

# Gone Aloft

## Captain Henry Frank Forse.

17th July 1935 - 18th December 2021.

Henry Forse was born in Paignton, Devon and, as his parents separated and divorced while he was still a small child, he was brought up by his mother and his grandmother in Brixham. His mother married a Belgian fisherman after the war and Henry lived and was educated for a time in Belgium before returning to Brixham where his mother and step father owned a fishing boat. Henry loved to fish and soon grew to love the sea.

Aged 14, it was his choice to join the training ship *Arethusia* which was moored off Upnor in Kent. He spent over 2 years there between 1949-1951 having a nautical education. *Arethusia* taught young men the skills of seamanship, swimming, gunnery, gymnastics and signalling hand in hand with a formal education. One of Henry's special duties was 'Captains Quarters Boy' and as the Captain's wife was Dutch and Henry speaking some Flemish could converse with her. He did very well and his final report commented "A quiet superior type of boy who will work hard and strive for promotion".

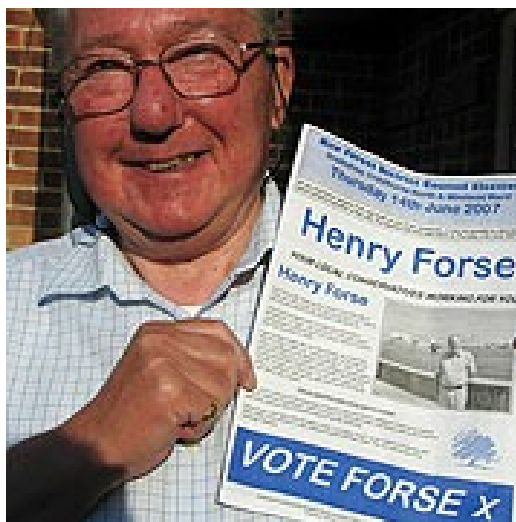
Having graduated from *Arethusia*, Henry's first ship was Union Castle's *Bloemfontein Castle* in 1951 where he was a Deck Boy. By the time he was 18, he had sailed around the world twice. He worked his way up through the ranks to 3rd Mate, serving on ships which included *Pipriki & Tekoa* (both NZS) and *Barton Grange* (Holders). He then served with the *RFA Fort Dunvegan* before taking a short break in 1958 to marry and raise a family. For about 2 years, Henry and his wife Anne became launderette owners in Ashford, Middlesex. Henry went back to sea in the early 1960s, serving on more ships which included *Africa Palm* (Palm Line) *Tilapa*, *Camito* and *Changuinola* (all Fyffes). More exams, his first ship as 2nd Mate was the *SS Turrialba* (Fyffes again) in 1963 and then he was 1st Mate on the *MV Tillerman* (Rowbothams) in the mid 1960s when he also gained his Master's Ticket. Henry worked for all sorts of companies which included Union Castle, Fyffes, ESSO and Westminster Dredging where commanded the *Seastone*.

In the late 1960s Henry got jobs in the Port of Southampton, he worked for Killick Martin followed by Solent Container Services handling cargo where he worked for a number of years. Although he was in the twilight of his career, he

was tempted back to sea by Red Funnel in the 1990s where he was the Relief Master. Henry retired from the sea in 1999.

In 2007 Henry stood as the Conservative candidate for the New Forest District Council and came up with a winning election slogan, albeit unintentionally.

He hadn't noticed the unfortunate (?) juxtaposition of the X with his name when he started to deliver his leaflets. They were received with some amusement, if not hilarity, by bemused



locals and even the National media got in on the act.

Initially, Henry was upset at the *faux pas* but New Forest MP Julian Lewis assured him that it was all great publicity.

With a message like that Henry was duly elected, *nem con* we would think, and he made many friends serving one term for the people of part of the Forest where he lived for many years.

Henry had become a member of the Club in 1967 when he was a Shift Manager at Solent Container Services and he was our longest serving Cachalot bar one.

Henry was married twice, and leaves his wife Freda. He had 3 children, Jonathan, Lorna and Emma by his first marriage and will be terribly missed by all his family. Henry was 86.

*The funeral will take place at the Test Vale Crematorium, Ridge Lane, Romsey, SO51 6AA, at 1300 on Friday 14th January. with a reception afterwards at the Green Man, Brook, SO43 7HE*

*Would those wishing to attend please contact Freda beforehand so she has an idea of numbers [freda.forse@me.com](mailto:freda.forse@me.com)*

*Thanks to Jonathan Forse for his help with this obituary*