

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 72

June 2019

Captain's Log

Well, here goes with my first update as the new Captain of The Cachalots. After an extensive hand over from Captain Flemming Pedersen, our Post Captain, I have hit the ground running. As I am still actively working as an Admiralty Pilot in Portsmouth, I have been amazingly lucky with my working roster to be able to attend so many events.

Let me first introduce you to my chosen charity for the year. Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service (GAFIRS). They are celebrating 50 years of service this year and as an independent lifeboat station (no funding from the RNLI), they are one of the busiest lifeboat stations in the UK. 2018 saw them carry out 92 missions, saving 5 lives and assisting a further 103 people with a total of 10348 voluntary hours given by the service. My three daughters have been involved with GAFIRS for their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award giving up their time and enjoying the varied experiences on offer. Should any of you fancy a refreshing dip in the sea, their big charity fund raiser takes place on New Years Day at noon with 500 plus swimmers taking to the water (most in fancy dress), There is also the GAFIRS emergency services day on Sunday 14th July, supported by the emergency services. A worthy charity and one that I hope I do not need to use.

My first official visit was a trip to London, where I was invited by the Captain Robert Booth, Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. A lovely lunch where I was able to chat with a number of Masters of various Livery Companies from the City of London. Did you know the Worshipful Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers has been existence for 400 years, having been resurrected twice? And are expanding their membership by moving with the times, they are recruiting new members from the vaping world. Food for thought, how can the Cachalots grow and modernise? Fascinating chats in a fabulous environment; what was the engine room is now a double heighted court room where we had a delicious lunch. Pre dinner drinks were served outside on the quarter deck. Unfortunately blue sky and sunshine were not supplied, but still a fabulous location. A brisk walk saw me catch the 16:00 train from Waterloo and I was on a pilot boat exiting Portsmouth Harbour at 18:05 to bring in HMS St Albans. Certainly puts everything back into perspective, and it was raining!

Having being encouraged by the reinvention of the Tobacco Makers Livery Company, my attention turns to our own club. To keep the Cachalots going from strength to strength and promoting new members, I ask you all, what can we do to move the Club forward? What would encourage you to get more involved in the Club? Unless we encourage new members, and get existing members more involved, the Cachalots will continue to see numbers falling. Please email me at captain@cachalots.org.uk with any suggestions.

The annual dinner at Southampton Royal Naval Officers Association saw a number of Cachalots being entertained with another pleasant evening. A tasty three course dinner, followed by a lively speech from Lt Cdr Mike Critchley RN regaling us of life in the Royal Navy. Stories which are similar to most seafarers with a Royal Navy slant. The things we used to get up to at sea (and subsequently get away with) always amazes me. If any of you have Seafaring exploits you want to share with us, please get writing for inclusion in the Cachalots magazine. You never know, it could be the start of a lucrative writing career.

HNLMS Johan De Witt, a 176m Dutch amphibious craft made a port call into Southampton. I attended with Captain Buckley (Southampton Harbour Master), where we were met by a steep gangway (always seems to be high water), followed by a lot of stairs (never a lift on a naval ship), We were hosted by hosted by Captain F Lenssen (Chief of Staff Netherlands Maritime Forces) and Commander J Herman van Huizen. A great chat about the positive relations between the Dutch and Royal Navy, in how the two fleets compliment each other in their fighting power and logistics. An exchange of the history in the Solent and Southampton and that of Holland. I took the opportunity to present them with one of our Cachalots history books. I did quiz them as to why the Port of Southampton and not Portsmouth Naval Base? They had been involved in a number of naval exercises at Plymouth and wanted a break from the Royal Navy, hence Southampton. I brought this vessel into Portsmouth in convoy with HMS Bulwark for part of the D Day 70 celebrations. We turned both these vessels at the top of Portsmouth Harbour before proceeding back out again All under very tight timings, to coincide with the beach landings at Southsea seafront. A very manoeuvrable ship with podded propulsion and bow thruster. Watch this space for the celebrations for D Day 75.

Attending a curry lunch at Kutis in Southampton, it was great to see such a good turn out. Delicious food and plenty of it saw interesting conversations with a lot of laughter. Really is value for money and I would encourage all members to take the opportunity to attend, at £17 per person for a three course meal.

The Cachalots is a club for all, with the club room open on Thursday and Friday lunch times. All our social events are advertised in the Cachalots magazine and you are all are encouraged to attend. Also a reminder for the Shipping Festival Service at Winchester Cathedral on 13th June.

Captain Rachel Dunn

Boatsteerer's Locker

Fellow Cachalots

I've recently upgraded my P/C to Windows 10 and am fighting the good fight to get to grips.

Preparations are well in hand for the Shipping Festival Service on Thursday 13th June in Winchester Cathedral. Unfortunately our usual lady Canon has left the Cathedral and things are a bit haywire, with the rehearsal now on the Monday before the event. With many thanks to Paul Leece and Ian Thomson I hope that we don't have too many snags. Please help by publicising our Service (posters can be downloaded via our Office) and I must plea for once again requesting our ladies to provide canapés for the post service reception.

Since my last Blog I needed a R&R in Spain to recover from the Sea Pie Supper and we are off on a cruise as far as the Faroes Isles immediately after the Winchester Service.

To celebrate our big Wedding Anniversary we spent 4 days in Sandbanks with a sea view balcony. I must admit that the Dorset folks are really hardy as every morning before 08-00 at least three ladies in normal costumes were swimming in the sea and every afternoon groups of mixed swimmers were up and down the beach. On the Poole Harbour side many kite-board surfers in wet suites were to be seen.

Our senior bus passes came in handy as we went on a double decker bus to Swanage via the chain ferry, Bournemouth on another day, and finally a visit to Poole for a taste of cockles !

Our esteemed Storekeeper has been hospitalised, but is now home recuperating, and unfortunately we report the sad passing of one of our loyal members, wife of a Past Captain, who with her husband was a regular Friday visitor to the Club and supporter of all events.

The proposed Thursday lunch time talks in the Club Room will go ahead once the holiday season is over and if you could volunteer to give a short talk on any subject it would be appreciated.

The Bursary Officer reports that both the Southampton and Winchester Sea Cadet Units have taken up their Bursary for this year so look out for their reports in future Cachalot Newsletters.

The Annual 'Seawork' Expo will shortly be held in the docks and a visit to this free event is strongly recommended. You will be surprised who you meet there from the Maritime World.

Well, the sun is shining and the grass is growing so must obey orders and put my gardening uniform on for man's unequal fight against nature.

Ken Dagnall



From the Editor

New readers start here:

From our website: Club Journal: "The Cachalot",.

"The Cachalot was first produced in June 2001 as a four page newsletter intended to keep members abreast of club functions and activities and informed as to what the Captain was getting up to in their name.

It is now a 16 page, some in colour, quarterly journal containing, in addition to the above, articles and memoirs written or contributed by Cachalots.

Editorial policy has been to try and keep it that way rather than recycle content that can be found in other nautical publications. We are, however, not adverse to including such items that take our fancy and we think might take that of our readers."

Printed copies of *The Cachalot* are posted by 2nd class mail unless members opt to receive it as a pdf version by email, thus saving the postage which now exceeds the printing costs. They can also opt to collect a printed copy from the club room. It is also posted online in the members only section of our website.

We have never embraced Facebook or Twitter.

Selected articles from the past 18 years are posted on the above mentioned page of our website, in the public domain.

The website www.cachalot.org.uk also contains just about everything you, or interested members of the public, need to know about the club, past and present.

There is a members only section which we call "The Cachalots Deck" and contains such information pertinent to members and which should be of no interest to the greater public.

To access that section you need to follow the registration process as detailed there. Once registered you can log in with your user name, password and inevitable *captcha*, which is now simplified to just four characters. It is as simple a process that we can make it in these security conscious times. We do not carry out any financial transactions on the site and your data is restricted to name, user name and email address. Therefore we do not consider there is any need for a more sophisticated (read complicated) security process.

When registered and logged in you can stroll along the Cachalots Deck and savour the delights to be found there. (*I may be over-egging it a bit here*). There is a section called Blogalog which was intended to keep visiting Cachalots up to date with what may be going on between the quarterly newsletters but the site is not very dynamic or subject to constant updates and members attention and interest understandably waned.

When we got a bit media savvy (not very) we introduced the *Cachalite* bulletin service which is more proactive in that it advises members by email of any reminders, news or happenings that we feel you should know of. It has proved very successful and we are currently up to number 140. We only issue them when necessary and keep them as simple text messages with no security worrying attachments. The distribution list, a Gmail contacts file currently 178 strong, is kept on the editors home computer and consists of just names and email addresses, as supplied by members to the club. *Cachalites* are sent out as blind copies so the email addresses remain confidential and relatively secure. If you wish your name to be added to the distribution list please advise me, the editor. Conversely please advise if you wish your name to be removed.

Terry Clark, Editor

editor@cachalots.org.uk



**SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
THURSDAY 13th JUNE 2019**

Every year in June, a Shipping Festival Service is held in Winchester Cathedral, by permission of the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, as a tribute to those who have served, and those who continue to serve, in the UK's vital shipping industry.

The Cachalots (The Southampton Master Mariners' Club) have organised this service each year since 1930, apart from a break during the Second World War.

Everybody is welcome. You don't have to be connected to seafaring or shipping to attend the Service which this year will take place in Winchester Cathedral at 1930 on

Thursday 13th June. (7.15 pm for 7.30 pm)

This year the service will again be attended by the Lord- Lieutenant of Hampshire, the Mayors of Winchester and Southampton and other dignitaries.

The preacher will be

The Rev'd Peter Salisbury

Canon of Church of St. Thomas, Lymington

Hon. Canon of Winchester Cathedral

The Southampton Albion Band will take part in the Service.

Proceeds from the collection taken during the service will be divided equally between Southampton Seafarers Charities and Winchester Cathedral.

After the Service members of the Congregation are then invited to the Chapter House Lawn where refreshments will be available and the Albion Band will entertain.

Everyone is welcome to attend this historic service

Curry Lunches



KUTI'S ROYAL PIER

The next Curry Lunch has been booked at Kuti's again.

Sat 8th June 1200 for 1230

Price is **£17** each to include the gratuity.

Due to the popularity of the Curry Lunches (31 and 38 attended previous ones in Feb and April, 19 in May) we have booked an extra two this year making six in all, so make a note in your diaries:

8th June, 10th Aug, 9th Nov

Still excellent value and we hope you can join us there. Friends and family welcome.

Book through the office please.

Parking in Mayflower Park is currently **£2 for 4 hours**

BUT

The SeaWork Exhibition will take place at Mayflower Park, 11th to 13th June and the usual parking may well be restricted during the set-up. Alternative on- street parking in Bugle Street and French Street (one-way).

Club Buffet Supper

RBL

Wednesday 4th September

1900 for 1930

Boatsteerer Ken Dagnall MBE will give us more reminiscences of his time served as British Consul in Le Havre.

Price expected to be around **£20** pp.

To be held downstairs at the RBL and as there will be no formal seating there is no restriction on numbers.

Names and numbers to the office please, no later than Friday 30th August.

Trafalgar Dinner

We are organising another Dinner for the Admiral of the Port and the local Maritime Community.

To be held at the Grand Café again, on

Friday 25th October

The Admiral of the Port, Mayor Peter Baillie, will be in attendance and the Toast to the Immortal Memory of Nelson will be given by Commodore Richard Farrington, CBE.

There will be a Prize Draw, all proceeds **In Aid of the Southampton Sea Cadets**

It will be a **Black Tie** function and Ticket price is retained at **£50**

Tickets available only through our office. More information in the next issue and on our website.

Captain's Charity Presentations



Post Captain Flemming Pedersen presented the proceeds from his Captain's Charity to representatives of his chosen charities for his year at lunchtime on Friday 5th April, in the clubroom.

Captain Robin Bradley (*right*) of the Gosport & Fareham branch of the SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, and Denis O'Shea (*left*) of the Sunday Lunch Project in Southampton each received a cheque for £435.30 and gave those present brief descriptions of the valuable work that their prospective charities do.

Club Supper

32 members and wives attended the Club Supper held at the RBL on 22nd May. The lower numbers allowed for an easier layout of the tables, at least for the serving staff if not for the diners' legroom. The guest speaker was Judy Theobald who is an ex policewoman, journalist and broadcaster, now retired, and a volunteer on the *Shieldhall*. She called her talk - "Life - and other Problems" and she regaled us with a non-stop monologue of anecdotes from her varied past, some racy, all amusing, and all very entertaining.



Storekeeper Ian Odd, Speaker Judy Theobald and Club Captain Rachel Dunn



Past Captain Ian Thomson was instrumental in organising a reunion of Blue Funnel Middies and friends on board HQS Wellington on the 8th May.

Around 60 ex Blue Funnel men, their partners and friends, including 15 from the Cachalots, enjoyed an all afternoon buffet lunch and get-together.

Ian has already received requests for a re-match next year.

More from the Editor - More from You?

This time it is a repeat of that old editor's lament: More Copy, more copy.

Further to our Captain's plea on the front page and my notes about *The Cachalot* on page 2, time and tide have thinned out my contributors and the survivors, after 18 years, are running out of tales that they can bring to us.

It can't have escaped your notice, if you read the New Members column, and I hope you do, just what a wealth of maritime experience there is out there that they could bring to us. But I have yet to receive any contributions, long or short, to our modest publication. So, if you are one of that recently signed on crew, or a less recent but more reticent one, I will be pleased to add you to my list of contributors - my red pencil is rarely used. Otherwise we may end up the way of the nearly defunct Merchant Navy.

We understand that not only do British ships no longer require any British seafarers to be on board but that the British Register of Shipping is now open to any ship, any nationality, no experience necessary! Unless you know differently - in which case let us know.

Too clever by half

Lloyd's List Viewpoint 11 April 2019

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

Who remembers that bulk carrier that went shopping in New Orleans, after its clever engine management system decided on its own initiative to shut down and the ship lost steerage way as it was passing a shopping mall? That was an early example of ship control systems being too clever for their own good, but we don't seem to have learned very much in the couple of decades since that happened.

Pilots tell me that they are being driven mad by systems which have a mind of their own and, being digitally interlinked, cause alarm when they decide to intervene, ostensibly to protect the ship or machinery. There are very big container ships which take it upon themselves to shut down the main engine when the navigational sensors detect the under keel clearance is less than it feels comfortable with. The fact that this happens, just when the ship is approaching a tight bend in the port approaches, causes premature ageing all around and a lot of near missed grounding incidents. Doubtless the engine management system feels very self-righteous.

There is a lot of urgent introspection about the "near- grounding" of the cruise ship *Viking Sky*, which seems to have suffered a main machinery shut down because of lubricating oil problems. Older engineers will perhaps have shaken their grizzled heads in bewilderment, remembering the annoyance they probably felt when the deck department had taken the ship into a storm and the rolling and pitching was setting the luboil header tank alarm off every couple of minutes, as the contents of the tank sloshed about. They would recall how they probably sent the junior to check the first time the alarm sounded, and then settled back in the control room, perhaps tightening up their ear defenders. But engines in those days didn't have a mind of their own.

This sort of thing is going to get worse before it get better, with our machinery and ship control systems being assaulted by a seething mass of algorithms as the artificial intelligence experts bring shipping out of what they regard as the dark ages and into the digital future it clearly needs. One doesn't want to be too stuck-in-the-mud, but an engineer I correspond with was seriously asking whether much of this wonderful stuff is needed, whether it will stand the test of time and a shipboard environment, and whether it will just annoy people still afloat. This chap said what he really wanted was not computers and AI, but the restoration of a couple of engine room ratings, who will keep the machinery spaces clean.

Doubtless such remarks will be seized upon by the progressives as emanating from an industrial dinosaur, who is defying the pace and direction of technology, but I don't think such views should be ignored. There is a sinister belief (mainly by those who have something to sell) that AI can do pretty well anything and on-board manpower should be effectively demoted to machine watching – not that it will ever need human intervention, of course.

But there is a lot that algorithms cannot do yet, and in dynamic situations that require judgement and experience, these very human qualities remain valuable. A simple example from the navigation watch might be clever collision avoidance AI that can deduce closest points of approach and recommend action, but may well fail to detect that a tug has a tow behind it on a very long line and tries to take the ship between the two. It might be suggested that humans have also made that mistake, but clearly it is not an acceptable to hand over to automated systems that are no better.

And there is a great deal that requires both judgement and experience if ships and people are to be kept safe at sea. You only have to peruse the excellent publications of the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch or those of the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme to see the results of deficiencies in both judgement and experience. So the next big question, prior to the development of clever equipment or the next steps in maritime AI, ought to be to consider what its consequences on the human seafarers who share a ship with it might be.

We have already got equipment aboard ship which effectively removes the need for judgement and decision making in a whole range of shipboard tasks. Is the effect to make the navigator, or engineer more, or less, "engaged"? Is the job more, or less, interesting? And if the answer to these questions is in the negative, is the human navigator or engineer more or less likely to react appropriately when he or she is called upon to over-ride the technology and take that decision, or make the judgement call that will save the day? None of these are silly questions and are closely connected with other areas, such as manpower retention, because people or intelligence and imagination are not likely to stay driving ships and machinery if they are being bored witless. They are questions which ought to be faced, and not sneered at or dismissed by the "progressives", who champion the march of technology.

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Auction of club artefacts and memorabilia

During the many years of the Cachalots, a not insignificant amount of memorabilia has been gathered together from a wide variety of sources. Although the previous venue provided a reasonable amount of space to display such items, there were still other items which remained hidden away.

Due to the move required from the Seafarer's Centre to the Royal British Legion, it was necessary to place most of the items which the club had been presented with and had looked after, into store.

Several items were identified for transfer to the RBL room and these are currently kept in the cabinet or displayed in our room. A suitable storeroom at the Lok n' Store facility at Millbrook is currently being used to house the other memorabilia along with flags and other items used at various functions through the year.

It has also become apparent that there is insufficient wall space for the large number of ships' plaques/wall shields that have been accumulated over the years. They have therefore been temporarily stored with the rest of the Club's items at the Millbrook store too.

Further, items with what we consider had a significant value were assessed by a local valuer, Woolley & Wallis, at the end of July 2016.

Sadly, due to the ongoing cost of the store facility we need to downsize our unit and consider the disposal of the various items for which we are unable to display. As part of this process we are offering members the opportunity to bid in a silent auction. The list of items, some of which have a reserve price in brackets where applicable, has been posted on our website. The period for bidding will run from 1st June to 31st August 2019.

Items that do not reach their reserve price will be passed to a professional auction house. Should they still not reach the reserve price, the Management Committee will use its discretion as to how to dispose of them.

A list of all plaques is also included. Should any member wish to purchase any of the others listed, they may do so at the following cost: - Individual plaques/wall shields £10 or three for £27. Members wishing to bid for any of the items listed, including plaques/wall shields should notify the office by the closing date of 31st August 2019, clearly indicating the reference number and description of the item. All items are offered 'as seen' and for collection from the club offices only by arrangement. Successful bidders will be contacted to arrange payment and collection.

The primary way to view the catalogue of items will be on the Cachalot website but for those who do not have access to, or use the internet, you are welcome to contact us and request a copy.

Please direct all bids and any questions to either the Cachalots office by post or by email to either office@cachalots.org.uk or robinplumley@outlook.com

You can find the page "Auction of Club Memorabilia" on our website under Cachalot's Deck, or click [Here](#)



Southampton and the D-Day Landings

Cachalot Roy Martin attempts to set the record straight, yet again, with regard to Southampton and the British Merchant Navy's contribution to D-Day and Operation Overlord.

With the present coverage of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the D-Day landings, you could be forgiven for gaining the impression that Portsmouth was the centre of all the activity; and that the Royal Navy carried out the maritime side single-handedly. In fact more than twice as many troops and infantry landing ships sailed from Southampton; and more than half of the infantry landing ships from all ports were British merchant ships, with civilian crews.

Rather the same rewrite of history was achieved with the so-called 'miracle of Dunkirk'. Over 90,000 of the 309,739 British (198,309) and French troops were saved by unacknowledged merchant ships. When that was over around 130,000 British servicemen were still in France. All but 20,000 and about 30,000 members of the Second BEF, were rescued from the Breton Peninsular, again by merchant ships. Those from Cherbourg and St Malo landed at Southampton and were hurriedly moved to camps in other parts of the country, as the public had been told that 'every last man' had been saved from Dunkirk. The Second BEF had only been in France for a few days; so wits in Southampton said that BEF stood for 'Back every Friday.'

Most of the ships went on to embark Polish and Czech troops and civilians; plus many British people, from other parts of France, and beyond. The bulk of the troops were landed at Plymouth, while civilians went to Falmouth.

After this Southampton Docks were closed to all but coastal traffic, mostly colliers for the power station, gas works and domestic coal; plus tankers? Many of the pilots were transferred elsewhere; some as far north as Scapa Flow and the convoy assembly anchorage at Loch Ewe. Thus Southampton and southern Hampshire became the obvious place to centre the British and Canadian assault troops.

When the Allies began planning the Landings the Admiralty assured them that they would handle the marine side; they appointed the experienced Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, who had planned the naval side of the North African and Italian landings.

Frederick Leathers had been made the Minister of War Transport in 1941, when he was made a peer. He assembled a formidable collection of shipping men, who from then on controlled every aspect of commercial shipping. For the only time in its history, the Merchant Navy was controlled by a unified organisation at the heart of government. It fell to the MOWT to organise every detail of the mercantile side of Operation Neptune, to meet Admiral Ramsay's requirements.

As at December 1943, the plan envisaged no US naval forces being involved in Neptune; but, at about that time, Ramsay advised the Admiralty that he would require a total of 467 HM ships for the operation; plus almost 150 minesweepers. The Admiralty were shocked!

Then General Montgomery took command of the British Army component of Overlord. On examining the plans Montgomery decided that the three divisional landing would result in the British and Canadians fighting on too narrow a front; so he demanded two more divisions. This two-thirds increase threw an even greater burden on the ANCXF. It not only affected the number of naval ships and landing craft that would be required, it also meant a need for a proportional increase in the already staggering total of merchant ships to achieve the necessary build-up. Ramsay knew, as did Montgomery, that there was no point in landing an invasion force unless you could ensure the immediate flow of supplies that only the merchantmen could bring.

To stand some chance of meeting the new demands, D-Day was to be postponed by a month until 5 June and the Admiralty laid-up several capital ships. At this point that they sought the help of the United States Navy, the US Merchant Marine and the British Merchant Navy. The American component of Operation Neptune became the responsibility of Rear-Admiral Alan Goodrich Kirk, USN.

Even by June there would be insufficient merchant ships to carry the vehicles required for the initial assault. Each Liberty sized ship could carry 120 lorries and 480 troops; twelve British Mk III landing craft would be required to equal this.

Montgomery had to agree that the number of lorries could be reduced from 3,200 to 2,500 per division. Even this meant shipping nearly 3,000 more of these space hungry beasts, together with drivers, mechanics and petrol and spares. The General also had to accept a reduction in the number of landing craft that were to have been modified as gunships, so that they could carry some of the extra vehicles.

There was not only a shortage of ships and landing craft; there was an even greater shortage of tugs to move the two Mulberry harbours. Many of the sections for these pre-fabricated harbours were constructed in and around Southampton and then 'parked' near Selsey and Dungeness.

Fortunately the merchant service had risen to the occasion and over 32,000 men, and at least one woman, had volunteered for the task. This was in addition to the many already serving on specialized units such as tugs and salvage vessels. A press release at the time of the invasion says that 50,000 manned one thousand ships. Their bonus was an issue of 200 cigarettes per week.

Meanwhile the Admiralty continued to pressure the Admiral to reduce his naval requirements; which, fortunately for the success of the mission, he refused to do. He put his faith in the willingness of the United States to participate; he was not disappointed. That said the British Royal and Merchant Navies still provided more than three quarters of the eventual fleet. The total combined Royal Naval contribution had now increased from 467 to 702 warships and the number of minesweepers had doubled. The Merchant Navies contributed over 850 ships.

Demands for equipment and supplies had to be met, without affecting the war effort elsewhere, on land, sea and air. Food still needed to be imported and distributed; fuel supplies, mostly coal, were maintained. Labour had to be directed to where it was

required. Areas of the country and coast had to be cleared by evacuating their populations so that training could take place and temporary embarkation points established. All this, and much more, was achieved without computers; though Bletchley Park had the use of the GPO built Colossus One computer: the improved version, Colossus Two, came into operation just in time for the landings. The very existence of the world's first electronic computer was a closely guarded secret and its use confined to decoding high-level enemy signal traffic.

There could be no question of having all of the troops and supplies close to their loading site; to do so would have caused bottlenecks and left the concentrations even more vulnerable to attack by the enemy. There was also the problem of alerting the German reconnaissance aircraft. So troops and supplies were hidden as much as possible, often far from the loading ports until needed. These 'dumps' were all over southern England, as much as sixty miles inland, and troops and their vehicles were hidden in woods and on common land. There is a photograph that appears to show US troops in Upper Hill Lane, it is not clear why they were in Southampton.

Similarly, too many loaded ships lying at anchor would attract unwanted attention; but it was essential that sufficient materiel be preloaded to meet all the requirements of the assault phase. Almost 300 ships had been selected as Transport ships. Other cargoes included petrol, spares, and rations. These ships came, in equal numbers, from the Americans and the British. Bulk oil tankers were also employed to ship petrol and water.

The troops to land at Juno and Gold beaches were to board at Southampton, those for Sword were transported to an anchorage off Lee on Solent by two paddle steamers. Once loaded they went to designated anchorages in the Solent. The salvage ships assembled off Hillhead and tugs off Lee on Solent. One newspaper correspondent assigned to the Merchant Navy said that it 'knocked the most impressive peacetime Naval Review into a cocked hat.' The Americans for Omaha mostly embarked off Weymouth and Portland, those for Utah left from Devon ports.

Admiral Ramsay insisted on three principles: The most immediate was to land the maximum military force and the maximum amount of stores and equipment in the first three days. The next was the 'Build-up' after D+3, with a regular schedule of daily convoys from each of the loading ports, avoiding alternating peaks and troughs in the arrival of materiel. The third concerned the operation of the various classes of landing craft; where possible these were to use the same port and berth for each visit. A repeating three-day timetable was to be kept to.

There were several classes of vessels employed as assault and troop ships. Out of the total of 77, the United States provided 20, the Royal Navy 16, plus 5 Headquarters ships; the balance remained with the Merchant Navy and the US Merchant Marine. The 40 British merchant vessels came from several sources. Many had been packet ships; the bulk of the packets were owned by the various railway companies. Two small ferries came from the United States and three had been British passenger liners. Another 13 had been built for the MOWT in America on Lend/Lease; these had been modified while under construction. A number of passenger liners, and two packets, acted as troop ships and many of the MT ships and coasters carried troops and their vehicles.



Empire Spearhead

Imperial War Museums collection

increase was in the catering department, where the Chief Steward was responsible for 20 stewards, 7 cooks and 4 bakers.

In addition, a naval officer was the Senior Naval Officer Transport, SNOT! Other naval personnel included: four to man each assault craft, a number of signalmen, known in the navy as 'bunting tossers', plus medics. The merchant LSIs carried 18 DEMS gunners. On the LSIs the DEMS gunners were naval ratings; on other merchant ships they also came from a special section of the Royal Artillery, many ships having both soldiers and naval seamen at the same time. The ship's crew, particularly the Apprentices, when they were carried, helped with handling the ammunition.



The Green Howards boarding *Empire Lance* in Southampton.

Another LSI(L) can be seen, also embarking troops

© Crown Copyright: Courtesy Battlefield Historian (TWM)

The 13 US built ships were modified Victory Ships, built in California and bareboat chartered to the Ministry of War Transport. All were Red Ensign ships at D-Day. They carried 1,310 troops. The ships were manned by a normal wartime complement of about 80. For example the *Empire Spearhead* (managed by Royal Mail Lines) had Captain Hill, four deck officers, plus a Purser; the fourth Officer was the Troop Officer. The three Radio Officers were sent on a signal course to a former school for young ladies; one remembers a plaque extolling them to "Be Modest and Preserve Our Honour". The famous Roedean Girls School, near Brighton, was taken over by the Admiralty in April 1941. Roedean claims to be the only girl's school to have an Old Boys Association – the Sparks would have been eligible!

The Boatswain was in charge of a deck department of 12. The Chief Engineer had 6 engineers and 2 electricians. There were 12 engine room ratings, plus a Winchman, a Plumber and a Storekeeper. The biggest

For the Normandy landings, the merchant ships were provided with two Seaborne Observers from the Royal Observer Corps. These 796 men were all volunteers; they stood ‘watch and watch’, four hours on and four hours off - a tiring routine. They were civilians, but were given the rank of Petty Officer RN for the duration. Their job was to identify any over-flying aircraft as friend or foe and hopefully avoid any friendly fire incidents. An Air Staff Officer said that: in the majority of cases the fire has come from warships and not from the merchant ships. ‘Indeed I personally have yet to hear a single pilot report that a merchant vessel had opened fire on him’.

One R/O said: It seems a contradiction in terms that merchant ships, manned by civilians, should play such a role. To steam into an enemy shore and land hundreds of invading troops can hardly be described as other than a hostile and aggressive act. Nine of the LSIs were transferred to the Navy between the end of June and September 1944, but they were never needed as landing ships again.

One photograph shows tank landing craft about eight abreast, all the way along the Southampton new docks.

Some of the smaller packets were adapted to transport casualties; with one exception they were British. Most discharged their patients at the Outer Dock at Southampton, the peacetime base for the Southern Railway packets to France and the Channel Islands. Outer Dock had the advantage that it had rail lines alongside the berths; it was also close to the Southampton Terminus Station. The dock is now Ocean Village. From Southampton casualties were dispersed all over the south of England, many to country houses that had been converted into hospitals.

All but one of the Hospital Carriers carried six landing craft adapted as ‘water ambulances’. The Medical Staff were provided by the Royal Army Medical Corps and Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Nursing Service, as it was then; or the United States Army, depending on which task force they served. In addition to transporting casualties, the ships were effectively floating Accident and Emergency centres.

The US war correspondent Martha Gellhorn was probably on the *Prague* and describes the operation. There is a slightly shortened version of her article online. This was published in The Guardian in 2004, it is well worth reading.

It was obvious to the British that there would be a need for salvage vessels to assist casualties and remove wrecks. The Southampton salvage company Risdon Beazley became the project managers, with a direct phone line to Southwick House. Metal Industries provided the McKenzie brothers, as Principal Salvage Officer and deputy. The husbandry remained with the ship managers.

The Royal Navy tended to look down on the merchant service, and even the other fighting services. In the case of the merchantmen, this could be because so few of their officers were from Public Schools, and many had worked their way up ‘from the deck’. The popular saying at sea was the naval officers were gentlemen, trying to be sailors; merchant officers were sailors, trying to be gentlemen; and the volunteer reserve were neither, trying to be both..

Admiral Ramsay’s Order of the Day said: Our task, in conjunction with the Merchant Navies of the United Nations, and supported by the Allied Air Forces, is to carry the Allied Expeditionary Force to the Continent, to establish it there in a secure bridgehead and to build it up and maintain it at a rate which will outmatch that of the enemy.

Follow-up coaster convoys arrived Far Shore p.m. 6 June

The British and American Liberty ships arrived on schedule at 0700 7 June, with only the British *Sambut* having been sunk in the Dover Strait.

*Much of this account is taken from Roy’s book **Merchantmen at Normandy** which details, very comprehensively, the role played by the ships and men of the Merchant Services not only in the D-Day landings but in the subsequent Operation Neptune. It is available as an e-book, at £2.31 for the Kindle edition, or in paperback at £7.69, both from Amazon.*



Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument

You may remember the appeal in Cachalot 66 of Dec ‘17 to raise funds for a MN Monument to be erected on Plymouth Hoe. George Lang tells us that they successfully raised the required funds for the statue and have now launched a “stretch” Crowd-funding appeal to help raise the funds for the plinth to stand it on. On the 24th of April the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, himself a Master Mariner, cut the first turf in preparation for the construction phase that will begin shortly.

Visit their home page at <http://mnmonument.uk/> where you can donate.

If you are a UK Taxpayer, completing a “Gift Aid” certificate will increase our contribution by 25p for every £1 you give. These certificates can be downloaded from the site to accompany your cheque, or hard copies obtained from the Treasurer, to whom you should send your contact details, at treasurer@mnmonument.uk

Days of Yore (Part 2)

Part 2 of the wartime reminiscences of our President, Captain Reg Kelso MBE.

Immediately after breakfast “All Hands” mustered on the Main Deck for Prayers in the Gymnasium. Chosen Sea Cadets issued the prayer-sheets and, at the end of the short proceedings the Captain of “Foudroyant” would issue the order “Cadets, collect the prayer-sheets” followed by a clap of his hands. At that the “chosen ones” would rush around the ranks, collect the paper sheets and then tear towards the nearest wall bars – and climb them. The last one to do so was given a resounding blow on the “b.t.m” with the long stick wielded by the Petty Officer. I made certain that I was never the last !

“Morning Prayers” was followed by “Divisions” and the Sea Cadets then made their way to the gangway, embarked on a pinnace and voyaged to Unicorn Steps where a waiting RN bus took us to H.M.S. Excellent for lectures on physical fitness and some very hectic activities in the huge gymnasium under the guidance of R.N P&RTI’s. About 1700 this would come to an end and we would reverse our steps – by bus and pinnace - to our mothership “Foudroyant”, a quick cold shower and an evening meal before slinging our hammocks and turning-in for the night. On occasions the bus and pinnace would be late and so our return aboard was delayed but the evening meal was put on the mess deck tables at the same time daily – and so it was stone cold by the time we were able to attack it.

The routine over the next 11 days seldom varied except when there was an air raid alert when we “lashed and stowed” – but we did NOT “stow” because our canvas hammocks were our life-saving equipment. The ship had no lifeboats (as such) and life jackets were not in evidence but – as we were told at the first “Divisions” our hammocks would make excellent “Flotation Equipment” in the event of an “Abandon Ship” situation – but only if they were securely lashed.

“Foudroyant” was flanked by four large rafts – each containing a small anti-aircraft gun – and manned by naval personnel. We had heard them fire only once during the hours of darkness but on the eleventh or twelfth night they started to fire very frequently and very quickly we got the order to “Lash and Stow” and proceed with our hammocks to the Gymnasium. It was pitch dark, very cold – and about 0130, as we huddled together, we soon heard the sound of aircraft engines and the guns fired almost constantly which caused the ship to vibrate and “lift” in the water. The aircraft engine noise increased and then – very suddenly – there was a series of tremendous explosions and the ship quivered and appeared to lift out of the water. None of us knew what had happened but, almost immediately, the Petty Officer appeared and told us that Portsmouth had been heavily bombed and that we were to ‘go below, dress warmly and await further instructions”

Now fully dressed we returned to the Gymnasium but, within minutes, we were ordered to proceed to the gangway and as we did so it was apparent that Portsmouth had been severely damaged and the heat from the fires could be felt at a considerable distance. It was now about 0300 and as we embarked on the pinnace and proceeded to Unicorn Steps we were told that we were needed to tend the long lengths of fire hose being used to fight the many fires in the vicinity of H.M.S. Excellent. The hoses were made of canvas and appeared to be unlined so, when the water supply was interrupted – as it frequently was – the hose “kinked” and our job was to kick the kink free and allow the water supply to be restored. It was tedious and tiring work and as we ran up and down Flathouse Road “hosekicking” we gave thanks that that raiding aircraft had departed after inflicting such damage on our surroundings.

The night passed slowly but as dawn broke it was easier to see the devastation in our vicinity, particularly the fire raging on what appeared to be a huge warehouse. We were later told it was used to store “waxed bags” for foodstuffs. As the sun rose more and more naval ratings joined us but there was no sign of any relief- and I was very, very tired and not just a little scared ! It was now some twelve hours since we had eaten or had a drink and I was beginning to feel sick and faint but every time I limped towards a kinked hose – and there were many of them – I was encouraged to “liven up a bit, Lad”!

By now I had lost contact with my other Sea Cadet friends and I really had little idea where I was. It was now mid-morning and my thirst was beginning to make me feel very unwell ..not to mention my hunger. THEN ...just as I was thinking of deserting my post .. a small orange van came around the corner and stopped almost alongside ME ! Out jumped two ladies who pulled down a shutter which formed a shelf – and they produced a large bread roll filled with very fatty bacon – and a huge mug of very sweet tea. NEVER...never ..have I enjoyed a meal so much ..and soon the ladies were serving a long queue of Sea Cadets and Naval Ratings and I resumed my hose duties. It was now early afternoon and just as I was beginning to think that we had been abandoned and forgotten, a Naval Officer appeared and told us to return to Unicorn Steps and return to the ship. Forty minutes later most of us were fast asleep and we were left undisturbed until late evening when we wished that the meal set before us was as appetising as the bacon butty served by the ladies in the van.

Two days later we left Portsmouth and after an uneventful trip by train and ferry we arrived back in Larne and, eventually, reunited with our worried families who had read of the devastating raid on Portsmouth ..but no news of their offspring until we arrived in Larne.



Built in Bombay in 1817 as HMS Trincomalee, she was saved from the scrap-yard to replace a previous TS Foudroyant, wrecked at Blackpool in 1897. A training ship for over 80 years, she was recommissioned in 1943, together with HMS Implacable, to become HMS Foudroyant. Taken to Hartlepool in 1987 she was fully restored and renamed HMS Trincomalee.

A Shipyard Apprenticeship Part Three

Incompetence, and more of Potter

Incompetence

When I was an apprentice, I soon discovered that I infinitely preferred talking about work to actually doing any. It wasn't that I was lazy, or I would hardly have managed fifteen hour days four times each week for eight or nine months of the year. No. What I really mean to convey is simply that, when I knew and fully understood *how* to do a task, I quickly became bored with the physical *doing*. My future was already beginning to unfold.

I also very quickly discovered that most tradesmen could not bear to watch ham-fisted work, so, knowing that, I could always avoid doing anything I didn't particularly want to do simply by shaping up like a duck with a shovel. The tradesman would watch in growing disgust, give a pitying "Tut tut" sort of look, a shake of the head, followed shortly by, "You useless bugger! Get out of the way and let me do it!"

Part of the reason for the tradesman's reaction was, of course, that the work would be attributed to him and so nothing short of the very best would do. That's why our ships were so good. (And, if anybody mentions the *Titanic* I will just point out that her Captain was an Englishman)

Apart from old Bob Metcalfe, the Robber, may he rest in peace, was the only other man who ever saw through my displays of simulated incompetence, which he effectively countered by setting me to work on my own and making me undo and redo the task until I got it right.

"Do it again. And properly this time. You're not as daft as you let on," Robber would snarl, standing over me. I soon realized that I could never pull the wool over his eyes.

But in general my "inept" tactic was effective, often leaving me free to slope off and study other tasks performed by other tradesmen. For example, I spent as much time as I could with the engine fitters, even masquerading at times as one of their apprentices. That way, I became familiar with diesel engines, steam turbines, reduction gears, engine speed governors, engine-driven pumps, oil separators and centrifugal purifiers, etc, etc. It helped of course that my mechanical engineering evening class studies often gave me the basic theoretical understanding and I was thus able to talk the talk most convincingly.

Until I became badly unstuck one morning . . .

I was in an engine room, in a crankcase, helping an engine fitter to insert a heavy gudgeon pin -I should have been up top, in a deck machinery house, helping an electrician to solder connecting lugs on the mains cables to a sub-switchboard - when the Foreman Fitter came along -accompanied by the Pope . I hastily pulled up the collar of my filthy oily boilersuit, pulled my flat cap down over my eyes and tried to shrink down out of sight.

"You?" The Pope shouted above the din.

"Er. Me?" I asked feigning wide-eyed innocence.

"Yes, you. D'u see me lookin' at anybody else? What the hell are you doing here?"

"What's the matter? Why shouldn't 'e be here?"The Fitter Foreman asked.

"Because he's an apprentice bloody spark, that's why. You! Gimme yer board!"

I fished in my pocket, and handed over my board, shrugged my shoulders at the astonished fitter with whom I'd been working and gave him an impish grin. I was undone anyway, so there was no point in crying, "Woe is me." I climbed out of the crankcase and hauled myself up the ladders and out of the engine room, with my metaphoric tail between my legs.

I hated soldering cable lugs, too . Hated those blasted paraffin blowlamps. Always managed to get my fingers burnt at some stage of the game.

At the subsequent disciplinary hearing, Management were divided over what should be done with me. The manager in charge of apprentice training wanted to suspend me for a month without pay. Mr Johnson, a director and head of the electrical department, sat and scowled at me. And, surprisingly, the Pope redeemed himself by weighing in with the opinion that I should be soundly ticked off and told not to do it again. Maybe it was the common surname that did it.

I was invited by Mr Johnson to explain myself, which I did, most eloquently I thought, mentioning my dual studies at evening classes to justify my interest in both trades.

When I had finished, the great man stared at me for a while, coughed to clear his throat, then told me, not unkindly, that I would probably have received little or no compensation had I injured myself, that I might well have breached the accepted demarcation rules, and that I would be called upon to apologise to the engine fitter and to senior shop steward of the fitters' trade union. I was then dismissed with the command that I was not to be *caught* repeating the misdemeanour.

Which was the end of the matter. No suspension. Nor was I called upon to apologise to anyone. But it was the effective end of my "dual" apprenticeship. Under permanent suspicion, I was able only occasionally to watch and ask questions of other tradesmen after that, which was not quite the same.

and more of Potter

I must confess I never liked Peter Potter at all. But that may have been because he was everything that I wasn't - tall, as handsome as sin, and knew it - athletic, well-spoken, charming and exceptionally clever. So, yes, my instinctive dislike of the bugger could have been largely due to envy, but I don't believe it was. And, of course, I suppose I did owe him an indirect debt of gratitude in connection with the very beautiful and charming SN.

Potter was another of the rare breed of dual-fuel evening class students, but he was a student with a difference. I said he was exceptionally clever - but the fact is he was a genius, no less.

At the college, Potter would attend the bare minimum number of lectures, do the barest minimum of class work, cheat on laboratory experiment results, submit just the least possible homework papers, and spend as much time as he dared out of the classroom during those lectures that he did deign to attend. Then, at the end of each academic year, when all the compulsory requirements set by the Examining Board were added up, Potter would have just the barest minimum in every category to be permitted to sit the examinations.

The examinations were always three hours long. Potter would write furiously for, at a pinch, only half the allotted time, certainly never more than two of the three hours, then he would hold a hand up, give his paper to an invigilator and swagger out, no doubt to meet some poor besotted girl or other, his current successor to SN.

Then, when they were published in early September, Potter would show everyone his examination results - never less than 95% in any single paper. Sickening, isn't it?

But in the shipyard, Potter was always in trouble. In fact he numbered among that small band of miscreants who were suspended for a whole month. In *today's* world his offence would be classed as persistent sexual harassment and he might well be prosecuted . . .

At the eastern end of the Musgrave works stood a very new office building in which the three hundred or so workers were all girls, tracers who made fair-faced copies of all the ship drawings that went to the owners, and machinists who did clever things with punched cards in the Hollerith Business Machine Room. The girls were all young, and most were very attractive.

They certainly attracted Peter Potter. . .

One summer, he took to sunbathing, sitting propped against a wall across the road opposite a large open space adjacent to the Tracing Office. When the girls in their bright summer dresses left the office during their lunch break, they passed between the seemingly-indifferent Potter and the bright midday sun . . .

This went on every sunny day«for nearly two weeks, until one girl, brighter than most of the others, worked out exactly what Potter was up to and told her father, who was a company manager. He took urgent notice of his daughter's complaint and paid the voyeur a surprise visit.

"Gimme yer board! "

Home for a month! And he stayed at home for a month, too.

Some time later, Potter fell for a girl called Alice, and he fell hard. Unfortunately for him, Alice was the profoundly religious daughter of the hell-fire-and-brimstone preacher at one of the numerous tin tabernacles that abounded in the city. But Potter was truly hooked. The only way that he could make any sort of progress with the girl was to accompany her to the tin tabernacle, where, in a short time, he got a powerful dose of fundamental, Gospel-based religion. He became Brother Peter, was baptised by total immersion and took up preaching on city street corners.

In time he became a popular and successful evangelist on the tin tabernacle circuit, brandishing a large Bible and haranguing his congregations with a heady mixture of humour and hot gospel. He was quite a good turn, actually.

The remainder of Potter's story I have on several good authorities, one of them none-other than the beautiful SN herself, who was also a member of the congregation at that same tin tabernacle, and with whom I maintained occasional friendly contact until she immigrated to Canada some years later and married a Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman from Montreal.

Towards the end of his apprenticeship, Potter was a Graduate Member of both the Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. He was given a place in the Electrical Design Office (One up on me -1 was taken into the ordinary Electrical Drawing Office where I was offered a much less interesting dead-end career path.)

The Electrical Design Office was headed up by a self-taught old electrical engineer who had begun life as a cabinet maker, would you believe, at about the time the *Titanic* was built. His name was Mr Pollock and he must have been well into his seventies at the time, 1950.

The Electrical Design Office was housed on the top floor of a fairly new office building in the Victoria Engine Works which once belonged to another shipbuilding company, Workman and Clark. The office had large windows and roof skylights which were never allowed to be opened because of the airborne dust and dirt in the area. Consequently, the office could be most uncomfortably hot in summer, a privation made worse by the fact that it was simply not done to remove jackets or ties.

Although Potter was obviously a brilliant engineer, he was also still a strident fire-and-brimstone evangelist, and not particularly popular with the other quite clever engineers in the office. Old man Pollock didn't like him much either.

One particularly hot day, Potter approached old Pollock and asked for the skylights and the windows to be opened. Pollock explained politely enough about the dust, and refused Potter's request. Being thin-blooded, and lacking sympathy, Mr Pollock refused to countenance shirtsleeve order too. Potter rebelled, removed his jacket. Mr Pollock was clearly displeased.

Next day, Potter intensified his rebellion, removed his jacket, and his tie and rolled up his sleeves. Old Pollock was quietly furious.

On the third day, Potter turned up at the office dressed in shorts and an open-necked, short-sleeved flowery summer shirt. Which was the last straw. Mr Pollock told him to go home and dress properly. Potter stubbornly refused. Mr Pollock went to see the Director of the Electrical Engineering Department, Mr Johnson. And that afternoon, Potter was handed a letter offering him alternative employment - a job in the Electrical Test House, not exactly "on the Tools" but damned nearly. It necessitated wearing a boilersuit, which was an insult to a man holding graduate membership of not one but two major Engineering Institutes.

Brick red in the face, Potter stuffed his slide-rule, drawing instruments and his various text books in his briefcase and stormed out. He marched through the Victoria Works, strode across the Queen's Road, and entered the main office where he demanded to see CC Pounder, the company's most senior Engineering Director (and author of several important text books on diesel engines.) For some inexplicable reason, CC Pounder liked Potter instantly and gave him a place in one of the Engine Design Offices where his eccentricities seemed to go unnoticed.

Potter did much clever work over the next few years, and was acknowledged to be a close personal friend of the Company's most senior Engineering Director. Potter could have had any engineering management or design post he might care to ask for in Harland and Wolff. But, instead, what does the daft bat do? He grows a wild ginger beard and joins the Communist Party. I was told that he wound up in India or Africa working as a Comrade, but I don't really know beyond that.

to be continued

Eddie Hunter

This article has previously appeared in the Official Organ of the Seven Seas Club.

Gone Aloft

Captain Derric G. Webster

21.12.1930 – 27.02.2019

Born in Bradford Yorkshire in 1930, his interest in the sea was sparked when, in 1940, he was evacuated to Australia, as part of the Children's Overseas Reception Board scheme, aboard the Polish liner "Batory" for what would become a 10½-week voyage to Melbourne, via Freetown, Cape Town, Bombay, Colombo, Singapore and Fremantle.

Derric wrote in his, sadly unfinished, memoirs on being sent to Australia; *'Parents were assured that no effort would be spared to ensure the safety of the children on their voyages abroad, and what do they do?? Put 477 of us, plus escorts, on to a troopship – a legitimate target for U-boats, bombers, surface raiders, or anything else the Germans could throw at us!!!'*

November 1945 saw his return home aboard the "Stirling Castle". It was this voyage that cemented Derric's career choice: he determined to go to Sea in the Merchant Service.

At the age of 16, in 1946, he was indentured to the British Tanker Company (later to become BP) as Apprentice, and joined his first ship – the "British Zeal" – in February 1947 in Glasgow. He gained promotion to Third Mate (Uncertificated) aboard the "British Bugler" in Falmouth in 1949.

He remained as 3rd Mate (Certificated) with British Tankers until 1952 whereupon he joined the Union Castle Line, working his way up from 4th to 2nd Mate on their fleet of Royal Mail passenger & cargo ships trading to South an East Africa. Coincidentally, his first appointment was as Dock Staff on the "Stirling Castle".

In 1955 he left the Union Castle Line to join the General Steamship Navigation Company. Derric joined as 2nd Mate on the "Petrel", and in 1957, was promoted to Chief Officer on the "Lapwing". In 1958 he obtained his Foreign-Going Master's Certificate of Competency.

In 1965 Derric was promoted to Master with General Steam, and then in 1967 he was seconded from GSN to North Sea Ferries and appointment as Chief Officer / Relief Master aboard the "Norwave."

In 1969 the opportunity to get in at the beginning of the new cargo transport revolution – containerisation – arose, so he took a desk job as Assistant Marine Operations Manager at Atlantic Container Line Services in Southampton – planning the stowage of numerous "boxes" and ensuring the ships themselves remained safe and stable.

After a number of years his knowledge and experience of general cargo operations made him uniquely qualified to take on the Management of the Company's "Special Projects" section. He loved the challenge of stowing railway engines, generators, earthmovers, aeroplane parts and numerous other huge lumps of machinery -without damage to ship, crew or cargo.

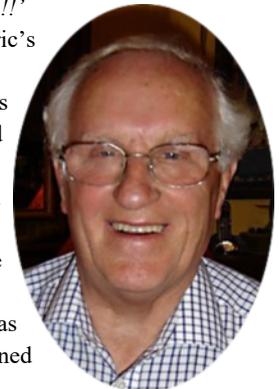
Several narrow-boat holidays during the seventies kindled a new interest in canals, and their importance to the transport of cargo. He became deeply involved through the eighties and nineties in the Inland Shipping Group of the British Waterways Board (eventually becoming Chairman:) an organisation dedicated to promoting the carriage of cargo on the inland waterways of Europe, in an attempt to alleviate the increasing HGV road traffic.

In the early 90's Derric retired, but he continued his involvement in the Inland Waterways Association and the Watercress Steam Railway and enjoyed an active social life catching up with his seafaring colleagues at the Southampton Master Mariners Club – and ex-ACLS colleagues at the various re-unions they held.

Derric went aloft on 27th February following a short battle with cancer. He leaves behind 3 sons, 6 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren and is now reunited with his wife of 58 years, Marylyn. RIP.

Jeremy Webster 18.03..19

Eldest son & fellow Master Mariner.



Gone Aloft

Anne Cartwright

16.04.1938 - 23.04.2019



Anne Patricia Cartwright *née* Harper was born in Rushden, Northamptonshire on 16 April, 1938. Sadly her mother died in 1942 and Anne was brought up by her father. As she grew up she was a lively lass, very much into tree-climbing and other such tomboyish pursuits. Her father was not best pleased and sent her off to a girls' boarding school in Burgess Hill, Sussex in the hope that they would teach her to be more ladylike. Anne always claimed that this was not a success and she was eventually brought back to the family home in Bedford, and finished her education at Bedford High School for Girls. On leaving school she worked briefly as a hotel receptionist until she was old enough to start training as a nurse at Edgware General Hospital in 1956. She qualified as a State Registered Nurse in 1959 and had a spell working on Medical Wards and Casualty [now known as A & E]. In September 1962 she qualified as a Midwife and worked in Gynaecological Wards until she joined Union-Castle Line in 1963.

Anne signed on as Nursing Sister on the *Braemar Castle* where she met an Assistant Purser and in 1964 she accepted his proposal of marriage and they came to live in the Southampton area.

When he returned to sea she registered with a Nursing Agency, and worked in various places in the New Forest. This meant that she could be unavailable for work when he was on leave. When family came along she took a career break from 1966 but in 1977, being unable to rid herself of the "nursing bug", she returned to the NHS and trained as a District Nurse, working in Winchester and Chandler's Ford.

Round about 1980 she hurt her back, possibly the result of falling off a horse, and to avoid further lifting of heavy patients, she applied for a position as District Nurse Manager. Much to her surprise she was duly appointed and asked to train as an Assessor of Supervised Practice, (a period of three months required at the end of the District Nurse training), in order to ensure that the NHS had safe practitioners.

In Management, in conjunction with a Community Physician and a planning officer, she became involved with service provision for the young physically disabled, (YPD 16-65 years in NHS terms), across the Winchester Health Area, which stretched from Wickham to Tidworth.

In 1983 as part of a NHS shake-up she was promoted to Community Nurse Manager, based in Andover, with responsibility for District Nursing, Health Visiting and Family Planning whilst retaining responsibility for ongoing involvement with service provision for the YPD.

By 1986 this post had become increasingly political, which did not appeal to Anne, as she preferred a more clinical role. She, therefore, moved base to Eastleigh and became Health Care Manager for YPD services, which included assessing the needs of patients across the district, and putting them in touch with the appropriate service providers. She was also very involved in the setting up of a Rehabilitation Service for this group.

She took early retirement in 1993, and, together with Gerry, who had retired in 1992, went sailing around the north Brittany coast for about six weeks.

About six months after retiring, the Winchester Branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society sought the benefit of her experience and her NHS network. After sixteen years of voluntary work, she has finally retired, and was presented with their Shining Star award by the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Anne became a Cachalot in her own right in 2010, the year that Gerry was Captain of the Club. She was very proud to be a member of the Cachalots, and very much enjoyed attending their social events, although latterly the early stages of Alzheimers disease sometimes caused her to forget the names of her friends. It began quite slowly at first but gradually picked up speed until it fairly galloped along. She had a fall at home, for the third time, on 1 February and was taken to Southampton General Hospital where she died peacefully, in her sleep, in the wee small hours of 23 April, one week after her 81st birthday.

St Boniface Church in Chandler's Ford was packed on the day of her funeral with over 30 club members among the 170 mourners present.

"Gerry Cartwright and his family would like to say a big THANK YOU to all those who sent condolences and cards, which were of great comfort and very much appreciated. Also to those who were able to visit Anne in hospital, and those who attended the funeral. It was a fantastic tribute to Anne's memory".

Donations in memory of Anne should be made payable to "Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance" c/o Nigel Guilder, Nathan House, 7 Hursley Road, Chandler's Ford, SO53 2FS

The place where you live

This article appears in the May-June 2019 edition of Mission to Seafarers magazine “The Sea”.
with kind permission of M to S and the author and illustrator, Cachalot Michael Grey

It was, said my correspondent, who had spent a long career at sea, a strange sort of progression. He had begun aboard cargo liners, living amidships, which was clearly the most pleasant part of a ship to have one’s accommodation. He had even spent some time on a tanker with a centre island for the deck officers to live in. He had begun his move towards the extremities of the ship in a ship with the bridge and accommodation three quarters aft, which was perfectly comfortable, but was, he reflected, just the start of a journey.

Then, as the designers needed to maximise the cargo-carrying part of the ship, he found that he was living in a six-decked island perched on the very stern of a container ship, where in any sort of sea, the motion was, to say the least of it, uncomfortable. Five decks up in his cabin, with the ship in a heavy swell, he found that he was subject to strange and wild accelerations, as the stern spiralled around, with the ship simultaneously pitching and rolling, with fierce vibration, as the propeller came out of the water. In the wheelhouse above, you had to hang on!

He had just about got used to this drunken motion, when he found himself commanding a big car carrier, with the bridge and accommodation at the very forepart of the ship, where the motion in heavy sea was almost as bad, with the slamming of oncoming waves in heavy sea an additional handicap to a comfortable life.

Ruefully remembering his early years on the elegant cargo liner, he wondered whether any of the people who designed ships ever got to sail in them. In my reply, I said that it was unlikely.

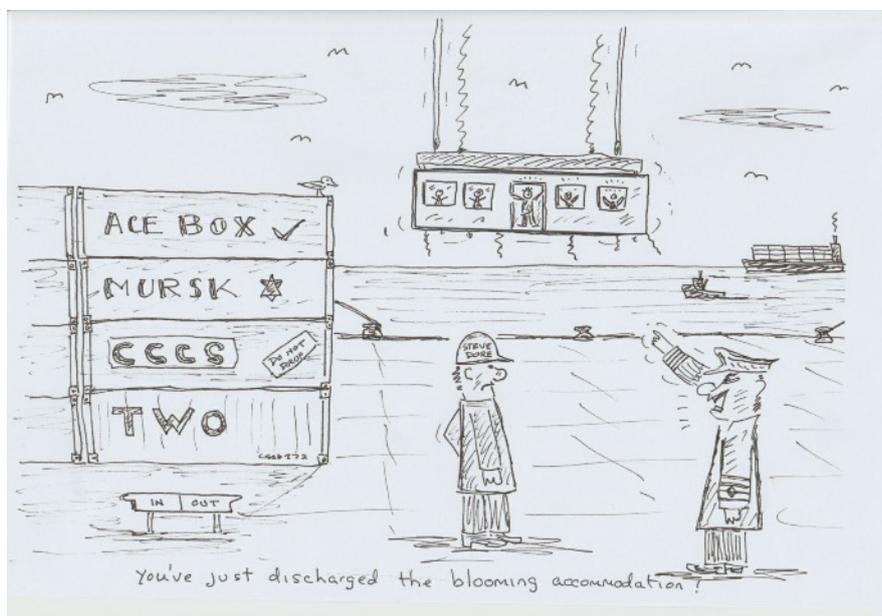
Where the crew is going to live in a ship, it might be suggested, has always been treated as a sort of afterthought by the people who design it. The naval architect will inevitably be focused upon the ability of the ship to earn money for its owner, balancing the need to carry cargo with the optimum speed, fuel consumption and external dimensions. And to look at some modern ships, you might think that at the last minute, the designer, completes his work and realises, with dismay, that he has made no provision for the seafarers who are going to drive this vessel. But there is a bit of room on the very stern, cantilevered above the mooring ropes, or perched on the forecandle head, where there is no space for any cargo. Job done!

In a sense, we are going backwards in design terms, if you think about the crew of the old sailing ships, jammed into the forecandle or under the poop deck. You can see it aboard the old clipper *Cutty Sark* and “comfortable” is not a word that crosses your mind. Very many years ago I sailed in an old cargo liner dating from the 1920s, with crew accommodation in her forecandle. Two of the foremost cabins had an anchor cable running through them, so the occupants had to evacuate if we dropped the anchor, lest they be seriously traumatised by the noise. It was, as you might imagine, quite hard to get a crew for these old bangers, let alone to keep them, in their violently accelerating, alternately freezing and sweaty home.

Today, of course, we might have air-conditioning and single-berth cabins, but we still have designers who treat crew accommodation as an afterthought. They are still trying to maximise the cargo loadings, treating the crew as a sort of breakwater to stop the deck load of containers being damaged or squeezed into a container stack, with the accommodation looking indistinguishable from the containers themselves. Indeed there was an “exciting” new design a couple of years ago which would have the accommodation on rails so that it could be shoved out of the way to get at the stack of boxes underneath. That might have been a step too far, because I don’t think it has been yet translated into steel.

So if accommodation is an afterthought, maybe we shouldn’t be surprised at complaints from seafarers that aboard too many modern ships, it is a bit like living in an institution, or a very low-end, budget hotel. You might think that if the seafarers are being squeezed into the non-revenue earning bits of the ship, the very least you might do is to provide them with some modest home comforts. It doesn’t take an expensive interior designer to work out a cheerful colour scheme for the cabins and mess rooms, or to buy some pleasant soft furnishings that can bring a bit of comfort into life in what is otherwise a steel box. You can also argue that on long voyages, with shore leave both short and uncertain, anything that makes life aboard ship more pleasant is doubly worthwhile, and makes both practical and financial sense.

rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk



New Members

Jason Coltman is a re-joiner who originally joined when he was MD at Testbank. He is now a Non-Exec Director at chemical services specialists Oemachem, based in Totton. He will, no doubt, continue to support the club, particularly at the Sea Pie Supper.

Nick Cutmore is Secretary General of the International Maritime Pilots Association, which is a professional body which promotes professional standards of pilotage worldwide in the interest of pilots' safety and is based at HQS Wellington on the Thames.

Captain **Amir Esmiley MBE**, Msc, C.Eng, C.MarEng, MRINA, MIMarEST, AFNI, is a Master Mariner with a Masters' Degree in Ship Technology. He went to sea in 1975 with ARYA Shipping Line, working in general-cargo ships and bulk carriers before a spell working in the oil platform and salvage environment in the North sea. His last deep sea ship was a livestock carrier with a 130 multi-national crew of which he was Master.

He joined the MCA in 1994 as a Marine Surveyor with responsibility for High Speed Craft, moving to Southampton in 1999 as Principal Surveyor then Surveyor-in-charge, Technical Operation Manager and finally Area Operation Manager. He was also the Marine Casualty Officer for over 17 years, attending many casualties.

For three years he chaired the IMO Working Group which produced the HSC(2000) Code. He received the MBE from the Queen in 2015 for service to seafarers.

Now retired, he believes in continuous professional development and has maintained his Masters Certificate and other qualifications. He is currently studying "self-learning" Human psychology, focusing on human error; "slipup versus violation".

Chris Norman is Managing Director of local ship repairers Southampton Marine Services, based at Ocean Quay. He has a Degree in Transport Design and has spent his career in shipbuilding and superyacht newbuilds.

Captain **Graham Pepper** is a retired Master Mariner, FNI and a Younger Brother of Trinity House, now a part-time reviser of nautical publications. In 2011 he was Master of The Honourable Company of Master Mariners and attended the Sea Pie Supper that year as a Top Table guest in that capacity.

Nicholas Warren is a Director of ship repairers SMS based at their Dover branch. He has a Degree in Business Management, is a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights.



She...or... It

Perhaps those who are debating - so vehemently - the traditional reasons for referring to ships as "She", should read the views of the late Vice-Admiral Sir John Martin (1918-2011), Lieutenant Governor of Guernsey from '74- '80.

"There is always a great deal of bustle about her, there is usually a gang of men around her, she has waists and stays, she takes a lot of paint to keep her looking good, she shows her topsides, hides her bottom and when coming into port always heads for the buoys".

'Nuff said!

CRK

The CACHALOTS

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club

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The Club room is currently open **two** days a week, Thursday and Friday, 1130 - 1500. Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink. There is no catering on site but there are many sandwich outlets within easy walking distance.

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

Dates for your Diary

Sat	8 Jun	Curry Lunch, Kuti's Royal Pier
Thu	13 Jun	Shipping Festival Service, Winchester
Sat	10 Aug	Curry Lunch, Kuti's Royal Pier
Wed	4 Sept	Club Buffet Supper, RBL
Fri	25 Oct	Trafalgar Dinner, Grande Café
Thu	7 Nov	Sale of Sea Pie Supper tickets
Sat	9 Nov	Curry Lunch, Kuti's Royal Pier
Sat	7 Dec	Christmas Lunch, MedBar

The cut-off date for the next edition will be

16th August 2019

250 Club		
March	Margaret Grant	Margaret Grant
April	G Cartwright	K T V Edwards
May	I Odd	R C Plumley