

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 62

December 2016

Captain's Log

At the time of writing my last log – early August – we were in the final throes of preparation to move to our new premises at the Royal British Legion Club in Eastgate Street, Southampton. The move was eventually made in mid-August and our first “get together” – or “house warming”- was held, very successfully, on Wednesday, 24th August. The numbers attending, 37, were such that the event could not be held in our own Clubroom upstairs, but RBL came to the rescue and allowed us to use their own, much larger, room downstairs, as long as it was not held on a Thursday or Friday – hence the Wednesday! John Davies and his team provided their usual excellent buffet.

Until this event, it was always believed that in-house functions such as Club Suppers, Trafalgar Night Dinner, etc would have to be held in outside premises, but after the event, great minds came together to work out that, as long as the function was not held on a Thursday or Friday, it would be possible to use the larger RBL room downstairs for such events. This is how things stand at present, but no doubt our splendid Entertainment Committee will keep an eagle eye on things!

A coffee morning, instigated by Mrs Judith Peck, was held in the RBL Clubroom on Friday 7th October in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Health and Safety inspectors were not invited – a wise move in view of the health hazard of the copious quantities of cakes of all shapes and sizes that were available for consumption, purchase, raffle or any other means of profitable disposal. I should add that Royal British Legion members were also invited and participated in style. It was their Club Room we were using after all! It took some time before all the monies were realised and arms twisted, but at the Trafalgar Night Dinner later in the month Mrs Lesley Odd asked me to announce that the sum of **£1003.08** had been raised. Of course I got the figure wrong – slightly – and that cost me a few pennies more!

My last log was taken up largely by the Shipping Festival Service and the award of Honorary Life Membership to the retiring Dean, the Very Reverend James Atwell. I make this obvious statement because, in his kind letter of thanks to me shortly after the service, the High Sheriff of Hampshire (Mr Tom Floyd) referred to the “Law Sunday” service he was organising at Winchester Cathedral in October; and he asked if some Cachalots might like to attend, stating he would be in contact later on, formally inviting a group of us to attend. He did, and we did. The official invitation was duly received and a group representing “The Cachalots” presented themselves at the Cathedral on the morning of Sunday 9th October. Your Captain was invited to read a prayer for seafarers; this reading followed that of the Winchester Prison Chaplain and preceded that of a JP representing Magistrates. No significance is suggested by the order of presentation.....

The Cathedral was full and service was memorable, with legal and civic officials robed and be-wigged; it was privilege to take part, even in our small way. All those present were invited to take refreshments in the eastern part of the Cathedral after the service and it soon became evident that a very large part of the congregation had decided take advantage of this opportunity. Leaving my wife in the hands of friends and colleagues for a while, I set off to find the High Sheriff, but on the way I was stopped by several people, most of whom were interested in why a Master Mariner was reading a prayer at a service on “Law Sunday”.

I endeavoured to explain the master’s role in upholding the law on board ship as well as the need to comply with both international and local law applying in the numerous and varied ports of a voyage. Soon the initial group of two or three had grown to about a dozen or so, and I had still not seen the High Sheriff! Eventually, with one eye on the time, I was able make my apologies, found the High Sheriff, thanked him and made my way back to where I had left Ann and our friends. A quick glass of wine perhaps, then off to lunch. No such luck! This time the “blocking group” knew all about The Southampton Master Mariners, some of them having attended both the Sea Pie Supper and the Shipping Festival Service in previous years. At least one was a previous High Sheriff and another was a former Mayor of Winchester. Fortunately, Ann and our friends were nearby (having found their own group) so the conversation flowed easily from the outset. Eventually, we all broke up and went our separate ways. I then realised I had still not had my glass of wine. And we were late for lunch. A wonderful service followed by an excellent reception!

I was away on private business the week after the “Law Sunday” service, but returned in time to attend a meeting at St Mary’s stadium with HALO, the caterers and organisers for the Sea Pie Supper, in order to discuss matters relating to the event. I made up the numbers with our Revered Boatsteerer, Esteemed Honorary Editor and Inestimable Richard James (who holds it all together).

Trafalgar Night this year was a little late, for us anyway, being held on Wednesday (of course!) 26th October. A total of 45 persons had booked at the RBL Clubroom. This was a bit of an experiment, but thanks to some clever planning by the usual few (the caveat – I won’t mention names in case I forget someone - but we know who you are!). By the time Ann and I had arrived just before 1855 - a bit late because of the football traffic - the room was a picture. Forty five table settings were in place over white table cloths. It was just about the maximum that the room could take, but as far as I have heard most were reasonably comfortable. I was however denied the pleasure of Mrs Trish Smart on my right and had to make do with husband and Post Captain Jeremy instead. The things a Club Captain has to put up with! The reason: an unfortunately placed table leg fouling an evening skirt, but reasonable for be-trousered legs.

The evening ended with the “Immortal Memory”, presented by Past Captain Lionel Hall in his own style, paying due credit to other Admirals and Captains in the years leading up to the Battle of Trafalgar, whilst lauding the memory of the greatest commander in British naval history. Lionel’s presentation ended in silence – due reverence being paid by all to Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson.

Editorial restrictions this quarter mean that the Captain’s Log does not contain reports of the Harpooners’ Dinner or of any other functions after 28 October. These will appear in the next Captain’s Log.

Working on the assumption that this edition of *The Cachalot* will not be published until the end of November and at risk of being premature with my greetings, Ann and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

Leslie R Morris, Club Captain



Boatsteerer's Locker

Fellow Cachalots

We are now safely installed in our new Club Room at the RBL which sells draught 'Seafarers Ale' amongst other thirst quenchers.

We had our first function downstairs in the main RBL room, an informal Club Supper which went off very well. We had a raffle with prizes of the left over Bar Stock from Queens Terrace (**ticket Nos 11 and 17 have NOT YET BEEN claimed**) and like the Second Coming I was presented with the long talked about bottle of the finest Single Malt Irish Whiskey, my problem now is that I cannot remember to whom I promised a tot.

Our old room at Queens Terrace has been emptied and cleared of all the desks, fridges, books etc by The British Heart Foundation, a worthy charity for our donation. The two removers had a job with the desks on the stairway but managed with much blood, sweat and Polish swear words.

We since have received a huge thank you from the British Heart Foundation for offering our goods to sell and so far they have raised £284.05 from our donation.

After all this excitement I took myself off to La Rochelle, France for a week, returning for a few days to see that all was well at our Club then went with SAGA to a beach hotel in Northern Spain for another week. The sea looked very inviting but discretion is the better part of valour and I didn't even have a paddle; after all it was the Atlantic !! The only excitement was that the B.A. pilot landing in Spain did a touch and go which caused the 39 SAGA passengers to give a collective WHOO as we went airborne again, much to the amusement of the air hostesses who suggested that we retighten our seat belts for the next landing attempt.

Now I'm back to reality, I organised a Management Committee Meeting, a Meeting with HALO for 2017 Sea Pic Supper and confirmation of the Shipping Festival Service Preacher.

The result of the Management Committee Meeting was that from our memorabilia we have loaned the Quadrant, Octant and Walkers Speed Log and donated the large display cabinet to The Honourable Company of Master Mariners. Some of the other memorabilia in storage must unfortunately be disposed of either through an Auction House or Nautical Artefacts seller, or to Members who may wish to purchase any of the items as we must cut down storage and insurance costs and unfortunately having a Club Room large enough to display our memorabilia again is extremely unlikely.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 11th January 2017, 18-30 at the R.B.L. Club.

At the AGM one of the Harpooners has completed his term of office and must stand down but may seek re-election. A call for candidates will appear on the Notice Board, incidentally both the Storekeeper and Boatsteerer have reached their two year term of office but have agreed to continue for a further two years.

A Member has produced a thought provoking letter on "The Future of the Cachalots ~ A Provocative Discussion" a copy of which is displayed on our notice board for your perusal.

A number of us went to Cowes for a very splendid lunch and talk on Windstar Cruises at the invitation of 'The Merchant Mariners of Wight', the fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Finally Richard, Liz and the Management Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish you all 'Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year' and don't get too turkified.



Peter Marriott Bursary Award

Winchester Sea Cadet Corps

From Bursary Officer Captain John Mileusnic:

It is a pleasure to report that following a glowing recommendation from the Commanding Officer of Winchester Sea Cadets, Able Cadet Callum Leverett was awarded a bursary towards the cost of a voyage on board TS Royalist.

The unit has been through a period of re-organization and staff changes and is now back up to full strength. During this time Callum remained at all times an excellent example to the younger cadets with support and encouragement, and is considered by his Commanding Officer to be a role model to the other cadets.

Callum is a pupil at Kings School Winchester and has been a Sea Cadet for more than four years. He has completed two voyages on sailing yachts but this was his first trip offshore on board TS Royalist. He was originally booked for the maiden voyage but this was cancelled at the last moment due to warranty/handover issues, something that many of our members will be familiar with. His long term ambition is to follow a career at sea and hopefully the voyage from Inverness to Oban will have given him some encouragement.

The following is a summary of Callum's report:-

I would like to express my gratitude to the Southampton Master Mariners for the recent bursary towards my trip on TS Royalist.

I had a very enjoyable and rewarding voyage from Inverness to Oban taking in a transit through the Caledonian lochs. We had many onlookers watch the transit and it gave an opportunity to show other youngsters the vessel, how it works and which activities we participate in with the SCC.

The weather was mainly overcast, raining and windy, often in the wrong direction to sail. The scenery, though was incredible and I was taken back by the beauty of the Scottish lochs.

The experience allowed me to make friends with cadets from other parts of the country, learn sailing skills and achieve a RYA sailing qualification.

The experience has inspired me and I am now booked to take part in the Tall Ships race next year sailing from Finland to Lithuania in July.

Thank you again for making this voyage possible for me.

AC Callum Leverett
Winchester Sea Cadets





In just three hours at the

Coffee & Cakes

event held in the downstairs room at the RBL Club

On Friday, 7th October
and after Gift Aid was applied
The tremendous sum of

£1003.08

Was raised for

Macmillan Cancer Support

Well done to all concerned.

Burns Supper

King's Court has been booked again, on
Saturday, 21st January

for our annual Caledonian Cultural
Experience and we hope to continue
with that rich traditional fare and
programme as enjoyed
in previous years.

1900 for 1930
Black Tie & Miniatures
£32 per head



AGM

Wednesday 11th January 2017, 18-30

at the R.B.L. Club

Eastgate Street, Southampton.

Sea Pie Supper 2017

**Friday 3rd February
St.Mary's Stadium**

Tickets, to members only, went on sale on

10th November

on a first come basis (that also means first paid)

Prices :

Members £52, guests £62

Key Fob



A plastic dangle which will
gain you access to the RBL
Club is available from the
office for a one-off payment
of £4

The Cachalot key ring is
also available for £1.50

SUBS & 250 CLUB

With this newsletter you should also receive your
subscription renewal form

&

'250 Club' Application

Also the Provisional Programme of Events for 2017

The Christmas Dinner

will be held at
King's Court Masonic Centre

On

Saturday 10th December

1900 for 1930

£32 per head

Black Tie

Traditional Christmas Fare

A Merry Raffle will be held at the
event and suitable donations
will be welcomed



Above: Boatsteerer Ken Dagnall receives that long awaited bottle of Single Malt Irish Whiskey from Past Boatsteerer/Captain/Hon Life Member Reg Kelso at the 'House Warming' event at the RBL on 24th Aug.
What can Ken look forward to now?

Below: Another Past Boatsteerer/Captain, Lionel Hall gives the 'Toast to the Immortal Memory' at the Trafalgar Dinner on 26th October, also held at the RBL Clubroom.



Above and below: Members attended the MN Day Service at Holyrood Church on 4th September. Among the flag bearers was one of the Southampton Sea Cadets who benefitted from our Bursary in 2015



Six members went to Cowes on the 3rd September to attend the Dedication of the Commemorative Plaque remembering the MN & Fishing Fleet Personnel who lost their lives in WWII and subsequent conflicts.

The plaque had been installed by The Mariners of Wight and was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of the IOW, Major General Martin White CB CBE JP



More nuances of scale

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 5 September 16

with permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey

When you dramatically increase the size of ships, while a ship twice the size may appear at first glance little different to its half-size sister, there is rather more to it than mere extrapolation.

It is a message that is gradually sinking in, possibly as a result of the “cascading” that is taking place throughout most shipping sectors, with huge implications for the port industry. Some of it is perfectly obvious, like the fact that if a ship twice the length of the berth turns up, it will probably shut out the adjacent berth for the duration of its stay, even if there is sufficient water to get the thing alongside. California seemed to learn this the hard way, even though people in European ports could have given them some useful intelligence based on experience.

The word “supersize” seems to have entered the maritime vocabulary, although it really doesn't really mean a great deal. While it might describe 15000teu containerships, people who operate ports capable of berthing short sea 2500tonners will employ the term as they tell you of their efforts to squeeze a 3000dwt ship into a somewhat limited berth.

Size is certainly challenging the hydrographers as much as it does the pilots, who have to cope with ships that are too long for the port's turning circles and are discovering that a sand bar a few inches higher than they thought causes considerable embarrassment, if not actual damage. With the safety envelope around a ship squeezed ever smaller, it would be surprising if there were not more cases of grounding in port approaches.

Depth is, after all, a variable, and there is more to it than tide. A few years ago I rode a part-laden capesize out of a port in the UK, with the hydrographer's launch sounding the channel a quarter mile ahead of us, providing real time information about our under-keel clearance. It all seemed very impressive, exceedingly skilled, if somewhat scary, but it is a serious demand if you to expect this sort of service all the time, as cascading increases a good deal faster than dredging, something all the environmentalists hate.

Then we have all the civil engineering challenges caused by very big ships. There are places where the wharves have been seriously undermined by bow thrusters that can develop the same lateral power as a main engine running at full sea speed in the ships for which the quay was originally built. Having to completely re-pile and rebuild a wharf will cost very big money indeed, and perhaps something that is never considered by the ship-owner as he gleefully contemplates the economies of scale. But these days, the physical constraints of ports rarely seem to give ship owners pause for thought.

I have never regarded a bollard as something that is terribly important, but this item of quayside furniture has required a lot of re-thinking as both ship size and the windage of ships alongside have hugely increased. Harbourmasters have nightmares about enormous ships being blown around their ports, having torn their bollards out of their concrete foundations with their high-tension composite moorings remaining perfectly intact. It seems a regular feature of equinoctial gales and unseasonable squalls alike. It is also a very good reason for ascertaining that a port has capable tugs available, just in case.

Tugs and bollards have also featured in the various tales emerging from the newly expanded Panama Canal. Not all the “New Panamax” vessels, whose owners would like to take advantage of this useful short cut, are suitable for the tugs which handle these big vessels fore and aft, with two lines on a bridle facilitating delicate manoeuvring. Heavy duty bollards (or bits, to be precise) need to be available along with suitable fairleads for these lines. These details are important.

It wouldn't be the first time that a tug skipper, applying sufficient power to stop a ship swinging, managed to tear fairleads and even inadequately fastened bits, clean out of the deck of the ship. Then there will be a terrible row, invariably involving lawyers, arbitrators and expert witnesses, as to whether it was the ship that was too weak, or the tug too powerful. Once upon a time the towrope would break, but these days it is the ship which may well give way first.

But mooring ropes under strain do break and anyone hit by a flying end is unlikely to constitute “walking” wounded. This is why the conventional wisdom of painted “snap-back” zones is currently being challenged, with the assertion being that there really is no safe space on a mooring deck, if a line breaks. Risk can be minimised, but not wholly removed, by arranging a mooring deck properly (the Oil Companies International Marine Forum provides detailed design guidance), avoiding acute angles of lead for lines and properly supervising operations.

The latest issue of the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme Maritime Feedback contains an admirable illustration of how a reasonably designed mooring deck can be transformed into a potential death trap, when the ship is forced to lie alongside an unsuitable berth. With the stern of the ship protruding out beyond the end of the berth, they were forced into mooring the vessel with a whole “cat's cradle” of backsprings and breastropes, with no stern lines at all. CHIRP makes the point that the berth might justifiably have been refused and the charterers given a hard time for their choice of an unsuitable berth. You might imagine their reaction if the master had exercised his rights!

But maybe this was a case of a “supersized” ship and a spot of cascading. It may be the way of the world, but we shouldn't meekly accept the increased risks.

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Probs with Props

We were swinging the lamp in the club a few Fridays ago, as we are wont to do, when Derric Webster mentioned that one of the ships he was on had lost a propeller blade. This prodded a few memory cells into action and perhaps it was not such an uncommon occurrence. Some of the Nourse Line ships that I served my time on carried spare blades, usually secured upright in no.5 'tween deck, for just such an occasion, more of which in a later edition. Most ships carried spare propellers either on deck or in a hold and quite a few of us will remember the spare propellers for the old Queens which were laid along the sides of the King George V Graving Dock in Southampton.

Here is Derric's account of his experience when he was Third Mate on a BP tanker.

NO DRYDOCK?

It was tea-time – I was in the saloon having just come down from the bridge after relieving the Chief Officer for his meal when suddenly the ship started bouncing, for want of a better description. It was most uncanny and, as the engine slowed down the “bounce” changed to a “waggle” where both the fo’c’sle and the poop were visibly “wagging” – then we stopped.

The Ship – “British Holly”, on passage in ballast from the Antipodes to Abadan.

The Year – 1950 or 51.

The Place – The Arabian Sea, some three or four days steaming from Ras al Hadd.

There was some discussion as to what might be the cause of this sudden irregularity. The Engineers checked the tail shaft in the vicinity of the stern tube but nothing conclusive was visible (although suspicions were aroused), the engine was running perfectly, so the general conclusion was that something had gone wrong with the prop. In due course a pilot ladder was lowered over the stern and the Chief Officer went down to have a look whilst the Engineers turned the propeller by hand. Sure enough, there appeared to be a blade missing.

There was nothing to be done then and there except to report our misfortune to Britannic House in London and continue our voyage pending further instructions. The engine was restarted and we carried on at a speed which kept the vibration to a minimum – somewhere between half and full speed was the optimum if I remember rightly.

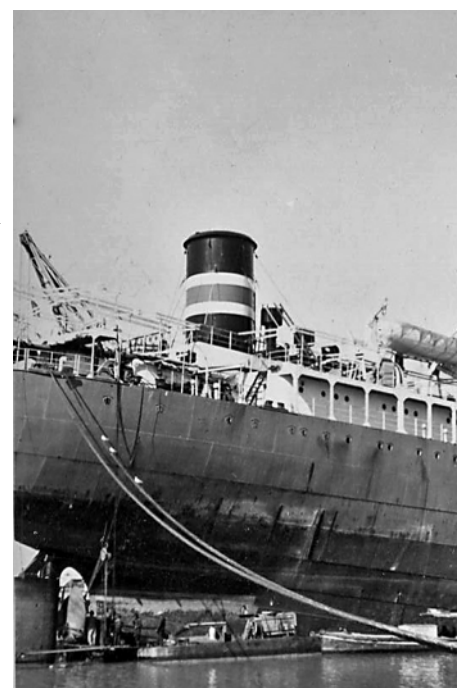
Of course conjecture was rife! We were bound for Abadan but that port did not have a drydock. Would we go to Bombay, or would we load a cargo for the UK or Europe and limp home at a reduced speed? Neither was the answer – continue to Abadan where the spare prop would be fitted. That’s what the Office said. Quite surprising when you think of it! No drydock? It would be a tricky operation!

We plodded on and eventually arrived at the Pilot Station at the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab. The river passage had to be handled with considerable care in order to avoid the critical engine speeds at which the vibration was so severe. Between Slow and Dead Slow was the worst. Number 16 Berth was allotted to us – a sort of mixed use cum lay-by berth about half way along the row of oil berths and just across the road from the Bawardi Club, which was handy! (Cold beer at the bottom of the gangway – well, almost – but the beer sold in Abadan in those days was an acquired taste as any ex BTC people will remember).

The next job was to trim the ship so that the propeller boss was sufficiently clear of the water to enable the props to be changed without filling the engine room once the tail shaft was withdrawn. We filled the forepeak and Numbers 1 and 2 cargo tanks, emptied all the other tanks and I think the Engineers were able to shift some bunkers forward. This did the trick and had the ship trimmed sufficiently by the head to proceed with the repairs.

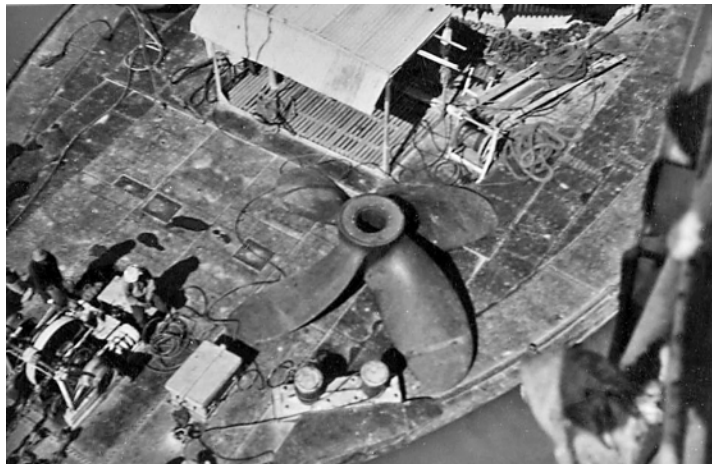
The spare, a cast iron propeller, was secured on the tank deck just by Number 7 Centre Tank, so it was quite easy for the resident floating crane to access it – not like a general cargo ship where the spare prop was often in the ‘tween deck. A couple of barges were secured, one each side, under the stern to provide a working platform and scaffolding was rigged through the propeller aperture, whilst the floating crane brought the spare propeller from the deck to the barge under the port quarter. By that time it was possible to inspect the damage at close quarters and it was found from looking at the staining in way of the break that the propeller blade had suffered a crack which had gradually got worse over time until it eventually gave way and the blade dropped off. About half the thickness of the stump was darker than the other half.

A couple of chain blocks from the pad eyes on the hull, enabled the weight to be taken so that the shaft could be disconnected and the tail shaft withdrawn into the tunnel leaving the prop hanging from the chain blocks. It was then swung across and



British Holly, trimmed by the head and the tail shaft clear of the water

landed on one of the barges leaving the propeller aperture clear enough to lift the spare prop and, by a similar manoeuvre in reverse, swing it into position and push the tail shaft back, connect everything up, and “Bob’s Your Uncle”, job done!!



The spare propeller lowered onto the barge, ready for fitting

Sounds simple, but it required both time, patience and a considerable amount of skill to accomplish the changeover in a two week period. A lot of credit must be given to the resident engineering staff in Abadan who were working only a few inches above the murky waters of the Shatt-al- Arab at the same time dealing with a heavy piece of machinery in a situation where any slip-up or miscalculation could have jeopardised lives and sent one, possibly two, valuable propellers to the bottom of the river.

The floating crane put the broken prop back on deck where the spare used to be. Once suitably secured the ship was ready to move to one of the other berths to load and so continue the voyage. I cannot remember where we went after this but I do not think it was straight back to Europe. We soldiered on, our speed somewhat reduced due to cast iron props being less efficient than bronze props, until our drydocking in the UK, due some months later, when a new bronze prop was fitted.



The faulty prop being removed, the stump of the missing blade clearly visible

Interestingly, in the few short months the cast iron propeller was in use, the amount of corrosion to the tips of the blades was considerable. At the time, someone said that the useful life of a cast iron propeller was about 12 months.

I always felt that an occasion such as this, changing a prop with the ship remaining afloat, was an uncommon experience, if not unique. I think it would be difficult to trim a general cargo ship sufficiently by the head without resorting to filling No.1 Hold with solid ballast but since discussing this with colleagues at the Club two other Members have cited instances of lost blades but drydocks were, I think, used in both cases. I wonder if anyone else has had the experience of changing a damaged prop with the vessel still afloat?



Autonomous Ships – Fact or Fiction?

In late 2015, the London Branch of The Nautical Institute convened a two-day seminar entitled “Autonomous ships; what does the future hold?” with speakers from, inter alia, Class, The Regulatory Authorities, Developers and Operators.

Each was invited to predict the impact that the introduction of unmanned vessels globally would have on the shipping industry and the scene was set by James Fanshawe, Chairman of the UK’s Maritime Autonomous Systems (MAS) Regulatory Working Group in his keynote address.

“Automated ships are here today, already, in all sorts of shapes and sizes, used by science for research, for defence and in the oil and gas industry, among other things.

As vessel sizes increase, they will have to be integrated into a well-established maritime world with many complexities in place. The MAS is determined that they should be brought in sensitively - and recognising the concerns of all involved”.

Successive speakers highlighted other viewpoints viz.

* Autonomous ships are not a thing of the future; in many sectors small autonomous vessels are already a reality for both subsea and surface work.

*The move towards fully automated vessels is likely to be driven by insurance and increasing public demand that no accident is acceptable. However, while it reduced risk in some areas, including keeping seafarers out of harm’s way, it may increase it in others.

*Interaction between manned and unmanned vessels is likely to be a major point of risk,

*Existing Conventions and regulations will need to be updated to take the existence of autonomous vessels into account, including SOLAS, The Colregs. and national regulations.

*While autonomous merchant vessels are unlikely to be a reality for many years yet, onboard systems are increasingly becoming automated, which demands a new set of skills and aptitudes from seafarers.

The seminar concluded that, while it will be many years yet before fully unmanned merchant ships become a reality –if they ever do – it is vital that the industry starts thinking about the implications of the potential change at an early stage. Only in this way can it ensure that the training, skills and knowledge are in place to maintain the safety and profitability of the industry.

In early 2016 – Rolls-Royce “lifted the lid” on their research into their vision of a land-based Control Centre for the operation of “Autonomous Drone Cargo Ships” wherein a small “crew” of 7 to 14 people monitor and control the operation of a fleet of vessels across the world using interactive smart screens, voice recognition systems, holograms and surveillance drones to monitor what is happening aboard the ship, and its environs. Explaining the motivation for the research, the General Manager, Remote & Autonomous Operations (Ship Intelligence) R-R. commented, “We are living in an ever-changing world where unmanned and remote-controlled transport systems will become a common feature of human life. They offer unprecedented flexibility and operational efficiency. Our research aims to understand the human factors involved in monitoring and operating ships remotely. It identifies the way crews ashore use tools to get a realistic feel for what is happening at sea.”

Rolls-Royce suggest that they will construct a “Remote Operations Test Centre” before the end of this decade and their Finnish partner in this research (The VTT Technical Research Centre) confirms that “The autonomous ship does not mean removing human beings entirely from the picture, as is sometimes stated. Unmanned ships need to be monitored and controlled requiring new kinds of work roles, tasks, tools and environments. The future shore control centre concept has been designed by emphasising the user experience of the human operators. By focussing on the operators point of view it is possible to introduce meaningful, pleasurable and engaging new roles for the ships’ shore control centre professionals”.

The research was undertaken by VTT and The University of Tampere Research Centre (TAUCHI) in collaboration with Rolls-Royce with the aim to explore the lessons learned from other industries such as aviation, energy, defence and space exploration, where remote operation is more widely used.

Undoubtedly, this research will provoke great excitement in certain segments of the maritime industry but, in others, the reaction is likely to be one of alarm and despondency. To read that a shore-based “crew” of seven to fourteen technicians will operate a FLEET of ships will ring alarm-bells throughout SE Asia – and beyond.

Shipping today is international, multinational and transnational with crews comprising six or more nationalities and 60% + wearing an ensign that is not that of their owner.

The vast majority of seafarers – Officers and ratings – hail from poor countries whose economy is, to a high degree, dependent on the money they send home.

In her book “Deep Sea and Foreign Going” Rose George writes “Most populous of all are Filipinos, who are lured not only by the wages (Government officials back home earn £200 a month, while the sailors’ minimum pay is meant to be £354) but by aggressive advertising that casts mariners as “patriotic heroes” whose remittances – amounting to billions of USD annually – support the nation.”

Some 25 years ago ICS/BIMCO initiated a study to quantify the global demand for seafaring Officers and ratings and their most recent findings make intriguing reading. Their current report suggests that the global demand for seafarers is 774,000 Officers and 873,500 ratings – with the demand for Officers outstripping supply by about 16,500. A worrying projection suggests that within a decade the Officer shortage will rise to “92,000 by 2020 and 147,500 by 2025”.

The report points out that it takes a minimum of 10 years to produce an Officer of “Senior Management Level” and adds “The amount of money that goes into seafarers today is enormous, but far too often we squander the investment by not doing enough to retain them – retention is vital”.

Unfortunately, there is a universal viewpoint that “A maritime career isn’t attractive any more – they must improve shipping’s image” so campaigners hope that the suggested looming manning crisis will be the pressure point for the industry to clean up its act.

Retention IS the problem (and it is difficult to see how the majority of today’s young seafarers will elect to make it a career) and that, coupled with recruitment difficulties just might convince the doubters that the autonomous ship HAS a future.

The August 1924 edition of "Sea Breezes" included a poem entitled "A Forecast – The Crewless Wireless Craft" (published in full in "Cachalot" No. 49, Sept.2013).

Herewith, a brief excerpt:

"Today, with myriad cathode rays, atomic forces splitting
Electron speed to unseen craft are from the land transmitting
A tube in shape, no deck, no keel, no funnel, ventilator
No rudder, engine, mast or screw, nor even Navigator
So here we have the future ship, unloseable we deem her
No longer need we navigate with paddle, sail or steamer"



CRK 10/16

Keep it simple

Reproduced with kind permission of the author, Cachalot Michael Grey, from his column, Grey Line, in

The Marine Professional November 2016

If you are looking for technical innovation, look no further than in the mail order catalogues that come clattering through your letterboxes, advertising all sorts of amazing things for your home that you never knew you needed. "Why on earth would anyone need an electric device for stoning avocados, or a combined worktop oven and coffee grinder?" is the sort of remark made regularly by my wife, as she shoves the catalogue in the dustbin, before I can get my hands on it.

She knows my enthusiasm for innovation is boundless, recalling the, industrial sized cheese grater that needed its own cupboard, the device for getting leaves out of the gutter which nearly led to me falling off the roof and the truly pointless and lethally sharp appliance for chopping up fruit and veg. in a aesthetically pleasing fashion. There was more blood spilt than in a slaughterhouse. And that is just the last couple of years.

It is her scepticism about pointless invention and the futility of much so-called innovation which marks out the difference between us. I am the customer which the manufacturers of devices and equipment are praying for, while she would reduce them all to tears of rage and frustration, as she asked obvious and eminently sensible questions about the utility of their products.

I often think that she should have changed her career and become one of the distinguished delegates of an influential flag state at IMO, where she could routinely scotch the plans of manufacturers, who work assiduously to make mandatory the fitting of their innovative equipment. Sadly, too many of the distinguished delegates are exactly the same as me, sighing with envy and enthusiasm about navigation devices which will enable an illiterate first trip ordinary seaman to operate with the precision demanded by Captain Cook.

The manufacturers then rush out and persuade technical directors of shipping companies that their amazing devices – think of anything with "e-" as a prefix- will facilitate huge cost savings in crew wages or insurance premiums, fuel or emission control. Almost certainly, it won't, and if it will at first, remember a ship lasts for a quarter century, while this "innovation" will be redundant six months after it is fitted and give up the ghost inside five years.

Don't get me wrong. There have been real technical breakthroughs which demonstrate the zeal of innovators and the appetite for their products. Mr Sperry's gyro compass, the facility of radar, high capacity pumps and welding, reliable diesel engines and containerisation; all marked substantial progress in marine science. But there is an awful lot of what is devised today which is the product of people trying to merely make things to sell, rather than to address a genuine need.

A classic example was the Japanese Techno Superliner, which was a product of the Japanese shipbuilding industry looking for something that might reverse the tide of decline in the face of Korean and Chinese expansion. It seemed a jolly good idea, to offer the potential customers a very fast ship that could carry large volumes of cargo at a speed roughly twice that of the fastest container ships. It would, they suggested, shift a lot of the cargo from the bellies of jumbo jets, into the holds of such express vessels. The only trouble was that when, after a king's ransom had been spent developing a couple of potential designs, the reaction of the customer was much the same as that of my wife, when I ask her if she would like a combined electric toaster and hydraulic potato peeler.

This might bring us to the knotty issue of autonomous ships, which seem to be generating an extraordinary amount of enthusiasm, at least among designers of such devices and some professionals, who perhaps ought to know better. They have been energised by the debates on driverless cars and trucks, which to my mind demonstrates an equal degree of insanity as having the skies filled with drones, delivering us products we don't need, from Amazon.

Ask around the shipping industry as to whether there is any real demand for ships guided by robots, operated by people sitting in air conditioned offices, which will probably be illegal and certainly uninsurable, until decades of diligent regulatory work has been accomplished. This is probably why there is such enthusiasm at IMO for these daft marine vehicles, as if there were no more pressing matters for them to occupy their time. I have yet to meet a ship owner who thinks, that in an industry which is mostly operating in the red, they could afford the enormous capital cost of such craft, which might save a small percentage of its operating costs on its crew, or lack of one.

If you back an owner into a corner and fix him with your steely eye, he will confess that worthwhile innovation to him, or her, will be a ship full of simple, robust systems and equipment designed to last. Remember the WWII Liberty ship, designed for a single voyage but which lasted thirty years. I rest my case.



A Salvor's Lot

By Roy Martin Part II - Fire & Wreck

Because the majority of our salvage operations were successful they do not appear in such books as Norman Hooke's 'Modern Shipping Disasters' or 'Lloyd's Confidential Index'. The exceptions are most of the vessels that suffered fires or which sank before we arrived on site and were the subject of wreck removal contracts, usually for one of the P&I Clubs.

The cargo liner *Cherry Ruby* was owned by Lion Shipping, one of Dolly Seah's Singapore companies. Madam Seah was a formidable lady, who, I knew from experience, didn't like being parted from her money – especially by *Ang Mo* (a red head - a foreigner). Her ship had been built as Ocean fleet's *Freetown*. In early April 1981 the *Cherry Ruby* was on fire off Penang, while on a voyage from Singapore to Colombo with cement: the crew had mutinied.



The supply vessel *Smit Lloyd 43* was first on site followed by one of Smit's larger units the *Smit New York*. We provided the salvage team and the casualty was brought back to the Jurong Anchorage off Singapore. The damage was so great that the ship was sold for demolition. A sad end for a fine ship.



The *Procyon*, had been built as the *Cunard Ambassador*, having been acquired by Cunard while under construction. The ship was only two years old when, in 1974, she caught fire while on a positioning voyage from Port Everglades to New Orleans. There were no passengers on board and none of the crew were lost. The cause was said to be a broken fuel line in the engine room. She was declared a CTL and sold to the Danish owner Clausen, who rebuilt her as the livestock carrier *Linda Clausen*. She was resold in 1980, becoming the *Procyon*, still fitted for carrying sheep.

In April 1981 she caught fire whilst bunkering in Singapore. Again the cause was a broken fuel line. This time it was the fuelling hose, which failed. The connection was via gun port door and a plate had been removed from the deck in that vicinity, so that diesel split onto a running generator and ignited. This time there was loss of life.

Selco and Smit fought the fire together. The ship was again repaired and suffered her final fire in 1984, when called *Raslan*.

The *Orient Welfare* put into Colombo with hull damage on 12 June 1981. At the time she was on a voyage from South Korea to Oman with bagged cement. She sank in the harbour on the following day. We were appointed by the P&I Club and our team re-floated the vessel and were then contracted by the club to scuttle her in deep water. The Sri Lankan Navy offered to sink the wreck with shellfire, if we would tow her out. This we did, but when we arrived on site the team found that the crew of the naval vessel were all seasick and couldn't man their guns; so our team boarded the hulk and flooded her down, then escorted the navy back to Colombo, arriving much later in the evening than they had intended.



Orient Welfare, previously the Kyotai Maru

Sometime later my Accountant, Lee Sook Fung, came into my office, she seemed quite agitated. 'Look, look' she said 'see what he has done now'. 'He' was Rainer and she

had in her hand his expense claim for the *Orient Welfare* job; included in it was an item \$50 for the pianist in a bar. Warily I called Rainer in and asked him about it, I got a typical Rainer explanation. They had arrived at this establishment sometime around midnight, shattered after their day scuttling the rat infested hulk. Not long after they got there the pianist put down the piano lid and was about to go home. The salvage team had intended to dance the night away, so Rainer slapped this \$50 note on the piano and told the man to keep playing, which he did till the early hours. I tried to explain to LSF that unless we had men like this who were prepared to do this extremely risky work we might as well shut up shop. I don't think she was in the least convinced.

As with most of these jobs I don't have the figure we received, but I did find out a few months later that I had acquired the nickname of 'Million Dollar Martin' in London. Someone in the clubs had worked out that whatever currency I quoted in that was my price for wreck removal. I was to lose that moniker on the next job.

In June 1981 we were returning from a weekend on a Malaysian island. As we approached Johore Bahru the radio in the car started to splutter into life; there was obviously a major incident in Singapore harbour. As we weren't licenced to use the frequency outside of Singapore I had to contain my curiosity until we crossed the causeway. When I got through I found that the Chinese cargo liner *Lian Hua Cheng* had suffered an explosion and was on fire. We had lost the job to SELCO and the Shell Pulau Bokum tugs. There is only a brief mention of this incident, in a Chinese technical paper, which says that the fire burned for twenty days and the total cost of the incident was Yuan 45 million.

In July the Chinese called for tenders to remove the wreck and the cargo. There were a lot of chemicals among the cargo, these were obviously fire damaged and mixed. The industrial chemists could give us no real idea of how to deal with them – except to warn us that there would be an ever present risk of another explosion. We tendered four million US dollars, but SELCO were one million dollars cheaper.

I wasn't overly sad to lose what was obviously a difficult job. Shortly afterwards I flew to Rotterdam for a meeting; then intending to join my wife in the UK for summer leave. During the meeting a message from Singapore was passed to me; Captain Yang, the General Manager of COSCO Shanghai, had declined to contract with SELCO. Apparently Ernst Kalenburg had arrived with two Chinese women lawyers and the manager had strongly objected to this.

I told the Rotterdam directors that I would have to return to Singapore that night to deal with the situation. Rom Scheffer, the President, said, not to worry as they would send their senior salvage master. I declined as that was likely to aggravate Captain Yang still further.

There was no KLM flight that evening so I used my ticket to London and the office rebooked me on the BA flight back to Singapore. I rang my wife to say I wouldn't be home and boarded the flight. We were climbing out of Heathrow, with a glass of wine on the table cloth in front of me, when the aircraft seemed to level out short of its cruising altitude. A flustered stewardess came to clear the table, saying they were 'stopping service'. I refused to give up my glass until it was empty, saying that if I was going, I was going p****d.

It seemed quite a while before the Captain announced that we would be making an unscheduled stop in Munich. As we landed we were escorted by fire engines and ambulances. We were told to make a hasty exit; none of us hung about, though we did not need to use the slides.

We were ushered into the airport terminal and there we stayed for a couple of hours. None of us had any Deutchmarks, if we had they would have been of no use as the shops were closed.

We were then taken out to the taxiway and told to identify our luggage, which was then reloaded. When we taxied for take-off some hours later there were still a couple of suitcases on the tarmac. We learnt that a note had been found in one of the lavatories. This purported to come from the Black September Movement and said that, if we did not land in Munich before midnight, they would blow the plane up.

By the time we landed back in Heathrow it was daylight and, after a couple of hours in the terminal we re-boarded, the same aircraft! Now about twelve hours late I assumed that I had lost the job.

Early the following morning we arrived in Singapore and I was taken straight to a meeting with Yang. Fortunately my ever efficient secretary Kim, married to our salvage officer Ivan Woodford, left briefing notes in the car. I met Captain Yang and his interpreter. From them I gathered that we could have the job, but only at SELCO's price of three million. The ship was not entered in a P&I Club. We also had to hire a China Salvage ship for half a million US to take the chemicals back to China, where they could deal with them. I was reasonably happy with this last condition, not knowing how we would dispose of the stuff otherwise.

We agreed, then Yang stood up and said 'well Ma-tian we should get something to eat.' Over breakfast I asked him why, as his English was so good, he used an interpreter. He just said 'it gives me time to think.'

Some months later, as the job was drawing to a close, Lee Sook Fung came in waving a sheaf of papers – 'Boss, you should not take on these jobs, we will be lucky to break even.' I asked for a meeting with Yang and explained the position to him; he said that there could be no more money, but he would give me the ship. I said please don't 'give' it to

me you will get me the sack. I suggested is that he could sell it to the company, for a token dollar – this he agreed to do. I called Rainer, who got in touch with Mr Ho at National Iron and Steel, Singapore. He offered us half a million US; we were in no position to haggle as both sides new that the broken backed hulk would never survive a sea voyage.

A few weeks later I was at the shipbreakers with Rainer and Halim Noor, our salvage co-ordinator, who had re-joined us. The salvage officer who was piloting the vessel up the creek called on the radio: 'I'm passing Yellow Pinky's (SELCO), shall I scuttle her here? I said, 'no, we need the money.' As our tugs pushed the casualty onto the mud we enjoyed a glass of Champagne! The following year I found out that the way that China Salvage had 'dealt with' the chemicals was to dump them on the voyage back to Guangzhou.

Some weeks later the duty man in the operations room called asking for the go ahead to take on a salvage operation. It was a hot evening and I knew that Sook Fung would be sitting up waiting for the temperature to drop before going to bed, so I called her. I asked whether we should take the job on. She said 'Boss that is for you to decide', I said 'yes and don't you forget it in future, I have already given the OK.'

Not fair, I know!

On the 4 February 1983 we heard that the Taiwanese cargo ship *Tung Ching* was on fire in the South China Sea. She carried 82,000 boxes of oranges destined for Singapore. We dispatched our salvage tug *Smit Singapore* who located the abandoned and gutted derelict and took it in tow. We learnt that the crew had been saved from the life rafts by a tanker, complete with their suitcases! We could see that we were on a hiding to nothing. Others had heard too, soon my chief tormentor was on the phone, 'K a l e n b u r g, I'm in the market for some hot orange juice, ha, ha.'

A quick survey confirmed our worst fears and the best deal we could come to was to take the ship out and scuttle her. The P&I Club paid us a measly US\$60,000 for the job. The Lloyds book Modern Shipping Disasters says that she was 'deliberately sunk with explosive charges near Indonesia.' Where we got the explosives from I do not know! We pieced together a probable scenario: the oranges would have been for Chinese New Year, which that year was on 13 February; in all probability the cargo would have arrived too late to get it to the shops.



Balstad had previously been the Oakland Star

A better payer was the Panamanian motor ship *Balstad*, laden with 10,000 tons of bulk sugar. Fire had broken out in the crew accommodation while the ship was bunkering off Singapore. Our tugs extinguished the fire and put the vessel to anchor, but she was declared a CTL and was sold for breaking. We were paid just over S\$900,000, but I suspect that included delivering the casualty to Taiwan.

As salvage income is unpredictable we would usually keep a couple of tugs on contract towing. Our cost base was always higher than much of the competition, so we generally got the more difficult jobs. After the 1984 recession there was a steady stream of work towing VLCCs and ULCCs, mainly from lay-up in Labuan Bay, to Taiwan for scrap. As our tugs were comparatively low powered we needed two to undertake each tow. It took many hours to get the tow up to speed, if you can call four or five knots 'speed.'

One such tow was handled by the Mississippi, Orinoco or Hudson, plus the Smit Colombo or Smit Rangoon. The rivers were old style single screw Smit tugs, fantastic heavy towing machines, but of only 2,400 BHP. The other tug was much more modern, twin screw and about double the horse power. Part way through one such tow the twin screw tug suffered a complete power failure and quickly lost way. The tow showed no signs of slowing and the bulbous bow was getting ever nearer. Fortunately the single screw tug was almost able to slew the tanker clear of her disabled sister, which only suffered minor damage to her mast and radio aerials.

After one tow I got an angry call from the scrap merchant in Taipei, he called my crew nasty names as the tow had arrived almost devoid of brass. The scrappers made good money selling compasses, telegraphs and the like. After a bit of questioning I found what was happening. During the tow the crew would put the launch down and visit the tow armed with a set of tools – they would then sell the spidge to other scrap merchants.

It dawned on me that we could make more money if we bought the tankers and sold them on delivery. This we did for a while, but it was a worrying business. If the price of scrap fell during the tow, the merchant would find every excuse not to accept delivery. I had visions of having to tell Rotterdam that two of the tugs were off Taiwan with a hundred thousand of scrap that we owned and no one would accept. Fortunately it never came to that. Some of the last tows had a sad end, the crews were told to leave the old tugs with the tow as they had been sold: as increasingly the oil industry would not charter tugs ‘with one wheel.’

Rt: Sook Fung and Kim with ‘The Mem’, as she was always called, in about 2008



Picture by Allan Ryszka-Onions, editor of “SCANNER”, the newsletter of the Solent Maritime Society

Above, the **NYK EAGLE** making her maiden visit to Southampton on 11th October. She was just one of the 60 container vessels (excluding feeders) that were serviced at the DPW Southampton Container Terminal during October and, at 144,285 grt, was one of the 21 that were over 140,000 grt. The largest was **CMA CGM ZHENG HE**, 399m, 178,228grt, 185,000 dwt, which, as you might tell from the name, sails under that popular flag of convenience, the Red Ensign.



Also on a first visit was the **BBC Skysails** which called on the 17th October. Built as **Beluga Skysails** by Volharding Shipyards, she became a pioneer in wind-assisted power, when fitted with a computer operated 160m² sail estimated to provide power equivalent to 2,000kW.

On her first voyage from Bremerhaven to Guanta, Venezuela, the system is estimated to have given between 10 and 15% fuel savings.

The sail is attached to the bow of the vessel with a high strength carbon-fibre rope and flies at a height of between 100 and 500m where wind speeds are significantly higher than at sea level. Now upgraded to a 320m² sail, evaluation is ongoing.

The concept was reported in an article “Harnessing the Wind” by our regular contributor Reg Kelso in *Cachalot* 23 of March 2007.

My thanks to ARO and the ‘Scanner’ for the above info. Ed

The Development of Navigational Instruments

In our previous Clubroom, in Queen's Terrace, two navigational instruments were displayed and were variously described as "quadrants", "octants" or "sextants" and currently both are on "permanent loan" to the HCCM, aboard HQS "Wellington" together with Terry Clark's elegant display cabinet which has been gifted to the Honorable Company. The instruments differed in size and construction and "mirrorwise" neither resembled the sextants with which we were familiar.....so, research was needed.

About 1699, Isaac Newton invented the quadrant comprising a sighting telescope, index arm, index mirror, horizon mirror and a graduated arc. The 45 degree arc was graduated in degrees, minutes and 10 seconds (one sixth of a minute of arc). It was an unwieldy instrument (the sighting telescope was some four feet in length) but, about 1730 an English mathematician, John Hadley, produced a much smaller "reflecting" quadrant which bore a striking resemblance to the sextants so familiar to us. The small telescope was mounted on one side of the frame and a large index mirror was mounted at the point of rotation of the index arm with a smaller horizon mirror mounted in the line-of-sight of the telescope. Pivoting shades were fitted to facilitate stellar observations. Hadley strove to make improvements to the instrument (and he adopted some of the features of a similar instrument designed in America by a glazier, Thomas Godfrey) and his final version incorporated two horizon mirrors, the upper one being small enough to allow the navigator to see the horizon directly ahead as well as the reflected view from the index mirror. Moving the index arm allowed the instrument to be held vertically (or horizontally) - and, for some unknown reason, it became known as "Hadley's Octant".



Later another amateur astronomer, an insurance broker called Caleb Smith produced an octant (also called an "Astroscope" or a "Sea Quadrant") incorporating a fixed prism in addition to an index mirror to provide reflective elements. To add to the confusion Smith often referred to his invention as a "quadrant" but soon the name "octant" was firmly established and its advantages became more obvious. As manufacturing techniques improved so did the accuracy of the instruments -and their size was reduced to facilitate travel.



The early octants were of wooden construction but subsequent designs incorporated components of brass and ivory. Initially, their mirrors were polished metal but as glass technology advanced these were replaced by silvered glass mirrors.

As time went on the demand for a more accurate instrument gave birth to the sextant. This instrument allowed the altitude of celestial objects to be measured relative to the horizon, rather than relative to the instrument, affording greater precision. The sextant does not require a completely steady "aim" because it measures a relative angle and, thus, was more suitable for shipboard use.

Today, despite the rapid advances in position-finding technology, many ships still carry a sextant. Its use is not dependent upon electricity or GPS satellites and thus it may be considered a very worthwhile back-up navigational tool.

Some years ago I visited a large container ship in Southampton and after a conversation about the changes in Bridge equipment, the Master, having made reference to his "invaluable" sextant, made a telephone call and instructed the recipient to bring the instrument to his cabin. After some ten minutes a rather flustered female Officer appeared with the news that "It's not in the chartroom drawer, where it was". The Master said that HE would find it but, after another ten minutes he re-appeared to announce that "it really IS a mystery ...I know I saw it last trip". I often wonder IF it was ever found -and, if so, how many, other than the Master, had the knowledge to make use of it to ascertain the ship's position.

CRK 12/10/16



Legal spotlight on command

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 3 November 16

with permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey

The Drapers' Hall is one of the grandest of the City of London's livery halls, its lofty chambers and rich decorations demonstrating that there has been plenty of money in curtains, at least since the 15th century.. Last week saw the annual Cadwallader Debate and Dinner held by the London Shipping Law Centre, with a full house from the maritime and legal community, replete with Law Lords, QCs and other distinguished folk.

In some respects, in the candlelight and glow from the great chandeliers, it all seemed a bit remote from the subject matter. We were all present to discuss the way we treat shipmasters in law and practice in the 21st century. As we were debating "The Master under Attack" and "authority and responsibility in an age of instant access", the practical realities of this would, simultaneously, have been occurring aboard ships all around the world.

In weather-beaten ships just arrived in port, gangways would be reverberating to the heavy tread of surveyors, inspectors, auditors and their ilk, all demanding to see the master over their separate matters of great priority. In fly-blown hell-hole ports where no sane person would willingly travel, corrupt officials would be threatening shipmasters over short-landed cargoes, alleged deficiencies, or some spurious bylaw, extorting financial penalties. In seas and ports worldwide, representatives of charterers would be shouting down telephones or firing off emails, to demand that the ship speeds up, or slows down, sails into a storm or changes the agreed cargo plan so that 150,000 tons of ore can be loaded in a single pass.

Masters are increasingly vulnerable to prosecution, civil and criminal sanction, simply because they are the people in charge. As representatives of the owner, they are on the spot. And with the wonders of modern communications, their decisions and actions are subject to almost instant questioning by somebody who thinks they know better. It doesn't, you might think, inspire confidence and encourage a young and thoughtful officer to aspire to command. "Do I need the grief and more to the point, the liabilities?" they may well think. Which, succinctly, was the whole point of the evening's event.

This scene was set by the moderator Captain Kuba Szymanski secretary general of InterManager, and a long career at sea behind him. But can P&I clubs do anything to protect shipmasters? The West of England's Michael Kelleher admitted that priorities were changing and burdens on both owners and masters were increasing, but clubs could provide defence costs, although this cover was not automatic and could involve tricky situations, should deliberate pollution be involved. Support for the master in the case of a collision was more certain. But there was no doubt that masters were seen as the soft target and easy for the media to home in on, with detention of individuals after a casualty becoming more common.

Michael G Chalos, partner at the US law firm K&L Gates and the successful defender of the master of the ill-fated *Exxon Valdez*, confirmed that he had witnessed the erosion of the master's authority. In the United States, if you are involved in an incident involving pollution or a death, there will be a criminal investigation. Moreover he suggested that international crews, technology and social media all played a part in undermining the role of the master, not least because of the practice in the US, of richly rewarding "whistleblowers".

In major casualties, he pointed out, government, press, publicity and politicians are just some of the multiple interests combining to blame a hapless shipmaster. The case of the *Exxon Valdez*, he believes, set something of precedent in attributing simple criminal liabilities and almost automatically "railroading" the master.

The US Coast Guard's director for commercial regulations and standards Jeff Lantz pointed out that in terms of international conventions, the burden on the master is indeed higher than that on others, the responsibility on the individual undeniable. However, the International Safety Management Code pushed the regulatory regime ashore, so that others now have responsibility for the safety of the ship and must ensure that the master has appropriate resources. The legal regime in the US recognises this shared responsibility and operating companies and others ashore, who have been judged as benefiting from the failure to comply, have been successfully prosecuted. Significantly, said Mr Lantz, in a single year, where CG inspectors boarded ships 57,000 times, there were just 92 prosecutions, but in only two of these, was the master found guilty.

Partner at Ince & Co. Faz Peermohamed is both a former shipmaster and a UK qualified lawyer and he was in no doubt that the perception that masters were increasingly burdened was sadly mirrored in reality. Apart from the pressures of market forces, where masters have to bow before charterers' demands, the modern master had to put up with bullying and harassment, corrupt practices, "micromanaging" from ashore, a huge increase in documentation including an inundation of non-essential items and demands of surveys and inspections. Refugees and piracy also added to the burden. The master "delivers", but at what cost? Above all, he emphasised, masters need "fairness".

Points raised in the following debate included the need for flag states to more forcefully intervene to support masters, not least when seafarers were detained for many months following a casualty. Some flag states were active, others were less so. Good flag states do not want their flag to be tarnished and behave accordingly.

Masters were said to be "on the rack" in some parts of the world, with solutions urgently needed to prevent harassment and the reality of corruption. There was a real risk that a "next generation" of senior officers would be put off their final promotion. Michael Chalos "sees no value to criminalise a man doing his job". But that, it seems is the reality.

We could have debated this subject all evening, but dinner was imminent. Masters, said our chairman Lord Clarke of Stone-cum-Ebony "deserve all our support" and suggested that there were many lessons to be learned. But, he wryly concluded – "it was better to be a maritime lawyer than a master". That he was so obviously correct provides food for much thought.

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**Southampton Master Mariners' Club
Cricket Section – Farewell Dinner**

**Ageas Hilton – Friday 17 June 2016
T20 Match – Hampshire v Sussex**

Present

- Rob Hinton – Captain
- Nick Salter – Vice Captain
- James Foster – Vice Captain
- John Sheard – Hon. Treasurer
- Peter Starkey – Acting Secretary /Umpire
- Ian Bagshaw – Long serving Member /Umpire
- Gerry Cartwright – Liaison Officer with the
Southampton Master Mariners' Club

**Past Members Deserving Special Mention
for Services Rendered**

- Mike Barnard
- John Sutton*
- John Smart*
- Frank Grayer*
- Paul Raworth
- Mike Weston
- Audrey Lampard
- George Gifford*
- Mike Atkelsky
- Ken Warren
- Keith Edwards*
- David Turner
- Jerry Stanford
- Colin Lampard
- John Hughes

* Gone Aloft

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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. There is no catering on site but there are many sandwich outlets within easy walking distance.

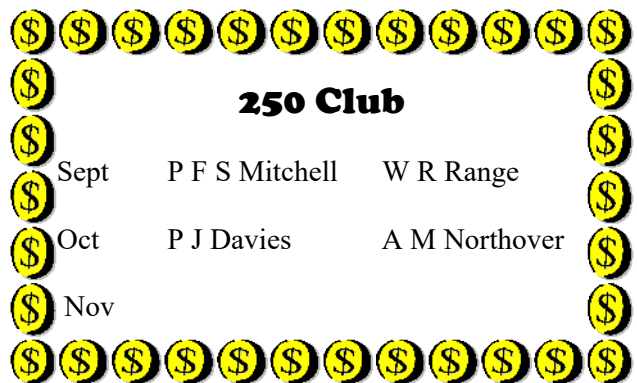
Suggestions for events, for improvements, offers of help, articles and anecdotes for inclusion in this newsletter will all be received with pleasure. We are even prepared to receive complaints if they are constructive.

Dates for your Diary

- Sat 12 Nov Curry Lunch, Kuti's
- Sat 10 Dec Christmas Dinner, Kings Court

The provisional Programme for 2017 should be enclosed with this newsletter, together with your subscription form and **250 Club** application.

The cut-off date for the next edition will be
17th February 2017



250 Club

Sept	P F S Mitchell	W R Range
Oct	P J Davies	A M Northover
Nov		

Gone Aloft

P Drake