



## Gone Aloft G.F. Cartwright

Past Captain Gerry Cartwright passed away at Winchester Hospital on the evening of June 24th.

Gerry was born in London in 1935. His father died as the result of an industrial accident in 1938, and the family moved to Surrey in 1939. In 1946 they emigrated to Canada, as his mother had two brothers there. He attended school in Winnipeg for eighteen months, but his mother didn't like the long cold winters and so they returned to Surrey in 1948, where he finished his formal education at Wallington County Grammar School.

After school he was employed by Union-Castle Line at their Head Office in Fenchurch Street until he was called up for National Service in the Royal Air Force in 1953. After basic training he enjoyed a cruise to Ceylon on the troopship "Empire Orwell" and spent the rest of his service on that idyllic island.

On demobilisation, in 1955, he returned to Union-Castle Line Head Office. In 1959 he was temporarily transferred to work in the Johannesburg and Cape town offices. On his return to the London Office he decided that life at sea appeared to be more pleasant than commuting to London, and so at the age of 24 years he applied for a transfer to the sea staff. He made his first voyage, in a working capacity, on "Pendennis Castle" in December 1959, and thereafter sailed at various times on the Mail Service and the East African Service. On "Braemar Castle" in KGV dock, in September 1963, he signed on an attractive first trip Nursing Sister. On sailing day she was warned, by one of his ex colleagues from London Office, to have nothing to do with him but after a whirlwind romance Anne and Gerry were married on Burns' Night 1964. He claimed it made it conveniently easy for him to remember anniversaries and he never forgot one.

Once promoted to Purser on the Kenya Castle in '65 he spent most of the time on the "SA Oranje" and "SA Vaal", with occasional spells on the "Pendennis Castle" and "Edinburgh Castle". He was well liked, by passengers and crew alike.

Captain Reg Kelso says, "Throughout my seafaring service with Union-Castle/B&C I served with Gerry on many occasions and each and every one is recalled with pleasure. He was a man who made friends easily and the many messages that poured in following the news of his passing reflected the extent of that friendship among his seafaring friends and membership of the SMMC."

When the Union-Castle Line passenger service ended in 1977 he joined Townsend Thoresen Ferries at Felixstowe, working mainly on the Europoort service, with occasional forays on the Zeebrugge and Cairnryan to Larne routes. Townsend Thoresen was taken over by P & O European Ferries in 1982, shortly before the collision between "European Gateway" and "Speedlink Vanguard" on December 19 that year. The "European Gateway" capsized and six lives were lost but Gerry was rescued by the Harwich Pilot Vessel.

He retired in 1992 and that year Reg Kelso proposed him as a member of the Club. He became a Harpooner in 1998 and Functions Officer in 2000, a position he held for ten years until he was elected Captain of the Club in 2010.

Gerry was the first ever non-Master Mariner to be so appointed and that is a reflection of the regard in which he was held by his fellow Cachalots. After his year of office he remained a Harpooner until 2020.

He was suffering from advanced prostate cancer and kidney problems but was not in pain and continued to lead an active life until a few days before his death. He was admitted to hospital with chest pains and ongoing kidney problems on the Wednesday and passed away on Thursday evening, 'peacefully' according to his son Robert who was with him.

To Robert and Gerry's other son Richard and their families we extend our deepest sympathy on the loss of "An Officer and a Gentleman".



Gerry and Anne, who passed away in 2019, with June Kelso on board the "Thetis Dolphin", a 35 foot Dolphin Class yacht they shared with the Kelsos and others.



Probably the last picture of Gerry, celebrating his 86th birthday in the garden of Ian & Joanne Thomson, on 12th June.