

# The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 66

December 2017

## Captain's Log

The month of September commenced with a small group of us joining the Mayor of Southampton, Councillor Les Harris, on the Civic Centre forecourt for the raising of the Red Ensign to signify Merchant Navy Day. It is good to see our Mayor taking a supportive role in the maritime importance and history of the port of Southampton, and the role of the Merchant Navy generally.

On the Sunday following, a small group of us, and some wives, braved the rain and cold to attend the Merchant Navy Day service at Holyrood. The Mayor and his wife were in attendance and the service was led by the Port Chaplain, Mission to Seafarers, John Attenborough.

On the 6th September, a Club Buffet Supper was held with our new caterer providing excellent fare and an enjoyable evening attended by over 40 members.

The Club Room has seen a steady stream of members attending on both Thursday and Friday of each week with hearty discussions on a variety of topics, both maritime and topical of the day.

On the first Wednesday of October we had a meeting with Winchester Cathedral to discuss concerns about the falling numbers of visitors and support from shipping entities at the annual Shipping Festival Service and whether the service is still viable for the cathedral, and ourselves. The overall view from the cathedral was that they are still happy to host the event although we did discuss the possibility of an alternative day of the week in future. From our own club perspective, we need to do more to publicise and gain sponsorship towards the costs of the event. We will be liaising with the cathedral with their social media output in advance of next years' service.

A meeting of the Clubs management committee was held the following day whilst an advance meeting with HALO at St. Mary's Stadium was held on the Friday. A busy week although I was unable to attend the HALO meeting due to commitments elsewhere on a golf course in Surrey!

I was away for the first full weekend of October at Branscombe in Devon. This picturesque village and its local beach were high on the news agenda in January 2007.

The 62,000-tonne vessel, *MSC Napoli*, had been badly damaged in a storm in the English Channel on 18 January and started taking in water through a hole in its side. Due to severe cracks in the hull, a decision was made to beach the vessel in the waters adjacent to Branscombe Beach. Not all sightseers were happy to simply look at the beached vessel. Containers lost from the deck of the vessel started being washed ashore prompting the arrival of hordes of people from all over the UK intent on scavenging cargo. Boxes of shampoo, wine barrels and even BMW motorcycles, still in their packing crates, were manhandled off Branscombe beach by an army of modern day 'wreckers.'

The disruption and disturbance to the normally peaceful village of Branscombe was made worse by narrow country lanes that soon became clogged with vehicles arriving to remove valuable items of cargo from the container strewn beach. By July 2009, every trace of the vessel had been removed from the area at a cost of £120 million. An account of the 10th anniversary is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tenth-anniversary-of-the-msc-napoli-shipwreck-disaster>

A meeting of the Entertainment's committee was held on 19 October and a programme of events and activities for the year 2018-2019 has been issued. (*Included with this edition*)

The following evening, Friday the 20th October at St. Mary's Stadium, and for the first time, we held a combined Trafalgar Night Dinner which has taken a significant time for some of our committee members to organise.

The evening was held in the presence of the Mayor of Southampton and Admiral of the Port, Councillor Les Harris and his wife and other distinguished guests as well as a large attendance of Cachalots. The event was a primary way to raise money for one of the Mayor's charities for his Mayoral year in office, the Southampton Sea Cadets.

Following an introduction from the Mayor, Captain Andrew Moll, representing the Sea Cadets outlined the work being done to develop a new building to house the many cadets who are waiting to join. He also acknowledged a splendid contribution from the Connaught Trust of £10,000 for which our own Staff Captain Flemming Pedersen has strong links.

The speech was presented by Captain Gavin Pritchard RN in a lively and amusing manner whilst delivering the appropriate level of decorum for the Immortal Memory.

Mrs Harris made the draw for a mini iPad with donations received of £1,920 being passed to the Sea Cadets.

The evening finished with The Salty Sea Dogs leading the assembled guests through a number of suitable shanties and songs.

With an attendance eventually of 196, the evening appears to have been a success with numerous requests from guests of 'when is the next one?'

On Friday 27th October, Karen and I joined Captain & Mrs Kelso along with Captain's Gates and Clark for the annual passage to East Cowes to join the Mariners of Wight for lunch. The passage over and return on the Red Jet were smooth and an enjoyable lunch was had at the New Holmwood Hotel with pleasant views across the Solent. We then moved to another function room for an interesting presentation from Captain Martin Scott, of his experiences with a fire aboard his command, Windstar Cruises '*Wind Song*' on 1st December 2002.

As a change to previous occasions, the Harpooner's Dinner was held away from the Club premises at The Star Hotel in Southampton. Twenty-eight invited Harpooner's attended for a meal and an evening of extensive lamp-swinging. I missed this event last year and so this was quite an eye opener and very enjoyable.

A well-attended Curry Lunch was held at Kuti's in Oxford Street on Saturday 11th November.

On Sunday 12th November, I had the proud honour of representing the Club in laying a wreath at the Southampton Cenotaph for Remembrance Day.

And finally, for this issue being the last before a certain date, I wish you all a merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Best regards,

Robin Plumley MBE, Club Captain



## Boatsteerer's Locker

Fellow Cachalots

I've just returned from an Adriatic cruise in fine weather except that Venice was fog bound so we went to a misty Trieste instead. However we took a coach tour to Slovenia and its capital Ljubljana and Lake Bred in glorious sunshine, a tour well worth doing. Due to a forecasted storm we did not visit our next port Ravenna but proceed direct to Split and then on to Corfu missing out Kotor in Montenegro.

A mutinous group of passengers loudly expressed their discontent and were not pacified by the itinerary change of two days in Catania, Sicily, after spending a day in Messina, Sicily, on the way out. Homeward bound we called at unscheduled Cartagena before our final port of Gibraltar. On Trafalgar night we were all offered a glass of wine with Dinner (I don't know if this was because of Trafalgar or our changed itinerary (the Master was ex R.F.A.).

For me one of the highlights was a visit to Corigliano Calabro in South Italy a rural hill top Italian village with a free shuttle coach from the ship and no shops but two bars, one of which appeared to be the HQ of the local mafia !!

Strange how you meet people on a cruise. We had been on board about 4 days when a chap came up to me saying "I know you, your in the New Forest Mountain Rescue Team" (I still am honorary Secretary) it turned out that we were on the same table on a Baltic Cruise about 3 years ago and as he lives in Brixham he couldn't join our team.

On one of my meandering about the ship I came across the Medical Centre and noted the prices; are the Medical Staff self employed ? Perhaps one of our members can enlighten me.

I noted that passengers (guests !) can now make a behind the scenes tour which includes the Engine Control Room, Galley, Theatre, for'd Mooring Deck, Anchors, and Bridge which culminates with champagne and canapés with the Captain in the Captain's lounge – a snip at £75 per person or you can join a group of senior officers in the comfort of the Captain's lounge with access to a for'd facing balcony directly under the bridge and enjoy a glass of Prosecco, cocktails and canapés when the ship leaves a selected port for only £25 per person.

Hint for the ladies who cruise - Do Not pack an extra suitcase or bag with shoes as your burra sahib may get quite vexed as he unpacks his essentials from his supermarket 5p plastic bag.

Arriving home safe and sound to note that the loft cold water tank was overflowing and the grass hadn't been cut for 3 weeks. On renewing the tanks ball cock a very reluctant mem-sahib after much verbal encouragement mounted the loft to check for leaks when I turned the water back on from the stop cock.

I missed the Mayor's Trafalgar Dinner at St. Mary's which by all accounts was a success and enjoyed by all (a credit to our hard working members) but managed to attend the Harpooner's Dinner at 'The Star Hotel' but had difficulty getting up the next morning at 05-30 to catch the ferry to France for a 4 day pilgrimage to Le Havre.

Le Havre prides itself as being a premier container port and now displays containers at the entrance to the port and also illuminates the town hall which certainly brightens things up.

I was pleased to see on my return John Noble in the Club looking fine, after his foot problem. Not yet able to turn out for the Club's XV Rugby reserve team but he is now driving.

We are all pleased that our honorary President in waiting Captain Reg. Kelso MBE and Cachalot John Hughes have both been awarded a well deserved decoration of 'The Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service'.

Please note that I will not be sending Christmas Cards to fellow members again this year but will make a donation to the Captain's Charity instead. I hope that other members do the same.

### Dates for your 2018 Diary

**St' Joseph's Catholic Church, Bugle Street, Docklands  
New Year Service on Wed. 3<sup>rd</sup> January at 09-30 hrs**

**Meeting of the Past Captains will be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>  
January at 11-00 hrs**

**AGM will be held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 18-30 hrs  
Both at the R.B.L. Club Room**

At the AGM five of the Harpooners -- Cachalots Chipperfield, Clark, Coote, Gates and Grant have completed their term of office and must stand down but may seek re-election. A call for candidates appears on the Notice Board.

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

Ken Dagnall

Boatsteerer



### AGM

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 18-30**

**in the Club room**

**Eastgate Street, Southampton.**

### SUBS & 250 CLUB

With this newsletter you should also receive your  
subscription renewal form

&

'250 Club' Application

Also the Provisional Programme of Events for 2018

## Christmas Events

### Lunch at the Medbar

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1200 for 1230**

You may still be in time to join the crowd at the Medbar in Oxford Street, where we will have exclusive use of the upstairs room and you will have the choice of three starters, mains and desserts, all for **£20** per head, to include the gratuity.



### Dinner at King's Court

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1900 for 1930**

The Black Tie dinner will be held at the Masonic Centre in Chandlers' Ford again, traditional Christmas Fare but you have the choice of either Old English Plum Pudding or Winter Berry Cheesecake for the Dessert course. Please indicate at the time of booking (and paying), also any vegetarian requirements.  
**£32 per head**

A raffle will be held at both occasions, proceeds to the Captain's Charity.

Donations of prizes will be appreciated.

## Burns Supper

King's Court has been booked again, on

**Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> 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 (tbc)**

## Sea Pie Supper 2018

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February  
St. Mary's Stadium**

Tickets, to members only, went on sale on

**10<sup>th</sup> November**

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

Prices held at:

**Members £52, guests £62**

Members are advised to secure an early booking

## Curry Lunch

The first Curry Lunch of 2018 is booked at our favourite hot-spot,

Kuti's in Oxford Street.



**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1200 for 1230.**

Excellent value at **£14.50** per head

Join us if you can.

### **MERCHANTMEN AT NORMANDY**

A few years on the eve of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the greatest invasion ever...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...

That evening the first course of courses arrived...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...

Roy Martin describes this vital, but largely forgotten, part of the landing...

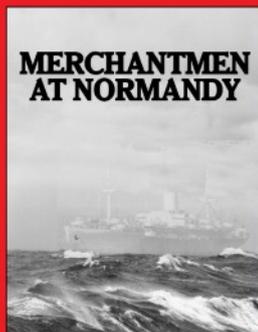
Released by the British Library...  
Just back to see from the great...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...

On 7 June The Times' Special Correspondent with the Merchant Navy...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...

Roy V Martin is a Marine...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...  
The first Merchant Navy ships to arrive...

MERCHANTMEN AT NORMANDY

Roy V Martin



Roy V Martin

Roy Martin, ever striving to get more recognition of the efforts of the Merchant Navy, in war and in peace, has written and published a new book.

It details, very comprehensively, the role played by the ships and men of the Merchant Services in Operation Neptune in 1944.

I was pleased to help Roy in a small way by proof reading the manuscript prior to publication. As editor of this magazine I know just how hard it is to spot one's own small mistakes.

While reading through it I was taken with the references to the *Chant* ships, which I had never come across before. Roy has now written an article for us, expanding on these vessels and their cousins, the *Tids* and the *Fabrics*, which you can find on pages 8 & 9.

Roy's book is available as an e-book, at **£2.31** for the Kindle edition, or in paperback at **£7.69**, both from Amazon.

## Trafalgar Dinner

The Club, in conjunction with the Southampton Royal Navy Officers' Association, SRNOA, organised a Dinner, held in the Mike Channon Suite at St. Mary's Stadium, on Friday 20th October.

The black-tie Dinner, titled the 'Mayor of Southampton and Admiral of the Port's Trafalgar Dinner', was in aid of the Southampton Sea Cadets Expansion Project, the Mayor having chosen the SSC as one of his charities for his year. We are pleased to report that the event was considered to be a great success by those who attended and enjoyed it.

With anticipated numbers hovering around 200 we had moved to the larger Mike Channon Suite but last minute changes resulted in a total of 189. We were by no means lost in the larger room and goodness knows how Halo, the caterers, manage to squeeze 500 of us in for the Sea Pie Supper, but they do.

The Mayor, Cllr Les Harris, and Mrs Harris, who is also a Southampton Councillor, arrived at 1845 and were met by Club Captain Robin Plumley MBE and Captain Andrew Moll, Chairman of Trustees of the Southampton Sea Cadets.

One of the Mayor's Cadets took charge of The Silver Oar of Admiralty, the Mayor's badge of jurisdiction as Admiral of the Port, and carried it to the display table which had been placed in the function suite.

At 1925, one of the Cadets piped "All Hands to Dinner" which drew appreciative applause and the Mayor, the Captains and the Top Table guests were received by the company, the Mayor's Cadet carrying the Oar of Admiralty and proceeding ahead of him.

Top Table guests included Vice Admiral Alan Massey, KCB, CBE, who is also a Trustee of the Marine Society & Sea Cadets, Rear Admiral John Lang DL, President of the Winchester Sea Cadets, Captain Gavin Pritchard OBE, Chairman of the Gosport Sea Cadets unit, and Cdr David Belfield, Chairman of the Southampton Royal Naval Officers' Association.

Also present as our guests, and hosted by Staff Captain Flemming Pedersen, were Colonel Bill Stevens OBE and Major Julian Walker TD, both Trustees of the Connaught Trust which had just donated £10,000 towards the Southampton Sea Cadets Appeal.

Captain Plumley welcomed the company and gave the obligatory safety announcement, detailing the abandon ship procedures and where the lifeboats could be found. He then introduced the Mayor who gave a short address explaining why he had chosen the SSC as one of his charities for his year.

Captain Moll then made his appeal on behalf of the SSC Expansion Plan and outlined the proposed method for collecting the donations and conducting the prize draw. In a forthright RN way he summed it up for the hard of understanding as ENVELOPE....PLACE CARD....MONEY. (Or was it the other way round?)

He then led the Nelson Grace and the 'victuals' were served, the company enjoying an excellent meal and exemplary service.

During the main course Sea Cadets collected the envelopes, containing the donations and the place cards, and these were taken to the counting house set up in another room.

At the end of the meal Captain Plumley gave The Second Grace and invited Cdr Belfield, SRNOA, to give The Loyal Toast.



**Captain Gavin Pritchard delivers his speech before proposing the Toast to the Immortal Memory**

The evening ended with some nautical entertainment in the form of a sing-a-long, in which we were led by 'The Salty Sea Dogs', a seven strong community group of shanty singers under the direction of Pauline McWilliams, Community Song Leader at the Natural Voice Practitioners Network. They sang acappella, entering the room singing *John Kananaka* and then led rousing renditions of *Drunken Sailor*; *Haul Away, Joe*; *Blow the Man Down* before finishing with *Heart of Oak* and *Rule Britannia*.

Our thanks go to our Distinguished Guests, the Southampton Sea Cadets, the SRNOA, Cachalot Members and their guests and not least to the Salty Sea Dogs, for making the evening so enjoyable and helping to raise that £1920 towards what those that were present understand to be such a good cause.

After the interval the Club Captain introduced the Speaker, Captain Gavin Pritchard OBE, whose speech, on elements of his own RN experiences, was on occasion hilarious but at the same time moving and thought-provoking. Having summed up and summoned up that Nelson spirit, he ended with the Toast to The Immortal Memory which was taken, in the tradition, in silence.

Captain Plumley then conducted the Prize Draw, announcing that it had raised a total of **£1920** towards the appeal, and one of the previously collected place cards was drawn from the raffle drum by Mrs Harris. The prize, a modern signalling and communications device, in the shape of an iPad Mini, had been provided jointly by the Cachalots and the SSC. It was won by a lady on Clive Robinson's table, fittingly perhaps since Clive was the first to support us when the event was proposed.



**Pauline McWilliams directs the Salty Sea Dogs in the shanties**

## **A gift to cherish.**

During the early months of 1798 the Royal Navy and the Navy of the French Republic engaged in a protracted game of “hide and seek” as Bonaparte’s fleet crossed the Mediterranean pursued by Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson who had been sent from the Tagus fleet with express instructions to find, and defeat, the French expedition.

For more than two months Nelson pursued his quarry – on several occasions only missing them by a few hours. Bonaparte was well aware of the pursuit and such was the secrecy of his movements that he was able to attack and capture Malta and then land in Egypt without disruption.

Having disembarked the Army, Admiral Brueys d’Aigalliers anchored his fleet in ABOUKIR BAY, some 20 miles northeast of Alexandria, confident that he had established an impregnable defensive position.

On August 1st. 1798 as the Royal Naval fleet sailed past Aboukir Bay the masthead lookout on *HMS Zealous* spotted several masts and reported them to his superiors. Nelson did a swift “u turn” and, closing the approaches to the Bay, he saw the enemy, at anchor in battle formation. The fleets were almost evenly matched with NELSON’S comprising 13 ships off the line, 1 fourth rate and one sloop and the French 13 ships of the line and 4 frigates.

Nelson did not delay and he ordered an immediate attack, splitting into two divisions with one passing between the anchored vessels and the shore and the other engaging the seaward vessels of the enemy. Subjected to such intense cross-fire, the French warships were battered into surrender in a three hour encounter but before they did so the French flagship “L’Orient” exploded in a huge fireball- and Admiral Brueys killed. Of the total of 17 ships only two ships of the line and two frigates managed to escape – an action that saw the end of the French dominance in the region and entrenched the Royal Navy in a dominant position until the end of the war. With Bonaparte’s army trapped in Egypt the ramifications of Nelson’s victory were felt across Europe.

Nelson was rewarded by being appointed “Baron Nelson”. He had been wounded during the engagement and it was said that he was far from satisfied with this paltry award.

With relative tranquility restored, one of Nelson’s Captains ( Benjamin Hallowell) decided to have a closer look at the semi-submerged “L’Orient” and he salvaged her mainmast taking it back to his command “Swiftsure”. Almost immediately, he instructed his carpenters and shipwrights to make a teak coffin and once this was done, Hallowell decided to send it to his Admiral.

Happily - and probably fortunately for Hallowell – he also wrote a letter to accompany his gift. “My Lord, herewith I send you a coffin made from L’Orient’s mainmast, that when you are tired of this life, you may be buried in one of your own trophies. But that that period may be far distant is the sincere wish of your obedient and much-obliged servant, Ben Hallowell”

Nelson accepted the gift and carried it in his cabin, until 1805 when he sent it ashore for storage saying “ this will be needed upon my return”.

Nelson died at Trafalgar On October 21st. 1805 – a few months after landing the coffin ashore and on January 9th. 1806 the coffin bore his remains into St. Paul’ Cathedral prior to his burial.

It was said that His Majesty George III objected strongly to the Cathedral being used for the funeral as, in his opinion, NELSON’S liaison with Emma Hamilton ruled out such a public funeral. – but eventually public opinion prevailed.

CRK 25/10/17

*For some reason I couldn’t find a photo of Nelson’s coffin (teak or pine?) online but I did determine that it had been enclosed in a soldered lead one and then in an ornately decorated mahogany casket for the funeral processions, the first by water and the following day by land, this final procession taking three and a half hours to pass. The twelve strong team from Victory’s crew would have found the triple coffin very heavy and impossible to carry downstairs to the crypt below. A hole had been cut in the floor and the coffin(s) lowered through it to the granite sarcophagus below. Ten years later this was replaced with the then near 300 year old sarcophagus that had been prepared for Cardinal Wolsey before he fell from favour with Henry VIII.*  
*Ed*

## **Influence & Speed**

### **Lloyd's List Viewpoint 2 November 17**

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

Speed, suggested the Bishop of Norwich on the BBC's *Thought for the Day*, is "a yardstick of virtue", which thought gave me considerable encouragement. It might encourage the ship operating sector too, as it reels from the attacks of sundry environmental interests getting in their low blows before the IMO considers the latest evidence on how shipping is choking the world. According to an investigative body called "Influence Map", which hadn't really registered with me before, the International Maritime Organisation has effectively been captured by a sinister cartel of maritime corporate interests seeking to facilitate indefinitely their noxious habits of pollution.

I hope that the International Chamber of Shipping, BIMCO and the World Shipping Council, (which we perhaps ought to recognise as the Evil Empire), rein back their terrifying domination of the UN body, before it is too late. Seriously, I just hope this gang of greens, which itself knows a thing or two about influence, both of the lobbying and bullying variety, might begin to acknowledge that if world trade is not to screech to a halt, they need to adopt a more reasonable tone over the pace of emission reduction.

If organisations like the ICS, BIMCO and the WSC have any influence at the IMO, it is due to the fact that they represent practical, contemporary operation of ships and as such they play an absolutely vital role in keeping the regulatory output of the organisation founded on sensible and reasonable decision-making. It is not "corporate capture", whatever this is, but ensuring that people who know about the day to day operation of ships are on hand as regulations that will affect the operation of every ship in the world are discussed and framed. And if the representatives of the terrible corporations get too big for their boots, there are plenty of people able to cry "point of order, Mr Chairman!" and voice their disagreement.

At the IMO, the point is often made that real contributions to the body's work are made by only some of the member nations and their non-governmental colleagues, while too many others just sit and watch. It has always been the case that the more put into the IMO, in terms of the service on working groups and sub-committees, the better the result. It is also true that real and relevant expertise is valued, regardless of which card the expert is sitting behind. Are these activist objectors to the role of the practical experts suggesting that such ought to have no place in the IMO discussions? If this is the case their argument is pretty contemptible,

But back to the Bishop, and his early morning text on speed, which he seemed to think was a jolly good thing. It came as a welcome counterblast to the report by the Dutch consultants CE Delft which seems to be suggesting that only by substantially throttling back the world fleet can emission targets be met. I don't know what their terms of reference were, but their most obvious recommendations seems to be that IMO should make it mandatory for a 30% speed reduction. If this startling regulation was implemented, joy would be unconfined, the demand for fuel will shrink, the air will clarify and shipbuilders the world over will fall on their knees sobbing with gratitude, as they work out that to haul the same amount of freight, we will need nearly 40% more ships.

I don't know that the revelations on speed and fuel consumption were particularly original, as for some years, speed reductions have been used as cost control measures with a parallel "environment-saving" objective. Is the pedestrian passage of one of these so-called eco-ships, which can just about cope with a head wind, to be further throttled back? There are several reasons for adequate speed and power, which are about more than getting from A to B in a certain time. Having the ability to get out of the way of weather might be thought quite important, for a start.

One can already discern a certain impatience among consignees of goods sourced from the other side of the world, as they complain about longer sea passages and on top of that the time taken to clear their cargo after some gigantic ship has dumped it all on the terminal apron in one go. They have already been told that they are saving the planet and should be jolly grateful for such an opportunity. Perhaps they can be consoled with the suggestions from consultants McKinsey that containerhips may grow to 500,000teu, which might mean that entire countries would be served by a single ship, calling annually.

What about the handful of wretched seafarers, whose voyages are further extended, as they go stir-crazy in their steel boxes. I wouldn't like to tell them that they should be grateful for slower steaming, too. And as for the Bishop of Norwich, maybe somebody ought to politely tell him that his advocacy of speed, on land or sea, amounts to a modern day heresy and he should jolly well repent.

*rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk*



## The Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument Fund

In the Second World War alone, more than 35,000 civilian men and women were lost at sea and have no known graves. Of these, some 30,248 were identified and their names inscribed on the Tower Hill memorial in London. However, despite its long seafaring history, the City of Plymouth has no adequate testament to the civilian seafarers of the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth.

To redress this, the *Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument* Committee is commissioning a monument to be sited on Plymouth Hoe alongside those of the armed forces. It will be dedicated to those of all nationalities who serve, or who have served, in the British merchant service or fishing fleet under the Red or Blue ensigns, in times of both peace and war, ensuring the survival of our island nation.

Subject to Plymouth City Council's formal agreement to the proposals and the necessary planning permissions, it is intended that the monument will be in place for the Mayflower 400 commemorations in 2020.

**Donations:** The Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument project has registered charity number 1167934. If you or your organisation would like to make a donation to our monument construction fund, please send a cheque made out to [The Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument Fund](#), c/o the Treasurer, The Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument Fund, 289, Fort Austin Avenue, Plymouth PL6 5ST or by bank transfer to National Westminster Bank, account No. 46426027, sort code 56-00-63.

For other ways in which you can contribute to funding, please see our "Crowdfunding" initiative, details of which are on the website below.

**Note:** *If you are a UK Taxpayer, completing a "Gift Aid" certificate will increase your contribution by 25p for every £1 you give. These certificates can be downloaded from our website <http://mnmonument.uk> to accompany your cheque, or hard copies obtained from the Treasurer, to whom you should send your contact details, at email [Treasurer@mnmonument.uk](mailto:Treasurer@mnmonument.uk)*

*Many of you will remember George Lang who was a lecturer at Warsash and an active Cachalot and Harpooner. He was also the instigator and 'webmaster' of our prototype website. I refer to George in the past tense but he has by no means 'Gone Aloft' ... more 'Gone West'. On retirement from Warsash he moved down to the West Country where he is obviously still involved in MN matters. He sent me an email referring to the above initiative, which I filed both mentally and electronically, neither system having proved up to the job. I have now belatedly put a link to the above websites on our own Cachalots one. Sorry George.*

*Here is the Crowdfunding one again URL: <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/plymouth-merchant-navy-monument>*

*but be aware that the initiative ends on 4<sup>th</sup> December so if you wish to contribute to this MN Memorial Fund by this means then you should do so soonest. ... Ed*

## Neptune's Prefabs – the TIDs, CHANTs and Fabrics

Winston Churchill made his 'The end of the beginning' speech in November 1942, when Britain had tasted of victory for the first time in the war. Now it was time to think about landings, rather than retreats; but that brought about an even greater requirement for ships of all types.

Every estuary and harbour tug that could be transferred to coastal work had been, but the country was still short by several hundred. Among the places where the shortage was felt were the docks. A order went out to 'design, organise and start work immediately toward achieving, in the shortest possible time, the delivery of one tug per week, using in the process, little or no shipyard labour.'

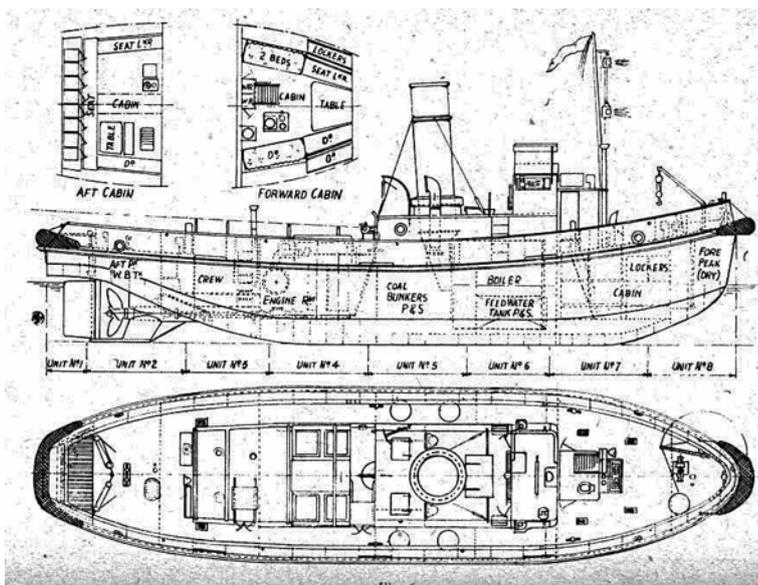
Those who received this order decided on a chine hull form, which could be built using only flat plate. A model was made and tank tested; during the testing a second chine was added. The hull was to be fabricated in eight sections, the heaviest weighing eight tons. These were to be welded inland and road-hauled to a shipyard. The last ten inches of the plate laps were not welded, allowing for minor adjustments on assembly at the yard.

The TIDs were 65 feet between perpendiculars, 74 feet overall, with a beam of 17 feet and a depth of 8 feet. The displacement was 124 tons. For shipment the tugs could be loaded as deck cargo, athwartships. The tug was propelled by a 220 ihp compound engine, with a vertical boiler; the earlier versions were all coal fired. The bollard pull was two tons. No one can agree where the TID name came from, I prefer the idea that it was short for tiddler.

The first order was for 12 to be assembled at the Dunston yard at Thorn. This quickly increased to 25, then as soon as production began, to 50 and then 100. The average assembly time was five days, the record being four.

Dunston's routine was to tow the completed hull to Hessle, where the engine and boiler were fitted. The new tug would then steam back to Thorne, and tow the next hull to Hessle, before going into service. This extraordinary rate of delivery went on week after week. Separate, but smaller, production lines were set up at the Pickersgill yard in Sunderland and the Henry Scarr yard at Hessle.

In all 182 were built, 90 were coal burners and sixty were oil burners. The final 32 also burnt oil, these were shipped to the tropics. They were also operated by both the Navy and the Army. After the war they were carried all over the world, with significant numbers going to Finland, France and Asia. Three were bought by Risdon Beazley's Lloyds Albert Yard MP Co and later sold on to United Towing in Hull. Husbans shipyard had a couple and one became the Alexandra tug Ower. A few still exist.



### TID 75: ADHERENCE

12.12.1952: British Mercantile Registry belatedly closed, consequent of transfer to the Admiralty.

10.10.1960: Sold to Henry George Pounds, Portsmouth.

1965: Resold to Husband's Shipyards Ltd., Marchwood, re-engined and renamed *ADHERENCE*.

18.10.1996: Purchased covertly by H.M. Customs and Excise and believed unofficially renamed *ADHERENCE II* for use in a drug smuggling investigation.

22.10.1996: Sailed as a decoy vessel to rendezvous in Bay of

Biscay with yacht *FATA MORGANA*, believed to be carrying cannabis.

23.10.1996: Fuel supply problems necessitated the temporary transfer of an engineer, by helicopter from *HMS CHATHAM*.

24.10.1996: *ADHERENCE II* rendezvoused with *FATA MORGANA* and 145 bales of 'cargo' were transferred to the tug next day.

25.10.1996: During her homeward passage in rough seas, took on water and at 15:40 UTC, sank at 47.27N., 08.43W., in the Bay of Biscay. The crew of four, all undercover Customs & Excise men, were rescued from their dinghy by the German mv *HORNCLIFF* (12,887g./92) and transferred to *HMS CHATHAM* later that day.

The MAIB did not learn of the loss of the tug until the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1997 and the result of their subsequent enquiry, along with a whiff of disapproval, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/maib-reports/flooding-and-sinking-of-tug-adherence-in-the-bay-of-biscay>

During the Overlord planning process, it became obvious that it would be prudent to design a coastal tanker that could carry either bulk or cased petrol, at least until the PLUTO system came into operation.

After tank tests it was decided that a second chine should be added. A skeg was also added. Mitchell and Sawyer say that this was 'of aerofoil shape' and was, therefore, the only plating on the ship that had more than a single curve. They were longitudinally framed.

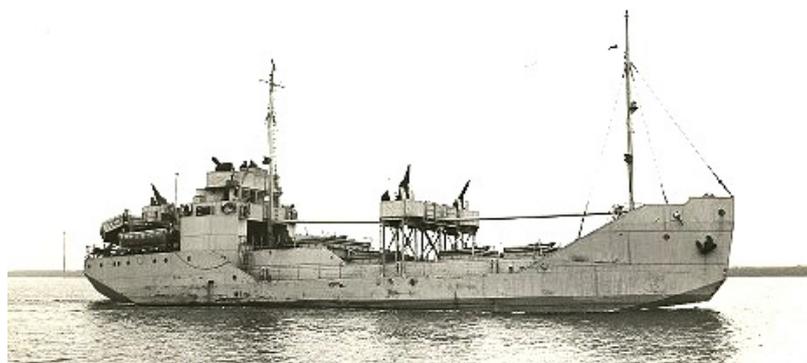
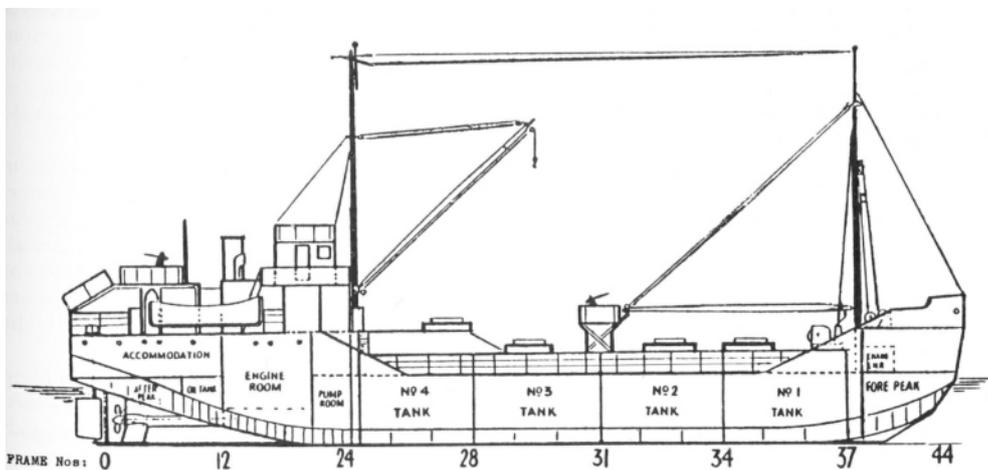
With the shipyards working at full capacity, it was decided that the 28 component parts of the ships should be built by inland fabricators and road hauled to the ship builders for assembly. This method had already been used for the TID tugs. The weight of the units did not exceed 13 tons. While primarily designed to carry petrol in bulk, they also had steel hatch covers, rather like those on a deep tank, to allow for case petrol to be transported. For this reason two thirty hundredweight SWL derricks were fitted.

The engines came from a number of manufacturers, including: Crossley, British Auxiliaries, Blackstone, Lister and Ruston Hornsby.

The sections were assembled in five shipyards, all on the Humber, between February and July 1944. In all 43 were built; most were managed by coasting companies, plus General Steam and Ellerman Wilson.

The ships were 148' overall, with a beam of 27'. They were just over 400 grt and 450 dwt. Various diesel engines in the range 220/270 horse power were fitted, giving a service speed of about 7 1/2 knots.

The hulls were made up of flat plate, with a double chine (the corner at the bilge) and double skinned. Forty-three were built and a further 25 were completed as dry cargo coasters. The latter were initially called Fabrics; they went into service with Empire names, each beginning with F.



presented for Special Survey. Several were converted into barges, and one to a floating restaurant – so somewhere in the blue yonder, one may still exist.

Roy Martin

*As your editor I was pleased to find the picture on the opposite page on the website of Medway Maritime Trust. Pleased because it not only shows the ADHERENCE off the Dockhead in Southampton (that's Hythe Pier top right) but also includes one of the old Red Funnel ferries (Carisbrooke Castle or Osborne Castle?) on which I worked when I first came ashore in the early '70s. And the smaller vessel in line with the ferry may well be the Harbour Patrol vessel SHB Triton, on which I also worked as a Marine Officer from the mid '70s. So many memories in one small photograph. Ed.*



**Chant 60 and Chant 61, J Readhead and Sons, South Shields.  
Tyne and Wear Archives via Wikipedia.**



Next year, 2018, the Society will celebrate two hundred years of affording support and welfare to seafarers in 91 ports in 27 countries worldwide – and throughout the United Kingdom.

Last month, many Club members attended the opening of the new Southampton Seafarers' Centre In East Street and, by the time you read this, the downstairs Charity Shop will be fully operational selling a wide range of used good quality clothing, bric-a-brac, reading material etc.

The new venue, unlike the previous one in Queen's Terrace, is solely under the auspices of Sailors' Society ..although it will always welcome the friendship and involvement of the other seafaring charities ...and, as such, will, to a large degree, be dependent upon volunteers to man the Centre and the shop.

Our new local Padre will be in attendance at the Centre whenever his other duties (ship visiting, family counselling , conducting services etc) permit but there will be many occasions when visiting seafarers may not have an opportunity to discuss their work ( and domestic) problems with someone with a knowledge of shipboard life....and that is where the members of the Club ...male and female, might be in a position to help.

The Centre is a few minutes walk from the Clubroom so why not drop into the new Centre and have a chat to visiting seafarers ? They will enjoy your reminiscences and you will learn a lot about life at sea today ( and perhaps dwell upon how lucky you were to serve when you did!)

AND ...next time you are having a "clear out" of your wardrobe, book collection, pictures, etc. then please drop the good quality items into the charity shop; their subsequent sale will contribute to the running costs of the upstairs Centre and thus make life a little more enjoyable for today's seafarers.

Finally ...if you are a coffee-lover, have a look at [www.BySea.org](http://www.BySea.org). ..the coffee on offer is of the highest quality, the cost is extremely reasonable (with free delivery) and every penny you spend will help seafarers.

CRK. 2.11.17

Vice-President S.S <https://www.sailors-society.org>

## **Bursary Update**

The 2017 bursary has been fully utilized by both Southampton and Winchester Sea Cadets. As this edition of the 'Cachalot' goes to print two Winchester cadets, recipients of the bursary, will be sailing onboard TS Royalist braving the English Channel in November. I am sure we all wish them good weather and fair winds and look forward to their report.

Three Southampton sea cadets have been recommended and awarded the bursary to assist towards voyages in 2018, two onboard TS Royalist and one onboard the motor vessel Jack Petchey. The popularity of the Sea Cadet offshore vessels is such that booking six to nine months in advance is now becoming the norm. In each of the above cases the recommendations with full details and reasons why a cadet should be awarded a bursary are made by the Commanding Officers of each sea cadet unit. These recommendations are studied by the senior officers of the club and a decision made.

In 2016 a bursary was awarded to Winchester Cadet Callum Leverett to undertake his first offshore voyage onboard TS Royalist from Inverness to Oban. His experience was such that this year he managed to secure a place onboard for the Tall Ships race. TS Royalist went on to be the winner of its class. Callum is now in further education with the aim of pursuing a career at sea.



## Designed for danger

**Lloyd's List Viewpoint 23 November 2017**

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

Every well-designed ship represents a compromise of aims for the designer. Even the dimensions involve a balance between the demands for a capacious cargo carrying space and the need to reduce resistance. The need to minimise the draft or keep the length beneath certain parameters, or the requirement for an air draught to enable the ship to pass under a certain bridge may demand compromises in other directions. The need for power, or great manoeuvrability or cargo requirements, will require balances to be made, if the ship is to function well.

It is also curious to note how design features which were once thought important, have now been relegated to the history books, largely to reduce the cost of building ships. It was, for instance, regarded by mariners as desirable that the ship's bridge should be as close to the mid-length of the hull. Elderly people may recall tankers with their centre castle, even though the machinery was in the after part of the ship. They might also remember ships with camber, to keep the decks dry and a rise of floor forward and aft, which, along with raised forecastles and poops, would keep the seas where they belonged.

Some adventurous designers, whose identity is surely lost in the midst of time, must, at some stage, suggested that all these things were un-necessary and by pandering to seafarers, just increasing the costs of shipbuilding. Henceforth ships would be constructed to a more utilitarian pattern, with accommodation piled right down aft or up in the eyes of the ship where it would be a useful breakwater. Presumably, those paying the bills would have agreed with these changes wholeheartedly, ignoring protests from those who might have needed to live aboard, and work the ships. With our modern enthusiasm for environmental priorities, other pressures pile onto the designers' computer. Fuel saving, reasonably equated with saving the planet, requires the power to be minimised, while speed, which was once a matter of pride to a ship-owner, is now severely curtailed. And waking up to the fact that a wind from ahead tends to slow down a ship, streamlining has become a new fashion.

Mind you, such enthusiasms for new and radical designs bring with it the risk of unforeseen consequences. I sailed in a wonderfully streamlined ship, which looked as if it could go fast, but in fact was no faster than any other of that power. The bridge front was elegantly curved and the windows set in at an angle, which meant that if you stood too close to the glass you bumped your head. Worse still, while the windows meant that there were no night-time reflections, rain, dew and snow lay on its surface and obstructed visibility. The unprepared would come onto the bridge, conclude it was foggy and prepare to put the engines on stand-by, before realising that it was perfectly clear. It is why the SOLAS convention has required windows to be angled in to their lower edge.

I can remember seeing the extraordinary design of the car carrier *City of Rotterdam*, when it arrived in North Sea waters and remembering my beautiful old ship. The designers of this ship and its owners were triumphantly telling the world of the savings to the environment which would result from a forepart, which resembled a tennis ball with windows. To maintain the perfect curve, only the window which was on the centreline was perpendicular to the fore and aft axis, those on either side sloping away to the sides. It was certainly a very striking looking vessel, though once again it occurred to me that the ship was being handled from a position right over the bow.

I wonder if any shipmaster or pilot was able to cast his eyes over this singular design, while it was on the drawing board. The ship's flag state, Panama, was persuaded to approve its non- SOLAS compliant bridge arrangement and the vessel went into service, to enthusiastic remarks about its fuel consumption and environmental signature.

So it was sad to learn, nearly two years ago, that the car carrier had been involved in a nasty bump in the Humber River and that subsequently, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch had concluded that a major contributory factor was the design of the wheelhouse. On a wild night, with the outbound ship making a lot of leeway in the wind, the pilot, standing behind one of the angled windows off the centre, was fooled by the illusion that he was looking ahead, when his view was on the bow. He believed that he was steering almost south to gain the right hand side of the channel but it was an illusion, and he was failing to clear the incoming ferry. The MAIB also reported that pilots elsewhere had found difficulties caused by this ultra-green design.

The reports of the MAIB, objective and professional as they are, must not be used in evidence but it seems quite extraordinary that presumably after they had read the report, Maritime & Coastguard prosecutors saw fit to send the master and pilot of the ship to the Crown Court in Hull, where, after they pleaded guilty to a number of charges, they were given custodial sentences, albeit suspended. It is, after reading the MAIB report, difficult to ascertain the logic of this approach, unless it is designed to demonstrate that henceforth, all accidents, no matter how caused, render the participants liable to a severe sentence, on the Admiral Byng principle. It is not too far -fetched to conclude that while plenty of seafarers over the years have lost their lives because of design problems, these two individuals have been criminalised by the same.

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## HMS Li Wo

**By Roy Martin**

We British prefer not to talk about our defeats, and the fall of Singapore is no exception. Troops and civilians did escape, though many who left in the first two weeks of February 1942 did not survive the journey. The Royal Navy were desperately short of ships and five of those that were in Singapore were under repair, only two got away. This fleet was supplemented with a number of merchant ships, whose officers were hastily given 'Temporary Acting' ranks in the RNR.

One such ship was *HMS Li Wo*, a Yangtze river steamer. Her Master, Captain Thomas Wilkinson, remained in command, as a Temporary Acting Lieutenant. His Chief Officer Ronald George Gladstone Stanton, became the 1st Lieutenant. A number of survivors from *HMS Repulse* and *HMS Prince of Wales* joined the ship and members of her peacetime crew volunteered to remain. She also embarked a considerable number of civilians.

*Li Wo* was one of about a dozen ships that sailed on 'Black Friday' 13 February, two days before the colony fell. She spent the first night among the outlying islands, as most of the channel buoys were missing. At dawn the gun crews were closed up and the ship got underway. In the afternoon they were bombed, but no hits were scored. At sunset the CO anchored the ship in a small bay on one of the islands.

On the following morning they were bombed again. 'The Captain decided that we would make a dash through ...the Banka Straits.' At about 1630 they sighted smoke off the port bow, this turned out to be a Japanese convoy, with an escort that included a cruiser and two destroyers. Captain Wilkinson mustered his scratch crew and was much later quoted as saying 'A Jap convoy is ahead. I am going to attack it and we will take as many of those Jap bastards as possible with us.' Others said that he 'consulted the crew.'

Leading Seaman Parsons, who had survived the sinking of the *Prince of Wales*, became the gunlayer (this is contradicted in another report). He checked the ammunition and reported to the Captain that he had 'Six Sem(?) - Armour Piercing Shells, Four Graze Fuse Shells and Three A.A. Shells. The Captain replied - Gunlayer, is that all the ammunition you have"? I answered :- Yes Sir, thirteen shells in all, plus three practice shell(s).'

Battle ensigns were hoisted at the gaff and the masthead and *Li Wo* closed in on her target, a transport of between 4,000 and 5,000 tons. There was no sign of fire from the enemy and the little ship closed to 2,000 yards before opening fire. The third salvo scored a direct hit, just under the bridge and fire broke out immediately. The Japanese ship was soon blazing furiously, but *Li Wo*'s ammunition was expended.

Captain Wilkinson then gave the order to ram; there is some disagreement whether the target was the blazing transport or another ship. They hit at full speed, striking the enemy amidships, and became interlocked. *Li Wo*'s bows were buckled back. Now at close quarters the gunners opened fire with the machine guns. The unsung hero of this part of the engagement was one of the two RAF Sergeants. He manned the Lewis gun, as he had done throughout the passage. He wiped out the four man gun's crew, then swept the decks of the first target and a second, killing many.

The rest of the convoy steamed away, this allowed the warships to concentrate their fire on *Li Wo*. The enemy gunnery 'was lousy' at first, but many men were injured by shrapnel. After about ten minutes, the Japanese warships found the range and the Captain gave the order to abandon ship. The few survivors had their last sight of their ship as she listed and sank, with her Captain on the bridge. Only about a dozen men survived the battle, the sinking, and the vicious attacks that followed. More were to die in the following days, and later in the POW camp.

In 1945 the seven who remained returned to Britain and told their story. At first Temporary Lieutenant Wilkinson RNR was Mentioned in Despatches; but, when the full extent of the action was realised, he was awarded the Victoria Cross. The Victoria Cross, or the George Cross, and a Mention in Despatches, are the only awards for bravery that can be made posthumously.



'Ever since 5-30 P.M. Saturday 14th 1942. I have honoured and admired the memory of the Bravest Man I ever knew: Lt. Wilkinson V.C. R.N.' - Leading Seaman T H Parsons RN.

The following appeared in a Supplement to the London Gazette 17 December 1946:

His Majesty has approved the following awards to officers and men of HMS Li Wo:

1. Victoria Cross - Temporary Lieutenant Thomas Wilkinson, RNR
2. Distinguished Service Order - Temporary Sub Lieutenant Ronald George Gladstone Stanton RNR
3. Conspicuous Gallantry Medal - Acting Petty Officer Arthur William Thompson
4. Distinguished Service Medal - Leading Seaman Victor Spencer
5. Distinguished Service Medal - Able Seaman Albert Spendlove
6. Mentioned in Despatches (Posthumously) - Temporary Lieutenant Edgar Neil Derbridge, RNZN
7. Mentioned in Despatches (Posthumously) - Temporary Sub Lieut. J.G.Petherbridge, Malaya RNVR
8. Mentioned in Despatches (Posthumously) - Able Seaman Desmond Palmer
9. Mentioned in Despatches - Acting Chief Petty Officer Charles Halme Rogers
10. Mentioned in Despatches - Leading Seaman William Dick Wilding
11. Mentioned in Despatches - Able Seaman John Smith

Some sources give the total crew as 84, but the best breakdown I can find is: 19 Royal Navy, including Temporary RNR and RNVR; 5 Army, other ranks; 2 RAF sergeants; 34 Europeans, mostly civilians; 10 Malaysian, (crew?) and 6 Chinese crew.

The Royal Navy proudly claims HMS Li Wo to be their most decorated small ship..

Thomas Wilkinson, V C, Master Mariner, was the youngest of the five children of William and Ester Wilkinson of Widnes. His father was the Master of a schooner.

I have written this article mainly using the reports of: Chief Petty Officer C. H. Rogers D/JX 125387 and Leading Seaman T. H. Parsons D/JX.143539

Roy Martin



## Cachalots awarded the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service



Two Cachalots, Captain Charles Kelso MBE and Captain John Hughes were among the sixteen recipients of the Merchant Navy Medal for 2017. The medals were awarded by The Princess Royal, Master of the Corporation of Trinity House, at a ceremony at Trinity House on 13th November. Captain Hughes, 2nd left in the group photo above, was cited for services to environmental protection at sea and Captain Kelso, 2nd right, for services to the shipping industry and sea cadets.



The Merchant Navy Medal provides an opportunity for the industry to recognise in a worthy and public manner, meritorious service by British registered Merchant Seafarers.

The Medal is awarded annually, without bias towards age or rank, to those eligible seafarers who are judged to have made a worthwhile contribution to merchant shipping, its operations, development, personnel, welfare or safety, or who have performed an act of courage afloat.



Captain Plumley, left, and representatives of the MNA and the SRNOA lay wreaths at the Southampton Cenotaph on Sunday 12th November. Those of us watching the Remembrance Ceremony in London from the warmth of our armchairs at home were pleased to see Vivien Foster, the President of the MNA, making a strong case for the 'forgotten' Merchant Navy when interviewed by Sophie Raworth. Only for Huw Edwards to pooh-poo the notion, saying something along the lines of 'all these associations think they are forgotten, but they are not really.'

### No smoke without fire?



And what would our BBC commentators have made of the above dramatic picture? 'Another British Merchant vessel polluting the atmosphere with its emissions while on its vile trade', perhaps. But no British seafarers to vilify here as British ships no longer have to carry any British crew. The 24 crew were Ukrainians, Russians and Filipinos.



The 399m long ultra-large container vessel *CMA CGM Vasco de Gama*, which grounded on the western side of the Thorn Channel whilst approaching Southampton on 22 August, 2016.

# Rope Ends

## Happy Birthday to us

Our Club was founded on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1928 so next year will be our 90th and it is hoped that we will find some occasions during the year to mark this anniversary.

One way, it has been decided, is to appoint Captain C.R. Kelso MBE and now MNM (see page opposite) as our Honorary President, just for the year. Captain Kelso, who so happens to be just six days older than the Club, is already an Honorary Life Member (see picture right).

The Club has never had a President before, but we have never been 90 before and neither has Captain Kelso so it seems fitting that we should celebrate the two together.



**Captain Kelso receives his Hon. Life Member insignia from the late Peter Marriott at the Harpooners' Dinner at Tudor Merchants Hall in Nov. 2007.**

The photo opposite, released by Spanish Maritime Search and Rescue Society, shows just what can happen when 50,000 tons of fertilizer overheats during transit.

The 56,000 dwt British bulk carrier *MV Cheshire*, owned by Bibby Line, suffered a cargo 'fire' in August off the coast of the Canary Islands during a passage from Norway to Thailand with a cargo of ammonium nitrate fertilizer. The fire, which doesn't seem to have involved any flames and was described as a thermal decomposition, was strong enough to initially blow open the hatches at no.4 hold.

Cheshire's crew abandoned the ship a few days into the slow-burning fire. Salvors were able to keep the vessel away from shore but couldn't board the ship due to the toxic smoke.

The cargo in all five of the ship's cargo holds burned for two straight weeks until there was no more fertilizer to burn. She was then towed to a Spanish port for discharge of what remained.

A previous incident, in which just 2200 tons of ammonium nitrate did explode on a French vessel in the port of Texas City in 1947, has been described as one of the world's largest non-nuclear explosions. It killed 581, injured over 5000, blew planes out of the sky and hurled one of the ship's anchors 1.62 miles.

Cheshire's cargo has been described as an ammonium nitrate *based* fertilizer so perhaps there is a chemical difference.

The fertilizer has recently been implicated in the pollution of water courses and aquifers around the world, due to run off from agricultural land..

Further to our piece in the previous edition about the grounding of ultra-large container vessels, another incident has come to light with the publication of the MAIB report on 25 October.

This time much closer to home, while the *CMA CGM Vasco de Gama* was making the West Bramble turn in fact, and not as a result of any mechanical failure but down to Pilot error, the MAIB report has determined.

A combination of tugs and ship's engines enabled it to be re-floated on the rising tide soon after grounding.

The vessel was the largest UK-flagged vessel at the time and had two of the port's specialist container ship pilots onboard.

