

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

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May 2021

Captain's Log

It has been a bitter-sweet month. On the one hand the sun has been out – apparently it has been the driest April since 1938 – and Phase 2 of the COVID un-lock has been achieved without a hitch. On the other hand, was the sad news received on 9 April that His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh had passed away, two months short of his 100th Birthday. Records show that he became the Club's youngest honorary Stowaway in 1949, and 72 years later when he 'crossed the bar' he was our oldest.

I read in the paper recently that when Gyles Brandreth interviewed the Duke of Edinburgh at 79, he asked him how he thought he would be remembered when he was dead. The reply was, "If the media have anything to do with it, 'cantankerous old sod', I suppose". Some did see that side of him but, for the most part and as you will read from the reminiscences in this newsletter, he was interested, interesting, humorous, and amazingly resilient. What has astounded me in the weeks since his passing, is just how many people met the Duke of Edinburgh, particularly those in maritime circles.

I will leave others to talk about Prince Philip's love of the sea and his seafaring background in the Royal Navy, where he served with distinction during WW2. Instead, I will focus on another of his legacies, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (or DofE). The origins of the scheme can be traced to Prince Philip's time at Gordonstoun School. The school was founded in 1934 by the German educationalist Kurt Hann, who became

its founding headmaster. Prince Philip was one of the school's earliest pupils, joining in 1934 at the age of 13.

Hann held strong views about moral development and wellbeing, and in 1937 he started the Moray Badge scheme, extending the Gordonstoun School ethos to children living nearby; allowing them access to physical training, to take part in expeditions and to complete a project before earning the award. He wanted to extend his scheme nationwide, but the resources were lacking. However, he had the ear of Prince Philip and in 1956 the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, based heavily on the Moray Badge, was born. For those not familiar with DofE, in the Duke's words, "it is a self-help scheme for growing up". By its 60th anniversary the scheme was operating in over 140 countries, and there were 2.4 million recipients of DofE awards in the UK alone.

Many Cachalots participated in the scheme and will tell you how formative it is. Youngsters that have completed the scheme, particularly to Gold level, have something special about them, and as an employer I always take note when an applicant's CV mentions the DofE scheme. At Southampton Sea Cadets we put particular emphasis on the scheme, encouraging all cadets to participate when they turn 14 as the award has kudos and attracts attention.

The Duke of Edinburgh will be fondly remembered, whether you met him personally or not, and will live on in our memories. However, in his award scheme he has helped literally millions of young people to grow up and take their place in the world. There could not be a better epitaph.

Keep safe

Andrew Moll, Club Captain

Contents

- 01 Captain's Log**
- 03 Contents**
- 04 Boatsteerer's Locker**
- 05 Golf Day**
Details of the proposed fine day out
- 06 Dorset Branch World Ship Society**
Notice of the May/ Zoom meeting
- 07 His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**
Cachalots' reminiscences of our late Senior Stowaway
- 18 Two Paces Back**
Details of a charity fundraising song
- 20 Captain Ken**
Column by Ken Owen
- 22 Towards utmost sustainability**
Comment from Michael Grey, Sea-Trade Maritime, March 2021
- 23 250 Club**
- 24 Ammonia (NH₃) as fuel for ships**
A report by Ken Dagnall
- 27 Go on, stop on**
More comment from Michael Grey, The Maritime Advocate, Issue 776 23rd April
- 29 The Noble Awards for Covid-19 behaviour 2020 - 2021**
Still time to enter this new competition sponsored by John Noble
- 30 The South West Shingles Yacht Club**
Would you aspire to be a member of this club?
- 32 It's not a war**
More comment from Michael Grey, Baird Maritime, Workboat World, 27th April



Congratulations

Commander L A Chapman BEng MBA CMMar FNI RN

Cachalot Les Chapman was elevated from Senior Warden to
Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners on 1st May.

Boatsteerers' Locker

Greetings to all our members and readers. The past month has seen a slow opening of a number of options as we reached Step 2 with increased mixing for families, access to a pub garden, outdoor sport or a haircut were among the priorities for some, or a lot of people!! Step 3, which comes in no earlier than 17 May will allow greater social contact, business and activities, events and a review of social distancing.

Based on the 'data' dates of our Dear Leader, and the expectation all restrictions will be removed from June 21st, we would hope to resume attendance at the Club room in the Royal British Legion (RBL) from Friday 25th June. I have been in contact with Archie, our point of contact to discuss plans for return and the management committee have developed a protocol for use of our room, certainly for the first few weeks. I have also spoken with Liz, our wonderful bar-lady who was very excited to hear our news of a return. The bar will be stocked!

Our arrangements will be promulgated in good time ahead of our expected return.

The **250 Club** draw continues to be made by our independent Office Administrator Richard and his wife Jill at their home with a live phone call for Zoom attendees to listen to at our Friday Zoom gathering. The latest draw was made at midday during the Zoom gathering on Friday 30th April, results included here, with the next draw to be made on Friday 28th May.

Sea Pie Supper 2022 – Following discussion and negotiation with SaintsEvents, we have concluded a contract for the Sea Pie Supper, to be held at St. Mary's Stadium on **Friday 4th February 2022**.

At current costings we intend to keep the ticket prices at 2020 levels (£53 members, £65 guests). Tickets will go on sale in mid-November and information will be available on the Cachalots website and through the digital Cachalot.

Another aspect of the role of Boatsteerer seems to be receiving the occasional 'Contact Form Enquiry' from people who have found our website and are looking for information. They are usually forwarded to me by Barry Peck! In February I received two looking for information about relatives who had served at sea during the Second World War. I found this quite interesting as I have a number of websites I use for my family research and I was able to use these to provide information to both contacts. One of them, his grandfather, a Chief Engineer had been torpedoed twice. The first whilst aboard 'British Statesman' in December 1942, and then aboard 'Empire Corporal' in February 1943. Sadly in the second he was lost with four other crew members. He is remembered in the Roll of Honour for the Merchant Navy.

I hope May comes with some warmth for you all rather than the cold winds we have experienced through April.

In the meantime, keep well.

Robin

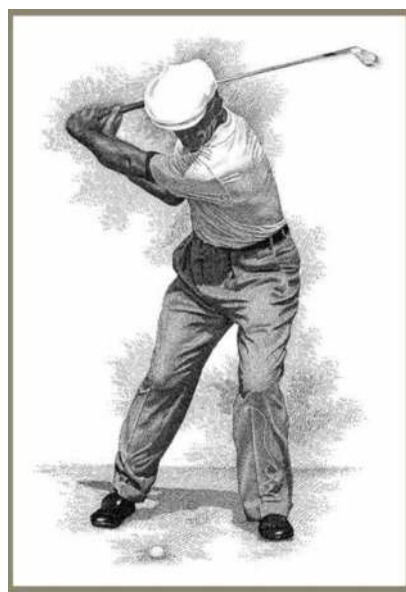
Captain Robin Plumley MBE

Boatsteerer

boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk

Golf Day

We have set aside 32 places and as well as an offer to our Cachalots, have invited members from the Southampton Shipping Golf Society (SSGS), DP World and Warsash Association to join us. Five Cachalots have signed up with one guest each. At present we have twenty players which does not include Warsash. It is likely there may be more interest from SSGS and we are confident we will reach the 32 places planned.



As a reminder of the day, here are the details:

Venue: Lee-on-the-Solent GC

Date: Thursday 30th September 2021

1st Tee Start: 1000 in fours. These will be selected in advance.

Format: 18 holes Individual Stableford with prize for 1st, 2nd & 3rd and a team prize for the winning fourball (best 3 scores from 4). Also Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive.

The 1st prize will include one of the cups held by the Cachalots. This will be returnable.

There will be a bacon buttie and coffee on arrival, a lite-lunch after with prizes.

Cost is £50.

Please contact me if you are interested.

Robin



WORLD SHIPSOCIETY DORSET BRANCH

Zoom Meeting

Again, of the Dorset branch of the World Ship Society

2.30pm, Saturday, May 8th 2021

~ The Trinity House Story ~ with Capt. Karl Lumbers

**...one of Britain's best kept secrets ... with a Younger Brother
of Trinity House ... lighthouses, wrecks & more...**

Their Secretary, Steve Pink, says:

There is no need to request an invitation to our April 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.

With increasing interest in the Branch and its online initiatives and events during the pandemic, they seek to finance some of their increased costs by inviting donations from those who would support them.

Again, explained on their website. [Here](#)



His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

The picture above is a copy of the signed one, dated 1951, which was in our possession.

By now you will probably have experienced a surfeit of information in the national media about our Late Senior Stowaway member but here we bring you stories and remembrances from your fellow Cachalots, garnered by an appeal by Cachalite. So here is the long and the short of it, in the order that they were received.



Simon Daniels has written three books about the Club and its members. The second book, “We Sail The Ocean Blue” was published in 1988 to mark the Club’s 60th Jubilee and contained a foreward which was written by Prince Philip. In that foreward he said:

“One thing has not changed, and that is the character of the men who go to sea. There may be fewer British ships and seamen, but those who man the sophisticated ships of today continue to show the same talents in the management of their ships and the same resolve in the face of the unchanging elements. The same is true of the Cachalots and the warmth and friendship that radiates from their Club.”

Simon writes:

The passing of great national figures can leave a feeling of loss for the nation

as much as for their family. So it has been for our Senior Stowaway, as His Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, has gone aloft; but reminds us of the best-known of all the Royal Yachts around the world, HMY *Britannia*, beloved of His Royal Highness and Her Majesty the Queen. Built by John Brown at Clydebank, Her Majesty graciously consented to name and launch her on Thursday, the 16th April 1953. The First Lord of the Admiralty's speech on that auspicious occasion can surely evoke the greatest pride of a nation in its maritime culture:

I cannot claim that this is a unique occasion, for other Royal Yachts have been launched from time to time over the centuries since King Henry I ordered a fast galley for his special use in the early twelfth century. But it is a very rare and a very special occasion, because there has not been a launch of a Royal Yacht for over 50 years. It is all the more fitting therefore that this ship, the first Royal Yacht in the new Elizabethan age, should have been built and launched by a firm of shipbuilders with such a history of successful ships behind them.... For over half a century the knowledge that their ships came from your yard has been a guarantee to officers and men that they sailed in the best, the stoutest and often the fastest ships that designers, shipwrights and engineers could produce. Those officers and men who served in them grew to love those ships; not as things of steel and wood and alloy, but as living entities with almost human characteristics; things with a spirit of their own born of the loving care of plater, riveter and welder, of enginesmith and draughtsman, and of all the skilled and unskilled labour that got to make a ship...

On the 21st September 1953, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh visited *Britannia* as she was fitting out. He was deeply interested in naval architecture and was passionate about innovative technology, which would account for a great deal in the value of this new ship, being designed not just for the grandeur of Royal Transport, but an icon of British maritime excellence wherever she visited in the world. That was not all, for she was also designed to be readily converted to a Hospital Ship in time of war. Prince Philip also took a deep and hands-on interest in the fitting out of the Royal and other apartments, and made a number of minor modifications. While Admiral of the Royal Yacht Squadron, His Royal Highness also took a lively interest in the Master Mariners' Club, having been Guest of Honour at their twenty-first annual luncheon in 1948, and was subsequently made a



Stowaway of the Club, a distinction which he enjoyed with Admiral of the Fleet, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

Prince Philip's *Britannia* sailed into a strangely obscure life in preservation, after she was decommissioned in a somewhat tearful ceremony in 1997. She survives, intact, in Leith, birthplace of many a fine small ship built for the General Steam Navigation Company, that provided ships such as the *Trident* at the disposal of Queen Victoria herself, so there is a connection. Perhaps more thrillingly for yachting enthusiasts after Prince Philip's heart, though, the twenty first century has been witness to plans to build a replica of her racing predecessor. It had been a grand idea, that had started in 1993, when a syndicate headed by a Norwegian financier purchased a stake in a Russian shipyard in Arkhangelsk, in order to create a replica of the *Britannia* in pinewood and laminated oak. How ironic it was, that Peter the Great's yacht would be built in Britain, and now the new *Britannia* would be built in Russia.

The project would run into the worst of economic storms, however, as the world was plunged into recession. The shipyard suffered a series of business failures, as it changed hands several times between 2002 and 2006, as joinery was nearing completion. Eventually, in 2006, the hull was completed but held back by the yard for 25 million Norwegian Kroner, and in the meantime was rechristened *Tsar Peter*. Of course the dispute led to litigation, when, in 2009, a Russian Court ordered that the hull be launched and delivered by the shipyard to her original owner, the Norwegian Sigurd Coates, who then took possession and the hull in Son for fitting-out. As this period coincided with the economic recession, work was stalled and Coates decided to sell the boat to a the K1 Britannia Trust, a British charity that had been established to complete and then use her to her as their flagship for charitable causes around

the world in the UK.

The replica was towed to the South Boats yard in East Cowes in 2012, where the Trust invested in the scaffolding, cradle, tools and workmen required and work began on the final stages of the *Britannia* build; then work was halted in 2014 when the yard was wound up in bankruptcy. Nothing more has been heard since 2018....



Adam Hooper, along with his brother Paul, run Martin's Rubber. This is from the News & Blog page on their website.. [click here](#)

Rubber by Royal Command

As an engineer, it's not every day that you get asked to solve a problem for the most senior members of the royal family, particularly when that request results in an invitation into the Queen's private chambers. Okay, so Her Majesty wasn't present at the time – but it makes for a pretty good anecdote. The lucky man in question was Brian Hooper, the late father of Adam and Paul who run Martin's Rubber. Here, Adam recounts the story his father told of the time he was called aboard the Royal Yacht *Britannia* to solve two rubber-related problems for Prince Philip and the Queen.

Dockyard daydreaming

'In the 1960's I was often taken out on deliveries to Portsmouth Naval Dockyard by my father during school holidays. I spent the majority of my time sitting in the car very bored while he "popped in" to some anonymous building with mouldings or hoses that had been made at Martin's. The reward for me was the chance to glimpse some of her majesty's finest ships in port on our circuitous route around the dockyard. As a [fully qualified marine engineer](#), my father was often called in to the dockyard to solve various issues requiring rubber mouldings or seals, but I recall him coming home particularly excited after one such request for urgent assistance. Her Majesty's Yacht *Britannia* was in port and the Chief Engineer had called my father to come on board to help solve a problem before the next sailing.

Prince Philip's porthole predicament

'Having been met at the top of the gangway by the Chief, my father was somewhat bemused when rather than going below decks, he was escorted to the royal chambers. The Chief took him over to a porthole and explained that, following some over enthusiastic oiling of the porthole latches by the crew, Prince Philip had unfortunately got oil all over his dress uniform when

he had opened the Porthole and that had resulted in an emergency wardrobe change. The challenge was for Martin's Rubber to come up with a suitable rubber moulding to cover the offending latches and ensure no repeat of the regrettable incident.

Be prepared!

'Father was always armed with a pocket rule, paper and pencil, and between them he and the Chief sketched up a suitable design that could be tooled for the necessary parts to be moulded before the next sailing. Satisfied that this issue was now under control, the Chief then asked if my Father could help with a second problem – of an even more sensitive nature.

Good vibrations and a state secret

'Following the Chief even further into the Royal Quarters, my Father, to his surprise, soon found himself in the Queen's bedroom. It turned out that Her Majesty had complained of vibrations from the engines disturbing her sleep whilst at sea... out with pencil and paper again, my father and the Chief sketched up some suitable rubber foot designs to fit the legs of the royal bed.

'Ever the engineer, my father asked, "and what loadings might I need to consider in specifying the correct material for these mouldings Chief?"

"I'm sorry sir, that is a state secret," came the diplomatic reply, with a twinkle in the Chief's eye...'



Ivor Salter was Captain of the Club in 2011.

In June 2011 Post Captain Gerry Cartwright and I were invited to his Royal Highness's celebration of his 90th birthday at Trinity House, after seeing the Royal Marines beat the retreat at the Tower of London. We gathered in a large room for presentation and pre dinner drinks were flowing. The Prince worked his way around the room and upon meeting us, Gerry explained we were from the Club, the Prince looked at me and said, "and what do you do for a living?" Gesturing to some of the other guests he said, "these are all retired but you must do something." I explained that I worked at Warsash and his face lit up, as he recalled his trip on the model boats. Just then the Queen entered the room and the Prince's G & T was suddenly thrust into Gerry's hand and fielded to a nearby radiator shelf. Well done Gerry.



From Douglas Gates

I met the Duke on one occasion at Hamble. I was accompanying Frank and Joan Murphy to a reception at the Royal Southern. Frank, Past Captain of the Club, in 1982, was also a past Commodore and a trustee of the Southern, and had met the Duke on several occasions, as the Duke was Admiral of the The Royal Southern Yacht Club. He came over to speak to Frank, and Frank introduced Joan and I.



Phil Messinger says

In the summer of 1962 the Training Ship HMS "Worcester" celebrated her Centenary. Her Majesty the Queen graciously accepted an invitation to distribute the prizes on Speech Day.

I was a prize winner, so I approached Her Majesty and saluted nervously - at which point Prince Philip looked at me and remarked "Goodness you're a long streak aren't you? - His way of making me relax, I'm sure.

Twenty years later I had the honour to lay the wreath at the Cenotaph in London on Armistice Day, on behalf of the Merchant Navy and Fishermen. We were presented to Her Majesty and His Royal Highness afterwards - I don't think he recognised me!

As an aside, at the same event Mrs Thatcher asked me what we should do about the Unions - to which I replied "Ma'am, I am a Council member of the Merchant Navy Officer's Union - at which she turned on her heel and strode away!



The Boatsteerer, Robin Plumley MBE, tells us:

My connection was meeting him at Buckingham Palace in 1972 to be presented with my Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. I completed the final



award through my school in Guildford and had just finished 3 months at Warsash for the investiture in December. I wore my cadet uniform and he came over and spoke, asking about the shipping company, the training and

where I was off to etc. He made me, and a lot of others feel very at ease. I have found that in any case when having the privilege of meeting the Queen, Princess Royal and Prince William, Duke of Cambridge too.



Another Cachalot to attain the DofE Gold Award was **Michael Cox**, pictured right with his mother and sister outside the Palace gates after the presentation by Prince Philip in July 1967.



Mine Countermeasures General Course (MCMG) Commanding Officers' Designate Course in 1976 including TCA Patron HRH the Prince of Wales, TCA President Rear Admiral John Lippiett and Lt Cdr Mike Cox RNR (Lt Cdr Mike Cox RNR)

Later, Michael is shown, left, as a Lt Cdr RNR, doing a Command test and still in distinguished company. The picture is taken from a Minesweeping book that he co-authored (titled *Last of the Wooden Walls*).

Michael also says that he was pleased to "attend" the Service of Commemoration, 1730 Friday 16th

at Winchester Cathedral.

Many members were also pleased and we were subsequently informed by the Lord-Lieutenant that the online service had been viewed over 100,000 times. Must be some sort of record for the Cathedral.



*The Post Boatsteerer, **Ken Dagnall MBE**, remembers:*

When I was President of the Southern Branch of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects (RINA) and the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) I was invited to the Annual Dinner of RINA in the Lancaster London Hotel in April 2010, the Dinner was graced by the presence of HRH Duke of Edinburgh. I was invited before hand to a private suite by the RINA President for drinks where amongst other guests he Duke circulated chatting to each group. At the Dinner although not at the top table

I was seated within 25 feet of the Duke and nearly opposite. Good food, good wine and good company !



*From Honorary Life Member, the **Revd Wm.W. Mc Crea, MNM***

Herewith, for what it's worth, my brief personal memories of Prince Philip whom I had the honour and privilege of meeting only twice in my eighty years on this magnificent Planet Earth.

The first time was during my chaplaincy at the two Nautical Colleges in Kent; the Merchant Navy College, Greenhithe, (formerly HMS Worcester); and the National Sea Training College, Gravesend, Kent where I served from the beginning of 1978 -- 91. It was at a Carol Service organised by the Sailors' Society at the Fishmongers Hall when HRH Queen Elizabeth and HRH Prince Philip were in attendance.

The Cadets accompanying me were in the reception area of the F.M.H., as the Guard of Honour on their arrival and they stopped briefly to inspect and speak to us. It was the Prince who spoke mostly, with a question or two followed by words of encouragement and a smile that we have never forgotten. One of the Cadets reached the rank of Captain and has enjoyed exceptional service and although hard for me to take in, is due to retire soon, oh how the time flies !

The second never to be forgotten meeting of their Royal Highnesses was on board the 'QUEEN MARY 2' several years ago for her 'Naming Ceremony' in Southampton. Rosaleen and myself were standing well back in the rather crowded entrance Foyer of the ship, wondering whether on their arrival if we would even manage to see them properly. Lo and behold, the opposite happened, on entering, Her Majesty ahead of her beloved husband as usual ; when suddenly Prince Philip broke away and headed straight for us and promptly said ; "hello reverend, are you doing the honours today "?

Well for once I was almost speechless -- Totally on the spot -- quick thinking was needed ! What do I say ? On my mischievous naughty side, I almost blurted out; "no your Highness it's the Opposition" ! However, thankfully, better judgement ruled, realising especially, that in today's fashion of political correctness it would be unwise and might be misunderstood by some Folk.

So with a smile I said "No your Highness; we are honoured guests just like yourself" ! He seemed pleased with the answer and with a twinkle of satisfaction in his eyes , happily hurried back to his position behind the Queen.

I found him to be so friendly, exuding warmth, genuinely interested in what you were doing ; so human and able to put one at ease instantly almost as if you were his shipmate !

In my eyes, he was a real Seafarer and a man whom I held with esteem and much affection over the years.

Finally, I would like to use the very appropriate words of The Bishop of York, the Revd John Sentamu, to remember the spiritual side of Prince Philip. He said; that "the Duke had a strong Christian faith and was a truly committed Christian like his Wife the Queen, which has sustained him over the many tragedies and difficult times in his life" ! This is how I will remember this remarkable man.



Captain Mark Thomson MSc CMarTech MIMarEST AFNI is Head of Marine at CalMac Ferries Ltd.

A couple of recollections from me:

Back in 1998 I was a second mate with Trinity House. That year, in October, the last manned lighthouse in the UK, North Foreland, was automated and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, who was the Master of TH at that time, presided over a ceremony to mark this historic occasion.

I lived in Cornwall at that time and I travelled up to Broadstairs during my leave to take part, all dressed up in full uniform, complete with cap, brass buttons and gold stripes. My vessel, THV Patricia, anchored just off the coast so as to be clearly visible from the lighthouse grounds and the marquee erected within. Us seafarers stood in a line and were presented to the Master and he asked me 'are you with that lot?' gesticulating with his head toward THV Patricia.

For the want of something more witty to say, I said 'yes sir, I am a Second Officer on Patricia'. He then said something like 'don't get lost then' and moved on. There was then drinks and tabnabs in the marquee before I headed off to get the train back to London and thence back to Cornwall. I was feeling quite pleased with myself, rubbing shoulders with royalty and all, but then I was brought down to earth with a bump at the railway station. A fellow passenger, seeing my uniform, asked me what time the next train to Ramsgate was. I told him that I didn't know and he replied

‘oh, from your uniform, I had assumed you worked for the railway...’ All delusions of grandeur gone in a flash!

One other...

In 2012 I was Head of Fleet Operations at Thames Clippers in London. In April of that year there was the naming ceremony for the royal row barge ‘Gloriana’ which took place at Greenland Pier at Surrey Quays in SE London. The barge was to be named by HM the Queen in a fairly low key (no pun intended) event. Thames Clippers owned the pier and I went along out of curiosity, rather than for any other official reason. I found part of the pier to stand on which I assumed would be a quiet and out of the way place, but blow me but HRH the Duke made a bee line for me and stood right next to me. This was a rare occasion where the Duke lead the way, followed by HM the Queen and Lord Sterling, who came and stood next to me as well. I found myself facing the assorted media during the actual handover ceremony finding myself in the paper the next day, photo-bombing between the Queen and Lord Sterling.

The photo attached shows the back of my head (grey hair) between the Queen’s left shoulder and Lord Sterling’s right shoulder – stood right next to the Duke, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible!



*Past Captain (1996) and Past Boatsteerer **Lionel Hall** brings us this:*

When guests aboard the Trinity House PATRICIA Julie and I were greeted by HRH Duke of Edinburgh who immediately spotted my Silver Cachalot and asked me what it signified. "It is a Cachalot, the chosen emblem of The Southampton Master Mariners Club". Why the Cachalot? the Duke asked. "It's a sperm whale, it rises to the surface and blows off a lot !" WHAT? OH I SEE. Ho Ho he laughed, we then exchanged a few nautical anecdotes.

❄ ❄ ❄

*And from **Ken Edwards***

Being in the RFA from the late 50's until the 70's, I was privileged to accompany The Royal Yacht on a few occasions and met various members of the Royal Family at events, including some with Prince Philip. The main occasions were The Fleet Review in Torbay in 1969 while I was First Officer aboard RFA Lyness (store ship). The review dinner was aboard the old HMS Ark Royal. Another time I met Prince Philip was while attending the Captain Cook bicentenary celebrations at Kurnell at Botany Bay in April 1970 while I was Chief Officer on board RFA Olmeda. It was a full week of receptions some of which I attended. You don't get very much time to converse with a Royal but speaking to Prince Philip you would soon find he was very knowledgeable about the RFA. RFA Olmeda, (fast fleet tanker), was the flag ship for the Far East fleet with Admiral Lewin aboard. He would spend quite some time talking to me about his career and time spent with Prince Philip while they were Lieutenants together during the war. They were great friends.

As you will know Lord Lewin was also a Stowaway at our club.

❄ ❄ ❄

*Finally, from **Bill Hargreaves***

*On being presented with his **FRIN** certificate by the Duke of Edinburgh:*

Equerry: "May I present Captain Hargreaves"

DOE: "what sort of Captain?"

Me: "Merchant Navy, Sir."

DOE: Unimpressed grunt

Me: "Tankers Sir, Very large ones"

DOE Slightly surprised I'd continued the conversation

Equerry: Ushered me off stage quickly

❄ ❄ ❄

*And finally, finally a submission from Past Captain **John Noble***

June 1964: HRH attended HMS Conway to preside over the opening of the new building in June 1964. I met with him during his tour of the building and had a short conversation with him when he visited my cabin.

Club Captain: During my first year as Captain of the Club (1989), it was customary for the Club Captain to be invited on board the Royal Yacht while she was moored off Cowes during the regatta week. HRH (with Uffa Fox) welcomed guests on board and during the cocktail party he circulated among all the guests. Both Mrs N and myself had a long chat with him where he showed a keen interest in what was going at the Club; he did mention he was a “Stowaway” (1949)!

Trinity House Younger Brother Dinner: I was a guest of the late Eric Beetham (a former Cachalot member) at a Younger Brothers’ dinner held at the Trinity House Headquarters at Tower Hill. HRH took time to speak with all the attendees and I held a short conversation with him. He made me feel as though I was the only individual who mattered during the meeting! Incidentally, when he entered the dining hall for the dinner, at his insistence, there was no applause (as is often customary at City dinners)!

His speech was a “Chatham House rules affair, so no report forthcoming!

‘TWO PACES BACK’

Charity fundraising song celebrates the life of the late Duke of Edinburgh

A charity song has been released in light of the recent death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, who was a Stowaway with The Cachalots. The song has been made available online to celebrate the late Duke’s life and at the same time to fundraise in aid of The Silver Line, the free and confidential national helpline for older people founded by Dame Esther Rantzen in 2012. Writer and performer Henry Dawe, of Uppingham, Rutland, who worked for the Royal Household between 2007 and 2012, has written the lyrics and sung the vocals to the piece, entitled ‘Two Paces Back’.

The song takes the form of a music video, showing a mixture of stills and footage from across the decades. The title is intended as a reflection of the unwavering support which The Duke of Edinburgh gave to The Queen for so long. The song can be found at www.henrydawe.co.uk/two-paces-back/, from where the public can connect to JustGiving if they would like to donate to the charity.

‘I wrote the original lyrics last summer,’ says Henry, ‘to mark The Duke of Edinburgh’s 100th birthday on 10th June this year. I was making preparations to

release the song when we very sadly lost His Royal Highness.

Having found the material for the video and come so far with the project, I thought that it would be a great shame if the opportunity to look back over all The Duke of Edinburgh's years, and to benefit The Silver Line, slipped away. I therefore adapted the lyrics from a birthday song to one celebrating His Royal Highness's life more broadly. The tune, which was always intended to be jaunty and upbeat, remains largely unchanged. The composer, Chris Fish, and I felt that this was still in keeping with the mood which we wanted to create for a gentleman who disliked fuss and who would no doubt wish to be remembered cheerfully rather than mournfully.

'Buckingham Palace could not give an endorsement to the original project but I was informed that I could release the song as a private individual in favour of a suitable charity. To my mind, none could be more suitable than The Silver Line, which exists to serve those aged 55 and over in the United Kingdom and is available all day, every day. This charity is not just relevant because of the age which The Duke of Edinburgh reached. In the pandemic the spotlight has been thrown so much on the difficulties faced by lonely, isolated and vulnerable older people. Via this song, the aim is to raise not only funds to enable The Silver Line to extend its work but also awareness among older people that this charity is there for them.

Like Buckingham Palace, The Silver Line cannot be an official partner for the song, but I am able to fundraise in aid of the cause. It would be wonderful if this song could go some way to making The Silver Line, a relatively young charity, better known. My collaborators and I hope that people will enjoy this music video and feel inclined to make a contribution. It is donations that are requested, rather than visitors to the site actually paying to download and own the song.

We would be thrilled if the project could make a difference to The Silver Line and to the people whom it helps, while serving as a tribute to the longest-serving consort in the history of the British Monarchy. We hope His Royal Highness's connections with The Cachalots may encourage members to donate.'

At the time of going to press, the song is on course to be released on **Saturday 1st May**. If for any reason it is delayed, please check back at the above website address. For anyone who does not use the internet but wishes to donate, cheques made payable to The Silver Line, with a note that they are in aid of this project, can be sent to The Silver Line, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA.



Captain Ken

*Another contribution from Ken Owen
which appeared in his local Mellor Church
Parish magazine "Outlook" of April 2021.*

I feel particularly privileged to have met, and conversed with, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on several occasions.

I was present at a reception following the AGM of the Royal Institute of Navigation of which Prince Philip was President. It was only a couple of years ago, and was being held at the Royal Geographical Club, in Kensington.

As David Barrie, author of the prize winning book 'Sextant', was being introduced to Prince Philip, the Duke reached across, and to my complete surprise, laid a hand on my shoulder, and said, "Now here's a man who knows how to use a sextant."

He was so acutely observant, that he had noticed my Honourable Company of Master Mariners' tie, and was in fact Admiral of the Company, himself. He then asked me where I kept my sextant now, and I confessed it was safely in my loft.

He was keen to encourage navigators to be familiar with the sextant, despite GPS, on which we are now so dependant.

We invited the Duke to dinner on board our headquarters' ship 'Wellington' to celebrate his 80th birthday.

When our Captain wished him a Happy birthday, he said, "Oh, don't go on about birthdays; last week I was visiting Chelsea Hospital, talking with a Chelsea Pensioner, when his young grandson asked, 'how old are you grandpa?' to which he answered, 'I am 96,' the grandson said 'Oh, I don't ever want to be 96.' To which the Duke said, "No, but you will when you're 95!"

On a later occasion, on board 'Wellington' at a reception to commemorate the Atlantic Convoys, the Clerk to our Livery Company, was accompanying Prince Philip who noticed two veterans displaying the recently released Arctic medals.

He asked the two veterans how they had obtained them.

They explained that they had served in wartime convoys to Russia.

The Duke said, "Well I know all that, but how did the medals get to you?"

They replied, "they simply came in the post."

"That is totally wrong", said the Duke, and asked them to give the medals to him, then handed them to the Clerk, saying "There must be a proper

presentation”.

“When would you like to arrange that Sir,?” said the Clerk.

To which the Duke responded “How about, Now?”, and shook their hands and pinned the Arctic medals on their chests. there and then.

I was impressed by the story, as the Arctic medals had always been a bit of embarrassment to the Ministry of Defence.

They were earned when Russia was our ally but by the time for presentation came, the Cold war had come about and they were no longer our friends.

Russia embarrassed us further by inviting some veterans to Moscow, and presenting medals there.

I was very pleased to notice how Prince Philip viewed the situation.

Some years ago we watched Prince Philip drive his horse carriage over Morecombe Bay , which he was finding very difficult due to two helicopters frightening the horses.

When some time later, in conversation, I mentioned the incident, he said “Those b’ dy helicopters. I WON’T FORGET THEM!”

When an exhibition commemorating the Battle of the Atlantic was held aboard ‘Wellington’, herself a former convoy escort ship, Prince Philip officially opened it, and to our surprise travelled to the quay side, in the back of the Police Range Rover that was supposed to escorting his official car. He said “What’s the point of having two ?”

The organisers were most impressed that the Duke knew more about the ‘hedgehog’ anti submarine depth charge weapon, on display, than they did.

Prince Philip will be sadly missed, not only by the Queen and the Royal family, but by a great many people throughout the world.

You can imagine how pleased Allwyn and I are, that Ella, our fifteen year old granddaughter, has just received her Duke of Edinburgh Award Certificate.



The DoF, Nick Cooper, one time Chairman of the NI
And Captain Ken



One of the last
Certificates to be
signed 'Philip'.

Towards utmost sustainability

Seatrade Maritime Opinion and Analysis March 2021

There was something reassuringly positive about that ancient phrase found in charter parties which required the chartered vessel to “proceed with utmost despatch and without deviation” to her eventual destination. There could be no equivocation or doubt in the master’s mind; he was called upon to ensure that the ship went like the clappers, to make her number at the arrival port, just as soon as wind, weather and the ingenuity of the engineering staff permitted.

It didn’t, of course, mean that the definition of what constituted “utmost” could not be the subject of a subsequent dispute, if the charterer felt that the colourful account of the severe weather the ship had encountered might have involved a certain hyperbole. Or maybe the speed advertised by the owner’s broker had been on the optimistic side, like those advertisements that suggest the range of an electric car is twice that which practice sadly proves. But both sides of the contract surely understood what was expected of the ship and her performance.

But in the age of sustainability, with the pressure to “optimise” a ship’s speed to arrive so that days are not idled at anchor, far more uncertainties start to creep in. We all know that there is a strong environmental case for burning less fuel, but a long ocean passage through possibly inclement weather can involve a fairly elastic estimation of the word “optimise” and the ETA can become a moveable feast.

There are more interests involved than those of the charterer and the ship that has been hired. The arrival port is an important third party in this marriage of convenience and needs to co-operate in the quest for efficiency. If the dockers decide to go slow, or the ship unloader breaks down with a ship on the berth, it is futile to suggest that the voyage of a subsequent ship *en route* will not be affected.

There is also, in a world where suspicion and entitlement regrettably abound, a need to ensure that any benefits from the efficiencies of the “just in time” voyage are properly shared, which implies an increase in the level of transparency between parties. It is clearly to everyone’s benefit that there is a reduction in fuel consumption, emissions are minimised and there is less wasteful hanging around at anchor. But can this be equably monetised?

Co-operation and co-ordination are important elements here, if “just in time” isn’t going to involve new and exciting dimensions for lawyers specialising in “arrived ship” disputes.

The new clause for bulk sector voyage charter parties announced recently by BIMCO has been designed to address such problems that might prevent JIT working. It gives charterers the right to ask owners to optimise speed to meet a specified arrival time and enables the voyage to proceed without breaching charter party obligations. Under the organisation’s imprimatur, it provides a proper contractual framework under which the parties can agree a strategy for the voyage that benefits both efficiency and the planet. You might ask what’s not to like. Just in time operations have worked in the liner trades and although the bulk sector is more fragmented, there ought to be no real reason, given goodwill and understanding between the parties, why it should not become routine in this huge and important branch of the industry.

You might also argue that meaningful efficiencies on passage will become more important if the tranche of environmental regulations now in the pipeline start to bite, with ships expected to demonstrate improvements in their carbon intensity indicators and their annual efficiency ratio. The mysteries of both are only now being digested by the industry. Additionally if power is to be limited in the future, and we don’t want to end up with more ships to carry the same amount of cargo, “optimum speed” will become a more familiar term.

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www.seatrade-maritime.com and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey.
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250 Club

The 250 Club draws were resumed in December, the draws taking place at the last Zoom meeting of the month.

April	K T V Edwards	D F Gates
March	Margaret Grant	D P Neaves

AMMONIA (NH₃) as a Fuel for Ships

*Following a discussion at one of our weekly Zoom meetings, **Ken Dagnall MBE** has put together some information for us.*

Fully decarbonizing the shipping sector presents a significant challenge, it has the potential to be among the most disruptive transitions that shipping has had to deal with but also to provide significant opportunity for the sector.

Moving away from fossil fuels in shipping will require different approaches according to the type of vessel involved so experts say. Commuter ferries are already moving toward battery power, elsewhere compressed or liquefied green hydrogen could be an option for ships that are able to refuel regularly. But for vessels that spend days or weeks at sea, such as tankers, super trawlers or cargo ships, the size of the fuel tanks needed for hydrogen would be prohibitive.

Another possibility is for the industry to rely on synthetic diesel or other carbon fuels produced using renewable energy. In this instance, though, the problem is cost. Synthetic diesel would cost approximately twice as much as green hydrogen in terms of energy on a megajoule-per-megajoule basis.

To date, no ammonia-fueled ships have been built, but that's not stopping companies including Equinor, Man Energy Solutions and Wärtsilä from rushing to help bring ammonia-fueled ships to market.

Moves to adapt engines and ship designs to ammonia fuel are driven by a 2018 International Maritime Organization (IMO) commitment to cut international shipping's annual greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent by 2050, compared to 2008 levels.

Ammonia has an advantage as it contains no carbon, so can burn in an engine without emitting carbon dioxide. ... While it is less energy-rich than today's marine fuels, liquid ammonia is more energy-dense than hydrogen, another zero-emission fuel.

The hot question of today is if the ammonia is a feasible solution for carbon-free shipping economy. Of course, it is well known that ammonia is part of the solution to the problem, it is not the unique solution, there will be a combination of solutions.

The prediction for 2050 is that the split between carbon-free and

non-carbo containing fuels will be about 50-50, meaning that one of the carbon-free fuels may be ammonia.

Among the properties of the liquid ammonia is its energy density of about 18.6 MJ/kg. It is significantly lower than today's marine fuels as well as natural gas and LPG. So ammonia has relatively low energy density. The big advantage of ammonia is that it can be stored in higher temperatures in a liquid form under atmospheric pressure. At ambient temperatures of 20 degrees, we need about 10-bar pressure.

Green ammonia, requires less storage volume than hydrogen and is cheaper to make than synthetic carbon fuels, seems like a handy compromise. But as a fuel, it is still far from ideal. Although more energy-dense than hydrogen, ammonia still occupies significantly more space than diesel for the same amount of propulsion. New vessel designs might be able to accommodate this, but retrofitted ships could end up losing a fair amount of space in the hold.

Ammonia is toxic, it could emit polluting nitrogen oxides throughout the fuel cycle and, as produced today, it's still far from carbon-neutral. Nevertheless, proponents claim that none of these drawbacks is fatal to its prospects.

The flammability of ammonia is relatively limited, as it is limited in a specific range between 15-25% LEL and UEL. This is a blessing and a problem at the same time. A blessing because it is more difficult to ignite it, and problem because we need to enhance its ignition capability via pilot fuels.

The advantage of ammonia used as fuel is that it contains no carbon but it needs pilot fuel for combustion. The pilot fuel proportion may be as high as 20%. Ammonia is the highest carrier of hydrogen, which has a significant energy density in contrast. Given the limited flammability of ammonia, we need pilot fuel for its combustion

The storage tank is placed on deck with the fuel preparation room placed in front of the storage tank. The system is completed by the knock out drums, which hold the liquid residues from the fuel, the fuel supply system and a nitrogen purging system to make sure that we have in case of emergency, an ammonia-free piping.

Because we are dealing with ammonia, which is a noxious compound, we need to have a Selective Catalytic Reactor according to

MARPOL ANNEX VI, meaning that there will need to have urea in storage. Urea decomposes the nitrogen oxides (NO_x) compounds into harmless nitrogen and water. This, unfortunately, induces more capital expenditure (CAPEX) in the ammonia installation.

Ammonia works out 32% cheaper than hydrogen and 15% cheaper than methanol.

Ammonia is a flammable gas, but the risk of fire is low compared to other fuels since the flammability limit is small, and the conditions for ignition – spontaneous ignition temperature and minimum ignition energy – are difficult.

Overall, ammonia can be a viable alternative future but still has many challenging areas that we may solve them with appropriate research in due course.

Safety requirements for ammonia as a fuel

- Redundancy
- Need for ammonia detectors
- Ventilation
- Pressure relief system
- Remotely operated isolation valves
- Route piping at sufficient distance from the side shell
- Locate piping in separate unmanned space
- 1% O₂ is allowed in purging with N₂
- Master Gas Valve, protects the engine
- In ammonia carriers we also need Gas Combustion Unit
- Airlock for access in the storage tank
- Two pumps/tank but one storage space

Ammonia, when mixed with water, is highly corrosive, as it mixes with body fluids, like sweat, causing skin burns. Ammonia is lighter than air, but if it is in solution with water it becomes heavier than air and then becomes a health risk.

Ammonia also corrodes copper, brass and zinc alloys. The storage tanks for ammonia, need to have various safety features like vents, relief valves etc. Of course, we need to be careful where we vent. Vent discharges have to be designated as dangerous areas because of the toxicity of ammonia.



Go on, stop on

The Maritime *Advocate* online Issue 776 April 23rd 2021

By Michael Grey

There could, I was reading the other day, be something of a societal change taking place as we emerge from Covid, to a kinder, greener and more inclusive world. This was evidenced by several of the most prominent finance houses and management consultants suggesting they would move away from their more inhuman practices such as making junior members of staff work long and antisocial hours. Responding to objections from post-millennials, who would like some time off on their career path en route to ludicrous rewards, it has been suggested that they might get the odd weekend to themselves. The Scots have been toying with the notion of a four-day week, although that might have something to do with an upcoming election.


Forecasts of societal change are perilous and natural sceptics will suggest that once we get back to something approaching normality, old habits will re-assert themselves. But it would be nice if the outbreak of universal kindness over the world of work could be exported to the maritime world, where there are few signs of it, thus far. True, there are all sorts of supportive messages about the need to consider the mental health of seafarers, just as long as its cost doesn't appear on the ship owner's balance sheet. My old secretary, who was fond of killer put-downs, might have suggested that such are "all mouth and no trousers".

But there is no evidence whatever that the frequently voiced complaints about exhaustion, fatigue and the dubious compliance with MLC rules, are producing any changes. Both the recent World Maritime University and Cardiff University studies on compliance with regulations on work and rest hours ought to have rung warning bells about an industry operating on the edge of legality. These reports, along with the effects of the pandemic, seem to have stimulated a certain amount of debate among seagoing professionals, mostly in the form of correspondence to their various organisations.

One rather shocking letter published in the Nautical Institute's Seaways magazine tells of a tanker officer who suffered a heart attack after

working 84 hours without a break. The same correspondent writes that on every ship he had served on, “hours of work were regularly exceeded due to the demands of compliance with other safety and operational matters”. Another, in the same issue, notes that none of his older colleagues seem to be surviving into old age following a working life of disrupted circadian rhythms and fatigue taken for granted. The old jokes about ship’s officers being woken up by officials checking up on the hours of rest really aren’t funny anymore.

It is obvious that firstly, there are not sufficient people aboard most ships to deal with the work that needs to be done, that the operational and bureaucratic burden on a few senior officers has become unbearable and that the pace of modern ship operations has become ridiculous. And none of this is going to be remotely improved by clever apps on smartphones or even software that will keep ships’ officers’ noses stuck in front of their screens inputting garbage that somebody demands ashore. Sure, we might get all the machinery wired up to transmit data to the engine manufacturer and wonderful “digitisation” that is said to be the cat’s pyjamas. Will any of this reduce the incessant demands upon a few exhausted people aboard ship? There needs to be a realistic assessment of the work that needs to be done, and the people available to do it, with proper leeway for illness, emergencies and the frequent untoward demands. There also needs to be a more rigorous application of the rules – the airlines would be an excellent example to follow, where there is no elasticity whatever. Or we could just slow down to a reasonable pace – we are not fighting a war here, but maintaining world trade and that shouldn’t be at the expense of anyone’s health. That’s what society seems to be saying, but will shipping shut its collective ears?

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The NOBLE awards for COVID-19 behaviour 2020 to 2021

Everybody will be aware of the internationally renowned NOBEL prizes that are awarded for exceptional achievement in many fields. Nobody will have heard about the NOBLE awards about to be instigated for categories of behaviour encountered during the past year of COVID.

I am sure all will have encountered behaviour that has occurred during the COVID panic that signifies a different approach to life as a result of it.

In some sectors COVID is used as an excuse for inefficient, or just simply bloody minded behaviour. However there have been many positive experiences where companies or individuals have gone out of their way to be kind or helpful.

I intend to award NOBLE awards to those nominating exceptional behaviour in the following categories:

- 1) Best Company.
- 2) An individual who has gone out of their way to be helpful/Acts of COVID related kindness.
- 3) Worst company/Best excuse for not providing a service/Sheer bloody mindedness.

The awards will be given to those individuals whom submit the most convincing entries and each winner will be offered a box of chocolates made by my personal “individual” choice of helpfulness, Jan at Fredricks Chocolates in the Marlands Shopping Centre, Southampton!

John Noble

23rd March 2021

*Your entries should be submitted to the Editor: editor@cachalots.org.uk by **Friday 14th May.***

You may nominate in any or all of the categories but please explain your reasons.

They will be judged by a panel of three: the Captain, the Boatsteerer and Past Captain John Noble himself, and the winners will be announced in the June edition on 31st May.

Remember, this is a light hearted competition and we are not looking to be sued by irate nominees. Names may have to be changed to protect the not so innocent.



The back page of the Sports section of The Daily Telegraph is hardly the place to expect to find a nautical story but John Mileusnic spotted this on Friday 2nd April and thought it might amuse members.

. With full acknowledgement to The Daily Telegraph.



You might well wonder what the captain of the Ever Given, the ship which became wedged sideways in the Suez Canal for six days, has to do with sport, apart from the fact that his container vessel is four-football-pitches long.

But if and when his sense of humour returns (it typically takes a couple of months), he will be on the receiving end of an invitation to join one of the world's most exclusive sport associations, the South West Shingles Yacht Club, and from his 160 distinguished fellow members he should be able to draw some comfort, if not amusement.



There she goes: Tugboats help get the Ever Given moving after the ship had been wedged sideways in the Suez Canal

The club was formed in 1984 by David Latchford, who was sailing Backchat from Cowes to Poole with the new auto-helm at work.

Visibility was down to about 28 miles but, due to an ebb tide, the auto-helm steered slightly off course, and while David was distracted with other important sailing duties, such as opening a bottle, the yacht hit the South West Shingles buoy head-on, causing the splintering of fibreglass, the bending of metal and huge embarrassment.

Some weeks after the shame had subsided, he had the idea of naming the club after the buoy – a hefty, bright red navigational marker the main point of which is to warn shipping off a shallow area rather than present a hazard in itself – for members of the marine fraternity who have had various misadventures at sea.

By chance, the day he launched it, Commander Colin Hamilton, on HMS Jupiter, got it “ever so slightly wrong” trying to execute a U-turn on his way out of the Port of London, inadvertently rubbing up against London Bridge.

It was no more than a nudge, but damage to both the frigate and the bridge cost millions. He was enrolled as the second member.

At the same time, a woman named June had to be rescued from the Bay of Biscay after flipping her trimaran. A friend who had read news of Cdr Hamilton’s admission to the SWSYC suggested that she should join. She did and, as a happy ending to both stories, she and the Commander ended up marrying.

Notable members range from Ben Ainslie, one of the most successful sailors in Olympic history, to a lady who was down below – to use a nautical term – with her husband when their yacht ploughed into Geoff Holt, the quadriplegic transatlantic sailor, who fell off the back of his boat at the start of the Round Britain solo yacht race.

Harold Cudmore is in for sinking the King of Norway’s yacht, sponsored by Jameson, off Cowes during the Admiral’s Cup. A photograph of the boat going down was captioned: “Jameson’s on the rocks” in the following day’s Telegraph.

Andy Coles was commanding the top secret but wonderfully named submarine HMS Astute when it was grounded off the Isle of Skye in 2010. Its cover was blown not by Russian spies but by a fisherman walking his dog on the beach.

Tony Bullimore was already a member and even flying the club burgee when the Exide Challenger capsized in the Southern Ocean. When he was finally picked up after five days in his upturned boat by the Australian navy, Bullimore was contacted by Latchford via VHF radio to thank him personally for doing so much for the club.

Ordinarily, Good Friday is the day the SWSYC would hold its annual memorial event, when a flotilla would arrive at the “clubhouse” – the SWS buoy – and mark the passing of any members by chucking a granite rock with their name inscribed over the side, therefore increasing the chance of someone running aground in the future. It would then be followed by a long lunch.

The captain of the Ever Given need have no fear – he is in great company, and may even find a wife.



The Club has its own website [URL: http://www.swsyc.co.uk/](http://www.swsyc.co.uk/) but it has not been updated since January 2016.

It's not a war

Baird Maritime Workboat World, Grey Power May 2021

Just suppose the master of the *Ever Given*, as his ship came up the top of the Red Sea and approached the Suez Canal, had scrutinised the weather reports for the next 24 hours and concluded that the high winds forecast suggested that he should stay at anchor until it calmed down a bit. Or, if he had weighed up the situation and said that a passage was safe only with the addition of a powerful tug to help with the steering. The big COSCO ship ahead of him in the convoy had opted for such assistance and indeed a large LNGC bound for the north had postponed its passage because of the weather.

Hypotheses are always dangerous and doubly so with the benefit of hindsight, but one wonders what the reaction of the ship's operators might have been, had the master of the EG opted for either of these strategies on the grounds of prudence. Prudence itself is a word that is sadly derided in the full-on, go-on, stop-on world of modern shipping, where caution is condemned and risk-taking expected by those who sit secure ashore and never have to take any themselves.

Years ago, in the liner company I served, we were expected to read the company's standing orders as each voyage began. I forget the exact wording, but there was a telling phrase which stated that nobody would ever be criticised for erring on the side of safety or acting with prudence. You would probably find words approximating to this today, but then they actual meant what they said. There was no inquest about why a master slowed down for heavy weather, or to time his port arrival in daylight. If the master went the "long way around" to avoid a storm, or demanded an extra tug, his actions would never be questioned.

You can read accounts of seafaring in wartime, when people quite literally worked themselves to an early death to keep their ships safe in the face of enemy action. But we are not in a war today, but merely operating a marine transport service and we maybe ought to step back a bit and just consider what we are asking human beings to do to keep their machinery operating 24-7. It is worth while taking a look at accident investigations and consider how many expensive and often fatal mistakes have been caused at least in part by the omission of prudence and caution from an action.

Crashes in narrow channels or fairways have often been caused by simple impatience, by people whose minds have been warped by the need for “utmost expedition”; who refused to wait to let the other ship clear the bend or the channel. They were often “short cuts to destruction”.

We have exhausted people, who probably cannot think straight, who are in such a state because of what is expected of them, who lie about their hours of rest, and operating in grossly undermanned ships where the manning certificate bears no resemblance to the reality of real need. Just yesterday I was reading an account by the Safety Board in the Netherlands of a fatal accident on a small ship which depended on a cook and trainee handling the lines on a tiny and congested mooring deck and managing to kill a 57 year old crew member when a line got around the screw and parted. “Poor communication and tiredness” were contributors, but it occurred to me that an additional proper able seaman would not have gone amiss.

There is something of a debate going on in the UK at present about whether trainee merchant bankers and young lawyers should have to work 95 hour weeks, something to which Generation Z seems to be markedly averse. I’m afraid that my mind immediately moved afloat, to a world where this sort of inhumane regime has long become established for a fraction of the rewards enjoyed by those pampered folk ashore, with absolutely no debate or appeal to higher authority. We are supposed to “build back better” after the pandemic, but will any of such intentions be transmitted to the operation of modern merchant ships, which are undermanned by any reasonable measure, with people driven by a fanatical demand for speed to take dangerous risks and threatened when they don’t?

It is an attitude that needs to change. We have unreasonable expectations and ridiculous assumptions that people are robots, that ships run on tram lines rather than in a hazardous and unpredictable environment. We need to get away from some lout yelling down the telephone that such and such a delay is costing \$x thousand every minute and somebody’s head is going to be on the block. We are not still in the Battle of the Atlantic and we need to slow down and give prudence, caution and seamanship the priority they deserve.

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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.

**The cut-off date for the next edition will be
21st May 2021**

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](mailto:yourname@kindle.com)

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

Reminder

Members are reminded that some subs and 250 Club contributions are overdue and the distribution list will be amended accordingly.