

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 65

September 2017

Captain's Log

The months of June thro' August appear fairly quiet for the club, especially this year without the upheaval of 'that move' from Queen's Terrace to the Royal British Legion. It would seem, on reflection that we have settled in well with a healthy attendance at club days on Thursday and Friday. Our relationship with the RBL appears to have developed well also which has allowed us to enjoy the use of their main room on the ground floor, albeit on a mid-week basis for functions.

One of these, after I had submitted my log for June was the club supper in May at which John Davis presented his final excellent meal to a significant contingent of members, having decided it was time to retire. The Principal Guest was the Master of the Hospital of St. Cross, the Reverend Reg Sweet RN, who provided an interesting and amusing biography of his time at sea. I had the great pleasure in making Reg an Honorary Member of our Club. This was followed by Lionel Hall giving a fitting account of John's history with us and presented a bunch of flowers and a bottle of rum. We will miss John and his team and he will be a hard act to follow.

Early June generally signifies the annual Shipping Festival Service held at Winchester Cathedral. This fell on Thursday 8th June, which unfortunately our Prime Minister had failed to note and went ahead to call a General Election on the same day! This may have had some effect on our congregation numbers which were significantly down on three years ago, 215 to 170, but maybe due to other effects as last year the congregation numbered 198. A meeting is planned with Winchester Cathedral in October to discuss potential options to improve the profile of this event which has been organised by the Cachalots since 1930.

The reduced numbers did not lessen the enjoyment of the evening. The service booklet highlighted the anniversary in February, 100 years ago when Germany commenced unrestricted submarine warfare against naval and merchant shipping and the terrible losses sustained.

Despite rain in the early evening the Colour Party was inspected by the Lord Lieutenant, Nigel Atkinson, prior to the procession.

The congregation were welcomed by the Very Reverend Catherine Ogle, Dean of Winchester while I had the privilege and pleasure to read the Lesson. This is not a role for the faint hearted in that the delivery should allow for the acoustics of the cathedral. I think I got away with it!

The Address was given by The Right Reverend Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth, who provided a light-hearted view of his experiences with marine craft of various sizes, along with appropriate recognition of the importance of the service.

On behalf of the Club we have written to those who played a leading role in this years' service and offered our thanks. Within the Club, we acknowledge the work of Cachalot Paul Leece for his organisation and his supportive team at the cathedral. Due to the ongoing building work on the cathedral and due to the rain, the buffet was set up by the west door and allowed our members, clergy and congregation to mingle and discuss the evening, and I am sure other matters of the day. Our thanks also to the ladies, and gentlemen, who provided food for the buffet and to the cathedral staff for the drinks.

I was unable to attend the Curry lunch on 8th July as it followed the festive evening of the Southampton Shipowners Association Gala Dinner the night before! I won't miss it again as I understand poppadum's were on the table and a bottle of Prosecco presented to all those who attended by the team at Kuti's.

A meeting of the Club Management Committee was held 6th July, and an advance meeting with Halo, the caterers at St. Mary's Stadium to discuss a forthcoming joint event. This will be the Trafalgar Night Dinner which is being organised in conjunction with the Southampton Royal Naval Officers Association (SRNOA), MAIB and Southampton Sea Cadets. The event will be attended by Councillor Les Harris in his role as the Mayor of Southampton & Admiral of the Port's. Monies raised will go the Southampton Sea Cadet as the Mayor's chosen charity for his year in office.

The editor has issued a Chachalite and tickets are £42 which are all being handled through the Cachalots office. A menu has been agreed with a vegetarian option. Please see the flyers and Cachalite's and no doubt this newsletter for full information.

I would also acknowledge the work of the Entertainment's Committee under the watchful eye of Captain Peter Grant. With John Davis retiring, Peter has been busy looking for an alternative provider and we are hoping he has found one who will be able to provide the Club Buffet Supper in September.

On Friday 1st September, myself and other members will be attending a Merchant Navy Flag Raising ceremony at 10.00am in the Civic Centre Forecourt, Southampton. We look forward to the opportunity to meet other invitees and highlight the role of the Cachalots in Southampton. On the Sunday following we will be attending the Merchant Navy Day Service at Holyrood.

Nearly 40 years ago now, the 24th October 1977 saw the arrival at Southampton of the last Union-Castle ship to carry the mail from South Africa. Fittingly it was the RMS Southampton Castle. By the 24th February 1978, all the mail ships had been sold for scrap or further service. The end of an era.

And finally, The Cachalot is our own newsletter of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club. We are always looking for contributions from our members of your experiences, serious and not so serious. You may have some old photographs lurking away in a box somewhere and we would be delighted to hear from you with an article describing the photo and the situation it was taken in.

After the heatwave of early July and the deluges of late July and early August, let us hope the weather settles again to a fair summer and you enjoy your time about, wherever that may be.

Best regards,

Robin Plumley MBE, Club Captain



Boatsteerer's Locker

Fellow Cachalots

With the Shipping Festival Service being successfully completed we intend holding a meeting in the autumn with Winchester Cathedral and amongst the items we shall discuss is the viability of holding future services if the attendance continues to fall.

Ladies - Amongst the tin foil platters returned from the cathedral there was a small oval stainless steel platter which is in the Club Room waiting to be claimed.

Two days after the service I escaped to the South of France to recover, flying from Southampton to Toulon – Hyeres. Staying at a small beach side hotel and quaffing double pastis while watching other holiday-makers frolicking in the sea until dragged away to visit cultural ruins and shopping in the old town.

Autumn is fast approaching and Club Supper and Harpooners Dinner will soon be upon us and before we know it Christmas. Incidentally we only raise money for the present Captain's Charity (The Solent Dolphin Trust) by the raffles held at our Xmas Lunch and Dinner and at the Burns Supper so as I did last year I will not be sending Christmas Cards to fellow members but will make a donation to the Captain's Charity instead. I hope that other members do the same.

I enjoyed the recent Ladies European Soccer 2017 Tournament on TV. The standard of play would put many of the men's soccer clubs to shame as there were no shame injuries in search of a free kick etc. (I did note that unlike the men at the end of the game they didn't swap shirts !)

We did well in the cricket against the South Africans, I record the highlights on TV and watch them in peace at 7 am the next morning before the burra memsahib rises.

At the moment she is having a practice pack as we are cruising in October to the Adriatic and she may have trouble lifting her suitcase if it's too heavy. As usual I've booked two hammocks in the Stoker's Mess which she doesn't mind providing they change their socks every night.

On a more serious note - Soon a decision must be made as to the items in storage at Lok N' Store to try and reduce our overheads.

Best wishes
Ken Dagnall
Boatsteerer

Trafalgar Dinner

The Club is organising a Trafalgar Dinner to be held at St.Mary's Football Stadium on the evening of Friday 20th October, as mentioned in the Captain's Log and detailed on the opposite page.

Cachalot Capt. Andrew Moll, who is Chairman of Trustees of the Southampton Sea Cadets, is in the process of raising funds for an expansion project that aims to double the number of young people that the SSC can take on.

The Cachalots are keen to support this initiative and when we discovered that the Southampton Royal Naval Officers' Association was due to hold their own similar function on that day we thought it would make sense to invite them to join us in a shared event, the purpose of which is to raise funds for the SSC. We are encouraging attendance and support from the Maritime and other organisations around the port.

The event, a Black-Tie (evening dress for Ladies) Trafalgar Dinner, along traditional lines, will:

1. Replace our own SMMC Trafalgar function planned for the 21st October at King's Court, which could not accommodate the numbers anticipated.
2. Be priced at the minimum to make the event viable. We have pegged it at £42 per head.
3. Give Captain Moll, on behalf of the SSC, the opportunity to raise funds on the night.

The suite which we have booked at St.Mary's will hold between 150 and 200 people. Beyond that we would move to the larger Mike Channon suite, where we hold the Sea Pie Supper and which, at time of writing, is still available. Our numbers are nearly there but are 'provisional' rather than paid for. We need firm bookings before we can commit to the larger suite, so, if you are interested, or have already expressed an interest, please confirm your booking and pay for your tickets as soon as possible.

Tickets are available only through our office.

Seating will be at tables of 10, arranged by us but accommodating such requests that we can.

The chosen menu is:

Slow Roasted Tomato & Red Pepper Soup
Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding
Dark Chocolate & Orange Delice, followed by
Cheese & Biscuits, Coffee and a glass of Port.

(There will be a vegetarian option of Wild Mushroom Risotto for the main course and please advise us of any vegetarian or other dietary requirements at time of booking.)

There will be a pay bar in the suite, open from 1830.

You are advised to pre-order table wines at

<https://halo-ce.co.uk/event/trafalgar-night-dinner/>

Wines will be available on the night of course, but by pre-ordering you will have a greater choice, avoid any crush at the bar and your wine will be waiting for you on your table.

Paper order forms are available with your tickets but must be returned direct to Halo at St. Mary's.

All this information, and more, can be found on the dedicated page has been opened on our website and further details will be posted there and promulgated as plans progress.

<http://www.cachalots.org.uk/events/trafalgar-dinner-17/>

You will find details of Andrew Moll's Expansion Project on pages 8 &9.

We hope to see you, your partners, friends and colleagues there to support this effort.

Mayor of Southampton & Admiral of the Port's Trafalgar Dinner

In Association with The Cachalots &
The Southampton Royal Naval Officers' Association

At St. Mary's Stadium
Southampton SO14 5FP

Friday 20th October 2017

1830 for 1930

Black Tie

Tickets £42 each

Available only from

Southampton Master Mariners' Club

**First Floor, Southampton Royal British Legion Club,
Eastgate Street, Southampton. SO14 3HB (sae please)**

Tel: 023 8022 6155 (Thursday & Friday 1130 - 1430)

Email: office@cachalots.org.uk

Website: www.cachalots.org.uk

In Aid of the Southampton Sea Cadets

Club Buffet Supper

Wednesday 6th September

Downstairs at the R.B.L

We have now secured a new caterer to provide for us so will be holding the supper as above, 1900 for 1930.

£18 each

We also have a speaker lined up,

John Cater

Who is a volunteer on the

Shieldhall where he is

affectionately known as

747

John will be giving us an insight

into his former career as a

commercial pilot.

He is a flyer, not a floater.

There will be no formal seating arrangements and there is no limit on numbers.

Names and payments to the office, as usual, please.

Curry Lunch

The last Curry Lunch of the year is booked at our favourite hot-spot,

Kuti's in Oxford Street.



Saturday 11th November, 1200 for 1230.

Excellent value at **£14.50** per head

Join us if you can.



Friday 6th October

This event has been cancelled



Above left: Able Cadet Rachael conducts a pre-inspection of her fellow Sea Cadets before the Shipping Festival Service. Rachael is one of the two Cadets who were appointed (Southampton) Mayor's Cadets for the year.

Above right: HM Lord-Lieutenant Nigel Atkinson performs the deed proper.

Below: Marshal of Parade, CPO Ken Turley RNR, leads the Colour Party and Flag Party into Winchester Cathedral.



Tony Birr, centre, and Captain Malcolm Parrot, right.
See the report on the opposite page.



Above: Past Captain Lionel Hall gives John Davis some flowers and a goody bag, along with some well chosen words, on the occasion of John's last supper as caterer.

Above right: The Rev'd Reg Sweet regales the company with his memories as an RN chaplain before being presented with his Certificate of Honorary Membership by Captain Plumley MBE.

Right: The CSCL Jupiter, aground in the R. Scheldt.
See the opposite page.



Photo: Capt Richard via Twitter

Coastal security tops maritime agenda

Concerns about coastal security are set to be raised with the Immigration Minister following a meeting of an influential Parliamentary maritime group. The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Maritime and Ports is to seek assurances from Robert Goodwill MP about measures to bolster Great Britain's inshore borders in the fight against such threats as people smugglers, organised crime, illegal fishing, terrorists and drugs gangs. It is also due to copy the letter to Shipping Minister John Hayes MP. A centralised command and control structure, multi-agency operations and co-ordinated intelligence gathering were among the issues raised at the meeting at Westminster. They came after a joint presentation to the Group by international consultancy The Maritime Group (International) Limited (TMG) and resilience management specialists State21 Limited, titled 'How secure is our coastline?'

Former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West of Spithead, said that a centralised capability of command and control to improve inshore security was 'exactly what was needed and something he has proposed in the past'.

TMG Managing Director Captain Malcolm Parrott and State 21 Business Director Tony Birr outlined the multiple agencies involved in coastal security. They include the Border Force, the Police and the National Crime Agency as well the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, National Maritime Information Centre, Royal Navy, the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA) and the voluntary sector. Captain Parrott and Mr Birr raised potential solutions for discussion, including a new single Government agency, a single command and control structure, central intelligence gathering and analysis, and a central process for deploying resources.

MPs and Lords at the presentation included co-chairmen Lord Greenway and former Shipping Minister Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Lord Wrigglesworth, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke and North Wiltshire MP James Gray.

Nearly 60 people attended the presentation, including senior figures from marine companies and organisations.

Jim Fitzpatrick, co-chairman with Lord Greenway, said the presentation was very 'valuable' in raising questions about coastal security, co-ordinated activity, command structures and intelligence gathering.

"I suggest the All-Party group writes to the Minister and puts the questions raised by very senior members of the Group."

The reply will be reported back to the All-Party Group.

The meeting came hot on the heels of concerns from the Independent Reviewer of Terror Legislation, David Anderson QC, about British borders being weakened by poor records kept by ferry firms.

TMG Managing Director Malcolm Parrott said after the meeting: "The scale of the problem around our coast is becoming enormous. Our presentation successfully raised questions about the issue which members of the All-Party Group and attendees carefully considered and proposed ways forward."

Tony Birr added: "Great Britain has excellent agencies with world class reputations and we hope the meeting was valuable in contributing to the debate about how these can be better utilised to secure our coastal borders more effectively."

TMG is an international consortium of maritime services companies, marine consultancies and marine management companies with its headquarters in Seattle and regional offices in London and Honolulu.

Founded by former police officers, State 21 is resilience management consultancy delivering training, exercises and debriefing for the maritime sector.

Push-me-pull-you on the Scheldt

If you followed the misfortunes of the *CSCL Jupiter* on the *gCaptain* website, you may have seen the picture on the opposite page, showing ten tugs on the starboard quarter preparing to 'wiggle' the vessel free from the bottom. There were another seven out of sight on the other side.

The vessel, 366m and 150,853 grt, had gone aground in the River Scheldt after leaving Antwerp on the morning of 14th August. She failed to make a sharp left hand turn and ploughed straight into the opposite bank at about 14 knots. The AIS track, <http://gcaptain.com/watch-ais-animation-shows-cscl-jupiter-grounding-salvage/> shows that she never even started to come to port, indicating a failure in the steering system. She was refloated on the evening tide with the help of all those tugs and returned to Antwerp, the port having been closed for the duration, a schedule-wrecking and costly business.

In February 2016, one of her bigger sisters, the *CSCL Indian Ocean*, 400m and 187,541 grt, had gone aground in the River Elbe in similar circumstances. She was aground for nearly a week and finally hauled off the bottom, with the aid of 12 tugs, only after off-loading 2500 t of fuel and with a fortuitous, higher than predicted, spring tide. Just over a week later, the *APL Vanda*, 369m and 150,951 grt, inward bound for Southampton, went aground in a 'controlled grounding' on the Bramble Bank after losing power. 8 tugs pulled her off. There are currently 9 large tugs based in Southampton and 3 at Fawley.

The problem for pilots and masters is that in the case of mechanical failures you just can't drop the pick and wait for assistance. The swinging circle of vessels of this size is generally greater than the width of the navigable channels so with a following wind or tide your rear end is going to end up on the putty. So that's the main channel blocked then.

In the case of the *Jupiter*, where they could see exactly where they were going to end up, they were going too fast to drop the anchors until into shallow water and then dare not in case they ended up sitting on them and puncturing the hull.

Another problem with these soft groundings is that if the vessel remains there long she will sink deeper into the mud with each tide.

The nightmare scenario for insurers, ship-owners/operators, port authorities and salvors is the time when one of these monsters takes the bottom and then refuses to budge. How are they going to lighten the vessel? Even if the ship ends up sitting nicely upright, as in the above three cases, there is hardly a floating crane in the world with the height and reach to be able to pluck 40 ton containers from the top of that heap. In the Elbe incident it was reported that the nearest crane that *might* have been able to help was on the west coast of Canada. OK, they managed to discharge 2500 t of fuel but I wonder just what her stability was like after removing all that weight from the bottom of the ship.

The Autonomous Seafarer

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 6 July 17

with permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey

It was this year's Day of the Seafarer, which is always an appropriate moment to consider our utter dependence upon this workforce that is over the horizon and forgotten by most of us. IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim's statement on the day was worth reading, coming from a person who had "been there and done that" and could thus provide additional weight and gravitas.

But then, my own DOTS was somewhat coloured by a conversation around the subject of "autonomy" and the amount of effort that is going into attempts to effectively do without seafarers. It all started with the report from Scandinavia about an experiment involving various participants (including Rolls-Royce and Svitzer) to remotely control one of the latter's harbour tugs from a shore control station. It all went swimmingly, we were told, albeit with the crew of the tug embarked and observing, with a certain nervousness, one suspects, their ship conducting all sorts of evolutions in which they had no part to play.

It is all part of this process, which clever people describe as inevitable, eventually leading to ships being either controlled by artificial intelligence, or perhaps more likely, remotely driven from people sitting snugly ashore.

I have to say, my own scepticism about this whole process was in no way mitigated by this latest exciting progress in the march of technology. It must be about sixty years ago when I had a remote controlled tug, which voyaged on our local boating pond. With a radio control adapted from a model aircraft outfit, it could manoeuvre to port or starboard, ahead or astern, but sadly was unable to remotely start or stop. It also broke down a lot and eventually the machinery got wet and that was the end of it.

The technology has advanced a good deal since then, I have no doubt. There are some amazing remote-controlled tugs operating at the manned model lake which Warsash Maritime Centre runs at Romsey, shoving around the VLCC and bulker models. So it is obviously perfectly feasible for this to be scaled up to full-sized ships, with all the sensors and communication devices employed.

It is clearly important that IMO becomes closely involved in the regulatory preparations for autonomous ships, because there will be scarcely a convention or regulation that will not be somehow affected if we end up with unmanned ships. So you might say that all the right noises are being made by the organisation, while the classification societies, some more deeply than others, are getting involved.

But as with all the confident predictions of technologists, you have to take everything they say with a pinch of salt. We are told that ships controlled by artificial intelligence would be safer than those operated by fallible human beings, but why should we believe this assertion? Just watch a pilot handling a very big ship in a confined space. He sees the movement of the ship before the machinery tells him, he sees that the tide has kicked in a few moments before predictions, and plays the engines, thrusters, tugs and rudder with the skill of an orchestral conductor. It is training, and instinct and spatial awareness at work and it is difficult to see how this could ever be replicated, or indeed, whether it is even worth trying to do so.

You would feel a lot better about "autonomy" if more of the people at the cusp of all this exciting science knew a thing or two about what the sea is actually like – its saltiness and violence, its whole variety of extremes which will test all machinery. Professional seafarers are not scientists, but they know something about the challenges they routinely face, with equipment that will break down when least expected and usually at the most embarrassing time. They also have a shrewd notion that while reliability can be improved, it will be done so, only at a considerable cost, while all the duplicated equipment and systems that will be necessary will not be cheap. Who is going to splash the cash for these astonishingly expensive vessels, when they will have to compete with what ship operators today really want – affordable, simpler, standard ships that can be operated by seafarers without doctorates in advanced technology?

It might seem a tremendous idea to have great fleets of autonomous VLOCs shutting back and forth between Brazil and China as various mining companies suggest, but you can guarantee that they will occasionally break down, and what then? Scientists and technologists can protest all they like, but ships at sea have always broken down and they always will and it is the skills of the seafarers employed which have been available to minimise the commercial interruptions. Brilliant sensors and communications may be able to detect a fault like an overheating bearing on an unmanned ship in the midst of a faraway ocean, but how exactly are its controllers to usefully intervene? Scream for a remotely controlled tug, perhaps?

And writing this shortly after the Day of the Seafarer, might not a better use of all this scientific and technological effort be to employ it in devising ships and systems of operating them that were rather kinder to their seafarers, and offer them a rather more pleasant life afloat than they have at present? That would be a challenge too, but a one that was rather more worthwhile.

Just a thought.

“Nothing is more trying, to a Seaman, both in the King’s and in the Merchant’s service, than the manner in which the best and ablest hands are turned adrift the moment their labours are no longer required”

These words were written by a seaman (William Hunter) more than two hundred years ago and reflected his own bitter experience after the war with France which ended in 1815 – after some 22 years of conflict. The Treaty of Amiens in 1802 brought a few months of “peace” and – true to form – as the guns fell silent during this brief lull Royal Naval seamen were paid off in the thousands with no thought given to the resulting hardship for them and their families. Many were merchant seafarers who had been “impressed” at the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars by the Government approved Press Gangs which had legal authority to take by force any seafaring man for service on a naval ship. In those days, life aboard a naval ship was not for the faint-hearted and there was very little inducement for any sailor to enter His Majesty’s Service.

Thus, on the outbreak of hostilities, a “Hot Press” would be staged at a naval port. The town would be sealed by soldiers and marines, allowing the Press Gang to seize all fit men – seafarers or not – and herd them into a guard house where they would be examined by a naval surgeon and a Magistrate and “ cripples, lunatics, apprentices and tradesmen” released. The others -irrespective of experience – would be taken aboard ship. Without the organised “Press Gang” any Naval Officer could take what men he needed from a merchant ship and it was not unknown for a naval frigate to intercept a merchantman, returning from many months overseas, before she berthed at her destination port, and impress many of the weary seafarers, leaving just enough to allow her to berth.

The failure of “The Treaty of Amiens” some fourteen months after it was signed, in March 1802, by Britain, France, Spain and The Netherlands signalled a resumption of the Napoleonic Wars and the impressment of those who had been discharged a few months earlier resumed instantly, only for the survivors to be discharged yet again the instant peace was declared.

Most historians acknowledge that the Battle of the Atlantic was possibly the most crucial campaign of WW2 and, in his victory broadcast in May 1945, Winston Churchill said “ My friends, when our minds turn to the Western Approaches, we will not forget the devotion of our merchant seamenso rarely mentioned in the headlines” In his memoirs he comments “ We never call on the officers and men of the Merchant Navy in vain” and, on October 30th. 1945, Parliament carried a Resolution “That the thanks of this House be accorded to the officers and men of the Merchant Navy for the steadfastness with which they have maintained our stocks of food and materials; for their services in transporting men and munitions to all the battles over all the seas, and for the gallantry with which, though a civilian service, they met and fought the constant attacks of the enemy.”

Indeed, no Allied wartime service was in action longer or suffered a higher percentage of casualties than the British Merchant Navy. Some 30,248 merchant seafarers were killed in action and officers and men of the Merchant Navy were awarded: 5 George Crosses, 213 Distinguished Service Crosses, 18 Distinguished Service Orders, 1077 Orders of The British Empire, 1717 British Empire Medals, 50 Commanders of The British Empire ...and 120 Knighthoods.

The survival of the strategic island bastion of Malta was credited to the convoys of merchant ships and their Royal Navy escorts when Sir William Dobbie, wartime Governor of Malta, declared “The work which this magnificent service did, in conjunction with the Royal Navy, in bringing supplies to Malta cannot be overstated. Without that help, Malta could not have held out - the debt the Empire owes to the Merchant Navy is immense”.

Of course, all of that was a very long time ago and, in the interim, much has changed. No longer does the Red Ensign predominate on the trade routes of the globe and, over the years, the number of UK registered seafarers has declined dramatically. A recent article in the Numast “Telegraph” warns that “Britain’s flagging power as a seafaring nation could put the country’s economic security at risk” and goes on to point out that “ decades of decline in the number of British-registered vessels means the UK’s Merchant Navy is becoming so depleted that our economy could be held to ransom by other nations with stronger shipping industries”.

The United Kingdom is dependent upon seafaring traffic (and seafarers) for 95% of our supply of “critical goods, including food, oil and gas for heating, and even military equipment” and, according to Government data we now rank 19th in the table of countries with sizeable merchant fleets – with 13.7 million dwt., representing 0.8% of the global fleet. More alarmingly, however, is the huge decline in the number of UK registered seafarers: today there are about 23,000 UK Officers and ratings compared with 73,400 some 40 years ago.

More than 11,000 Certificates of Equivalent Competency have been issued to foreign Officers to allow them to serve aboard UK registered vessels at a time when hundreds of British Officers are unemployed (and newly qualified Officers are struggling to find that first job). UK seafaring ratings are faring even worse and many are struggling to find gainful employment in the deep-sea industry where Asian and Eastern European domiciled seafarers are predominant.

Despite this, the industry has launched its “UK Maritime Careers Awareness Programme” employing more than 300 volunteer “Careers at Sea Ambassadors” (under the auspices of The UK Merchant Navy Training Board.) All are past or current seafarers and they provide information about careers in the Merchant Navy to schools, youth clubs and career fairs throughout the United Kingdom. With today’s disclosures relating to the cost of, and debts incurred by, studying for a University degree, the fact that one can take a foundation degree in Engineering without any cost (“You learn while you’re earning”) is certainly appealing -but time will tell.

It is said that the ship’s company of one of the largest passenger liners – a regular visitor to Southampton- (built in the United Kingdom but not wearing a Red Ensign) - comprises 26 nationalities and that many of the huge container ships sailing under a variety of flags with crews of 24 (plus or minus) can count six different nationalities amongst their manning.

And the “thought”? Well, in the advent of hostilities involving the United Kingdom, how many of today’s foreign seafarers will continue to man the ships carrying vital supplies of food etc. to these islands and “meet and fight the constant attacks of the enemy” despite the fact that THEIR own country is not involved ? And if they do not – who will?

Double Up 2017

Southampton Sea Cadets Expansion Project

The Cachalots have kindly agreed to support the Mayor of Southampton and Port Admiral's Trafalgar Dinner in aid of Southampton Sea Cadets. So, it is only fitting to explain why the Mayor has chosen the Unit as one of his charities, and why Southampton Master Mariners are also helping give the Unit a leg up. In short, it has been a long standing ambition to expand the number of cadets the Unit can take on, and this year the opportunity has arisen that could turn this dream into reality.

The History Lesson

Southampton Sea Cadets was formed in 1942, 75 years ago this year. During WW2 the Royal Navy was keen to recruit 'semi' trained sailors to help with the war effort, and there was a strong feeling in Southampton that a Sea Cadet unit should be formed in the city for this purpose. The Unit opened with its headquarters in a school hall in Albert Road, and within a year had a complement of 125. After the war, the Unit moved to co-locate with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) at berth 14 in the Eastern Dock, whose headquarters were the former frigate HMS ERME, which had been renamed HMS Wessex. When the frigate was scrapped in 1964, the Royal Naval Reserve (by then the V had been dropped) moved to the old Aquila Airways Flying Boat Station at berth 50. The cadets went too, benefitted greatly from the RNR's training facilities, and at its height the Unit had over 160 cadets on strength.

Post-Cold War re-structuring and cutbacks resulted in the MoD deciding to close the RNR unit at HMS WESSEX in 1994. The cadets managed to stay a little longer, but the Port of Southampton was keen to redevelop the site and in 1996 gave the Unit its marching orders. However, Southampton was not ready to see its Sea Cadet Unit close. With a lot of good will, a herculean fund-raising effort, and lots of hard work by volunteers, the Unit was able to re-locate to its current premises in 1997.

In many ways, the Unit's premises on Vespasian Road are ideal. The main building is a former boat house with a slipway giving access to the River Itchen. However, it is only able to accommodate 40 cadets, which is why we have been so keen to expand its capacity.

The Opportunity

This year, after two years of negotiation, Radian Group agreed to lease the derelict land to the Unit for 10 years (see Figure 1 below). The short lease precludes building permanent facilities at this stage, but the space is large enough to install temporary buildings that will allow the Unit to double the number of young people in the City that can take advantage of the tremendous opportunities being a Sea Cadet can offer.

The Plan

We aim to install temporary buildings to create 4 new training rooms. As the site can flood during Spring tides and storm surges, the buildings will have to be raised to keep them above the flood tide level. To keep costs down, second hand buildings will be used.

Once the temporary buildings are in place, the current Unit building will undergo some minor changes to better equip it to handle the increased numbers and to create limited overnight accommodation for weekend training events; plus enhanced bathroom and toilet facilities, and enlarging the galley so that hot meals can be cooked on site. We aim to improve the quality of training by dedicating some rooms to specific subjects, such as navigation, seamanship, engineering and first aid. With these changes to the boathouse, the main deck can be used for boat maintenance and repair, so reducing the time the Unit's boats are off the water.

Fund Raising

Each Sea Cadet Unit is a charity in its own right, responsible for raising funds to pay its annual running costs and to maintain its premises, vehicles, boats and all other equipment. This is achieved by regular fund raising by the staff, cadets and supporters of the Unit, which allows us to keep the cadet's weekly subscriptions to a minimum. Extra fund raising is needed for development projects.

Buying second hand temporary buildings makes costing approximate, but we estimate the expansion will cost around £50,000. To raise this money, the Unit is seeking partial funding from the National Lottery, charities that traditionally support cadet units, and local organisations and businesses. A number of local businesses have offered or donated their services for little or no cost, and our landlord has agreed a rent the Unit can afford. Even so, progress will be dictated by the speed with which we can raise money, and so it is great news that the Mayor of Southampton has named Southampton Sea Cadets as one of his charities for 2017, and that so many organisations, including the Cachalots, have agreed to support us.



Fig.1 - Showing the current Unit (left) and derelict plot (right).

Progress

- 5 June - Radian agrees to lease the plot to the Unit for 10 years.
- 23 June - A generous donation of £1000 gets fund raising for the project underway.
- 28 June - The Mayor of Southampton names Southampton Sea Cadets as one of his charities.
- 17 July - Kier Construction complete clearing and levelling the site.

Captain Andrew Moll

Fig. 2 - 14 August: Fencing makes the new site secure.



Expedition Sailing at the School of Navigation

By Alec M Macpherson OBE

On completion of a four year Short Service Commission in the Royal Navy I joined the School of Navigation as a Lecturer in Mathematics and Physics in the autumn of 1961. A considerable amount of my time in the Navy had been taken up with sailing activities and one of these was the task of setting up what was called Expedition Sailing in Portsmouth Command. This involved arranging for a group of cutters and whalers from ships and establishments in Portsmouth to sail to a weekend rendezvous where the crews could camp and enjoy a relaxed time. I found that it was fairly important to arrange that the camp site was relatively near to a pub.

An unpopular duty at the School of Nav. for the lecturers was taking your turn as the SWW which involved living aboard all week from Monday including the following weekend. On Saturday morning the SWW had to take charge of boat handling instruction for a group of Cadets and normally this meant taking about 20 or 30 of them out in a heavy rowing galley and making them pull on their oars with gusto, but never achieve more than two knots. *(Alec could not remember the name of this craft, or what it was called by the Cadets. An online search reveals that it may have been a square-ended rowing barge named "Stubington", known as "The Torture Machine" and reportedly ballasted down with concrete to give it some grip. No doubt there will be other ex Warsash Cachalots out there to put us right. Ed)*

When my turn came up for SWW duty at the end of June 1962 I suggested that I take a party of Cadets away in gigs for the weekend, but Captain Whalley Wakeford and other top brass were horrified at the idea. No change to the normal routine was to be contemplated. I thought that they were very set in their ways. Eventually it was reluctantly agreed that I could take a sailing expedition outside the River Hamble for the day on Saturday.

At 1000 on Saturday 30th June our little flotilla set sail – 25 Cadets in 4 gigs, two in a dinghy and I took three in my yacht *Nighean Mhara*. I had a mooring on the mud north of the pier for my yacht which was a Mystic class built in Cowes and only 21' with no engine. I was the only member of staff. We did wear lifejackets. I do not think that the Health and Safety people would approve nowadays but I am convinced that activities like this are essential for young people to let them take charge in some way and have some freedom. The Cadets were well briefed about staying reasonably near one another and being responsible crews. Nobody let me down.

The weather was dull but dry and the tide just after neaps with LW early afternoon so we tacked round Calshot spit into a light wind from the SW. The tide carried us to the mouth of the Beaulieu River which we entered and tacked up to Bucklers Hard pulling the gigs onto the beach at 1430. In those days there was a small shop in Bucklers Hard and the lads headed there to buy lemonade, sweets, ice cream and probably cigarettes. We had a picnic lunch provided by the school kitchen sitting on the grass in that lovely environment.

At 1545 the boats all launched or cast off and set sail to find a cracking SW breeze blowing so we had a really fast and enjoyable run back to the Hamble with the tide under us. We were back on our moorings by 1830. They kept together quite well; never easy under sail. I am sure they all enjoyed the day and it made a fun change from the normal Saturday activities.

Footnote:

Readers may be interested to know that during that particular week while was SWW the staff were shown plans by Captain Wakeford for the new teaching block and social areas to be built which was a really good improvement for the School. We were all delighted at the prospect of these new premises.

Sadly, this very block is now empty and likely to be demolished in the near future. The likelihood of expedition sailing for Cadets from a venue in Southampton is now remote. Warsash was such an ideal location for the School – what a pity it has to move.



Alec sailing his yacht *Nighean Mhara* in Cambletown with his two sons on board, both now over 50 years old.

Daddy's (or Mummy's) Yacht.

The Royal Yacht "Britannia" was de-commissioned in 1997 after some 43 years of service to The Royal Family and The Nation. During that time the vessel travelled more than one million nautical miles worldwide and today she is berthed at Ocean Terminal in Leith where she attracts more than 300.000 visitors annually. She was designed to act as a Hospital Ship in times of war (although she was never used as such).

In 1997, the then Conservative Government had plans for a replacement vessel but the in-coming Labour Government declared that this would not be the case -and so, today, despite the many arguments supporting the case for another Royal Yacht, no replacement has been found.

She was the 83rd. Royal Yacht and the second to bear the name "Britannia": The first was a small racing cutter built for the Prince of Wales in 1893 ; the vast majority of Britannia's predecessors were of a similar size -small sailing craft designed for competition.



Photo: TEC

HMV Britannia off Browdown during the 50th Anniversary of D-Day celebrations, June 1994



National Maritime Museum

HMV Royal George

Last used in 1842, she became an accommodation hulk in 1902, and was broken up in 1905

Yachting as a sport was slow to develop (although there was a Yacht Club) but the Royals recognised the advantages of owning a craft that could "convey Princes, Ambassadors and other great personages from one kingdom to another" and in 1814 the much larger "Royal George" (330 tons) was built in Deptford. The (then) Prince Regent immediately joined the Yacht Club and, on coming to the throne he bestowed the title "Royal" on the Club and later, when William IV came to the throne he changed the name to The Royal Yacht Squadron.

In 1842, with Victoria on the throne, Sir Robert Peel was instrumental in promoting the change from sail to steam and the first "Victoria and Albert" was built in Pembroke. Two hundred feet long with a maximum beam of fifty nine feet and a speed of 11.5 knots she was a paddle steamer of ornate design. Her Majesty never put a foot on her "as she was concerned about the vessel's stability" and she was replaced (and renamed "Osborne") by a larger "paddler" of the same name which proved to be more to the Queen's liking.

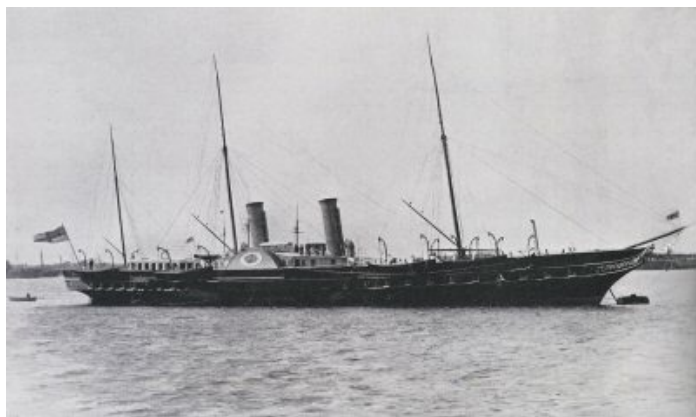
The third "Victoria and Albert" was a built in Pembroke in 1890 but (due to a catastrophic error in design) as the building dock was flooded she took a list of some 20



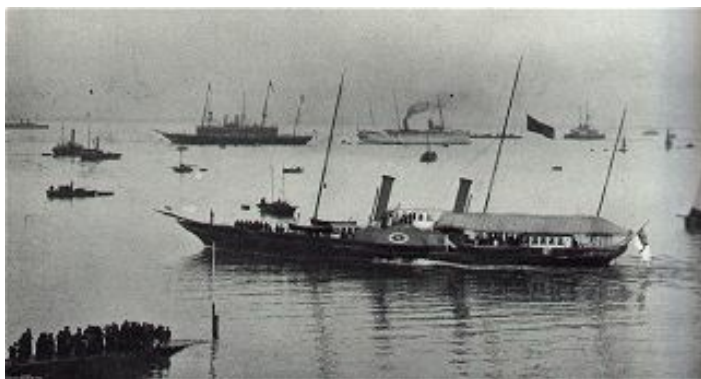
HMV Victoria & Albert III

degrees and nearly capsized. Much later, after the removal of some 260 tons of top-hamper and the addition of 250 tons of ballast, she entered service and proved to be a comfortable ship.

By now, large racing sailing yachts were becoming the vogue and the Royals took a great interest in the sport. In 1851 the Prince of Wales witnessed an American victory in the "Round I.O.W" in the famous "America" and in 1893 he was instrumental in building the first "Britannia". She won her first race and for the next 43 years she was practically undefeated. She was modernised often and ended her life as a "Bermudan" cutter. Her last owner was King George V. and he instructed that, on his death, the vessel should be broken up. Thus it was that, on July 9th. 1936, following the death of the King, she was towed to sea by two destroyers and sent to a watery grave by explosive charges in her bilges.



HMY Osborne



HMY Alberta, built in 1863 as a tender to the larger Victoria & Albert II. Seen here departing Cowes for Gosport with the body of Queen Victoria on board.

With the end of WW2, interest in the sport was revived and, in 1948, the Island Sailing Club presented a Dragon class yacht to Their Royal Highnesses Princess Elizabeth and The Duke of Edinburgh. She was named "Bluebottle" and was a frequent competitor at regattas – but seldom won! Some time later she was replaced by a "Flying Fifteen" craft named "Coweslip" (having been presented by the "People of Cowes") and with the Duke at the helm she enjoyed considerable success. As mentioned earlier the vast majority of the early "Royal Yachts" were small wooden sailing boats capable of competing within their class and the "Victoria and Albert" was the first to be propelled by steam. She served four sovereigns over many years and was finally decommissioned in 1939 but acted as an accommodation vessel in Portsmouth Dockyard until she was broken-up in Faslane in 1954.

The early 50's saw a revival of the interest and, on February 4th. 1952, the Admiralty placed an order with the John Brown Clydebank Yard for a larger vessel suitable for global travel and one that could double as a hospital ship in time of conflict. The keel was laid in June of that year and the all-riveted vessel was ready for launching on April 16th, 1953. Her name had never been revealed until Her Majesty broke a bottle of Empire wine on the hull and announced " I name this ship Britannia – I wish success to her and all who sail in her" – and so it proved to be.

CRK 15/7/17



I have made mention here before of the gCaptain website and know that many of you subscribe to their free daily newsletter by email. I understand that it is also available on facebook, twitter, linkedin, google etc, etc, but can't vouch for any of that.

It is a great source of up-to-date information on the latest happenings, with videos and links that will take you deep into the murky depths of the online maritime world.

On Mondays they have a feature, edited by 'Miss Monkey Fist', called Maritime Monday, which is a miscellany of pieces that amaze, amuse and intrigue one, in that very American way.

On July 17th they featured a photograph of some Cachalots, with a link to another online magazine called Atlas Obscura which featured many more amazing pictures, the like of which you are unlikely to have ever seen before. I was so taken with them that I then googled the professional photographer, Tony Wu, and found his own website where one can view the complete set. I daren't re-print any of them here because of copyright infringement, but would urge you to make the effort to view them. You might see some vaguely familiar faces.

You should start at: gcaptain.com/maritime-monday-july-17 and follow the links.

Ed

Self-inflicted Vulnerability

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 3 August 17

with permission of LL and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey

Are you worried that your “intelligent” fridge will be transmitting secrets of your bank account to Moscow, the Mafia or a shadowy crime syndicate operating from a garage in Barcelona? Should you be concerned that every time you play “Angry Birds” on your smartphone, you are imparting personal secrets to potential blackmailers in North Korea? Perhaps more to the point, if technically astute operators like Maersk can be brought to a screeching halt in a global cyber attack, what hope is there for any of us? Best to drag the old manual typewriter out of the attic, corner the market in Tippex and ribbons and get into survival mode.

You get the impression we are poised on the very edge of something pretty catastrophic in terms of our cyber security and our various vulnerabilities. Aren't we just asking for trouble as we boast endlessly about our Big Data and opportunities for connectivity, with 400 cruise ship engines being remotely supervised by an engine manufacturer via sophisticated data links? Might we be chancing our respective arms in our utter dependence on seriously weak and eminently interruptible signals from our satellites out there in space?

Shouldn't we be warned by what experts suggest are “probing attacks” at our vital services and utilities? Aren't we plain stupid to be increasing the range of our vulnerabilities? Won't the cost of defences effectively cancel out all the supposed advantages of fridges which order up more groceries, or “apps” which can turn the central heating on, or main engines which can be overseen without an engineer on site?

That's an awful lot of questions, but I would hesitate to suggest that we should necessarily believe any of the reassuring answers you might be given to any of them. It is not difficult to think that even the brightest security scientists and communication technologists are just struggling to catch up with the shadowy figures, whether state agencies, mad dictators or clever young obsessives in their bedrooms behind all this probing. For all the brave talk of “patches” and “cyber hygiene” and changing your passwords every five minutes, if they can bring down that batch of this midsummer's industry victims, surely it is time to lay in the emergency rations and lots of torch batteries.

This is being written from an island off the coast of Northumberland, where I spent several years as a child and still remember the extraordinary self-sufficiency of that unconnected existence. It has come a long way since then, but seventy years ago, we had no piped water, no electricity or gas. My relatives, as with the rest of the small population, lived off the shore, grew most of what they ate, burned driftwood and sea coal and ate a lot of rabbits and fish.

Spending a couple of weeks out here this summer, while all these tales of potential electronically facilitated doom surge around our shores, it tends to bring on, if not survivalist tendencies, at least the belief that we are just asking for trouble.

I read the other day that a US industrialist is going to build the world's biggest battery, three times larger than has ever been built before. It will be built in South Australia, and if you are looking to ascertain why this is necessary, it is that the crazed South Australian greens, allegedly the most fanatical in the whole commonwealth, have shut down all the coal-fired power stations and the state doesn't have sufficient electricity to keep the lights on. Does the term “self-inflicted vulnerability” which insurers like to quote if you have left your car open, come to mind? Apparently furious wind turbine and solar array construction is going ahead in SA, but they still need a back-up to cope with calm and cloudy conditions, hence this monstrous, unproven battery. With public utilities, belt and braces would seem to be a sensibly precautionary principle, but not when the dreaded carbon intrudes into your thinking.

I suppose that another question which comes to mind is whether all this connectivity is actually worth the trouble into which it seems to be leading us. We gave up doorstep milk deliveries when we had to communicate with our local dairy via a call centre in Manila. It just seemed to be bloody daft. One of my sons, who is big in railway engineering, tells me that the only signalling equipment that can be guaranteed to be 100% reliable is mechanical and dates from the 1950s. And here we are warding off cyber attacks, piling investment into self-driving cars and autonomous ships, while enabling some madman to take control of our ships' machinery, blot out all our navigation, financial and control systems and bring container shipping to a standstill, or, maybe (it has just occurred to me), to divert it all to Pyongyang. And tell your intelligent fridge to order up 6000 tons of avocados, to be delivered at 3 in the morning. I'm off to the beach to look for some coal.

rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk

A Bumpy Ride for Lumpy Ore

In 1997, our Functions Officer, Peter Grant was master of the **Lowlands Trassey**, a Capesize bulk carrier of 163554 tons dwt. She was operated by Red Band for Fred Olsen's bulk division, First Olsen Tankers, and was on passage from West Australia to Dunkirk. This article appeared in Red Band's quarterly newsletter, **Link**, of July 1997.



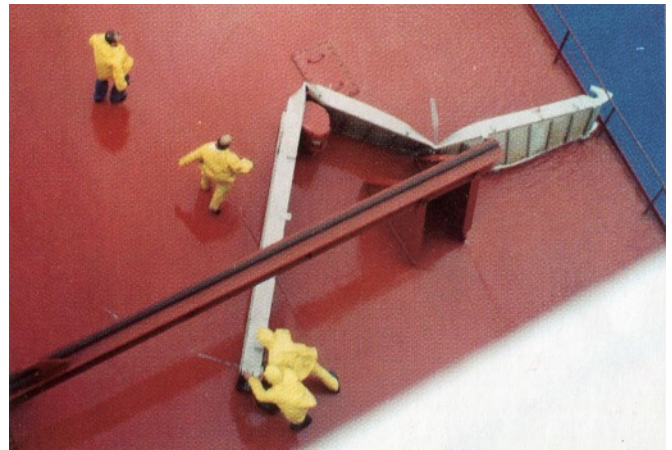
Rarely do we read about the trials and tribulations of the ships and their crew. Catastrophic events sadly seem to be the exception. With this report from the Bay of Biscay to Red Band's head office, *Lowlands Trassey* master, P. Grant, provides an interesting glimpse at some of the modern day maritime hardships endured around the world, every day.



“It was during loaded voyage 14, March 1997, on passage from western Australia to Dunkirk, France, that we sustained heavy weather damage,” reports Mr Grant. “We had just rounded the middle of the roaring 40s when winds picked up to a Force 10. We encountered mountainous seas with swells reaching 12 metres forcing us to reduce speed to six knots. As waves and wind battered the vessel, the foc’sle vent was severed, flooding the storage area to a depth of nearly one and a half metres. Luckily the forward power transformer was spared, however, oil drums broke loose spilling 800 litres of hydraulic fluid which was eventually soaked up by floating mooring ropes.”

“As the storm continued, the forward six-man life raft was destroyed, the electronic foremast bell was damaged beyond repair and four deck floodlights were ripped from their mountings. Further aft, the wharf ladder was lifted from its cradle and smashed into the starboard saddle tank vent, bending it into an “S” shape.”

“Fortunately we managed to weather the storm without sustaining any further serious damage to the vessel or injury to the crew, and successfully discharged our cargo of lumpy ore after reaching Dunkirk West on 17 April.



Having successfully navigated the narrow Charles De Gaul Lock with only metres to spare, our vessel was blockaded for several days by French fishermen protesting against mesh net regulations. Thankfully we were the first vessel freed from the blockade after having used our several day lay-up for, among other things, testing “free fall” lifeboat equipment - after our journey it somehow seemed appropriate.”

Union-Castle Line - 40th. Anniversary of the last Mailship!

In 1856, South Africa comprised four self-governing areas – Cape Colony and Natal were British and The Orange Free State and The Transvaal Republic were administered by the Boers. At that time all overseas mail delivery contracts were awarded by the Admiralty and, in 1857, they offered the Cape Mail Contract to THE UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY and their auxiliary schooner *Dane* inaugurated the service when she departed Southampton on September 15th. 1857.



In 1876 the contract was reviewed and the Admiralty split the new contract between two companies – The UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY from Southampton and THE CASTLE MAIL PACKET COMPANY from London, with ships of each company sailing on alternate weeks – and a passage time of 26 days.

This contract lasted for some 25 unhappy years with intense (and dangerous) competition exerting strong commercial pressure on the Masters of the vessels.

The contract was again reviewed in 1900 and after some sensible discussion the two companies agreed a merger and – on March 8th. 1900 THE UNION-CASTLE MAIL STEAMSHIP COMPANY was registered to undertake the new South African Mail Contract with the ships based in SOUTHAMPTON.

In 1955 a new Mail Contract was signed (effective from January 1st. 1957) but, at that time THE UNION-CASTLE LINE and THE CLAN LINE were discussing a possible merger and, with effect from 31st. January 1956 these two great companies merged to form THE BRITISH AND COMMONWEALTH SHIPPING COMPANY.

By 1975 five large cargo-carrying passenger vessels and two passenger-carrying cargo vessels were operating the joint service between the UK and South Africa. An announcement by Sir Nicholas Cayzer (Chairman of B&C) in May 1975 provided the inevitable news that Union-Castle and Safmarine were to phase out two ships from the mail service, the *S.A. Oranje* and *RMS Edinburgh Castle*. Each vessel had served 27 years. The final rundown of the service had started. Both ships left Southampton with cargo only, on 19th September 1975 and 10th May 1976 respectively, bound for Durban where after discharge, they left for Kaohsiung for breaking.

RMS Pendennis Castle, only seventeen years old, after her final arrival to Southampton on 14th June 1976 was sold for further trading and left Southampton under her new name of *Ocean Queen* on 6th July 1976. She was eventually broken up in Kaohsiung in April 1980.

RMS Windsor Castle made her final departure from Cape Town on 6th September 1977, enjoying a special send-off, and arriving in Southampton on 19th September. Having been sold, she departed Southampton for the last time on 3rd October 1977 as the *Margarita L* under the Greek flag.

RMS Good Hope Castle arrived in Southampton on 26th September and laid up, pending sale.



Photo: Ian Boyle

RMS Southampton passing Mayflower Park on her final mail trip to SA on 16 Sept '77



S.A. Vaal made her final departure from Cape Town on 27th September 1977, arriving in Southampton on 10th October. She carried the last bag of mail shipped from South Africa by mailship after a service lasting 120 years. After discharging her cargo, she sailed from Southampton for Japan on 29th October where she was converted for a new life, cruising successfully as *Festivale* for Carnival Cruises.

RMS Southampton Castle, after leaving Cape Town arrived for the last time to Southampton on 24th October, officially ending the mail service for Union-Castle and Safmarine and bringing the curtain down on a very remarkable piece of maritime history..

The two cargo passenger liners laid up in Southampton until sold to the Italian Costa Line. *Good Hope Castle* sailed as the *Paula C* on 16th February 1978 whilst *Southampton Castle* sailed as the *Franca C* on 24th February.

CRK & RP 8/17



Mariner's Wharf, Cape Town, see Rope Ends, opposite

Rope Ends

Mariner's Wharf

In a very pleasant and popular restaurant in Hout Bay, south of Cape Town, lies Mariner's Wharf and emporium, owned by Stanley Dorman. Stanley has gathered a significant amount of memorabilia from the mailship era and has set aside the Union-Castle Dining Room in the restaurant. This room contains a wide selection of posters and artefacts dedicated to Union-Castle, including a builder's model of Penderis Castle.

There is also an elegy from Captain J.P. Malley of the Cape Town Master Mariners' Club recording his thoughts on the demise of the service.

It was written by him in October 1977 and appeared in the *Journal of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners*, of which he was a member.

The signed copy was presented by him in February 1988, during a visit to view the artefacts there.

No stately ships to leave our shores,
No sumptuous dinners with 'petit fours',
No waiting for a ship's run,
No games on deck which were such fun,

No 'Legs eleven' or 'Kelly's eye',
No 'Shake the bag' and give a sigh,
No walks on deck in early morn,
No purser's jokes tho' rather worn,

No Captain's table for the 'nobs',
No luxury cabin for one time snobs,
No tourist class for the hoi polloi,
No young people for this to enjoy,

No Captain's dinner t'wards end of trip,
No eager stewards for service to tip,
No Southern Cross to woo the lasses,
No cheery chink of barman's glasses,

No 'Gangway up, the ship's to sail',
No first trippers looking pale,
No Father Neptune crossing the Line,
No fond memories on which to pine,

No thrill arriving at next port,
No little gifts usually bought,
No fond farewells, no pledge of friendships
No more alas-our beloved Mailships.

Can anyone ride a bicycle?

One of the earliest pieces of advice I received on joining the Royal Navy was 'never volunteer'. The First Lieutenant seemed to have an inexhaustible list of dirty jobs, and lingering too long over 'Stand Easy' was likely to lead to the question 'Not got something better to do, Mid?', followed by being lurked for something suitably time-consuming and unpleasant. Having discovered that his target audience were quick to drink up and escape within the allotted time, the 'Jimmy' resorted to asking strange and esoteric questions. Anyone foolish enough to answer was immediately 'hooked', and the mind-numbing, onerous or just dirty task quickly followed.

I could tell you that with age comes maturity, and that volunteering is actually a very noble thing to do. That only someone with your unique qualifications and experience could possibly undertake the task. And so on. All this is, of course, true. More pressing, however, is that Southampton Sea Cadet Corps is embarking on an expansion plan, and as we grow we will need more trustees to join the Unit Management Committee to help steer the ship. We particularly need trustees with skills or enthusiasm for public relations to promote the Unit, or with a penchant for coordinating the upkeep and maintenance of buildings and boats. It goes without saying that all trustees help with the fund raising, as each Sea Cadet Unit is a charity in its own right and needs to raise funds to pay the rent, put fuel in the boats, and so on.

I should add that being a trustee is also quite serious nowadays. Anyone interfacing with young people needs to be DBS checked, but there is support with induction training that covers such subjects as safeguarding, protecting information, and the role of trustee.

Is it rewarding? Of course it is. There are few things as satisfying as helping young people to discover the sea and all its mysteries. Learning to handle a boat is both an adventure and an empowering experience, and it helps young people develop self-confidence and a sense of self-worth.

Have I sold it to you yet? I hope so. If you are interested in becoming a trustee or learning more about Southampton Sea Cadet Corps, please get in touch and I will be delighted to show you around.

Andrew Moll
Chairman of Trustees c/o
southamptonsc@yahoo.co.uk

Gone Aloft



Brian Michael O'Connor

12th April 1927 - 27th May 2017

Brian O'Connor, who was the Club's Senior Past Captain, was born in South Africa and, in 1943, at the age of 16, commenced his seafaring Cadetship with Mitchell Cotts, serving with them until 1950 when he joined Standard-Vacuum Tankers. He soon tired of "tanker life" and, in 1951 joined Union-Castle as a Fourth Officer and remained with them throughout his seagoing career and beyond.

In 1964, having attained the rank of Chief Officer, Brian was appointed Assistant Cargo Superintendent, Southampton, and within a few years was promoted to Cargo Manager, a post he held until the demise of the Union-Castle mail service in 1977. Thereafter, he served as Marine Superintendent for the London based Newgate Shipping Co. And finally as a Shipping Advisor to the Government of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh.

He became a Cachalot in 1964 and after service on various committees - the meetings invariably "enlivened" by Brian's contributions - he was appointed Staff Captain in 1972 and Club Captain a year later.

Brian "Went Aloft" in his 91st year but, as Abraham Lincoln said, "At the end, it is not the YEARS in the life that count, but the LIFE in the year" - and on that score, Brian did rather well.

It was standing room only in the West Chapel at Southampton Crematorium for the funeral Service held on the 29th June, which was led by Rev'd Bill McCrea. Remembrances continued back at the Club room, which was also packed.

New Members

Paul Bryson is a Master Mariner with Msc, PgCert and is an AFNI, and currently an Inspector of Marine Accidents with the MAIB.

He completed a dual cadetship, deck and engine, at South Tyneside College and sailed as a Deck Officer with Carnival. He served in all ranks up to C/O, sailing in the P&O Cruises, Princess and Cunard brands. He attained his Masters in 2004 and joined Irish Ferries in 2007 as C/O, Staff Captain and then Master before taking a post of Assistant Harbour Master in the port of Londonderry. He joined the MAIB in Southampton in 2013.

While in N.Ireland he was a member of the Belfast M.M.Club. He is a keen sea angler and has his own small boat.

The CACHALOTS

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club

**1st Floor, Southampton Royal British Legion Club, Eastgate Street
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membership@cachalots.org.uk
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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

Sun	3 Sept	MN Day Service, Holyrood Church
Wed	6 Sept	Club Buffet Supper, RBL Club room
Fri	20 Oct	Trafalgar Night Dinner, St. Mary's
Sat	4 Nov	Harpooners' Dinner, Star Hotel
Fri	10 Nov	Sea Pie Supper tickets on sale
Sat	11 Nov	Curry Lunch, Kuti's
Sat	2 Dec	Christmas Lunch, Med Bar
Sat	9 Dec	Christmas Dinner, King's Court

The cut-off date for the next edition will be

10th November 2017

250 Club		
June	Anne Cartwright	D Gates
July	G Cartwright	M Wallis
Aug	A Saunders	L Warltier