

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 84 Printer Friendly Digital Edition January 2021

Captain's Log

It is tradition that the last Captain's column of the year provides an opportunity for reflection on the achievements of the past twelve months. In a normal year it is the easiest column to write, as the captain calls on the editor's best friends, Copy & Paste Ltd, to snip out the highlights from previous columns and so create a bumper Annual of Achievements. Unfortunately, that ploy will not work for C-19/2020. Further, as I wrote to all Cachalots before Christmas with an update, current Club news is also in short supply. I therefore have to turn to other fare in order to fill the column inches.

One thing can be certain, it has been a challenging year for the shipping industry. While the container industry has recently been enjoying something of a purple patch, oil demand is 25% down, the short-sea passenger trade is 70% down on last year, and around 12% of Ro-Ro ferries are standing idle. The hardest hit has to be the cruise sector, with over 70% of cruise ships standing idle, but have you ever wondered why so many of them have been anchored off the south coast?

The simple answer is that many nations would not let vessels into their ports to facilitate crew repatriation, and some would not even allow cruise ships into their waters. In contrast, the UK has led the way and done its utmost to facilitate crew movements by a variety of temporary visa waivers, visa extensions and granting seafarers "key worker" status for the purposes of COVID testing. The result has been that many lines re-located their ships to UK waters to conduct the crew changes they could not achieve elsewhere. I know one oil major has bought a guest house so it could pre-position new crew ahead of its vessels arriving in UK waters. On the 9 July, when around 200,000 seafarers globally required repatriation, the UK hosted an International Maritime Summit on Crew Changes that led to a joint statement calling for all International Maritime Organisation (IMO) nations to designate seafarers as key workers, and to adopt the industry developed protocols for safe crew changes. Those protocols were subsequently adopted by the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee in November. While the protocols themselves were industry-led, the UK played a major role in having them adopted internationally, which is something to be pleased about at the end of this difficult year.

You will doubtless be reading this column in 2021, so too late for a New Year's toast. However, next time you have a glass in your hand, could I ask you to raise it in silent acknowledgement of all the seafarers who, despite COVID, are working to keep the supply lines open, the food stores stocked, and the fuel flowing.

Best Wishes for the New Year

Andrew Moll, Club Captain

Boatsteerers' Locker

I trust that you had a good Xmas and New Year in these difficult times.

This is my final Blog as Boatsteerer and I realise it is my 31st epistle. My first blog attempt related to how I was persuaded to come out of the engine room and under the guidance and watchful eye of Reg. Kelso take over his position as Boatsteerer on 4th September 2014. I soon found out that although it seemed an exalted position with a badge of office to wear around my neck instead of an engineer's sweat rag and told to suitably dress and not to don oil stained overalls.

My baptisms of fire were the 2015 Sea Pie Supper at a new venue in St. Marys Stadium followed in June by the Shipping Festival Service in Winchester Cathedral, a swift learning curve on both occasions. Then came the move from Queen's Terrace to the RBL and the storage of our records and artefacts. With true Engineer's spirit I didn't make too many errors but my alcohol consumption increased somewhat this was before COVID-19 which I now test for daily as should you.

Now with the engine room telegraphs on 'Finished with Engines' I hand over the tiller to Captain Robin Plumley, who I'm sure like me will enjoy his term in office.

Finally with much of the day to day administration is in the very capable hands of Richard James and our finances in the hands of Ian Odd, both of whom deserve a big thanks as well as Liz behind the Bar. I must not forget my thanks to my fellow Officers and Harpooners and those Cachalots who helped out at the Sea Pie Supper and Shipping Festival Service.

Keep smiling, healthy, safe and sane and see you at the Friday Zoom meetings.

Ken Dagnall BS Rtd



It is just over five years since I received an email, out of the blue, from the esteemed Boatsteerer, Ken Dagnall, suggesting I might like to consider becoming Staff Captain of the Cachalots. From there, much water has flowed through the lock as roles of Captain, Past Captain and Harpooner have well and truly inducted me into the Cachalots, having received a letter of acceptance to the Club from Captain Kelso on 9th December 1998. It has been an honour and privilege to undertake these roles and now I have another challenge by following in the footsteps of Ken Dagnall MBE who has provided sterling service as Boatsteerer for the past 6 years.

We all find ourselves in turbulent times with Covid-19 and Brexit affecting and likely to affect our lives for some years to come. It has been a credit to the Club members that we have, despite the loss of the use of the Club room in Southampton, through various means, managed to keep a line of communication open by the monthly issue of a digital Cachalot Newsletter to our members who have email and by a weekly virtual meeting using the modern technical stuff of Zoom. We have even held a quiz and a management committee meeting using the virtual method. We have issued two letters of update outlining the status of the Club to members who do not have an email facility, although the issues of providing this does make for some innovative logistics.

Looking forward to the coming year of 2021, I will be making contact with Winchester Cathedral to commence plans for the annual Shipping Festival Service in June. We will promulgate a date as soon as one is agreed with the cathedral. Sadly, the annual Sea Pie Supper for 2021 was cancelled at an early date and does appear to have been a good decision providing clarity in good time for our many attendees. Of course, we will be looking to be back for the first Friday of February in 2022 and planning will be started in the early part of 2021.

As highlighted by our Captain, Andrew Moll in his update, we also say our grateful thanks to Captain Peter Grant for his excellent role as Functions Officer over a considerable period and we wish him well. We are grateful to having a volunteer in Captain John Noble who has taken over from Peter in advance of the official handover at the AGM in early January, as is my position.

My thanks go to those members who have provided excellent support and guidance since 2015, especially in the application of The Rules!! You know who you are.

I look forward to working with you all and providing the level of service and beyond you have become accustomed to with Ken.

Finally, my grateful thanks to Ken for the extensive catalogue of notes and records as part of the handover and we hope, and expect, to continue seeing you, with brown sauce, especially when we are able to return to the Club room.

Robin
Captain Robin Plumley MBE
Boatsteerer-elect

AGM

Thursday 14th January, 1900. Online on Zoom (open from 1830)

In accordance with Rule 11, all Cachalots will be entitled to attend, but only Cachalots who have paid their subscription fee for 2021, will be able to vote in any matter or take part in any discussion.

As you might expect, events of the past nine months have meant we are unable to hold the meeting at the Club room. The attached agenda outlines the intentions for this meeting and I hope you will be able to join us using the Zoom facility. Access to this is indicated below and Robin Plumley will be quite happy to run through how it works if you wish. Please just drop him an email at boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk Or, you familiarise yourself with the technology by joining us at our first Friday Zoom meeting of 2021 on the 8th Jan at 1100.

These are the Zoom access details. They are the same as for the Friday Zoom meetings. You can just use the ID and Password or click the link. You will need to download the Zoom software and register (free), by visiting www.zoom.us

Ideally you will need to have the facility for using video and sound.

Meeting ID: **421 735 0675** Passcode: **5Zj7mh**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4217350675?pwd=ZGJocmFSNXVPZ2F3NTFmSVNLWDV0UT09>

One of the current Harpooners, John Noble, comes to the end of his two year term and is up for re-election. The Management Committee has appointed him Functions Officer, to replace the retiring Peter Grant. This position is not necessarily a Harpooner's one.

It is anticipated that two other current Harpooners will be elevated to Officer status, leaving seven elected Members, the rules calling for at least six.

Any member wishing to become a Harpooner should be properly proposed and seconded for election at the AGM. Agendas and Officers' reports will be circulated by *Cachalite* prior to the AGM.

250 Club

The 250 Club has been in abeyance since we were denied access to the office but it was never thought that we would be locked up for so long. It was decided at the recent meeting of the Management Committee that we should resurrect it, at least for Christmas, and Capt. Robin Plumley, the Boatsteerer-elect, arranged for the bag of numbers and the list of participants to be salvaged from the office and for the draw to take place live on the Zoom meeting of Friday 18th Dec. Office administrator Richard James and his wife Jill, who do not have the Zoom facility, would draw the numbers at their home and transmit the winning names by telephone to Robin at the Zoom meeting.

To the amusement of most of the virtual attendees and the embarrassment of one, one of the two numbers drawn from the bag for the £100 prizes was that of one: R C Plumley! Merry quips of "Fix!" and "How did you arrange that?" were quickly silenced when Robin donated half his winnings to the Captain's Charity. The other lucky winner was Victoria Yelland.

After that successful trial, for Robin at least, it has now been decided to continue the monthly draws in this fashion, at the last Friday Zoom meeting of each month.

Remember, each £5 subscription buys one number to be entered in 12 draws (2 x £40 prizes each month, 2 x £100 in December) and any outstanding numbers you may hold will be carried forward into the forthcoming draws until expired. New/renewal subscriptions will be entered into the draws commencing the month of receipt.

In the current situation, with no revenue coming in from the cancelled functions, the Club is in need of more income and the 250 Club is one way for members to support the Club without us having to increase the annual subscriptions.

As we have pointed out before, it is better odds than the National Lottery but perhaps not so good on the prizes.

Full details can be found on the '250 Club' page on our website [click here](#)

Remember your friends

The Maritime Advocate online Issue 766 December 5th 2020

Listening to some wrathful retailer raging on the radio about delays at Felixstowe which was going to seriously discommode the pre-Christmas shopping programme, I'm afraid my reaction was less than sympathetic. What with the pandemic, overstocking in anticipation of lockdowns and probable post Brexit chaos, there was a reasonable explanation for the problems. But the fact that they had anything to sell at all was due to the seafarers who have kept on going regardless and stopped the world starving, with its lights going out. But their contribution, naturally enough, wasn't mentioned in the broadcast.

There was an excellent piece in the *Guardian* on "Black Friday", which regrettably seems to have become lodged in our calendars, pointing out the crucial connection between this retail experience and the seafarers who have delivered all the stuff. Written by former UK shipping minister Nusrat Ghani and the ICS' Guy Platten (a former seafarer), this was a stark reminder of the plight of the forgotten 400,000 seafarers who make civilised life possible, but who still struggle to leave and join their ships. If it hadn't been for them, quite simply, there would have been nothing to buy.

As the old song goes, "when this blooming war is over...." and life returns to normal, one would hope that there will be some sort of reckoning in which the maritime heroes of this pandemic can be properly discriminated from the villains. An enormous debt has been owed to the former, who kept the ships running regardless, but let us not forget the armies of jobsworths and box-tickers who have made their lives infinitely worse.

The latter will tell us that they were merely following regulations, which they were unauthorised to implement in a more pragmatic or flexible fashion, and that is probably true. The regulations, made in the heat of the moment or extrapolated from earlier and different sorts of crises, deal with the treatment of whole populations who must be locked down or forbidden things. A half dozen crew members who require repatriation, or an individual who needs to join a ship – they just fall through the regulatory cracks and don't make sufficient waves to persuade officialdom to flex. There are heroes, of course, represented by those companies and managers, agents and ports which went that extra mile to look after their people and they should be honoured.

It's the litany of miserable individual cases that will live on in the memory, as the shipping industry and those who work in it remember this awful period. The ports where it was impossible to land a seriously sick seafarer will be recalled, as will the implacable quarantine services that just refused to budge on crew changes, even where was a functioning airport in the vicinity. The rotten case of seafarers flown in from the other side of the world to join a ship, but who were not permitted to move from the airport to the docks without a fortnight in stupid quarantine, only to see the ship leave without them, was a not unusual experience.

The charterers who would not move an inch from the small print in the charter party, to make a crew change on "humanitarian grounds" possible, ought to be on somebody's list. We might wish to remember the miserable case reported in the *Nautilus Telegraph* of a woman cadet from Panama who spent an inordinate length of time on her lightening tanker off the US coast, unable get home through a US port because of inflexible visa conditions. Eventually, after twelve months aboard and all this official intransigence, she managed to get another ship to Canada, from where she was able to fly home. And we ought also to remember those managers and operators who seized the opportunity presented by the difficulties of repatriation to quietly trade on regardless, and pressurise the crew to accept their lot.

Said the ITF inspector Tommy Molloy, who has in his career seen plenty of examples of man's inhumanity to seafarers, "those placing unnecessary hurdles in the way of overdue repatriations need to be identified and called out". Seafarers should remember their friends, but as memories of the pandemic fade, they shouldn't forget these blighters.

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Port of Southampton – providing vital services in unusual circumstances

This article appeared in The Mission to Seafarers newsletter of the 14th December and is reprinted here with their kind permission.



Many events occurred during the month of October – the lead up to the US election, the UK re-entering lockdown and most notably, in the maritime industry and in the Solent region, the attempted hijacking of the *Nave Andromeda*.

The tanker was on route from Lagos, Nigeria to Southampton when stowaways became violent towards the captain and crew. The crew safely contacted the coastguard and alerted the police, following the strict protocol which is advised in the case of these incidents and retreated to the ship's citadel, a secure area in which crew can lock themselves, making it impossible for attackers to enter and, rightly, prioritising their safety.

Following an operation by the Special Boat Service to resolve the situation, the vessel was escorted to the port of Southampton where the stowaways were detained. For the traumatised seafarers onboard who had undergone a serious ordeal, our Mission to Seafarers chaplain, John Attenborough, was on stand-by to provide them with vital aftercare.

Despite the vessel essentially being designated as a restricted area as it was under police surveillance, John Attenborough was determined to ensure the health and wellbeing of the seafarers. After three days, he was able to board the *Nave Andromeda*.

Living up to The Mission's values, John provided post-trauma support to the often-overlooked keyworkers of the seas – lending an ear as the captain recalled the attempted hijacking experience.

Having been deprived of human contact as well as the opportunity to contact their families as a result of the ongoing pandemic, our chaplain spent some much-needed time with the crew and providing free SIM cards which gave them the opportunity to get in touch with their loved ones.

Recalling the unexpected event, Revd John Attenborough said: "During the month of October the team and I visited 70 ships. At the end of the month, the *Nave Andromeda* came into sight of the South Coast. Once the ship was eventually escorted into the Port of Southampton, I knew I had to see them, despite the vessel being designated as a restricted area.

"Eventually after three days of trying I managed to board the ship, where I spent some time with both the captain and the crew where I was able to help them come to terms with what had happened as well as offer other essential services.

"Following completion of the visit, the Captain told me that he was so pleased to see and thanked me, and the mission for bringing humanity back on board his ship – lots of frowns were turned upside-down."

After contacting their families, and providing wellbeing support, the vessel left Southampton safely, grateful for the support from our local chaplains.

It is with these services, such as a listening ear, access to WIFI and SIM cards, that seafarers can feel connected to loved ones and protect their mental wellbeing after traumatic experiences such as these. Being isolated onboard a ship for a long period of time is difficult but also experiencing an attempted hijacking is something that will remain with these seafarers for the rest of their lives. Providing support is essential and we are extremely pleased to have provided support and care to the *Nave Andromeda* during this difficult experience.



Two men appeared before Southampton Magistrates' Court on the 26th Dec. charged with an offence relating to conduct endangering ships under section 58 Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and have been remanded in custody. They will next appear at Southampton Crown Court on January 29, 2021.

Five other men, who were arrested on suspicion of seizing or exercising control of a ship by use of threats or force, remain on police bail until January 25, 2021.

Pushing the boundaries

The Maritime Advocate online Issue 767 December 18th 2020

Following the astonishing sight of the ONE *Apus* arriving in the port of Kobe, there has been plenty of speculation as to why half her deck cargo suddenly hurled itself into the sea. I don't know any better than anyone else, but would venture a guess that it might just be the old story of a fatal flaw that eventually emerges with any clever departure from long established design norms.

There is nothing new about adventurous risk-takers skewing traditional design or operational compromises to what might appear to produce the best profit for the least capital cost. Think of the extreme clippers, which were lethal when handled badly, or the "hell or Melbourne" skippers who took ridiculous risks with their ships and the lives of those aboard, for a record-breaking passage.

"If you push your luck, you will come unstuck", said one of those little rhymes we learned to instil in us the value of professional prudence. And if you have been around in the shipping industry for a good few decades, there is no shortage of examples where snags have emerged after the introduction of something new or clever. It seems almost inevitable.

I might go back to the late 60s, when nobody bothered about fuel price or emissions and to the fine-lined cargo liners that started to appear. Sure, they reached their destination faster and were greatly admired for their passage making. One of ours was roaring down the Atlantic off the Azores one night when she dipped her bow into a swell and about 2000 tons of sea ended up on the foredeck, which was set down a couple of feet, before they got the way off her. Then a Ben liner was bent like a banana and a Neptune ship lost most of the bow, so word got about that these beauties needed some rather careful handling, compared to their simpler predecessors.

With Suez closed and everyone screaming for oil, tanker sizes were extrapolated to extraordinary levels, somebody deciding that it was a great economy idea to equip these monsters with a single boiler and bring them up estuaries on the top of the tide to sit in holes dredged off a terminal. It worked a dream, until they started to break down off lee shores and spectacularly explode, when washing their tanks in the tropical microclimate of their vast internal spaces.

Roll-on, roll-off ships would have been prohibited in a more cautious age – class would never have permitted a huge hole in the hull- but they provided so many solutions to cargo-handling problems that old horrors of free surface or watertightness were thought easily manageable. Boundaries were literally pushed and we soon saw ro-ros where the main deck was under the load waterline, so a few degrees of list with the ramp open could prove fatal, requiring a new understanding (better later than never) of this type's vulnerability.

Big bulk carriers were the cat's pyjamas; too large, alas, for a the crew to make the slightest impression on their maintenance requirements, while pliable regulators permitted deep loading, longer intervals between drydocking and a new and malevolent philosophy of "permissible levels of steel wastage" emerged. That took a lot of ships to the bottom, along with the lives of those who worked aboard them. And that's before we considered issues of metal fatigue, weaker scantlings (who would pay for a stronger bulk carrier?) and cargo liquefaction.

Car carriers appeared to be a design that could be endlessly extrapolated, their specific vulnerabilities of instability and fire spread, contributed to by too much haste in port, eventually becoming apparent – after they had grown to huge sizes.

Maybe we shouldn't frighten potential passengers about what cruise ship operators have learned the hard way and to their cost, over the years. As a simple seaman it always seemed to me that there was something wrong when you couldn't put the helm hard over without the grand piano carrying away and crushing half a dozen insufficiently nimble passengers. We won't go into flammable balconies and careless captains getting too close to the shore.

And so to giant containerships, the current conduits of international trade, which have grown like Topsy, both in dimensions and capacity, where boundaries have been pushed in all directions. To somebody aged enough to have written about 1500teu ships with "too many eggs in one basket", and who can recall agonised debates about whether a third tier of boxes would be a hazard in the winter North Atlantic, it could be better to exercise caution about the current generation of monsters and their vicissitudes.

I recall a friend who had been in at the very birth of containerisation telling me about the experiments he took part in where they piled loaded boxes on top of one another and tilted stacks to test their lashings and design fastenings. Now, of course they have computer aided design tools of remarkable sophistication, but you just wonder whether there is anything that really replicates the terrifying forces produced by an instantaneous 40 degree lurch, as the whole length of the ship finds itself unsupported, to stop dead and hurtle the other way, as green seas crash aboard and a hellish wind blows on the ten-high stack.

Maybe it would help a little if designers spent some time at sea. But looking at some of these recent incidents, it is surely not unreasonable to ask whether lashing rules and the equipment they prescribe are really fit for purpose aboard the ships on which they are now installed? Are the ships too long and the stacks too high? Or like so much else in an industry, where development is exponential and prototypes unknown, are the designers pushing their luck, in this case, too far?

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If you are still in the festive mood, or even if you never managed to attain it, here is an offering from Barrie Youde.

Here at Parkgate (*on the Wirral peninsular*) we are fortunate. A reminder of balmy summer days spent sailing for pleasure sits prominently on the remaining Middle Slipway of our historic port. Today that reminder is dressed for Christmas, with fairy lights and a small branch of a Christmas tree.

DRESSING THE SHIP

We dressed the ship today. Love won't be beaten by ill health.

The love which lives in all of us accounts for all our wealth.

Our ship today is modest, on the slipway; but a hulk,
Reminding us that need continues. Trade still moves in bulk.

Trade continues anyway. It is not beaten yet,
By any means nor any thought on Earth, where dry or wet.
And so the ship remains an icon, marking man's goodwill
To fellow men around the globe. And why? The need to fill.

Whilst trade is by agreement, it requires men to agree
To buy and sell around the world with due economy:
And where the world is wet, there is no thing which might outstrip,
For trade and love and pure goodwill, the stout and buoyant ship.

And so she must be dressed for Christmas, marking now the time,
When inns were full and nonetheless there was a love sublime
Presented to us all in manger humble, bed of straw.
The mariner can see that man could ask for nothing more.

And so the mariner will dress his ship, afloat or not.
The submarine, the freighter or the finest fancy yacht,
Or hulk upon the slipway which has seen far better days:
The dressing is the way the sailor sings his Songs of Praise.

BY

20.12.20



Captain Ken

Another contribution from Ken Owen which previously appeared in his local Mellor Church Parish magazine "Outlook".

It is yet another reminder, and illustrated elsewhere in this edition, that none, from the small multi-million dollar yachts currently participating in the Vendée Globe race and with all their modern sophistication, to a gigantic container ship, are immune to the power of the waves.

You have probably heard the statement, usually from well known TV personalities, that 'there is no such thing as Bad weather, only inadequate Clothing'.

Unfortunately that has not been my experience.

For several years I was captain of 'Strathconon', a medium sized container ship. We had twelve British Officers and a full Chinese crew.

We were engaged on a regular service between North Europe and North America.

On one of our Atlantic crossings, we were bound from Le Havre to Boston, in a very miserable November. Our clothing was good, but the weather was horrible. Gale force winds and heavy driving rain.



Our voyage coincided with the famous ocean yacht race, known as La Route de Rhum., which goes from St. Malo to Guadeloupe.

This particular race was notable, as Eric Tabarly, the French and world champion yachtsman, was competing in his large trimaran, 'Côte d'Or' considered, by some, to be the world's fastest yacht.

Part way across the Atlantic, we received a radio distress message from none other than Eric Tabarly himself, saying his trimaran was starting to break up.

The race itself had a rescue yacht the 'Penduk VI', actually owned by Eric, but the sea was far too rough for it to approach.

As we were the nearest large vessel, and after consultation with the Portuguese Coast Guard, we altered course and headed for the casualty, which was some twelve hours steaming distance away.

Prior to arriving at the casualty, the Chief Officer organised the crew to prepare all possibly helpful equipment, such as safety nets, life buoys and ropes.

As he was checking the equipment he noticed that our old Chinese bosun, had arrived with a huge fire axe. He explained that many years ago off Shanghai, he had had a similar experience, when to his horror, the rescued person produced a gun, and robbed them all. 'This time, I'm going to be ready' he said.

It was 3 a.m. before we reached the casualty, and I was able to speak to Eric on the VHF phone, and explain how we intended to manoeuvre.

His boat was breaking up, and he was clinging to his last remaining pontoon, but once we were close enough to shelter him from the heavy swell and wind the rescue yacht towed an inflatable dinghy close to where he was clinging, and he was able to roll into it, and was safely hauled aboard the yacht.

Eric called me from the safety of his rescue boat and we had an enjoyable conversation. I wished him well, and we proceeded on our voyage.

The following day I received a telephone call from a publisher in Paris. He had heard of the rescue, and offered to pay any price I suggested for the photographs of the rescue.

Even though I assured him we had not taken any photographs, when we reached Boston, he was the first person to board, desperate to purchase the non-existing photographs. (there were no camera phones at that time.) But I did make a point of ensuring, ever since, my camera was always available on the bridge.

Eric Tabarly was a national hero in France, and it was very sad that ten years since we provided his rescue, he fell overboard from his yacht while sailing from France to Scotland, and was drowned.

I believe he is very fondly remembered particularly in France.



Not a “Pacific” ocean at all

Seatrade Maritime Opinion & Analysis December 2020

Winter in the North Pacific is not a place for the faint-hearted, but the scene of devastation aboard the ONE *Apus* after the loss or damage of a substantial portion of her deck load is the perfect illustration of what the sea can do to even the biggest ships. It is said that some 1,900 boxes were affected but that must be a very rough estimate as an accurate count must wait until the ship is safe in port.

These occurrences seem to be taking place too often, despite the rapid increase in ship sizes and suggestions that weather forecasts have got so much better on these long ocean passages. Climate change enthusiasts have attempted to make the obvious connections, with the incidence of extreme waves allegedly having increased in recent years.

A rather sinister tendency has been to blame the master of ships for what in a different age would have been in the protest note as “heavy weather damage”. It has been suggested that had the ship been handled rather differently, perhaps altering the course and/or speed, the outcome would have been different. It is an easy and thoroughly unfair judgement to make, from the safety of dry land.

Others who have seen what the sea can do have made the point that if operators must insist on piling boxes to such incredible heights in their deck stows, regardless of the season and the anticipated weather, then one should not be too surprised at damage and massive losses. There may be various devices available that claim to optimise ship motion, but expecting them to somehow flatten vast Pacific swells or prescribing course changes in time to avert catastrophe, is perhaps over-egging their abilities. A deep low is a very dynamic situation and it is asking a great deal of a master to be able to minimise damage in terrible weather, during a dark night when it is impossible to see what is likely to hit the ship until it happens.

Doubtless, there will some sort of post-mortem, where the stowage and lashing plans are scrutinised and what remains of the lashing equipment will be closely examined. A sensible strategy might be to weigh the surviving boxes, to compare actual with manifested weight. But this wasn't a case of a single stack giving way – the best part of the entire midship stow seems to have lurched to starboard like collapsing dominoes, as the ship fell on her side.

One point that might be explored is the fact that the container guides above the main deck extended no more than three boxes high, necessitating the six or seven boxes above these having to be manually lashed. It is notable that on some ships, such as the HMM giants and the big new OOCL tonnage, the deck stow is “racked” to a height of six boxes, which one might think provides a great deal of additional solidity to the stack, and saves a lot of costly lashing.

The penalty with this arrangement is that the stevedores will claim that it markedly slows down the cargo handling as each box must be lifted high over the guides before it can be positioned. The new generation of port cranes is said to cope with this problem better than their predecessors. It is significant that Atlantic Container Line, which never trades anywhere other than across the wild western ocean, has always racked their entire deck load to full height and despite the weather, has an enviable record of cargo security.

But it is always easier to blame the master than to get terribly analytical about deck cargo loss and recent instances where cargo has ended up on somebody's beach have seen shipmasters dragged into court by the wronged coastal state. A more cerebral counsel might be to ask whether it is sensible to stack boxes so high, but big money is at stake, and nobody is going to answer that question. Pile 'em high, and take the chance in a percentage game.



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ONE *Apus* returns to Kobe on 8th December

Reg Kelso and the Union Castle Line

Here is the concluding part of the account of Captain Kelso's career that appeared in 'The Wake of the Cachalots' by Simon Daniels

In 1956 the Union-Castle Line and the Clan Line merged to form The British and Commonwealth Shipping Company and before long the Clan Line officers of all disciplines were serving in passenger vessels and Union-Castle officers were serving in Clan cargo ships. It was a painless exercise, though and many friendships from training ship days were renewed.

The mailships were, in reality, large cargo-carrying ships with luxurious accommodation for some seven hundred passengers and it was this that contributed to their demise. The handling of the large amounts of cargo was labour intensive, time consuming and very, very expensive. New cargo handling methods were being developed in the early 'sixties - containerisation was the 'in' word - and British and Commonwealth was not slow in getting involved with this new technology.

The mail schedule was speeded up in order to allow it to be maintained with a smaller fleet; but the art of passenger carrying had been perfected in the air and long-distance jets with their ever-increasing passenger capacities were making inroads into the monopoly that the Union-Castle Line had enjoyed for years. The effect of all this manifested itself truly in 1963 when the company announced that tenders were being invited for the construction of two fast cargo liners, with no passenger accommodation because it was felt that berths offered in the five passenger ships in service were adequate to meet the demand. Thus the *Southampton Castle* and *Good Hope Castle* were the first mailships ever built without passenger accommodation.

It had always been my ambition to command a mailship and now it began to look as if that dream was to be thwarted. On top of the changes that I have outlined, the merger of Union-Castle and Clan Line had resulted in not only a vastly increased fleet but also an equally vastly increased officer list, in an era when company salaries were seen as in need of pruning, which all had the effect of slowing down promotion. My career followed the more or less traditional path until 1964, when a new rank, of Staff Commander, was introduced into the Mail Fleet. It was really an upgrading of the Chief Officer's position but was rather more lucrative and much more prestigious. In London I was summoned to the Dock Office and told, with some disdain, that I was being relieved as Chief Officer of the Round Africa *Kenya Castle* and was to proceed to Southampton for an appointment as Staff Commander of the mailship *Pendennis Castle*.

The merger certainly widened our professional horizons and instead of the spiraling promotion path we had come to expect we now found ourselves called up to serve in a much wider variety of ships. The British and Commonwealth group included the King Line, Scottish Tankers, Bowater Steamship Company and several other operators and we, as loyal British and Commonwealth men were expected to serve in any of them. Bowaters ran a fleet of small paper carrying ships trading to the South American continent and to Scandinavia and these ships became popular for 'first command' appointments.

In 1967 I was appointed to command, and leaving the luxury of the mailship *Edinburgh Castle* and the cushy life of Staff Commander, I proceeded to Northfleet, a Thames riverside berth, to take command of the *Gladys Bowater*, 5,475 deadweight tons. After *Edinburgh Castle's* 28,705 gross tons she seemed very small indeed but it was amazing how big she suddenly became when I was first called upon to handle her. With Company Pilot in attendance we sailed down river to the Swale and the port of Ridham. Entering the narrow waterway and the tortuous approaches to Ridham Dock, the pilot pointed out to me the various damages inflicted by previous ships, commanded, I was sure, by ex-Staff Commanders.

We sailed out into the teeth of a gale and as we cleared Dungeness I very soon realised that there was a vast difference between little ships in bad weather and big ships in bad weather. She stood on end, rolled alarmingly and every endeavour to improve things by reducing speed or altering course had little effect. The crew, realising that they were in the hands of yet another mailship escapee, were totally nonplussed and pretended that it was not really happening. In fact they were mostly Bowater men and knew little better weather. We berthed in Charlestown, South Carolina, after almost being run down by an American nuclear submarine on trials, but by that time I had come to terms with my new job. They were excellent sea ships and well equipped with navigational aids and cargo handling gear.

Some seven months later, just as I was preparing to sail from the Manchester Ship Canal, I was relieved and ordered to report to Southampton as Assistant Marine Superintendent on a two year posting. We lived in London but a few weeks before I took up my new post I found a suitable house in Bursledon, near Southampton, and my wife and son were soon installed. The mailships came and went and we looked after their requirements, kept them cleaned and painted, met them on arrival to help deal with the problems, exercised the crews in emergency drills in the presence of a Department of Transport surveyor and despatched them to sea in, hopefully, a better condition than when they arrived. We had our own Shore Gang of seamen, riggers and painters and it was now that I was to come into contact with the realities of trade unionism.

The cruise ship *Reina del Mar* was one of our busiest customers and her one-day turnarounds kept us on our toes. She had been built for the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, a British company serving the west coast of South America. The ubiquitous downturn in demand and profitability, though, led to her early demise on the route and she was sold to Union-Castle for cruising.



Gladys Bowater, his first command

My two year appointment stretched to almost three and then I joined my first Asian crew ship. The *Clan Maclachlan* was a 6,000 ton general cargo ship and we loaded in Birkenhead for South Africa. By this time fleet reductions were the order of the day and it was no great surprise after a few months to be told to take her to Shanghai for demolition. We left the UK with cargo for South Africa and Hong Kong en route for Shanghai.

Twelve days later, after three typhoons, standing by an American ship aground on a reef, returning to Hong Kong for more fuel and being scrutinised by Chinese Nationalist gunboats, we arrived in Shanghai. We had eleven happy days there handing over the ship to the Chinese crew and, despite the fact that she had been sold for demolition, she left the port under her new name (*East Wind*), but in Clan Line colours, for further trading. See also *Cachalot 74, Dec '19* or [here](#)

After a Tanker Safety Course at Warsash, I was appointed to command the 20,000 ton products tanker *Hector Heron* on charter to British Petroleum. We traded from the Persian Gulf to the River Congo and from there to Australia. We were the last non-Australian flag ship to carry cargo around the Australian Coast and fortuitously were in the right place at the right time to rescue three young men from a capsized trimaran in wretched conditions off Australia's east coast.

The Hector Whaling Co.

Hector Whaling was formed in the early 1930s as a British holding company and was associated with the Norwegian company of N. R. Bugge and a version of that company's livery was adopted.

After WW2 Bugge, now operating as Bugge & Krogh-Hansen, became managers of Hector Whaling and United Whaling and acted as such until their whaling interests were sold to Japan c.1960 (with Hector Whaling thereafter coming under Cayzer, Irvine & Co. Ltd., together with the likes of Clan Line and Union-Castle, until the beginning of the 1970s when it disappeared).



Hector Heron



■ Last sight of the badly damaged trimaran *Foam Light*, from which three men were rescued by the crew of the *Hector Heron*, off South Solitary Island on May 24. Picture: Enid Wilkinson.

This letter was written by Enid Wilkinson, wife of second engineer G. M. Wilkinson, describing the rescue of three men from the trimaran *Foam Light* by B&C's *Hector Heron* off the Australian coast.

Sir,

After leaving Sydney on May 24, heading for Brisbane, the *Hector Heron* picked up an SOS Mayday call to search for three men who were in trouble after running into gales near Coffs Harbour, Western Australia, while heading for a six months holiday on the Great Barrier Reef.

At about 9 a.m. the chief engineer saw a flare and informed the bridge, who immediately turned and started to circle the crippled trimaran *Foam Light*, which had the mast and one hull broken. This caused great excitement aboard, with everyone available rushing for cameras. By this time a large air-sea rescue plane had joined in the action.

As we got nearer two men were visible in the trimaran and another in a rubber dinghy.

After two attempts at getting a line across, our crew finally succeeded in getting two men aboard *Hector Heron*. But the third man was exhausted and our second officer had to go down into the dinghy to help him aboard. Quite a few saw the funny side of it, as when the second officer was swimming toward the dinghy, secured to a life line,

the *Hector Heron* rose up on the swell and left the poor fellow swimming in mid air.

Every effort was made to save the men's dinghy and other possessions but unfortunately it was washed away in the swell.

By evening the rescued looked much better after having a hot shower, a change of clothing and a few rums.

When we got into Brisbane the television cameras and reporters were waiting, so in the evening everyone crowded into the bar to see the *Hector Heron* on television and re-live the day's events.

ENID WILKINSON,
15 Flowers Close,
Hamble, Hants.

Footnote: The search and rescue took place on May 25 in poor weather with winds of Force 5 to 6 and heavy rain, as Capt. C. R. Kelso stated in his report when *Hector Heron* reached Townsville. G. Chadwick was the second officer who gamely went into the sea to assist the exhausted man.

CLANSMAN thanks Capt. Kelso and others who provided information about the rescue. We felt readers might like the novelty of a report from Mrs. Wilkinson, who was sailing with her husband on Voyage 91.

I was relieved in Lagos and came home to join the bulk carrier *King James* on charter to British Steel. We traded to West Africa, New Orleans, Narvik and the Continent, becoming the largest ship at that time to navigate the Ghent - Terneuzen Canal, and certainly one of the few to navigate it in reduced visibility which set-in suddenly and without warning.

The King Line

The King Alfred Steam Ship Co Ltd was formed in 1889 by Owen Philipps, to own a ship of the same name.

The business was managed by Philipps & Co. In 1893, the company name was changed to King Line Ltd and two single ship subsidiary companies were set up to buy two second-hand ships.

In the early years King Line frequently bought and sold existing ships, but the overall size of the fleet grew until it reached 10 tramp steamers by the outbreak of WW1. The company sold 2 ships and lost 6 during the war. After the war the fleet was rebuilt, mainly using war-standard ships. Philipps seems to have disposed of his interest in King Line at this time, as in 1923 the management of the firm was taken over by Dodd, Thompson & Co, led by Vernon Thompson, who was later to become chairman of Union-Castle.

King Line had 20 ships at the start of WW2, of which 15 were lost during the war. After the war the company again started to buy war-standard ships as replacements, but in 1948 King Line was bought by Union-Castle and the trading pattern changed. New, higher specification ships were bought to act as relief ships for cargo liner operations.

King Line had 11 ships in 1956, when the Clan and Union-Castle groups merged and Cayzer, Irving & Co became managers of the combined fleet. This led to the co-ordination and rationalisation of the network, which had a considerable impact on King Line. Its conventional cargo ships were sold or transferred within the Group but were gradually replaced by bulk carriers. The bulk carrier fleet peaked at 6 vessels, owned from 1975 to 1978, when one was sold, but was replaced by two tankers that were operated by another group company, Scottish Tankers Ltd. These two ships were sold in 1982 and 1985. The Cayzer family sold their last ship a year later.



King James

Just as I was beginning to think that my move to live in Southampton had been rather premature, I was appointed to command the *Reina Del Mar* for a series of cruises from Southampton to the Atlantic Islands and the Mediterranean. It was exciting and very rewarding work to see so many people obviously enjoying themselves. Many passengers returned to the ship year after year and it was a bit shattering for the newly appointed Captain to be told, "You are new, aren't you" and to find that the questioner had done more cruises in the ship than you had. *Reina del Mar* was an old ship and not particularly fuel-efficient and she, too, fell victim to new developments in cruising. Fly-cruises were becoming popular and this, coupled with the fact that she was labour-intensive soon put her at a disadvantage economically. I commanded her on her last voyage from the United Kingdom and she then went to South Africa to do three or four South American cruises before heading east for demolition.



Reina del Mar

My next appointment was to the *S A Vaal*, the renamed *Transvaal Castle*, now owned by Safmarine but managed and operated by Union-Castle. She was a magnificent ship and was revolutionary insofar as she was an hotel-class ship with varying standards of accommodation but with all passengers, whether berthed in the best suite or in a four-berth inner, enjoying the same public rooms and other amenities. She was one of the first ships to employ females as stewards in the dining rooms and their influence on the ship was considerable and very advantageous.

She had the most magnificent accommodation for the Captain and from my dayroom I enjoyed a panoramic view of the horizon from beam to beam.

By now, British and Commonwealth were well on the way to achieving their avowed intent to get out of shipping and concentrate on more lucrative business. Ships were being sold at an alarming rate and we knew that the mailships had not much longer to run. I transferred to *Edinburgh Castle*, a ship in which I had served in many capacities during my career. Just twelve hours before we were due to sail, the ship was called upon to host the annual luncheon of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club. The function had been scheduled to be held aboard Shaw Savill's *Southern Cross* but she developed engine trouble returning from a cruise and was drifting in the Channel as the guests boarded *Edinburgh Castle*. The crew enjoyed the challenge and it was an excellent function.

I made three more voyages in the ship, with a break in between for secondment to the London office and it was during this period that I was invited to take up the post of Chief Marine Superintendent for British and Commonwealth. I knew that we would not be shipowning for much longer but was assured that ship management was very much a possibility. I went off to think it over and soon decided that a life at sea in small cargo ships would probably bore me to tears and, in any event, I had my family to think of. I made my last voyage to sea in *Edinburgh Castle* and, in November 1975, I rang "Finished with Engines" on her bridge telegraphs for the last time. I had had twenty nine marvellous years at sea and now a new career was beginning.



Edinburgh Castle, his last command

Reg certainly considered himself lucky to have the luxury of a new career assured, especially marine-based, if ashore, for the Red Duster was disappearing under the effect of economic attack. By the mid-1970's the British shipping industry was so beset with problems that it did not need any more bad news. Certainly it did not need the embargo on oil supplies imposed by the Arabs following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the effect of which was to send the cost of fuel oil soaring. Shipping companies had to consider ways of compromising on the amount of fuel and at the same time increase revenue. The Union-Castle Line slowed down its Cape service by a full day, so reducing its fuel bill, and fares increased sharply. Still, it was not enough: overheads were too high to compete; too many passengers had been lost to air travel and cargoes were being containerised. In 1979 Union-Castle issued the following press release:

"It is with great regret that Union-Castle...announce that the two remaining passenger mailships operating on the route between the United Kingdom and South Africa are to be withdrawn from service in the latter part of 1977..."

This was virtually the end of the old Union-Castle trade but for Reg Kelso, the years after he came ashore were, in their own way, every bit as exciting as had been the 29 years seafaring:

The sale of the ships continued apace, many of my friends were made redundant and eventually we changed from shipowning to ship management. That carried on for a time but we found it almost impossible to compete with the vast number of companies, mostly based in the Far East, who had entered the ship management field. We were, of course, still employing British officers and ratings on UK conditions of service and, in consequence, our costs were high.

Our managed fleet diminished and finally, as we were on the verge of calling it a day and shutting up shop, we were approached by an Italian company and were asked to quote for the management of four refrigerated cargo ships. We quoted on the conventional manning basis and our quote was rejected. We sat around a table and drew up a scheme whereby we would employ our own officers and Bangladeshi ratings. This time we were successful. The officers were paid a flat rate, in US dollars, for six months employment and two months leave and were on a contract of employment with a company registered in Bermuda. We were no longer direct employers of these officers but their loyalty remained and the savings we made enabled us to carry on and afford many of them reasonably gainful employment.



Captain Kelso in Command

By this time, British and Commonwealth Shipping was a thing of the past and we had changed our name. We were to change it again very soon afterwards when our Italian friends became our employers. The fleet grew and by the end of 1987 we were managing ten ships with two new ones building in Korea. Much of early 1988 was spent in Korea with the two newbuildings and we ran trials on the first of them in the spring of that year. On the way home I called at Bangladesh to recruit deck and engineering officers - like most companies, we were experiencing difficulty in recruiting British officers - and in May I returned to my desk in London.

The pensionable age had been reduced to sixty and I had attained that age in February 1988. Enjoyable as the life was, it was not what my background had really trained me for and I was finding it more and more difficult to come to terms with crew reductions and the other measures necessary to remain competitive. In August 1988 I made my decision, chose my successor and cleared my desk for the last time. A career of forty two years lay behind me and I remembered each and every one of them with happiness and not a little pride.

"Would I do it all again?" You bet I would, and in exactly the same way. Almost.

Your New Year Quiz

The Maritime Advocate online

Do seafarers have souls? Are they sentient human beings, with natural rights, or, as the last mooring rope is slipped, do they become inanimate; items of ship's equipment, like the oily water separator or the windlass? And while pondering these questions, which are really more practical than philosophical or theological, we might also ask whether charterers have hearts?

You have to wonder, as reports about how seafarers have been treated by their fellow human beings, since the Covid-19 plague provoked its panic-stricken response around the ports of the world. Nobody with an ounce of decency can fail to be enraged by the appalling plight of the bulker *Anastasia*, swinging around her anchor for nearly six months off the North China port of Caofeidan, along with another small fleet of laden tonnage waiting for berths.

The ship is operated by MSC, but Covid restrictions and general refusal by charterers to consider the need of the crew for relief have seen the adamant hearts of the latter exposed to the worst possible degree. All sorts of solutions have been proposed – relieving the crew at the anchorage has been rejected, while the proposal to divert the ship to a Japanese port where the authorities are sympathetic, has been refused by the charterers. The operators, between a rock and a hard place, fear that the ship would be arrested if they attempted to order the master to seek succour elsewhere, with the crew merely becoming pawns for a while lot longer.

Meanwhile the mainly Indian crew has sought the intervention of the Indian and Australian authorities, although neither government can be said to be enjoying cordial relations with that in Beijing. The ship was running out of fresh water but what was supplied was found to be effectively non-potable, after several of those who drank it became ill. Who cares about this, apart from the crew and their relatives? The institutions and agencies do their bit of course, but when it comes to rights, it seems that the inanimate rights of the charterers always trump everything else and protests fall on stony ground – that is ignored. It was notable that the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organisation, no less, felt impelled over the festive season to provide some very firm words about the utterly disgraceful practice of charterers seeking to insert a “no crew reliefs” clause into sundry charter parties. You would like to think that this might make a difference, but it probably won't stop the practice, as the blighters will merely find some other crafty way around the wording. Remember the rights of the charterer are sacrosanct, as established in umpteen cases of Admiralty law. So there is no point in working yourself into a rage about seafarers' rights.

Another item that struck a chord for all the wrong reasons in the run-up to Christmas came from the little New Zealand port of Napier, where a general cargo ship suffered a serious hold fire lying alongside, and the crew required to be evacuated. The ship had been 17 days at sea, the crew apparently healthy, but you would think, from the rage stoked up by the local media, that they were importing bubonic plague, by affording refuge to this company of seafarers. Admittedly, New Zealand (largely because of its geography) has been astonishingly successful at managing the pandemic, but it hasn't been any fun at all for the seafarers upon whom that small country totally depends for its imports and exports, during the duration.

Napier was one of my favourite ports on the Kiwi coast, a small seaside town where the natives, who would flock to the port to look at any ships in at the weekend, were the soul of hospitality. There were tennis courts and putting greens within a five minute walk of the ship, and some of the loveliest country you could imagine not far away. It somehow saddened me to read about the deterioration in human relations over the years as the seafarers that country depended upon became invisible, as they have done everywhere else.

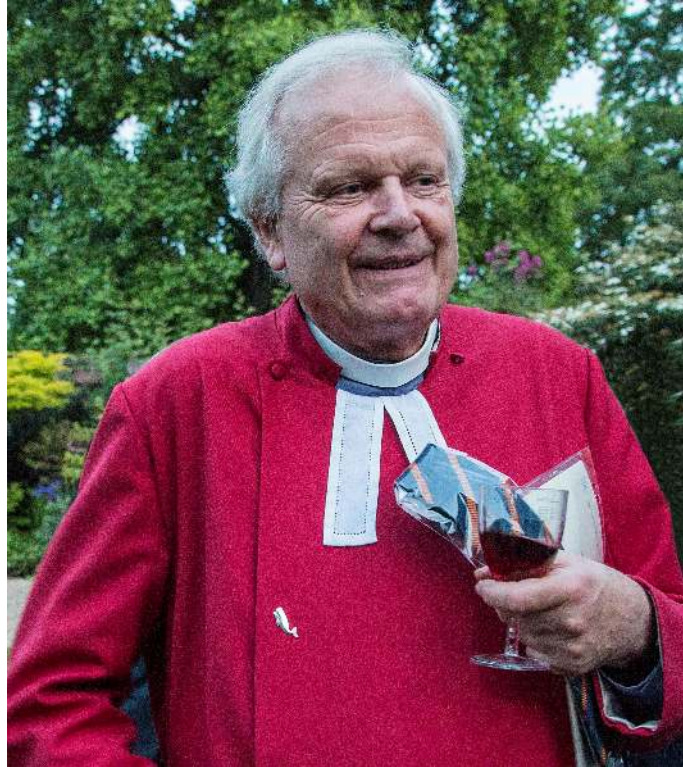
If nothing else, does not this Covid crisis, now being employed as an excuse for some pretty nasty legislation and crazed schemes for “rewilding” and veganism, show up the need for a proper revisit of the relationship between owners and charterers, not to mention the collateral like the crew? It is time to look at whether ancient case law, constantly cited by learned lawyers, is appropriate to the style and practicality of modern shipping and maritime commerce. My suggestion is that there should be constituted a high-level Commission, presided over by BIMCO, which retains its reputation for fairness, impartiality but above all practical professionalism, but with representation from those with an interest in a fair and decent final outcome. And it would be awfully nice if, somewhere in the not too small print, it could recognise that seafarers have souls.

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and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk

Gone Aloft



The Very Rev'd James Atwell

The Very Rev'd James Atwell, who was called aloft on the 12th December, aged 74, was Dean of Winchester from 2006 to 2016.

He was very supportive of our Shipping Festival Services at the Cathedral, ensuring the full co-operation of all his staff. His wife, Lorna, actively ensured we were able to entertain our guests with the use of her garden and kitchen.

He was made an Honorary Member of the Club after the Shipping Festival Service held at the Cathedral in the year of his retirement and is shown above sporting his newly presented silver Cachalot whale and clutching his Club tie and certificate.

He and Lorna were Top Table guests at the Sea Pie Suppers from 2013 to 2016.

A full obituary appeared in the Daily Telegraph on the 15th December [Click here](#) and it is of note that the picture accompanying that obituary was also taken at another of our Shipping Festival Services, this time in 2013, the year in which the Princess Royal attended.

Cachalots on LinkedIn

The groups aim is to provide a central forum for Cachalot members to stay in touch, especially during the current coronavirus epidemic.

We have now attracted thirty-one members with four Cachalots who are registered on LinkedIn and who have been invited but have not completed the final action of accepting the invitation.

The group is marked by the Cachalot emblem in place of the usual 'mugshot' and a banner photo which is changed on a weekly basis, normally on a Tuesday. I will always be grateful for 'new' images of ships you have been on or associated with or marine activities you are involved in.

Hopefully, as a Cachalot member, you are reading this article in the digital edition of the Cachalot and I hope if you have not done so already you will be moved to come and join us. The instructions are included below.

To join the group:

1. Register with LinkedIn if you are not already a member.
2. Search for Captain Robin Plumley MBE
3. Send him a Connect request. There should be a box on his page or you might find it under 'More'.
4. Once he accepts your request, he will send you an Invitation to join the Group.

This is all very new to many of us so please be patient in the event of unforeseen wrinkles.

Important Club news will still be circulated using the *Cachalite* e-bulletin system.

If in any doubt or require assistance please email at plumleyrobin@yahoo.co.uk



Read it on your Kindle too

We can also send a copy of these newsletters, (including ALL the previous ones, on request) direct to your Kindle device, as well as to your normal email address.

Each Kindle has its own registered e-mail address and to find yours go to Settings → My account. It will look like *your name* @kindle.com

Send this to me at editor@cachalots.org.uk and I will add you to the Kindle distribution list.

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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.

Another Virtual Meeting

This time of the Dorset branch of the World Ship Society

At 2.30pm, Jan. 9th 2021

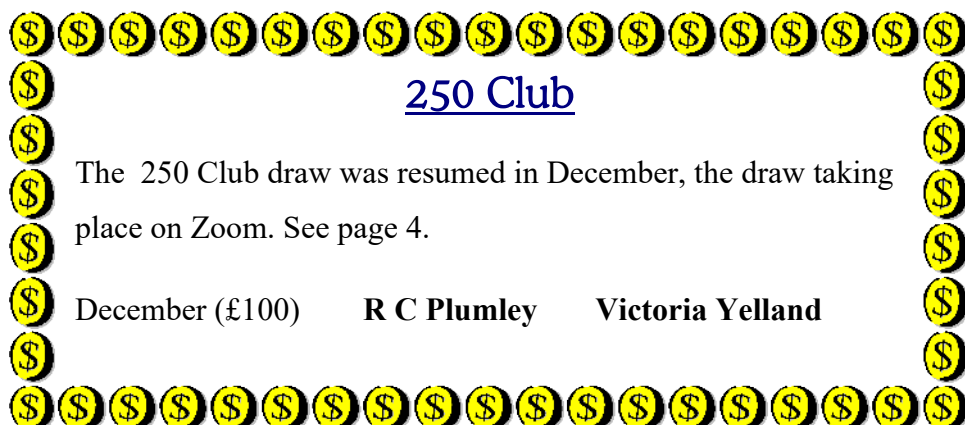
British India Steam Navigation Company Gulf Service ~ with **Ken Dagnall**
... from Bombay/Karachi ... a brief history from 1862 to 1982 ... "Coringa" to "Dwarka" ...

Their Secretary, Steve Pink, says:

There is no need to request an invitation to our January event ... everyone on our circulation list will be sent a Zoom Invitation Link about a week beforehand ... but do make sure its in your diary.

If you are not yet on that list, visit their website shipsdorset.org and follow the links.

The cut-off date for the next edition will be
22nd January 2021



250 Club

The 250 Club draw was resumed in December, the draw taking place on Zoom. See page 4.

December (£100) **R C Plumley** **Victoria Yelland**

Here's wishing you a better year

Full of hope and full of cheer

This Covid Christmiss, all we ask

Is to get the jab and drop the mask.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS