

CACHALOTS & The QE2



Memories & Reminiscences of members of
The Southampton Master Mariners' Club.





A familiar sight to Sotonians, the QE2, seen here from the Weston shore, has dominated their nautical affections for more than forty years. Uniquely for Southampton, the terminal on her designated berth was even named after her rather than the monarch, I suspect. Now she has gone, to a retirement berth in Dubai, and no doubt the QE2 lovers will throw up their hands in horror as details emerge of the indignities which will, no doubt, be inflicted upon her in order to convert her from a vibrant, moving liner to a static hotel ship come tourist attraction. But, maybe, better that than the ignominy of being driven up onto some Indian beach.

Ships come and go, and Mariners have never been over-sentimental about the ships that they sail on. Those that have tried to maintain them appreciate the difficulties faced in trying to withstand the ravages of time and salt water. That there is an ever increasing army of legislators, bureaucrats, surveyors and inspectors all safely employed in making up and enforcing new regulations does not auger well for the longevity of new tonnage, let alone the old. So the QE2 can be congratulated on lasting as long as she has.

In this first supplement to *The Cachalot*, the quarterly newsletter of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club, eight contributors, all Cachalots, all Southampton men, six of them Master Mariners, bring you their own personal recollections of when they worked and sailed on her.



Picture Southern Daily Echo

HM The Queen with past Captains of the QE2 on 2nd June 2008, the 55th Anniversary of her coronation.

Keith Stanley, Robert Arnott, Robin Woodall, Nicholas Bates, Ray Heath, Laurence Portet, Peter Jackson, Roland Hasell

John Burton-Hall

Ian McNaught

David Perkins

Ronald Warwick

Peter Jackson

Captain Peter Jackson, pictured here for the first World Cruise in 1975, when he was Staff Captain, started his career as a midshipman with Blue Funnel in 1938. He had an eventful and often highly unpleasant war, helping to ferry the British Expeditionary Force firstly to France and then in their recovery from Dunkirk and elsewhere. He was engaged with the Malta Convoys, which he described as “pretty horrific”, and two of the vessels that he subsequently sailed on were sunk. The first in the Gulf of Mexico and Peter was in an open boat for a week before being picked up, and the second in mid-Atlantic. This time Peter was in charge of a small open boat full of exhausted survivors and for 15 days he navigated it to make a land-fall in Antigua, a distance of some 1500 nautical miles. Later in the war Peter navigated British aircraft carriers in the Pacific.

He joined Cunard in 1946 as Third Officer on the *Franconia*, working his way through all of the Cunard passenger ships, with the exception of the *Scythia*. He was first appointed as Relief Master of QE2 in 1973, was the Master when she was requisitioned during the Falklands conflict, and retired in 1983.

He has been a Cachalot since 1990.



Royal visit to QE2 prior to the Ship's retirement.

It was an honour to be among the guests who were invited to a reception and lunch on board my old ship, "Queen Elizabeth 2" on 2nd. June, 2008, in the presence of Her Majesty, the Queen,

Having sailed in the ship for a number of years and guided her around the world, it felt good to walk aboard and see that she had been so well maintained. The furnishings and decor were superb and it was very evident that the crew were extremely proud to sail in such a ship. My wife and I enjoyed speaking to many old friends during the reception and much reminiscing went on, but for me the supreme moment was being presented to Her Majesty.

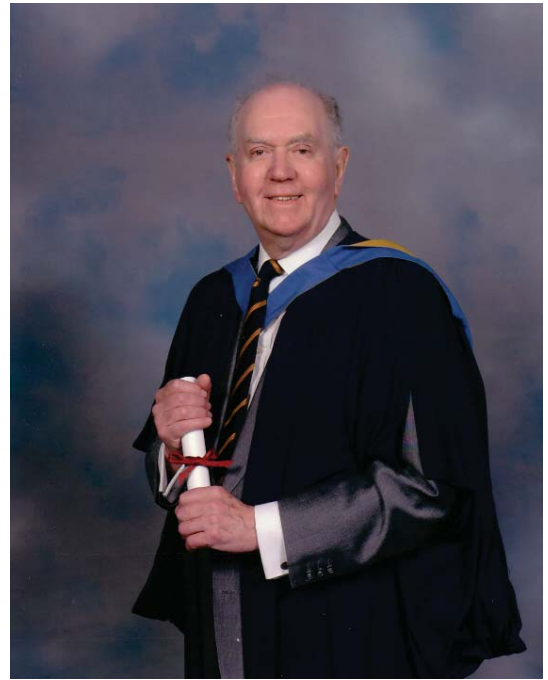
As I walked around the ship, I was reminded of events which had taken place and which are now part of history, but it was gratifying to know that I had been a part of those happenings. From the Bridge, which I knew so well, my thoughts went back to the time when I considered it prudent, and necessary, to take over guidance of the ship when in a Norwegian fjord, since I could see something of a disastrous situation was developing. Fortunately the impending problem was resolved and the cruise continued. Also, the epic voyage to the South Atlantic, at the time of the unpleasant episode with Argentina, when we took the Fifth Brigade of Scots Guards, Welsh Guards and Gurkhas to South Georgia and returned with survivors of H.M. ships *Ardent*, *Antelope* and *Coventry* came immediately to mind, along with the transfer of 1,654 passengers, baggage and lifesaving equipment at sea, to another ship, which was almost a miracle, but is now largely forgotten. Another major event at sea was the rescue of six young Europeans from a sinking yacht, in a force 10 Northerly gale, when I used the ship to create an effective lee - now just a memory to me.

Looking through my diaries I recall so many details of things which occurred during my time as Master of QE2, and it is with pride that I think of fine shipmates who helped to make the ship into the legend we all know so well. QE2 accomplished all that was asked of her and it is with dignity that her name can truly be remembered and associated with the other great "Queens".

Peter Jackson.

Ian Stirling

Ian Stirling spent 1951 as a cadet at Warsash. He was at sea until 1968 in various capacities in several shipping companies and the RNR. He then came ashore; hydrographic surveying at Bristol, until being called for the Trinity House Isle of Wight Pilotage District in 1969. He was first licensed in 1970 and in 1980 also qualified as a Deep Sea Pilot. In 1981 he returned to sea for six months as master of seismic survey vessels, followed by part time freelance marine surveying. In 1988 he was conscripted into Associated British Ports as the office-bound Pilotage Co-ordinator for 8 months before returning to the pilots' roster. In 1995 he resigned from ABP to concentrate on North Sea pilotage and expert witness activities, until reaching the Trinity House age limit at the millennium. Thereafter his sole active seagoing was performed on the SHIELDHALL, culminating in 2005 with the ship's 50th. Birthday trip to Scotland and the bicentenary firework celebrations for the Battle of Trafalgar off Portsmouth. It was then time to bow out in time for his own 71st. Birthday. In 2006 he finally graduated from the Open University after nine long years of study! A Cachalot since 1994, Ian was Club Captain in 2002.



QE2 and Me2

We both entered service at Southampton during 1969; the ship as Cunard's flagship, and I as a trainee with the Trinity House Pilots. However, due to injuries received in what is euphemistically described as an 'RTA', my actual launch as a licensed pilot did not occur until May 1970. At the time of writing, QE2 is still operating out of the port but my Southampton career ran out of steam in 1995! This shows that the ship had more staying power than most of the people associated with it!

Although I was never an employee of the Cunard Line I came to know the QE2 and the Vistafjord very well between 1987 and 1995, both as a pilot and a passenger. My immediate predecessor was the late Peter Driver who had recommended me to replace him after his retirement on account of the fact that I was well known for always sporting a white handkerchief in my breast pocket and creases in my trousers. Peter was a Cachalot and his sons still like to attend our Sea-Pie Suppers.

I became the junior of two 'Choice Pilots', being the running mate of Captain Danny Robson. Danny was well known on the QE2, not only as a fine pilot but as a 'character' and bon viveur. He lived on the eastern side of the Isle of Wight and liked to take the ship to sea on the odd occasion that the weather dictated a Nab departure. I learned the reason for this the first time the job fell to me. On approaching the Nab Tower the Captain's tiger (steward) appeared on the bridge and handed me a parcel. When I queried its nature he told me that Danny always ordered the contents to be delivered hot to him just before he disembarked. Apparently, his wife used to meet him at Ryde Pier and they would consume the contents there and then – Two hot steak filled baps wrapped in foil and a box of Belgian chocolates. I could hardly get the steak sandwiches to the Test Valley in edible condition so I earned my self 'browny points' from the pilot launch crew by donating them to the two hungry fellows. The chocolates naturally found their way to my wife instead! I wondered if I might have struck a lucky precedent but the steward never made the same mistake again.

The QE2 was always scheduled to sail at 1700 hours. This meant that I would board at shortly after 1600 for the usual exchange of briefings. It also meant that I would be on the move for most of the evening - disembarking at about 2000 then 40 minutes back to Gosport, providing we didn't have to wait at the Nab for pilots to transfer to or from other ships. After that was a 45 minute taxi ride to our base at 37 Berth, Southampton. One of the Masters was inclined not to offer me dinner and I was too proud to ask for it. After it had happened several times my wife hit on a plan. She made up a plastic box of sandwiches which I was to place on the wheelhouse window ledge along with my cap and passage plan. Nothing was ever said on either side but it worked like a dream.

Pilots are used to being an outsider working with a close knit community, usually foreigners (which sometimes even amount to a bridge team!). The QE2 was only different insofar as they were all English speakers, so it was still necessary to mark one's presence. I soon found that one Master was an inveterate smoker although he would allow no one else to smoke on his bridge. Most of the rest of us were by that time abstainers and found the fug rather unpleasant. The solution proved to be to provide a half pound bag of 'Pell's Jargonelle Pear Drops' and share them around the entire bridge team until they ran out, usually just before reaching the Needles. To emphasise that I was an outsider I always started with the Filipino quartermasters and worked my way up through the ranks until I reached the Master last. It proved a great way to ingratiate myself because they all enjoyed the taste as well as the diversion. However, the most important effect was to make the Captain's cigarettes taste so horrible so that with careful timing along the passage the rest of us were entirely spared the effects of secondary smoking.

Pilots wear Sea-Safe coats for boarding and landing. They are considered to be handy for swimming about in the English Channel. In my day they were bright orange with reflective stripes but the important thing was that they were waterproof. On one occasion, when the QE2 was berthing at Southampton, it started to rain so I donned my coat. I was working the tugs with my handheld radio. This was not waterproofed but I always carried a supermarket plastic bag in my coat pocket for just such an occasion. Inside the bag the radio remained dry while transmission and reception were not impeded. As we approached the berth close enough for us to be clearly visible from the gofers' gallery on the terminal, the Staff Captain reeled back in mock horror saying 'You really can't go waving a Tesco bag about on the bridge of the QE2'. He immediately despatched a quartermaster on an errand from which he returned with a Harrods' bag from the onboard shop, too late to save the ship from the ignominy I had caused. However, I was sufficiently chastened to make sure I never repeated the offence. Incidentally, that anonymous Staff Captain was my immediate predecessor in the chair of the Cachalots.

On the 30th. October 1994 the QE2 sailed from Southampton in bad weather with me aboard. Clearly, it would be too rough at the Needles so we proceeded to the Nab. Things were not good out there either. We could hear the Nab Launch talking to a Japanese container ship. It was attempting to get a pilot aboard the vessel but not able to obtain a sufficiently stable lee because the master was worried about pointing his ship inshore in the high wind and heavy seas. The QE2 reached the Nab Tower and proceeded as slowly as possible to await the boat. Time went on and as our speed dropped to about 3 knots we began to roll heavily. The stabilisers could not be extended owing to the restricted water depth. Eventually the pilot boat abandoned the container ship and headed to us. I went down to the hull door from which the pilot ladder would be extended. When I reached there I realised that we were likely to roll the doorway under with six Filipinos and me in the alleyway leading to it. At times we were even looking up at the boat. It was also becoming obvious that the ship was making great leeway towards the Ower Bank to the eastward. Not being known for sticking my neck out I radioed Captain Burton-Hall on the bridge and urged him to go full ahead out of the situation (with me on board, naturally). Of course, I had to go to New York, so they rigged me out for the trip from the outfitters'. When it came to the underwear, I protested to the young lady in the shop that she had handed me little girls' knickers but she assured me they were gentlemen's briefs. There were storm force westerly winds on the entire passage. Each day I noted that the anemometer showed 80 knots ~ 25 for the ship and 55 for the weather. I tried to make myself as comfortable as possible in my penthouse suite but was never able to sit out on my balcony. Normally, there is a ceremony at dinner one night, parading the Bomb Alaska pudding around the restaurant with sparklers flashing but that and the flambé had to be cancelled as fire hazards because of the pitching. I was repatriated by air and shared a minibus to the airport with a young Chinese couple of entertainers with half a ton of luggage. He had been the stage magician and the gear was necessary for sawing his wife in half!

QE2 normally used to transit the Needles Channel when heading directly to or from New York. In this respect it was different from its predecessors. This was due to its lighter draught. I was informed that cutting 29 nautical miles each way saved a significant amount of fuel every voyage but more immediately it could potentially give the ship an extra hour and a half alongside in which to load stores over the usual Southampton stay from 0700 hours to 1700. The only problem was weather, because the Needles Fairway Buoy is in a very exposed position and when the wind reached Force 6 from the Southwest it became too difficult to board.

Unfortunately, the only suitable helicopter in the area was the Coastguards' but its priorities were lifesaving, not commercial work. I did once board the ship from it because the helicopter crew wanted to exercise with us. The landing area was just behind the funnel in a tennis court. The diver went down first with a valise containing my gear. I followed, with a dry-suit over my shirt and trousers. His job was to strip the suit off me. It all seemed very undignified, like being the monkey in a cage with dozens of passengers popping off flash bulbs through the netting fence. Unfortunately, nature took a hand in changing the ship's passage routine. During the winter of 1994/5 there were a succession of storms which caused the Shingle Bank off the western edge of the Isle of Wight to change its orientation. Ever since, it has become unsafe to manoeuvre such a long vessel through the narrow entrance southwest of the Needles Lighthouse. Cunard's answer to our advice, to re-route it via the Nab, was to relax the schedule so that the passage took six nights instead of five. This enabled them to maintain one of the nine diesel generators at sea, save fuel and to gain more revenue from the bars and casino. Incidentally, during that winter an island appeared on the Shingle Bank two metres high and two hundred metres long. Some wag hauled a cement mixer out there and erected a big sign 'Keyhaven Properties – Plots for Sale' but although it made a great photo opportunity, within three months the island had sunk beneath the waves.

QE2 is a wonderful ship; immensely strong and powerful to cope with crossing the North Atlantic at high speed. The downside is that it is not particularly manoeuvrable at slow speed. I never quite understood why the QE2 retained outward turning propellers when it changed from reversing turbine engines to diesel electric power with controllable pitch propellers. This meant that, thereafter, turning 'short round', utilising the transverse thrust of the astern engine, was no longer an option. Somebody must have had good reason but it made life more difficult for the masters or pilots. Although it has bow thrusters, these are not powerful enough to help except when almost stopped so tugs are always needed for berthing. Cunard's replacement, QM2 has the advantage of new technology that makes it largely independent. It is also built to cope with the North Atlantic. However, it was designed for a six night crossing from the outset so it is almost certain that the QE2 is still the fastest ocean going passenger vessel in service.

It was a great honour for me to have been associated with the QE2. Although personally not tempted to holiday in Dubai I am sure many other people will wish to go there just to book a cabin on that great icon of the late twentieth century.
IWS



*Passing the Needles outbound.
Compare this original funnel with the one shown on the front cover
(which picture was taken by Cachalot Doug Gates as the ship passed Calshot.)*

David Carr

David attended the School of Nav. at Warsash in 1959 prior to going to sea with P&O. He stayed with them until 1972 when he joined Cunard where he served in various ranks, Second Officer on the first world cruise in 1975, through to Staff Captain in 1986, before coming ashore in 1993 as Marine Operations Manager.

He joined the RNR as a midshipman in 1960, was awarded the reserve decoration in 1975 and bars to the decoration in 1985 and 1995. He was promoted Captain RNR in 1988.

He was appointed ADC to the Queen from 1993 to 1996.

He first became a Cachalot in 1980 and was Club Captain in 2001.

David Carr's Recollections

David remembers the ship running to a very well oiled and practised routine, particularly on her five-night transatlantic crossings. Once they had reached Bishop's Rock it would be full away on ocean passage, 30 knots or so, and David recalls the distinctive sensation of a "wriggle" or speed wobble. (This was when she was still steam turbine.)

On the first day it was boat drill and there would then be daily tests of the watertight doors, along with regular inspections and safety meetings etc.

On the first evening the "1st Class" cocktail party used to be held in the Queens Grill.

Second night was the cocktail party for the "transatlantic" passengers, (no 2nd class here, the QE2 was always one class) in the Mauretania Restaurant.

Third night was the Captain's Cabin party and the fourth night the Officers' Wardroom party.

Invariably, once they reached Grand Banks they would hit fog, horrible claggy fog, but David only ever saw one iceberg in all his career.

One time, in the fog, David was Officer of the watch and Captain Portet said to him, "Mr. Carr, I'm going to have a rest in the sea cabin. Let me know if any ships appear on the radar." When one did, David went to call the Captain but saw that he was curled up in a deep sleep and looked so comfortable that he decided to leave him. Then another echo appeared, and another. Finally David decided to call him and said, "Captain, we have ships on the radar."

"How many?" asked Portet.

"About fifteen", replied David.

"J**** C*****!" exclaimed Portet, leaping up in an untangle of long arms and legs.

Stuck in the mud in Montevideo

Captain Lawrence Portet was not always so jumpy. One time when they were due to leave Montevideo they found that the ship was sat firmly in the soft mud. The Pilot asked for full astern, the intention being to wash the mud away from underneath the ship and scour out a trench ahead. After about an hour of this things were starting to get a bit overheated so they let go and tried full ahead. She slid out of her berth like a cork from a bottle, gaining more speed than anticipated. Unfortunately there was a Japanese cargo ship moored ahead with a bunker barge secured alongside. Lots of little men in yellow hard hats and white boilersuits were frantically shouting and gesticulating. As the QE2 neared the bunker barge Captain Portet coolly said,

"Mr. Carr, get the damage report ready."

Fortunately they managed to bring the ship to a halt just two feet from the barge.

On the scrap heap

David stood by the ship in Bremerhaven during her major refit in 1986 and was Officer in Charge in the absence of the Captain; essentially he was Staff Captain. A publicity shot was taken of him standing on top of some of the redundant machinery that had been removed from the ship and this appeared in various British national dailies. A copy was pinned up on board upon which some wag had written:

"David Carr: On the scrap heap at 40."

Engine trials

After the re-engining in 1986, we took the ship on trials. The first trial was to test the stern power. I recall overtaking a coaster and then we put the engines on full astern. Then as we were moving astern at something like 24 knots, the coaster appeared to be overtaking us at a similar speed.

On another occasion, we were finding out the stopping distance. The re-fit manager came up to the bridge and pressed the over-ride button to tell the computerised power management system that something irregular was about to happen. He pulled the sticks back to full astern when we were approximately 1 mile from a buoy. The ship appeared to glide along until the stern power kicked in and the ship went astern causing a large “stern wave”. Eventually she stopped short of the buoy. In fact it took only 3 minutes to stop.

Static electricity

Because the ship was fitted throughout the public areas with nylon carpets, static electricity would build up on handrails, particularly on the stairways. It was routine for the ship’s personnel to use a key to short the charge to earth as they went around on their duties.

Big storm off New Zealand

On the way from Los Angeles to Auckland in February 1989 the ship was struck by a bad storm and David remembers waking to find that the door of his fridge had been flung open and disgorged its contents onto the deck. As he scrabbled about trying to replace cans of Heineken with one hand and retain the rest with the other, his pride and joy, a television set that Cunard had presented him with, also found its way to the deck but was mercifully undamaged. During that storm, in which the ship was reportedly nearly on her beam ends, some 35 passengers and six crew had to be treated for cuts and bruises. Another casualty was the Steinway grand piano in the Ball-room which came out of its blocks and fell over. The local press made a big thing of it when the vessel made New Zealand and the Captain, the late Alan Bennell, who blamed his entanglement with the storm on “misinformation” from the NZ Weather Service, was pictured in full rig seated at the still tilted piano and pretending to play it. Of such stuff are legends made, because subsequently, in his obituary in the Times, it was stated that Captain Bennell used to entertain the passengers after dinner and they printed the photograph of him sitting at the piano to prove it.

Visit from Queen Mother

The Queen Mother was very attached to the ship and visited a couple of times. As Staff Captain, David would have the honour of escorting her. One time she asked, “Will I be able to watch the horse racing?” Apparently there was a big race on that day so David had the Officers’ Wardroom cleared and the television set tuned in ready for HM to watch it. Unfortunately lunch over-ran so she was a bit late coming out and missed the race. When it came time for her to disembark David was at the top of the gangway ready to bid her farewell and she enquired,

“Did you find out who won the big race?”

“No Ma’am, I didn’t, I’m very sorry” replied David.

“Oh! I know what won,” piped up the Doctor who was standing nearby.

“Push off, Doctor” said David, objecting to him trying to muscle in.

“Don’t fight over it boys,” said HM, “my daughter will have recorded it on the video for me.”



Salvador Dali

The surrealist artist travelled on the ship one time, boarding in his signature fur coat, complete with brief case and highly decorative “assistant”. On the Atlantic crossing they encountered a storm and the cabin steward arrived on the bridge, “Sir, sir,... Mr. Dali’s in trouble!”

The 2nd O.O.W. was sent down and found Mr. Dali curled up on his “Murphy” bed. These large beds were fitted in the penthouse suites and folded down from a recess in the bulkhead. As the ship pitched the bed was going up and down, with its occupant nearly disappearing into the recess. *Very surreal!*

Not enough rice bowls

At one time in the late ‘80s the QE2 was hired by the Japanese for a couple of “alongside” charters in Yokohama and Osaka. People could stay onboard on a bed & breakfast basis and there were a couple of mini-cruises to Taiwan and Hong Kong. There were daily liaison meetings with the Japanese managers to sort out any problems.

At one of these meetings Mr. Hagiachi (or whoever) complained, “Not enough rice bowls.”

“Put that in the minutes” said Harvey Smith, who was General Manager on the ship at that time.

At the next meeting Mr. Hagiachi was still complaining, “not enough rice bowls!”

“Put that in the minutes again,” said Harvey Smith, “more rice bowls required.”

“No, no!” cried Hagiachi San, “Not rice bowls rice balls!”

The Bulbous bow.

The bulbous bow came in for its fair share of punishment, the most serious incident occurring at Nassau. As the vessel swung off the berth the bow contacted the coral reef and was holed. The blame fell on the shoulders of Captain Mortimer Hehir but a subsequent survey by the then Staff Captain Peter Jackson and some divers from amongst the crew revealed that the offending part of the reef was uncharted and a nearby channel marker buoy was out of position.

David remembers that they trimmed the vessel heavily by the stern to enable the fitting of an internal cement box but this was just washed away when she got up speed. A dry-docking was required so the ship was sent to Norfolk, Virginia, and the passengers were sent home. They travelled to New York by train, on a line that hadn’t been used since the Korean war, and were accompanied by a four piece orchestra and crates of champagne to keep them sweet.

Another time, in bad weather mid-Atlantic, the stem anchor was lost, complete with a length of chain. On its way to the deep it struck the bow, causing yet another dent in the bulb.

Missing camel

One of the regular American passengers, an elderly lady who was known to all as Lulu, was heiress to the Reynolds Tobacco Co., who produce the Camel brand of cigarettes. She would always bring with her a soft toy camel and would book a two berth cabin, one bed for her, one bed for the camel.

One time in Singapore the vessel was berthed close to one of Her Majesty’s warships and some matelots had been invited on board and were drinking in the bar.

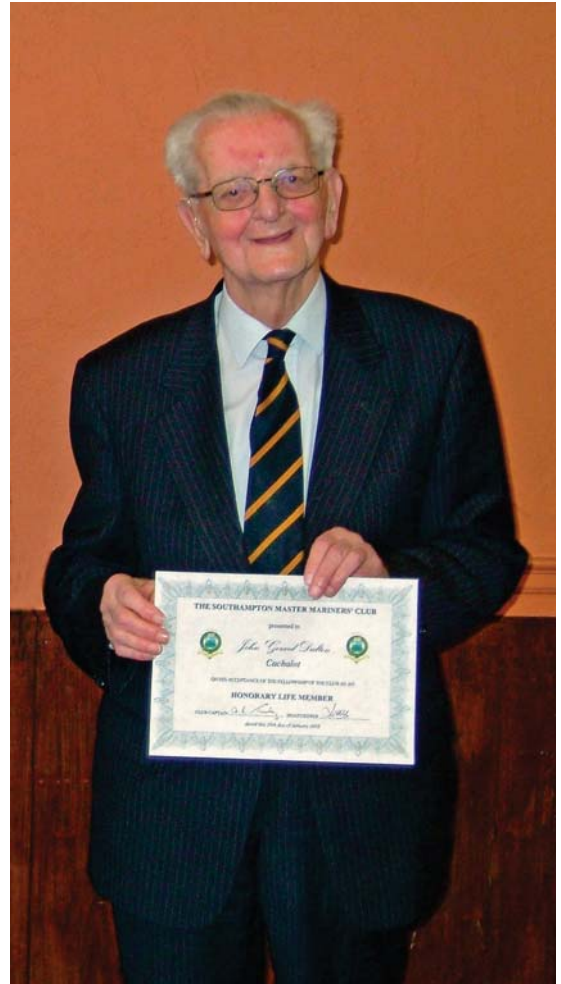
Lulu was a bit of a party girl and, having met the matelots in the bar, invited them back to her cabin for more drinks. When the sailors had gone, so had the camel. Lulu had the ship turned upside down, with everyone searching for the missing camel, but it would appear that it had been press-ganged into HM service and may even now still be adorning some mess-deck somewhere.

Gerry Dalton

Gerry Dalton started work in the Marine Superintendents Dept. at the Cunard building in Liverpool on the 14th April 1930.

He was called up in 1939 and spent the war with the RAF before returning to Cunard in Oct.'46. He was then principally involved with the engagement of cadets and navigating officers. In 1952 he transferred to the General Manager's office where he worked on crew labour matters. He became Assistant Manager of the Liverpool District office in 1962, responsible for the two passenger ships as well as the cargo ships and also those of associated companies such as Port Line. On Cunard's big move to Southampton in 1966, Gerry stayed on in Liverpool as Manager of the District office. He finally joined his colleagues in Southampton in 1967, becoming Operations Manager in charge of marine operations. He retired in Nov.1975 at Cunard's compulsory retirement age of 63.

Gerry joined the SMMC in 1969 and was appointed Honorary Life Member in January 2005.



Gerry displays his Honorary Life Member award

Ship Handling Conflicts

Only rarely does a Captain feel constrained to take over from a Pilot, but here are two occasions when this happened on QE2.

At Aruba in the West Indies, the channel outward to the sea has a sharp bend after leaving the

quay. I was standing at the back of the bridge outside the wheelhouse. The Pilot took the QE2 off the berth into midstream and then took a long time before moving forward for the bend.

As he began the turn, the Master, Captain Bil Warwick, saw trouble and taking over from the Pilot ordered more starboard helm. The ship responded but lurched against the sandbank wall of the channel.

Later at annual overhaul, I went to see the ship in dry-dock and there saw a section of the bilge keel missing on the port side where contact had taken place at Aruba.

The other instance happened in Southampton.

Formerly Inward Pilots brought ships in as far as Netley. They handed over to Outward Pilots to complete the task of berthing the ships.

With the big change in Pilotage this procedure came to an end. The QE2 was piloted by an experienced inward Pilot who under the new arrangement would take the ship to the berth. When manoeuvring to enter the Ocean Dock, the Master, Captain Douglas Ridley lost confidence with the pilot's ability and took over, he himself putting the QE2 alongside the Ocean Terminal.

The first instance I witnessed, the other was reported.

Gerry Dalton,

Long retired Operations Manager Cunard Line

Please note: Captain BIL WARWICK, only one 'L'.

That is how he liked it.

Lionel Hall

Lionel's call to the sea was inspired by Rudyard Kipling's "*Great Steamers White and Gold, rolling down to Rio*" so it was no surprise that after a year at Warsash in 1952 he aspired to join Royal Mail Line. There being no vacancies then, he served his time with their subsidiary, Pacific Line, before attaining his wish as a young officer.

He came ashore in the early '70s and after a brief spell as a Marine Officer with the old Southampton Harbour Board he became Operations Manager at the Prince Charles Container Port. He returned to the Harbour Master's Department in 1982 as Deputy Harbour Master and finally got back to the bridge full-time as a Southampton Pilot in 1989.

He was Choice Pilot for P&O Nedlloyd container ships and retired in 1999.

He has been a Cachalot since 1965, was Captain of the Club in 1996 and was Boatsteerer from 2000 - 2007.

The Loss of a Queen

When Captain T. Clark, our intrepid editor and proof reader (writer?) of *The Cachalot* suggested any member Cachalot who had sailed in QE2 might like to share the experience through the pages of our magazine I experienced a warm feeling of affinity with QE2.

Everyone I have met who sailed in QE2, whether as master, crew, officer or passenger has shared this affection for the ship, which has become a much loved National Treasure. Even people who have never been on board gaze in awe of her magnificence. So much has been written about this grand old lady of the sea by past captains and passengers, it would be foolish of me to compete but I would like to pen a few words of my cruises as a stowaway Royal Naval Reserve Officer who was privileged to sail in her.

As The First Lieutenant, Solent Division, I also served as D.O. of the List 1 Officers and it was through this office that I met old school friends during training and the names of John Burton Hall, Ron Warwick and David Carr spring to mind. After the serious so called "Training Sessions" we would relax and swing the lamp in the wardroom over a glass. These meetings always left me feeling bored driving a desk whilst these fellows were still enjoying a life on the ocean waves.

It so happened that in 1989 Cunard were unable to source sufficient suitably qualified officers to make up the Bridge Team and David Carr suggested that the shortfall could be made good with RNR officers. This opportunity to exchange my desk, from which the only sea going experience then available was mine sweeping with NATO Forces in the Western Approaches was just what I needed. My wife Julie was equally enthusiastic when she heard she would be permitted to accompany me. Thus it came to pass that Julie and I boarded the majestic QE2 in October 1998, she with best "Wanted on Voyage" wardrobe she could muster and me with my Royal Navy kit and my trusty old sextant. The only



Lionel, as ever, a thorn between two roses: Julie and one of the dancing girls

formality was for both of us to sign on articles, she as a supernumerary and me as Navigator. We were berthed in the 1st Officers cabin which had the biggest bunk I had ever seen and the cabin was about the same size as those for which some had paid buckets of money.

I had previously sailed in QE2 on a Naval acquaint basis but now I was a serving officer with responsibilities and it was essential to know my ship. Thanks to the willing help of the Officers and Petty Officers I soon found my way around the ship and recognised the “need to know” personalities who are essential in the day to day management of a super liner.

My several duties included instructing the new crew members on their duties in the event of an emergency. I think I got this job because I had recently attended a refresher course at HMS Phoenix on Fire Fighting and Damage Control. I became aware of the difficulties encountered by British Offices briefing crews from around the world who could not speak English. Whilst I was busy learning my ship Julie was being chatted up in the WR by countless young men who seemed to be spare. I don't think Julie saw me for the first 24 hours!

Ships don't make money alongside the quay so off we went. The weather forecast, which all seamen regard with reverence and trepidation, was not good; in fact it was terrible. Hurricane Oscar or some such, was shaping up towards the S.W of Ireland and Captain Robin Woodall decided that it would be prudent to avoid a close encounter. Much to the chagrin of a few dozen would be passengers left stranded in Cork in the Irish Republic we headed south. Notwithstanding putting about 200 miles between us and the path of Oscar we experienced some very heavy weather and *mal de mer* was shared by passengers and some crew without favour.

Julie had been watching the CCTV in our cabin but found the sight of the enormous swell and seas smashing over the bridge to be quite nauseating. Coming onto the bridge Captain Woodall told her to focus her line of sight on the horizon, which often reduces *mal de mer* but unfortunately Julie became quite ill. The medical staff were a great help giving injections of secret potions although her hero Captain Woodall provided the best treatment. He suggested that Julie took herself down to the 1st class tea rooms which were located so close to the centre of the ship that there was much reduced apparent motion. It was in this area that Julie enjoyed 1st class cruise. She must have looked forlorn sitting there alone but veteran QE2 passengers are a good breed and she was befriended by many, some remain good friends today and with whom we exchange visits across the water.

The heavy weather took its toll in various ways, and on the second day Captain Woodall appointed me to be responsible for writing and making a daily broadcast to keep the passengers advised of interesting trivia. “No more than 5 minutes, Lionel” he said. On the first occasion I found it difficult to fill 2 minutes.

Julie listened to my broadcast and told me that passengers paid close attention. This encouraged me to play to my unseen but appreciative audience and I searched the charts, almanacs and other publications for stimulating material to include in my broadcast.

On one occasion when we were enjoying better weather I noted that the ship would pass close to the charted position of TITANIC and decided this would be too good to omit from my broadcast. At dinner that night I was host to a table of beautiful ladies (I didn't notice their spouses) and became a bit of a celebrity when they discovered me to be the guy who made the broadcasts.

“I do love your broadcasts” said one, “so English”. “Why are we going so close to the TITANIC” enquired another lady. I didn't want to admit that we were in fact miles away and foolishly replied that the hotel manager was running out of ice. “Oh my God” she exclaimed in horror. It was only when a gentleman said that was the first time in 20 years of marriage that he had seen his wife speechless that I noticed she was married. Of course Julie had noticed as soon as I sat next to the lady! I got a severe reprimand from the Staff Captain for ordering a bottle of vintage wine at about \$100 a bottle, which reminded me of my humble position!

It has been said one could find ones way to New York by following the trail of Cunard crockery on the sea bed and tragically the same might be said about the thousands of merships sank by enemy action during the wars since TITANIC was infamously clouted.

At the height of the mandatory Captain's Cocktail Party, which had been postponed for a day due to the dreaded Oscar, I had been made OOW so that Chris Balls could attend the party.

You will recall that we had avoided the greatest wrath of Oscar thus were enjoying more favourable weather. However there was still a very heavy swell running on the starboard bow and I remember comparing it with the last time I was in the area aboard a Swedish ship which was pooped, narrowly escaping disaster. I was watching the approaching swell and noticed a particularly menacing crest. I became almost weightless as the ship crested the swell and fell into the trough with terrible force. The sea broke over the bow and hit the bridge like Niagara Fall, swiping off the CCTV camera I mentioned earlier. Well I don't think it was providing much of a romantic ocean view that day anyway!

Julie was bravely enjoying the CTP at the time we hit that particularly heavy swell. This was her maiden deep sea voyage and she had never experienced anything more than a force 3 in the English Channel. She could dine out on her story of that night to remember when about a hundred cocktails hit the deck. Such a waste.

The weather changed very quickly and we were soon enjoying sunshine with ever moderating weather. Julie recovered her sense of humour and you will see from the picture that she happily braved the open deck for the first time!

I was not aware that I had a reputation as Jonah of the bad weather until the QM reported that one of the Stateroom Butlers sent his greetings to me, adding that he always expected bad weather when he sailed with me in RMS Andes years previously. The QM said I would remember the steward in the Ships Own Drama Society (SODS) in Andes where he was known as BEULAH.

Julie had made many friends while I was busily engaged in crew instruction and enjoying near monopoly of the broadcast system. I did not see much of Julie on voyage and it came as no surprise when we berthed in NY to be told she was off to stay in a penthouse in Manhattan with an American she had befriended while taking tea in the lounge each day (Lovely!?) It happened that the American was a government enforcement officer of some shade of grey that we never really discovered and had to proceed immediately to Washington DC. "Don't worry Julie - here are the keys to my apartment and I shall introduce you to Thomas the concierge who will look out for you". Julie telephoned her Godmother who lived up state NY only to be told. "You are in Manhattan alone in a penthouse? Just you lock all doors and don't go out". Fortunately Julie is made of stronger stuff and had a great time discovering NY city. Meanwhile I was off to sea again for what was known as a gambling cruise. I have never seen so many well heeled men behaving like schoolboys on their first day out in Paris.



Julie Hall, undecided as to which way to go.

Well of course I was wondering what Julie was up to and whether I would ever see her again. On return to NY she was actually there on the pier to greet me like an immigrant, and anxious to show me the sights of the great city, especially her penthouse and of course the essential ascent of the Empire State Building, which had escaped me previously.

During the Eastbound crossing Julie made many more friends including Alistair and Julianne from Toronto who have subsequently enjoyed a Club supper with us and shared two of our trips to France. (We even met together in Bermuda one year). The QE2 has a magnetic personality and we have the most pleasant memories of her. It is no wonder that she has become a legend in her time hence even I share an affinity with her after such a short romance.

PS In my innocence I shipped my sextant but it never saw the light of day and I was initiated into a world of Sat Nav!



Anthony John Ireland

After leaving Taunton's Grammar School, Tony did pre-sea training at Warsash in 1960 before joining British & Commonwealth as a Clan Line cadet and then spending most of his Deck Officer years with Union Castle. He worked as a compass adjuster from 1970 - 1972 and again from '74 - '78 with a spell as Master with Bulk Acid Shipping in between. From 78 to 82 he was a Trinity House pilot in Workington and then worked for four years as Mooring Master with Occidental. He became a pilot in Gibraltar in '86, retiring at the end of 2006. He now confesses to be an OAP, part time gardener, full time golfer and wine-taster, sunning it in Spain.

Swinging the compass, then the lead

In 1970, a notable year for me, I obtained my Masters F.G. Certificate, resigned from British and Commonwealth to get married and find shore employment.

This was with F.Smith & Son, who were then in Queens Terrace, and close to The Master Mariners Club, then in Royal Mail House. It was a firm of Nautical Opticians, and I trained as a Compass Adjuster, qualifying in 1972, with a B.o.T. certificate.

In December 1974, I was flown to Rotterdam, to meet the QE2 coming out of Wilton Feyenoord dry dock, with Captain Mortimer Hehir. I travelled back to Southampton, adjusting compasses on the way in, off the Nab Tower. This was all prior to her first World Cruise. I have to mention that, the Standard compass on QE2 was the closest to perfection, that I ever encountered. It had its own private 'monkey island' and was surrounded by non-ferrous decking, making it difficult to find deviation !

Then in November 1975, I had to adjust compasses on QE2, this time leaving from Southampton. Merchant vessels have to be adjusted every year, and the common practice was to swing off the Nab, disembark with the pilot, and be transported to Gosport. After the swing at the Nab, I handed the Deviation cards to Captain Peter Jackson, and mentioned to Cunard Choice Pilot Captain Gadd, that I was ready for the off. He gave me a wry smile, and said "Don't spoil a good thing !", ordered Full Ahead, and we were all off to Cherbourg !

A Cunard tradition, especially with the Queens Mary and Elizabeth, who had eight boiler rooms, and were building up steam by the Nab, was to carry on and over carry the Pilot. Later in the Captain's cabin, with the pilot and Staff Captain, I mentioned that I was without a passport. Staff Captain T.D.Ridley, immediately put his drink down, and went to the Captain's type-writer, and typed the enclosed letter, saying I was only in possession of a Drivers License.

After docking in Cherbourg, Capt. Gadd and I, were put up at the Sofitel, where we had a sumptuous dinner. Next morning, after an excellent breakfast, we were flown back to Southampton care of Aurigny Airlines. The letter allowed me through Customs and Immigration. Well done Staff !

In all a wonderful experience, and never one to break with tradition, or spoil anything, I'm so pleased that I didn't mention that I was expected home for tea the previous day !

In 1987, I was a licensed Gibraltar pilot, before I met the QE2 again. She was a frequent visitor to Gib, and I piloted her several times on and off the Western Arm. Before I retired at the end of 2001, I piloted her alongside in severe weather conditions, and was awarded with the enclosed certificate from Captain R.W.Warwick. I thought how he resembled his father Bil !

Now in retirement, this certificate is framed with others, and hangs in pride of place. Although, not in the largest room in the house, it is respectfully gazed upon, and reminisced with affection, regularly, I'm pleased to add.





David Mansell Pope

David Pope, pictured here alongside the sunken Argentinean submarine *Santa Fe* in South Georgia, went to sea as a deck-boy with Moss Hutchinson before being taken on as a cadet in 1959. Gaining his tickets he worked for Esso and then Clan Line, moving on to the Union Castle Mail ships after attaining his Masters Ticket in 1968. On the demise of that line he joined Cunard and worked his way up before retiring officially as Staff Captain, QE2, in 1998.

Becoming bored with shore life he returned to sea in command of a beautiful old 160 passenger ship *Bali Sea Dancer*, cruising around the Indonesian Islands. After a couple of years of that he did another two years captaining luxury motor yachts before finally swallowing the anchor in 2002.

Finished with Engines

In November 2008, the greatest cruise liner the world has ever seen, the QE2, was honourably retired. Her Captain, for the last time ever, gave the order "Finished with Engines" when she berthed in Dubai as a floating hotel.

So, at the end of her active service whisking happy passengers across the oceans, I would like to share some of my QE2 memories with you. Between 1980 and 1996, I was lucky enough to hold the ranks of Second Officer, First Officer, Chief Officer and Deputy Captain of the QE2.

To begin with you might like to know that the QE2 carried 1,850 passengers who were looked after by 995 crew.

Over 13 decks, her passengers luxuriated in 927 cabins, four swimming pools, health spa, gym, library, cinema and theatre.

Every cruise her passengers consumed nearly 1,000 bottles of champagne, use 51,000 glasses, eat 1,500 lbs of lobster, 200 lbs of caviar and 100 lbs of foie gras.

After forty years of cruising, she carried 2.5 million passengers 5.6 million nautical miles around the world.

She was no longer the largest but she was still the fastest.

And so what? In modern cruising terms, the QE2 was modest and austere, for she had no ice rink, climbing wall or surf machine. The QE2 was dwarfed by more modern cruise liners and the cruising market has evolved beyond the image of cocktail parties, deck quoits and shuffleboard. Even so, I promise you that when she set sail from Southampton for the last time there was not a dry eye on the dock. I also promise you that without the QE2 plying the oceans for the last forty years there would not be the buoyant cruising market that Cunard and other operators are enjoying today.

Here are a few memories from my life on the QE2 that will never do justice to the role that this ship has played on the world stage and in the hearts and minds of those fortunate enough to have walked her decks.

Sailing into New York harbour

From my time on the QE2, this is probably the ultimate cruising experience. The five day 3,000 mile transatlantic crossing is characterised by forceful Atlantic waves, cold wind and storms reaching Force 10 on the Beaufort scale. We would even see the occasional iceberg on the transatlantic routes. All the while of course, hardy passengers and hardened crew got on with the business of crossing the Atlantic in style tucking into caviar and souffles.

The reward at the end of each crossing though was the serene and surreal experience of gliding gently into New York harbour at dawn. The passengers would all get up early and line the decks to watch the Manhattan skyline loom gently but suddenly through the mist. We would pick up the River Hudson pilot at 04.30, pass the Statue of Liberty on the port (left) side at 05.30 and spot the landmark twin towers ahead at 06.00. When we were almost at our berth we would slip under the Verrazano Narrows bridge at about 06.30. Going under this bridge was always a wake-up call from the slow pace of life at sea. By that time of the morning the traffic crossing the Verrazano bridge into the Manhattan metropolis was in full flow and going under the bridge the noise of the traffic was like a swarm of metal bees.

We would finally dock at 07.00 next door to the USS Intrepid, another aged mistress of the sea. It became tradition to sound the ship's horn whenever we arrived and left New York harbour and the booming sound would reverberate up and down the skyscraper avenues.

My reward at the end of a morning's work? A few hours off which I spent in an Irish bar on 27th street with a fry-up and several well-earned pints of Guinness.

At anchor in the Caribbean

A transatlantic crossing is the classic cruise, made so by the golden era of ocean liners when they were the only mass mode of transatlantic transport. But for many, cruising is meant to be a tropical pursuit and the Caribbean island cruises typified many a passenger's dream holiday. Several times I was lucky enough to take my family as guests on QE2 cruises and I can remember seeing them bask in the Caribbean glow that I had witnessed on many passengers faces before.

In times gone by the QE2 was too big to dock at several ports so on these occasions we would simply drop anchor in the bay and shuttle the passengers ashore in the ship's own launches. Such a boat trip actually afforded passengers a more acute sense of being at sea, looking up at the towering cruise liner above them on the shuttle run to and from their mother ship. And yes, the description "mother ship" may sound alien and more fitted to the sci-fi world than the seafaring but where do you think the phrase came from in the first place?!

After a day sightseeing at the latest tropical destination we would meet the passengers on the quayside where the QE2 Stewards would have set-up iced drink stalls to welcome and refresh the passengers back to their ship. And yes, there were plenty of passengers over the years that missed the last shuttle back.

Unsurprisingly, the officers liked to get in on the act and get their R'n'R in the Caribbean sun. Occasionally we would commandeer a lifeboat, pick a deserted cove off the navigation charts and lazily steer the lifeboat, feet propped up on coolers full of Banks beer or whatever we could find in ship's stores. Once we found our picnic bay we'd tie a line round a palm tree on the beach, throw a stern anchor out and get the barbecue going.

Of course the officers' picnic it wasn't just for the officers but for the crew too. I remember that we invited the casino croupiers, the beauticians, the dancers, the nurses...

Cocktails and killer waves

Cruising isn't just about the destination, but about how you get there. To you it may sound like the life of a QE2 Officer was glamour, entertaining and seeing the world. To me though the lifestyle was only an entree compared to the duty of responsibility towards nearly 3000 souls and to the honour of commanding what wasn't the largest but the grandest liner on the seas. In other words, the job of hosting the Captain's Table at evening dinner or meeting and greeting at the Captain's Cocktail Party came second to the job of ensuring the safety of crew, passengers and liner.

Both sides of the job had their dangers and I remember numerous glamorous American divorcees taking to my uniform and being keen to see the inside of an Officer's cabin. On one occasion the wife of a rich American millionaire industrialist proceeded to stroke my leg at dinner, underneath the Captain's table. Whilst the said American millionaire industrialist was sat at the same table!

The Falklands War aside, the QE2 faced several real dangers. On several occasions, the Captain and Officers were placed on high alert of terrorist attempts and I won't forget the time in 1986 when we were hit by a rogue 100ft wave in the middle of the Atlantic. I was asleep in my cabin when the Officer of the Watch rang down to my cabin at 01.30 summoning me to the Bridge. Nothing unusual in that in so far as junior officers would often call to confirm course corrections when we were skirting heavy weather systems. There was of course something pretty unusual in a 100ft wave, even in the middle of the Atlantic and one had just crashed over the bow of the ship. From the Bridge we could see that the bow of the ship was awash with several feet of water and the task fell to me to go to make a damage report. Out there, on the foc'sle of the ship was suddenly a very lonely place. The weight of the wave crashing had bent the bow and beaten the deck at the front of the bow down by 6 foot. We calculated the weight of the wave to have been roughly 2,000 tonnes and believe you me, I was frantically looking back over my shoulder scanning the horizon to see if another freak wave was on the way.

We had reduced speed to ten knots immediately and I made my report to the Captain who was of course on the Bridge managing the situation. I dutifully made my rounds of the rest of the ship and damage was minimal, with several of the large windows in the large public galleries having been smashed by the energy of the wave passing along the ship. Some passengers were still up and boozing at the Lido Bar at the stern on the ship, whilst they had been thrown around a little they were unconcerned enough to ask me to stop for a drink. Whilst the fear of running into another 100ft rogue wave almost demanded a stiff drink, the rest of the ship had to be inspected for structural damage and I had a long night of work ahead. We ran at reduced speed for the remainder of the crossing and limped into port somewhat late. I don't know what magnitude of wave it would taken to sink the QE2 and thankfully we never found out.

The QE2 gets seconded to the Royal Navy and carries British troops to the Falklands War.

It was the 3rd May 1982 and we were one day out of Southampton on a transatlantic run from Philadelphia and I was having a cold beer in the Ward Room, the equivalent of the local pub for the 81 officers who managed the ship. Chris Connerty our Chief Radio Officer, burst in with the news that we were being requisitioned to carry troops to the Falklands War. The tradition of merchant ships being requisitioned to serve as military transports had all but disappeared as air transport had become the military logistical tool of choice. On this occasion however, the UK Government had no friendly airfield within 1,000 miles of the Falklands and so the Merchant Navy and the QE2 stepped into the breach.

Upon arrival at our home port of Southampton, Captain Peter Jackson took command of the ship and along with about 650 other crew members I volunteered for the trip down to the South Atlantic. In just over a week, the QE went from luxury liner to military transport. All the furniture, fittings, paintings, pianos and tapestries were taken ashore. Luxury goods were replaced with the loading of vast amounts of ammunition and all the carpeting was covered in plywood and cardboard boxes and luxury chandeliers swapped for strip lighting. The after decks that housed the tennis court, golf driving range, swimming pools and bars were quickly and unceremoniously ripped up and converted into helicopter pads.

Anti-aircraft missiles and gun sites were installed fore, aft and amidships. I remember overseeing two Blowpipe heat seeking missiles getting set-up and thinking they looked distinctly out of place either side of the QE's traditional red Cunard funnel. There were machine guns on the pontoon deck platforms to guard against boarding attempts and Browning heavy machine guns on the bridge wings.

As sailing day dawned and to the sound of their regimental bands we embarked 3000 troops including Welsh Guards, Scots Guards, Gurkhas, Blues and Royals, plus a few "specialist" troops. On the afternoon of 12th May we sailed out of Southampton and later embarked the Navy's Sea King helicopters once we were out in the Channel.

Our brief was to deliver the fighting force quickly and safely into the war zone. As we sailed south, we all thought that the Argentineans would quickly back down and that we would shortly get the order to turn around and come back home again. However, as we steamed further south at an average speed of 24 knots our naval escort of frigates and destroyers couldn't keep up with us and the reality quickly dawned on us all that we were alone, in the middle of the Atlantic, and that we were at war.

We heard on the radio that another of Cunard's ships requisitioned for the conflict, a cargo ship called the Atlantic Conveyor, had been hit by Exocet missiles and sunk with the loss of 12 merchant seaman lives. From then on we totally blacked out the ship after dark and began running silently, with no radar or electronic transmissions. A navigational challenge to say the least!



QE2 Command Team - Falklands War

Seated L to R. D.M.Pope (Navigator), Staff Captain Alex Hutchinson, Captain Peter Jackson, C/O R.Warwick, 1st Off. M. Scanlon



Discharging bombs, weaponry and other equipment from QE2 to Canberra, seen anchored in the background, at Grytviken, South Georgia.

Unsurprisingly, we grew apprehensive of the threat from submarines and steaming fast towards the war zone, we ran zig-zag courses to confuse any Argentinean submarines that may have been tracking us.

We later found out that that the QE2 had been classed as a high value target by the Argentinean command and that considerable effort and intelligence had been spent to track the QE down to try and sink her, not just to hamper the war effort but for the massive psychological blow that would have been dealt by the sinking of the ship bearing the monarch's name.

In the end the more dangerous role fell to the Canberra, another merchant navy ship requisitioned for the conflict, for the QE2 was deemed too much of a welcoming target for the Argentineans. We dropped our troops on South Georgia and picked-up 700 survivors from three Royal Navy ships sunk on the conflict HMS Coventry, HMS Ardent and HMS Antelope.

Ultimately, our part in the conflict was small but not insignificant. The journey to take the injured survivors to the Ascension islands home was not without incident or danger, especially the ice fields we navigated in the dark without radar. Suffice to say we then ferried our troops back home and after a total trip to the South Atlantic of

14,967 miles, the rest is history. I was so proud to be part of the QE's contribution to the conflict and the heroic return to Southampton water. Rather than add my own observation on this I think it better to reflect on the radio messages that we exchanged with HMY Britannia with the Queen Mum at her helm.

09.45 June 11 1982:

Captain Jackson received the following message from the Queen Mother:

"I am pleased to welcome you back as QE2 returns to home waters after your tour of duty in the South Atlantic. The exploits of your own ship's company and the deeds of valour of those who served in Antelope, Coventry, and Ardent have been acclaimed throughout the land and I am proud to add my personal tribute".

To which Captain Jackson replied:

"Please convey to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, our thanks for her kind message. Cunard's Queen Elizabeth 2 is proud to have been of service to Her Majesty's Forces".

"Stand by engines"

So as the QE2 sails into the sunset for the last time I would like to raise a glass to her along with the millions of people that have sailed on her since her launch on the River Clyde in 1967 Here's to the holidays of a lifetime, the honeymoons, the anniversaries, the laughter and the smiles, her Captains and her crew.

God bless her and all who have sailed in her!!



David M. Pope, right, with fellow Cachalot John D.M. Taylor pictured in the Officers' Wardroom on a visit to the ship in July 2008.

After that visit, a duly impressed John had the following to say:

It was way back in July, when Capt. David M. Pope invited me to join him, his wife Ann, and his son David, to lunch on board QE2, which was being hosted by the Hotel Manager. I was fortunate enough to have a personal tour, partly conducted by the Hotel Manager, and partly by Ann Pope, who despite not having set foot aboard for in excess of 10 years, appeared to remember every little tiny nook A cranny and secret stairway from deck to deck. What "bowled me over" was the immaculate state to which QE2 continues to be maintained, with replacement carpets still being re-laid, soft furnishings being upgraded, and spotless standards everywhere. Perhaps, most telling for me, was the impeccably maintained teak decks, which speak louder than anything, of the relentless consistent care and attention by past Masters over so many years.

This experience initiated David and I to do all we could to encourage The Cachalots to mark the seagoing retirement of QE2 with some kind of recognition, particularly because of the long relationship between Cachalot Members and this unique ship. Back at the Club we found that our Cachalot Editor, Terry Clark, was very much thinking along the same lines, and indeed had already done a massive amount of work in initiating and co-ordinating contributors articles; but was facing very tight budgetary restraints. Recognising the problem, I undertook to use my best endeavours to seek some sponsorship money to help defray our costs.

I was able to locate three old colleagues (none of whom have any direct link to the sea) who were willing to "stump up" the lions share of the additional costs; with all three wishing to remain anonymous. However, just to give a flavour of the their backgrounds, two sailed with me, many years ago, on the Brig T.S. Royalist, on a memorable occasion when we sailed up the Caen Canal, and berthed alongside, under sail power only! The legendary late Cdr. David Gay RN, who was in command, had an absolute hate of the thought of using the rather puny engine on a sailing ship flying the Blue Ensign. I well recall much line throwing: 2,4, 6 heaving, and the Commander's threats of what would happen to us if we as much marked one inch of her paint-work. By the time we had "squared off", we had gathered around us a large contingent of French locals, who considered we were completely mad, but nevertheless kept us well supplied with local wine, whilst they found out where we had come from.

The third, and largest sponsor, (in all senses of the word) had never set foot on a passenger ship until a couple of months ago, after years of me boring him with what he was missing, and cajoling him to "give it a try". He has already booked his second voyage for later this year!

Eds note: John served as Captain's Writer with Blue Star Line, Senior Assistant Purser with Union Castle Line, later becoming a director of Bass Wales & West Limited, and Welsh Brewers Ltd., : M.D. of Bass & Welsh Brewers Inns & Taverns, Chairman of Anchorage Inns Ltd., Chairman & Chief Executive of H.C. Wolton A Sons (Chartered Surveyors) Ltd., a stint of 10 years as Deputy National Treasurer of the British Institute of Innkeeping, as well as serving as a Trustee Director of Hampshire Youth Options (formally known as the National Association of Boys Clubs) He retired in 2003 to take a world cruise on Oriana, something of a culture shock he found, after his favourite Geest Reefer trips to and from the West Indies!

My thanks to John and David for their valuable input in making this supplement possible.

On 15th February 1928, twenty one Master Mariners, all square rigged sailors met in Royal Mail House, Southampton, UK, and formed the Southampton Master Mariners' Club.

The motto "In Omnia Paratus" (in all things ready and prepared) was chosen.

The secondary title "The Cachalots" was adopted on the suggestion of Frank Bullen, a Master Mariner and writer of stories of the days of sail.

"The Cachalot whale had the thickest skin, blew the hardest and spouted the most!"

The club badge was designed by Laurence Pritchard, an artist friend of Reg Gleave OBE (the Club's first Hon. Recorder who was present at the inaugural meeting) and he also executed the beautiful illuminated Certificate formerly presented to Stowaways, the first of whom were the Rt Rev F T Woods, Lord Bishop of Winchester, and Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Jellicoe of Scapa.

We are pleased to have on board the following Stowaways today:

1949 His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, KG, KT, OM, GBE, AC, QSO, PC, CD
1989 His Royal Highness The Duke of York, KG, KCVO, ADC(P)
1990 Rear Admiral Sir Morgan Morgan-Giles, DSO, OBE, GM, DL
1991 General Sir Peter de la Billiere, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC
1993 Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald, GCB
1996 Captain Sir Malcolm Edge, KCVO
2000 Captain Mary Fagan, JP, RNR, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire

The Club presently has approximately 400 Cachalot Members .
Club rooms are situated above the Southampton Seafarers' Centre and overlook Queen's Park, immediately outside the main No. 4 gate, Southampton Eastern Docks.

For more information contact:

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You may also find more information on the Cachalots in two previous publications, both written and published by Cachalot Simon Daniels:

The Wake of the Cachalots (1992) and *The Master Mariners of Southampton* (2003)