide. After one such fumigation, the stench from a dead rat(s) somewhere behind a bulkhead in the Chief Officer's office was unbearable for weeks. In the USA, chemicals in cups, attracting rats to drink, were strategically positioned so that rats couldn't return to and die in their hiding places. In spite of fumigations, we often had rats. For rats on deck and in the lifeboats, cadets set break-back traps. I think our record for one night was six rats in six traps. I can remember the Chief Officer saying he had considered giving us a shilling per rat tail, and, because of the number we caught and the amount it would have cost him, he was pleased he hadn't done so. I once saw two (or was it three?) rats climbing together up a vertical bulkhead ladder outside the officers galley. One morning we found a rat had bitten a hole through all three of the tarpaulins on a weather deck hatch. Cockroaches were a problem in the accommodation. To prevent them from getting into the officers' "supper box" on the Bridge, the box was often hung from the Chartroom deckhead.

Lascar crews of the "CLAN ANGUS" were from the hinterland of Chittagong in what on my first voyage in 1946 was Bengal, which, after Bengal divided in 1947, became East Pakistan, and is now Bangladesh. Khalasis (seamen) and agwalas (firemen) were mainly Muslims, and included Topasses who performed the more menial tasks for the crew, such as cleaning toilets and sweeping decks. Catering staff for Officers were Christians who were able to handle pork and deal with garbage. In 1947, after Bengal divided, Hindu-Muslim riots caused enormous worries for our Lascar crews and their families. Always after arriving at Calcutta, they having been away for anything up to a year or so, the crew was immediately paid off. Day and night shore gangs were employed until the next crew joined. These gangs cleaned and cement-washed the after peak (reserve) fresh water tank, and painted the crew accommodation above it. Cadets were put in charge of this more or less continuous operation, the junior cadet on night work. I remember the Chief Officer going ashore for the all-important task of selecting his new Serang (Bosun). He was obliged to see all Serangs looking for a job, before deciding. The new Serang chose the khalasis, many of whom would be relatives or friends from his village. On board, Muslims prayed morning and evening, often more frequently, always facing Mecca. At sea, in overcast weather, cadets were often asked the direction of Mecca and time of sunset. In fine weather they prayed and ate on deck. It was taboo for a European's shadow to pass over their food. At ports where we got mail from home, cadets often read letters for illiterate Lascars, particularly the lonely (outcaste) Topasses, who could barely contain their excitement. Their relatives at home got or paid somebody to write these letters, purposely in English. Lascars very much respected Officers, sometimes preferring to confide in one rather than a shipmate. They thought we knew everything about everything – for example, we might be handed a broken watch and asked not only what was wrong with it but also how much it would cost them to repair. Hindustani, the language common to all Lascars, in those days lacked descriptions for items of machinery and new inventions. I recall a lookout on the Bridge describing an aircraft as a "Steam Murgh" ("Steam Chicken"). A number of the crew spent a considerable amount of their spare time away from home making fine-mesh fishing nets, to take home to their family of fishermen. Lascars, like all seamen, looked for bargains abroad. I remember the Serangs - the wealthiest Lascars – in New York buying enormous quantities of secondhand 'natty' suits, and quadrupling their money a few weeks later in Durban, selling it to Zulus, on a Saturday afternoon, when the port was quiet. They dressed khalasis in two or three suits, a hat or two, and maybe an overcoat as well, and sent them out of one dock gate, to return by another gate, hoping not to raise Customs' suspicions. At that time Clan Line had a regular cargo service between the USA and South Africa, so such trading probably occurred on a monthly or so basis.

I look back on my time in the "CLAN ANGUS" as having been very rewarding and enjoyable. Deck officers gave me every conceivable job to do; Engineers made me conversant with everything in the engine room and to do with bunker coal; the Carpenter, a time-served shipwright, taught me numerous things which I found very useful throughout my career; and the Chief Steward – a butcher who joined the MN rather than HM Forces during WWII – I still think of whenever I cut meat, remembering to cut it across the grain, not with the grain. I experienced one small fire (other than in bunker coal), in our deck cargo, but I won't expound on that here. By the time I left the "CLAN ANGUS" I had made many good friends. I kept up with two officers always, but, sadly, the others I never saw again - they and I became "like ships that pass in the night"!

I left the "CLAN ANGUS" early in 1949 at the end of a twelve months' voyage. After a short leave, I joined the TSS "CLAN MACTAGGART", as Senior Cadet, for her maiden voyage, which completed my sea-time to sit my Second Mate's Certificate.

Richard Olden



# Southampton Master Mariners' Club Cricket Section

## Captain's Report

### 2015 Season

Despite the well publicised struggles over recent years and against all the odds, yet another season of dedication was faithfully pledged by the resilient, core group of Cricket Section Officers for 2015. A fresh recruitment drive for committed playing membership was undertaken by early Spring and after the loss of Hardmoor as our home ground, Otterbourne Cricket Club was again secured for our home fixtures meaning that the 2015 season began with promise and a refreshing sense of vitality.

Pre-season commenced with our annual nets practice sessions at the Ageas Bowl. In total 3 were booked and all were well attended and with a good standard on show, which provided a great deal of encouragement for the season ahead. With a full set of fixtures in place and the promise of yet another glorious British summer, The Mariners' season was all set to go but alas, once again our opening fixture was lost to the weather and just like 2014 it was also against Kerala XI CC.

Our season finally got underway on a fine spring evening in Southwick against DSTL. Our pre season fears about our ability to raise a team were initially eased and we enjoyed what turned out to be a fantastic and hard fought game that was played in the true spirit that we all play the game for. Though we lost by 1 wicket it will forever remain in my memory as one of the most memorable evenings with The Mariners', if only for the final ball of the game which resulted in the wicket resembling a skittles alley! The contest was also followed by some superb hospitality.

We went on to lose our second game, this time against Swanmore by 8 wickets but then went on to beat OMCC, a highlight considering losing our first two batsmen to the first two balls of the innings! The Swanmore result aside, most games ended in close finishes, indeed, the away fixture against The Vine actually finished as a tie although this result wasn't ratified until later...in the pub!

Although we were constantly under pressure to put out a team only 3 matches were cancelled, the home game against Kerala XI CC due to the weather, the home game against DSTL due to lack of players and the Gosport Mayor's XI cancelled their home fixture with us due to other issues. Throughout the summer all games were played in the right spirit and with good humour throughout, though the will to win was shown by all players in the right way and at the right time. It is also fair to say that, given the weekly struggles we had in confirming a full team, those that did turn out were usually fully involved throughout each match.

A summary of the Club's results for 2015 are as follows;

No. of Fixtures	Won	Lost	Tied	Canx (Weather)	Canx (Others)
13	4	5	1	1	2

Despite the best efforts of the Captain and Vice Captains we again struggled with player commitment in all areas from our playing membership and also found it difficult to muster support with the post match social scene, looking after the kit and writing reports for the benefit of all. We were unable to maintain a nucleus of the playing membership to a consistent level and as a consequence each match, like previous seasons, became dependent on a rather nomadic band of players and this weekly cycle again placed undue pressure on the Captain and Vice Captains.

### Gone Aloft

This summary of the 2015 season would not be complete without paying tribute to Captain Keith Edwards, our shipmate and ex Cricket Section Captain who finally succumbed to his hard fought battle with his illness on 8th December. He was an immensely popular figure within the marine and cricketing fraternity and the attendance at his funeral was testament to that. I always considered Keith to be the consummate professional. He was what I referred to as 'old school', a highly skilled, knowledgeable and pragmatic mariner with a dogged determination to achieve anything and to the highest of standards. He demanded the same from those around him, always remaining firm but fair. His honesty, integrity and sportsmanship combined with the driest of dry sense of humours meant that we all connected with him in some way. Keith was an utter gentleman and epitomised all that The Mariners', and The Cachalots, stand for and this can be summed up by a quote that he lived by, one that any of you who attended his funeral will be more than aware of and one that I now find myself using on an almost weekly basis,

*"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence"*

Keith's life was taken far too early, his loss is still raw and his loss will forever leave an irreplaceable void in all of our lives.

### The Sutton Trophy

A season without a consistent level of attendance from many players meant it was very hard to nominate candidates for The Sutton Trophy this year. Initially one candidate was nominated however, it was then unanimously decided that the trophy should be posthumously awarded to Keith Edwards in memory and recognition of his overall and tireless contribution to the Cricket Section's management on and off the field and his captaincy on the field. The trophy will be engraved accordingly with "In memory of Keith Edwards" accordingly and Keith's wife, Sharon, was most appreciative of the gesture and has requested that the trophy be immediately given to SMMC for permanent display.

### Future of the Cricket Section

In January 2016, and following on from the well publicised problems with playing membership over recent years, I enquired to the Club's Officers whether it was the intention of the Cricket Section to try and seek a positive way forward for the 2016 season by undertaking yet another recruitment drive for playing membership. Though it was felt that this would be futile, it was agreed that it was the proper and correct course of action to take before the future of the Cricket Section could be officially decided. An invite for committed playing membership was subsequently issued however, after 3 weeks we had received NO positive responses and it was clear that the principle of commitment is missing from the club and unlikely to ever return and that we would not be able to muster the required commitment to our opposing teams and so to agree a fixture list would be an unviable option. The lack of players' commitment was also evidenced by the very poor attendance at the 2015 AGM. We reached the point where it was clear that we did not have enough people to fill the roles of Club Officers let alone anywhere near the numbers required to confidently commit to a season of fixtures. No officers were selected for the 2016 season and the Committee took the decision to formally wind up the Cricket Section.

Our cash reserves have been identified and we will be making a donation to the charity 'Disabled Cricket Hampshire' and using a small amount to provide a meal for the last of the Club's Officers, after which the remaining funds will be passed to The Cachalots. The playing kit will be donated to 'Cricket Without Boundaries' which is a UK based cricket development and AIDS awareness charity that will collect the kit and then distribute it to their various projects in Africa. Our remaining shirts and caps will also be donated to the same charity however 1 cap will be donated to The Cachalots and will remain on display alongside The Sutton Trophy.

I have only been involved with The Mariners' for 5 years or so but I know that the legacy of the Cricket Section stretches back many decades, so it is a crying shame that the Committee has had to take this action. However, with the increased decline of personnel engaged within the marine industry, either sea going or shore side, and the knock on effect in player availability in many ways it was almost inevitable and only a

matter of time. Despite repeated and tireless recruitment campaigns over the last few years, we have never been able to capture a core group of committed players and so the majority of the teams we have fielded have been made up of only a handful of mariners. I am sure that some of you will be of the belief that the Southampton Master Mariners' Cricket Team should be a team made up of Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel! I'd like to take this opportunity to thank The Cachalots on behalf of all of those that have remained involved with the Cricket Section for your ongoing interest and support throughout. Safe watch to you all.

Captain Rob Hinton SMMCS Captain



Further to the above report, on Friday 6th May, Peter Starkey, of the Cricket Section, attended the Club room to present the Sutton Trophy. It was received by Staff Captain Robin Plumley and placed in the trophy cabinet, next to other cricket memorabilia. Peter informed us that the SMMCC kit has now been handed over to the Hampshire County CC. They are entering a second disability team this year into their league and advancing many of them to hard ball cricket so the kit donation comes at a good time. They also mentioned that it's possible some may be shipped to Ghana for use by the national team. Either way they said they will send us an update in due course on how it's being used.



As he modestly inferred in his log on the front page, Captain Les Morris was the star player in the Gentlemen's team on Skittles Night at the Southampton Old Bowling Green on the 18th March, and collected his due reward. No such luck for Ian Paterson, who collected the wooden spoon, although it will probably outlast that bottle of wine.

Lesley Odd was top scorer for the Ladies, who revelled in the drubbing that they had meted out to their lesser halves. How could they be so cruel?

Husband Ian, right, seems to be praying to the light above, but to no avail.

Return match next year, if we are speaking again by then. Or maybe we should revert to mixed teams.

## Skittles Evening At The Southampton (Old) Bowling Green



*In the days before GPS satellites it was an occasion of note when a vessel passed “under the sun” when on passage. It occurs when the vessel’s latitude and the sun’s declination (latitude on the earth’s surface) coincide. At noon that day the sun will be almost exactly overhead.*

*In this more modern age, the event is relatively unimportant and may not even be noted – a reflection perhaps of the many changes which have occurred in professional seafaring and the gradual separation of the passenger experience from the sea.*

## Under the Sun

We passed “under the sun” today.  
It took no notice, intent on other things  
- but we were there.

We passed “under the sun” today,  
but nobody noticed  
- didn’t even care.

Satellites, computers worked together  
and as one,  
declared - “Oh yes, and by the way  
we passed “under the sun!”

At noon the sun was blazing down EXACTLY overhead.  
Latitude, declination matched and one old sailor said -  
“We’ve passed under the sun - oh yes! - did anybody see?  
or know? - or care? - or even look?  
or was it only me?”

Equator close, the Cruise Director,  
camping up and down,  
said “Party Time! - King Neptune’s here”  
and minced off - like a clown!

The mariner smiled sadly  
as his memories unfurled.  
“We passed under the sun today  
- into a different world”.

# Rope Ends

## New Members

**Roger Barker** is a Master Mariner with an HND in Nautical Science and is Director of Navigation with Trinity House. Roger went to sea as a cadet with P&O General Cargo Division, then as 3rd Mate. He moved to United Baltic and served there from 3rd Mate to Master before becoming Marine Superintendent with United Baltic/Andrew Weir. He was Navigation Manager with Trinity House before his current appointment.

He lives at Rowlands Castle and joins us 'to enjoy the local company of like minded marine professionals for both social and professional dialogue'.

**Harold Hugh Collinson** is a Fellow Chartered Accountant who started his career with Deloittes and whose appointments include MD of Airtours and Chairman of their subsidiary, Sun Cruises. He is currently Chairman of Lakeland Green Ltd, a wholesaler of chemicals. His interests are sailing and cruising and the restored Dunkirk Little Ship 'Naiad Errant'. He joins us 'to meet people with similar interests'.

**Geoff Waddington** is Senior Marine Surveyor and Chairman of Geoff Waddington and Partners Ltd., based at Hythe Marina. He retired from the Royal Navy in 1993 as a Chief Marine Engineering Artificer after 24 years service, during which he was Mentioned in Dispatches for Distinguished Service in action while serving on HMS Glasgow in the Falklands War. On coming ashore, he worked as Ship Repair Manager at Husbands Shipyard before setting up his own Marine Surveying business. He is a qualified Yacht Master and Expert Witness and other professional qualifications include I.Eng.; I.Mar.Eng.; MIMar.EST. In 2011 he was elected Chairman of the International Institute of Marine Surveying Education Committee and promoted to the Board of Directors, and elected Fellow of the IIMS in 2013. He says that many of his friends and colleagues are members and hopes that joining us will provide an opportunity to network with like minded professionals.

### **FOR SALE**

**Silver Cachalot Whale Lapel Pins £26**  
(These have the modern backing stud)

### **Silk Club Bow Ties**

**Just Arrived**

**Self tie**

**£18**

**New Stock**

**Ready tied**

**£12**

### **A THURSDAY LUNCHTIME MAGIC LANTERN SHOW**



A PowerPoint presentation by Barry Peck

***"The History of the Strick Line"***



**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 1230 in Club Room**

**A brief account of the shipping company with plenty of ship photos and anecdotes**

This is a repeat of the presentation given on 28<sup>th</sup> April. A number of members missed it and have requested another chance to see it. As the length of tenure of the Club Room is uncertain it seems appropriate to do it at the first convenient opportunity.

## Gone Aloft

Captain John Harry Neal, who “Went Aloft” earlier this year, completed his initial training at King Edward VII Nautical College and, in October 1945 signed indentures with the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, remaining with them until 1950 when he joined The Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

In 1956, on obtaining his Master’s Certificate John left the RFA and joined Cable and Wireless, the company in which he was to remain throughout his distinguished career.

Appointed to Command (C.S “Cable Enterprise”) in 1976 he served on a number of cable ships working globally until his retirement (in Honolulu) in 1983.

A friend and colleague who served as John’s Chief Officer remembers his leadership abilities. *“I recall that he was a man who planned everything to the n<sup>th</sup> degree and frequently, in his own words, reminded everyone that he was a “Belt & Braces man”. He meticulously planned any operation and would require every piece of equipment that could conceivably be used be ready for it's purpose. He was firm but fair and certainly didn't suffer fools gladly, but was equally ready to compliment a job well done”.*

After his retirement, John and his wife Jane settled in Romsey, he became a “Cachalot” and, in addition to becoming a Ship Surveyor he was recalled by Cable and Wireless (Marine) as Head of their Survey Department.

A man of strong Christian belief who had supported the local Anglican churches during his postings to Brazil, Fiji and Spain, John now volunteered as a guide at Romsey Abbey, and as a driver for The Blind Club as well as assisting with the running of the annual Romsey Show.

In 2002 John and Jane moved to the Springbok Estate in Surrey where he became an active part of that community of retired seafarers. Ill health dictated a move to live with their family members in Dorset where Jane passed away in 2014, followed by John on March 31st 2016.

Captain Neal was a Liveryman of The Honourable Company of Master Mariners, a member of The Royal Institute of Navigation, an associate of The Royal Institute of Naval Architects and a Freeman of The City of London.

John resigned from The Cachalots in December 2009 due to his ill health.

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

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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

Thu	9 June	Shipping Festival Service, Winchester
Sat	9 July	Curry Lunch, Kuti's
Fri	9 Sept	Club Buffet Supper, Chilworth
Fri	7 Oct	Macmillan Coffee Morning
Fri	14 Oct	Trafalgar Dinner
Fri	4 Nov	Harpooners' Dinner
Thu	10 Nov	Sale of Sea Pie Supper tickets
Sat	12 Nov	Curry Lunch
Sat	3 Dec	Christmas Lunch
Sat	10 Dec	Christmas Dinner, Kings Court

**NB: Some venues are as yet undecided and events are liable to change**

The cut-off date for the next edition will be  
12th August 2016

		
<b>250 Club</b>		
	March	G F Cartwright S Harwood
	April	Anne Cartwright Edwina Smart
	May	M R Donaghy C Dowty
