

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 99

June 2022

Captain's Log

It is now a few months since Captain Andy Moll wrote his final Captain's Log and a lot has happened since. Firstly, the country was battered by storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin in less than seven days with record breaking winds of 122 mph recorded at the Needles which in turn brought record sales of fence panels to timber merchants! Then the world was hit by the invasion of Ukraine, record inflation and cost of living crisis.

Throughout all this and with Covid restrictions eased, there has been regular attendance by members at the RBL for their weekly salty tales over a beer; curry lunches continue and preparations are now well in hand for the Shipping Festival Service to be held at St Michael's Church on 9th June. Robin is planning for the annual golf day in September for which I have started practising – I can get the ball round the bend and through the castle door but I still get beaten by the windmill! After two years of lockdowns, it is good to be getting back to some normality.

With summer sunshine and warmer weather, we have now had our first family BBQ and after donning the chef's hat I was reminded of our past Stowaway, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh who was a great fan of BBQ's and liked simple food. On inspecting the crew of a newly launched warship, he asked the first person in the line up what do you do onboard. 'A Chef,' the sailor replied. 'We don't have Chef's onboard warships, just cooks', said the Duke. 'Yes Sir!' replied the sailor. Moving down the line Prince Philip asked the second sailor what his role was onboard. "A Cook, Sir" he replied. "How long have you been a Cook?" asked the Duke? 'About 30 seconds Sir' was the reply!

It will come as no surprise that my chosen charity for the year will again be the Southampton Sea Cadets as I have been their President for eleven years. In that time under the Chairmanship of our Past Captain the unit has expanded its premises and has been able to increase the number of Cadets to over 65. To achieve all we have done, thanks should also be given to Southampton Ship Owners and Williams Shipping who have been very generous with their continuing support. We have recently refurbished our pontoons with new planks. The opportunities offered through being a Sea Cadet can change young lives and encourage a few to embark on a career at sea. We are always looking for adult volunteers either as uniformed staff, instructors or on the management team.

Finally, a big thank you to our Past Captain Andy Moll who had an unprecedented two years in post steering the club through Covid whilst having a very busy day job. Thank you Andy.

See you all at the Shipping Festival Service.

Martin

Captain Martin Phipps MBE, Captain of the Club

Boatsteerer's Locker

Greetings to all, going back to a quarterly contribution is not as easy as it sounds. It means I have to remember what may have happened in the past three months!!

We have opened up the Club room on a Thursday as well as the Friday although only three members make a visit on a Thursday once a month although Friday's are becoming busy again.

I have continued with opening the Zoom box when I have been available but apologies to any of you for those times when I have been unavailable. I will continue to open up until we decide to discontinue the Zoom subscription.

250 Club – Remember, you have to be in it to win it!!!

We have now used the random name generator, Wheel of Names for the past two months which has introduced an element of razzamatazz to the monthly draw. Well, maybe not but it's different from dipping a hand in the bag of old cardboard numbers.

Functions

John Noble indicated at the last meeting of the management committee that he would be standing down to provide more time to his election as Chairman of the Conway Association. He has been helping hand over to Julia Whorwood.

John has decided to resign with immediate effect and Julia has taken over the role. We thank John for his contribution to the role of Functions Officer and wish him well in his support of the Conway Association.

If you have any ideas for an event etc, or wish to make contact with Julia to assist, please use functions@cachalots.org.uk or boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk

Curry Lunch - Saturday 25th June 1230 for 1300

Due to a poor experience at Kutí's recently it was decided to look elsewhere. John and Julia visited Everest Cuisine at the end of Queensway in Southampton., has been confirmed with the venue. A flyer has been issued and a list to record names available on the noticeboard in the Club room.

Unfortunately the Summer Club Supper was cancelled due to circumstances beyond of our control.

Shipping Festival Service - Thursday 9th June at 1900.

The Shipping Festival Service is all planned for St. Michael's Church in Southampton. The format will follow similar to those held in previous years but modified due to the layout and smaller size of St. Michael's Church. The Lord-Lieutenant and Mayor of Southampton, with other principal guests from the maritime world will be attending. There will be a parade of flags outside prior to the service.

We would like six volunteers to assist with guiding duties in the church and about four to assist with setting up and assisting at the post service reception. This will be held in the Stella Maris Hall adjacent to the church.

The church will be open for us from 1730 to allow setting up for the band and our own items.

Cachalots Golf Day – Thursday 29th September 2022

After the success of last year's resurrection of this event, we will be holding another at Paulton's Golf Centre near Ower. I already have 32 confirmed players so four places left. The day will cost £60 and include bacon buttie and drink at start, a round of golf and a meal and presentation of prizes afterwards.

Trafalgar Dinner - Friday 21st October 2022

A dinner to celebrate Trafalgar Day is being planned by our Post Captain, Andrew Moll and the Boatsteerer at the Grand Café, Southwestern House, Southampton. The Mayor of Southampton, as Admiral of the Port will be in attendance and Sir Alan Massey is our Guest Speaker. Details will follow soon.

In Closing!

Last week the BBC, and Daily Star! announced we would be enjoying 'loads a sun' with temperatures above those in Mediterranean beaches. As I write this it has been raining, got cooler and looking like it will be the usual UK summer of 'who knows what'. Yesterday I got very wet playing golf!!!!

Enjoy your summer, wherever you may be.

Robin

Captain Robin Plumley MBE

Boatsteerer

boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk

A long lunch

The Curry lunch held at Kuti's on the 30th April did not go with the smoothness that we have come to expect. Our lunches were always advertised as 1200 for a 1230 sit down and this has recently changed to 1230 for 1300. Now, we are told, Kuti's does not open until 1300, which seems a strange time for a lunchtime opening. Whatever, the 23 of us, as booked, were primed, seated and waiting at 1300 but the starter course did not appear until 1400 and it was another hour before that course had been cleared and the main course served.

We have been customers of Kuti's for many years now and have never suffered such tardy service. On the previous occasion there was a longer than usual period between courses but we put that down to a large family occasion that was being held upstairs. The food, when it came, was up to the usual quality, plentiful and hot. The reason for the poor service was lack of staff. There was one bar person and two serving staff looking after us and the approximately 10 other customers who were in three family groups. How many were manning the galley we do not know.

Mr Kuti himself finally appeared and almost tearfully apologised for the lack of service, explaining that he couldn't get or keep staff because they were almost immediately poached by other businesses. It is true that where we were used to seeing familiar faces, now it is different staff every time, including in the supervisory and management roles.

Despite Mr Kuti's promise that he would be there personally to supervise next time, a new venue was quickly investigated for our next Curry outing on 25th June.

Everest Cuisine is situated on the corner of Queensway and Briton Street and was formerly **POSH**, where several Club Curry Lunches were held in the past. It serves traditional Indian and Napalese food and the menu will be: poppadoms with chutneys, lamb& chicken currys with rice, bhajis, pakoras, flat bread, followed by Ice cream.

Price will be **£22** per person, exclusive of service. Tea/ coffee extra.

About a six minute walk from the multi-storey car park in Eastgate Street, there is limited on street parking adjacent to the restaurant but the bays in Queen's Terrace will give you up to four hours parking. The nearest car park is in Gloucester Square off the High Street which has the same tariff as Eastgate Street.

Be aware that the restaurant is accessed by a three flight stairway and there is no lift.



Cachalot David Lee spotted this potential new Club house with nice Atlantic views while on a break in Madeira in March. However he also reported that there was a gale blowing with some snow and he was glad to get back to sunny Warsash!

I wonder if they can accommodate 30 or so for a Curry Lunch?

THE BLUE FUNNEL LINE 'MIDDIES' AND FRIENDS REUNION



The Alfred Holt flag was proudly flying on HQS Wellington on Victoria Embankment on Wednesday May 4th. The occasion was a buffet lunch onboard to celebrate the 2022 Blue Funnel Line 'Middies' and Friends Reunion. That the 'friends' now clearly outnumber the Middies is a sad reflection of the affect that time and tide has had on their dwindling number. Of the 59 present, 27 were from the SMMC, including six Middies.

The striking of eight bells by organiser Ian Thomson announced the commencement of the event with a sparkling wine drinks reception on the quarterdeck. This was followed by an excellent buffet lunch in the Court Room where there was much intermingling between the tables as the conversations (and the wine) flowed. After some post lunch speeches and reminiscences, at which the Cachalots were again well represented, we toasted Birthday Boy Leslie Morris and then opted to continue in the Wardroom where we drank them out of IPA. The final bell was struck at 1700 to announce the closing of the bar which was, perhaps, just as well as some of those present were just getting into their stride.



Left: Senior Middy Ken Owen and Ian Thomson welcome the guests on the quarterdeck.

Top right: Captain Ken Owen, Allwyn Owen, Joanne Thomson, Captain Roy Whelan, Captain Will Stoker and Ian Thomson.

Bottom right: On one of the Cachalot tables, Middy Peter Grant and friends.

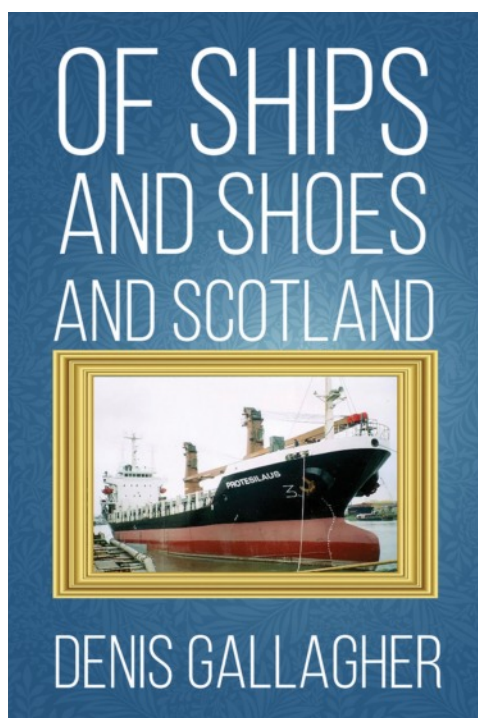


More photographs taken at the event can be found online at:
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/S6ekz3tBSovpfZeD8>.

Of Ships and Shoes and Scotland

Continuing with the Blue Funnel theme, Denis Gallagher was a Middy in the late fifties and has written a book on his early life in Scotland, his time at sea and subsequent life in Australia. Following a prompt from Ian Thomson I bought the book, purely on the strength of this excellent forward in it, written by Michael Grey.

It is available online at Amazon, also from Waterstones and, I suspect, all good book sellers, as they say.



Denis Gallagher is just one in the great diaspora of British seafarers who have spread all over the world since the implosion and disappearance of the world's biggest merchant navy. Like so many who had been in this workforce, his subsequent career has been one of variety and interest, and in this series of autobiographical accounts, he offers the reader some insights into his life. What makes Denis rather different from the run of the mill ex-mariner, is his ability as an acute observer of both people and place with the facility to recollect incidents in perceptive detail, but recounted with a seaman's sense of wit and humour.

There are thirteen accounts here, which might be thought of as individual flagstones on the path of a life well-lived. He begins where he began, recalling the ambience of the Scottish village, Whins of Milton where he spent his childhood growing up in the forties and fifties, which if you think about it, is as remote from the life lived by modern youth as somebody living on another planet. Without necessarily getting unduly political, he describes the sort of Scottish education that was once renowned throughout the world, but which has been lost under the 21st century dispensation: 'where all must have prizes.' He may not have admitted it at the time, but his considerable ability with words surely owes a great deal to those unbending, brutal teachers of an earlier and more traditional period, and a system which delivered a thorough and well-rounded education to generations of Scottish children (Michael himself was educated in Bonnie Scotland at primary school, his father being in the Andrew.)

Maritime readers of a certain age will warm to the account of his final semi-hysterical interview with his headmaster, appalled that Denis had elected to go to sea rather than Glasgow University. If nothing else, it demonstrates the startling ignorance of even well-educated landmen in a so-called 'maritime nation' of the debt they owed the British merchant service, which had saved the country from starvation at a horrendous cost of lives lost, only a few years earlier. Denis was accepted as a midshipman with Alfred Holt's legendary shipping company and with one brief interlude was to serve through to second officer aboard Glen Line and Blue Funnel ships. Latter-day readers may marvel at the sort of training which was given by a shipping company as it developed its young officers, something that has all but vanished in the accountant-infested world of 21st-century shipping.

He provides some wonderful pen-portraits of the masters-under-God with whom he served, the deck apprentices, mates, engineer officers, cooks, stewards and boatswains, Chinese and Liverpoolian who populated Alfie's Welsh Navy. In what Denis might suggest were lesser shipping companies, we used to make fun of Holt's singular methods from navigation to cargo-care but they didn't lose ships, and managed to keep them full, with fast passages at least until the end. He recounts some of his scrapes and self-inflicted problems, caused perhaps by a boisterous personality that emerges in these pages.

The accounts as to his new life in Australia are similarly perceptive, as Denis embraces the business of becoming an Australian with enjoyment and energy, no whinging pom here! The enthusiasm for football which was once demonstrated in the bleak ground of Stirling Albion, is transferred to the mysteries of Aussie Rules. It is clear he hugely enjoys his new country as he brings up his three children in a Brisbane suburb, with the nuances that make Queenslanders different from the folk 'down south' and its metropolitan elites made eminently clear. We have affectionate portraits of those staples of life, the pub, the beer, the sport and the rebellious characteristics of the Aussie at his best, carefully portrayed, albeit by someone who hasn't forgotten his Stirlingshire roots and Blue Funnel upbringing.

As a shipowner and marine consultant, Denis found himself travelling around the Pacific islands, trying to make sense of the special needs of these amazing places, and his accounts of this chapter in his life introduce us with great affection and lots of laughter to the people of these remote communities. One gets the impressions that Josef Conrad would have found himself very much at home in these surroundings. Here are voyages aboard unsuitable inter-island ships, learning something of the dilemma facing people whose dependence on shipping is total, but whose ability to afford the sort of safety and standards enjoyed by developed industrialised countries, is just not within their price range. Somehow, they make light of their troubles, and Denis can write about all this with great sympathy. He shows the reader some of the problems faced by people making a living in New Guinea, the remote-north of Queensland and the islands of the Torres Strait with their marine infrastructure designed for an earlier age and largely unsuitable for modern ships. The author introduces us to local politicians, and larger-than-life characters who dominate these communities. He also has a lot of fun, and can communicate this to his readers admirably.

This is a book that can be enjoyed at several different levels. Old or contemporary mariners will enjoy it for its reminiscence and a pleasing lack of nostalgia for a way of maritime life which has passed, lost because of containers, communications and cost-accountants. But anyone who enjoys literature and can appreciate the pen and eye of a craftsman, will find it difficult to put this book down as they walk over the thirteen flagstones of Denis Gallagher's life.

Minister discovers shipping industry

The Maritime Advocate online Issue 801 April 8th 2022

By Michael Grey MBE

(Michael Grey had cause to gently admonish me for promoting him to OBE in the last edition, whereas, he pointed out, he is an MBE. Sorry Michael)

“In the shipping industry” an old Greek shipowner said to me, “we operate not with the help of the government, but in spite of it”. And it is absolutely true, no matter where a shipping operation might be based, although some governments are more landlubberly than others.

This statement, uttered more in sorrow and weary resignation than in anger many years ago, came back to me as we read with mounting disbelief of the suggestion by the UK Secretary of State for Transport that the ports must become a sort of inspectorate to check out the pay packets of the crews of visiting ships. This of course was the wheeze as the government flailed around seeking to punish P&O Ferries for its combined HR and PR catastrophe in the summary dismissal of 800 of its employees.

The national minimum wage was the weapon of choice and it was intolerable that any seafarer aboard ships docking in this realm should be paid any less than this hourly rate. Urgent talks would take place with countries on the other end of ferry routes to see if “corridors” could be established along which only the minimum waged might travel. And the ports would be tasked to check out the pay packets, preventing ships with seafarers who are paid less than the going rate from entering these fair wage waters. Meanwhile all sorts of government departments are roaring around to facilitate the prosecution of P&O Ferries and its unrepentant chief executive for various unspecified crimes, once the lawyers can agree on their nature.

You can probably guess where this is all going. Who remembers the suggestion of some years ago that urgent action needed to be taken around the “European Lake” to preserve jobs which were disappearing fast as operators searched around looking for cheaper crews. That initiative went down like a lead balloon, when the highly economic workforces of the new EU members from Eastern Europe became available and dramatically undercut the conditions of crews from the West, without their employers searching further afield.

I can recall a conversation with a British short sea shipowner, who ran a very decent fleet with UK seafarers, who told me that he just could not compete with others manning their ships with cheaper workforces. He told me that he was sincerely ashamed that many of his British seafarers were in receipt of government benefits, such as the paucity of their pay packets. But there was no way that he could pay them more if he was to compete with road haulage or competition manned more economically. His fine little family company, it goes without saying, is now just a memory.

The P&O Ferries behaviour was downright disgraceful, both in the manner of its labour relations and the possibly fatal harm to the brand, but there have been no government interventions or ministerial grandstanding throughout the long years in which jobs on ships have been outsourced to contracted labour, to manning agents in far off places who will offer seafarers for a few dollars less. There are seafarers working for far less than the UK minimum wage in every port in the kingdom, in passenger ships, freight ferries, coastal tankers, supply boats, short sea and coastal traders. But to listen to the indignant Transport Secretary and the politicians of every party, you would think that this is something new and extraordinarily outrageous that has been just discovered as the result of P&O Ferries’ shocking behaviour.

The search for ever cheaper labour is endemic in an industry that is characterised by its parsimony. There was no ministerial action when we first saw Philippine or sub-continental hands shivering in their oilskins in offshore craft in winter-bound Peterhead, or living aboard battered middle water trawlers. I recall that it was left to people like port chaplains to intervene on behalf of sub-continental seafarers running a shuttle tanker around the coast on a twelve-month contract, without a single hour off.

Nobody, other than the unions, has even commented on the way the European short sea fleet has gravitated to cheap and often quite incompetent flags, just to shave a few more dollars off their costs. I once took pride in my knowledge of geography, but many of these ships are registered in ports most of us will have no clue as to where they might be. There will be hands aboard these ships to whom the UK minimum wage would be unimaginable wealth, but it is only their willingness to work for far less that makes the economics of these vessels just about add up.

And that is the reality, which might be just about dawning on Grant Shapps, in his new-found discovery of the maritime world, where a culture of cheapness has suited everyone, as far back as the days when a dug-out canoe was the channel ferry of choice..

Anyway, the ports have made it pretty clear what they think about the Minister’s grand plan for a wages inspectorate to be bolted on to their responsibilities, thus alienating the customers they work hard to win and retain. I thought their response extremely diplomatic, when more seamanlike language might have been entirely appropriate.



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and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey greyrjm@gmail.com

There's nothing new in ditching the crew

The recent P&O debacle over replacing crew with cheaper labour is nothing new. Over fifty years ago, in 1970, I was Second Mate on the *Trefusis*, a 10,000 ton tramper run by Hain-Nourse, a subsidiary of P&O. We had arrived in Yokohama when with little notice the British crew were replaced by a Chinese one. The officers were unaffected but none of us had any experience of sailing with a Chinese crew although several of us, mainly from the Nourse side, had sailed with what were then known as Lascar crews. It was common on those ships for the carpenter to be Chinese but that was about the limit of our knowledge of a very different culture and language. We did not even have the advantage of any familiarity with Chinese Pidgin English, as spoken on Chinese crewed ships such as Blue Funnel.

Anyway, the British crew were dispatched off to Tokyo for their flight home but they did not go meekly. Some saw it just as a shortened trip while the more astute realised just what was happening to their jobs and future prospects. They were put up overnight at a quality hotel in Tokyo, an experience, we later heard, that the hotel had no desire to repeat.

As one coach departed with the British crowd, another drew up on the quay with their Chinese replacements. Someone had advised the Old Man that it would be politic to welcome the new crew by greeting the senior hand, the boatswain, at the gangway but Captain Lister balked at the idea of treating him like some kind of visiting dignitary. Whose loss of face was the greatest was a moot point. I remember that the Bosun's name was Ho Fuk and that seemed to sum the whole thing up.

It made perfect operational and economical sense for British shipping companies such as BI and Blue Funnel, trading predominately around India and the Far East, to employ local seafarers but then the vessels were specially designed to accommodate their different needs.

The *Trefusis*, a typical 'white' crew ship, had just one galley in which the Chief Cook, the Second Cook & Baker and two galley boys would prepare the same food for all hands, whether it was served in the Officers Saloon or in the Crews' Mess. Chinese and Indian crewed ships had separate catering facilities for the officers, with dedicated chefs and staff serving mainly European cuisine, while the rest of the crew were provided for by different cooks for the deck, engine and catering ratings. Even different food, as the cooks would go ashore to the local markets when they could and barter with their allowance for their own choice of chickens feet, beaks and other such delicacies.

So, on the *Trefusis*, in a space designed for the preparation of one meal, we had at least four cooks, all trying to prepare four different ones. Harmonious it was not, and although sharp knives and cleavers were close to hand I do not recall that much blood was spilled but there was a lot of shouting and screaming..

Nor do I recall any problems, safety wise, even though there was little verbal communication between officers and crew. The deck and engine ratings had been recruited from Shanghai in communist China and they seemed quite competent in the operation of that class of ship, albeit in those days we did not have the equivalent of the MCA breathing down our neck, nor such things as safety inspections and drills other than BOT sports.

We officers were spoiled in that our Chef and his staff had been recruited in Hong Kong from the P&O passenger ship pool. The Chef had worked at the renowned Mandarin Hotel but had acquired a gambling habit to such an extent that his family sent him away to sea so they were at least sure of receiving his monthly allotment. I remember the Christmas meal which started with Port & Starboard soup: a thick red tomato soup on the left side of the plate and an equally thick green pea soup on the right, the line between them perfectly straight with no intermingling of the two liquids. The roast turkey came to the table seemingly whole but had already been carved and carefully re-assembled without any sign of the joins. Very different catering to what we tramping men were accustomed to.

I don't think that any other ships of the Hain-Nourse fleet changed over to Chinese crew but it was a time of great upheaval with the ships being subsumed into the P&O General Cargo Division and then quickly sold on or scrapped. *Trefusis* was renamed *Strathteviot* in 1975 and sold to the Greeks in 1978. Detained in Basra during the Iran-Iraq war, I don't think she ever got out.

Terry Clark

THE CACHALOTS
SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS'
CLUB



SHIPPING FESTIVAL SERVICE

**St. Michael's Church,
Southampton
Thursday 9th June 2022
1900**



(see page 2)

Curry Lunch

EVEREST CUISINE

A new venue for the next Curry Lunch
On the corner of Queensway and Briton Street
(Some will remember it as POSH)

**Saturday 25th June
1230 for 1300**

The price will be **£22** per person, exclusive of gratuity.

Nearest car park is Gloucester Square, off the High Street.

Book, and pay, through the office a.s.a.p. please.

(see pages 2 & 3)



Email

john@instituteofseamanship.co.uk



Contact us →

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Welcome to The Institute of Seamanship

The above is a screen shot of the welcome page of the website of the Institute of Seamanship and we are pleased to include here a note from their Chairman, John Johnson-Allen, which is self explanatory.

We are a relatively small organisation, whose members all share a common interest in the skill and practice of seamanship in all its forms, past present and future.

We produce a Journal which is emailed to members six times a year- sample articles are on our website- have an annual lecture, which is part of the Wellington Trust series, every December and hope to be able to return to arranging an annual visit to a relevant location. We also support the Seachange Sailing Trust by sponsoring a berth to enable a young person to experience practical seamanship on a Thames sailing barge.

The annual subscription is £25. Members may use the post nominal letters MIOs.

Do visit our website, instituteofseamanship.co.uk, to read more about us.

Contact our chairman, John Johnson-Allen at john.johnson.allen@gmail.com for membership.

Flemming is a Caseworker in the Gosport Division of the charity and has achieved some excellent results although he is not without health issues himself.

Admiral of the Port's Trafalgar Dinner

**At Grand Café
South Western House
Southampton SO14 3AS**

Friday 21st October 2022

1900 for 1930

Black Tie

Tickets £55 each

**Available from 21st July, only from
Southampton Master Mariners' Club**

***First Floor, Southampton Royal British Legion Club,
Eastgate Street, Southampton. SO14 3HB (sae please)***

Tel: 023 8022 6155 (Thursday & Friday 1130 - 1430)

Email: office@cachalots.org.uk

Full details on our website: www.cachalots.org.uk

In Aid of the Southampton Sea Cadets

250 Club

Feb

A A Melia

B E Peck

March

S Daniels

F N Pedersen

April

K Dagnall

A D Saunders

URL: <http://www.cachalots.org.uk/cachalots-deck/blogalog/>

A Criminal Pilotage Investigation

The subject of safety v pecuniary advantage in the maritime sector is not confined to just crewing as in the recent P&O case. Barrie Youde is a retired Liverpool pilot of nearly 30 years standing who followed that career with 25 years as a solicitor, specialising in Pilotage Law. In 2014 he took up this case in which he avers that a CHA created a shortage of pilots by obstruction and subsequently granted authorisations to underqualified persons specifically in order to gain a financial advantage for itself. Barrie sees it as a case of corruption and has made 56 Personal Witness Statements and written numerous letters and emails to the Metropolitan Police, Dame Cressida Dick, the Prime Minister, the Speaker, Ministers past and present and made allegations of misconduct in Public office against the Shipping Ministers involved. Some of the Government departments will no longer respond to him and he is treated almost as a vexatious litigant. Here is an explanation of the case that he wrote for The Times in the hope of gaining their interest.

1. The background to the corruption lies in the abuse of the Pilotage Act 1987. The Act gives to local harbour authorities for the first time the discretionary power to impose compulsory pilotage upon shipping and to levy charges for the services of pilots provided by those local authorities. Before 1987 and since recorded time began, the power to impose compulsory pilotage had been reserved to the Crown.

2. The Act provides a statutory definition of a pilot as “A person not belonging to a ship who has the conduct thereof”. To have the conduct of a ship means to have control of the speed and direction of a ship which is being navigated. Accordingly, the master of any ship which is made subject to compulsory pilotage is obliged to transfer control to the pilot; or, in the alternative, to risk prosecution under Section 15(2) of the Act for navigating other than “under pilotage” when subject to the compulsion. It follows necessarily both that a pilot is properly qualified and that a shipmaster is obliged to trust the pilot provided to him. These matters are legally binding on all persons for all purposes.

3. To that end, the harbour authorities are empowered to set the standards to be required of the pilots who operate in their area of jurisdiction. Where standards have been set there is an equal requirement that the standards are maintained at least for as long as the compulsion is also maintained; in default of which there is a clear and obvious breach of the relevant law (The Crown v Milford Haven Harbour Authority 1999 – following the SEA EMPRESS disaster of 1996).

4. In January 2014 Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners operated a compulsory pilotage scheme in accordance with the Pilotage Act 1987. The Commissioners were nominated as a “competent harbour authority”, by Section 1 of the Act and had determined under Section 2 that compulsory pilotage should be imposed in the interest of public safety. The Commissioners had licensed or “authorised” three pilots to perform the necessary pilotage in accordance with qualifications determined under Section 3 of the Act; and the three pilots served on self-employed terms as members of a co-operative (“Foyle Pilots Co-operative”) under Section 4 of the Act. As to payment to the pilots, Section 10 of the Act empowered the Commissioners to levy financial rates as a civil debt against any ship obliged to use the services of the pilots and to pay the pilots via the co-operative in accordance with the rates.

5. The qualifications of pilots determined under Section 3 of the Act were set out in a document entitled “Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners Rules and Regulations for Engagement of Pilots”. The rules and regulation as mentioned required that any candidate for authorisation must initially hold a Class One Master Mariner’s Certificate in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers 1978. Thereafter the candidate would need to undergo a minimum training period of three months before being examined by an examination board consisting of “two Senior Pilots and the Harbour Master”. The rules and regulations required further that after the grant of any authorisation as a pilot, restrictions would remain in place as a matter of probation for at least two years before qualification to perform the pilotage of any ship of more than 140 metres in length overall or 8.3 metres in draft. Accordingly, a minimum period of two years and three months would be required before the best-qualified candidate for authorisation could become qualified to undertake the pilotage of the largest ships making use of the port.

6. On 30th January 2014 the Commissioners proposed to reduce by thirty percent the pilotage rates payable to the pilots whilst leaving the rates chargeable against the ships unaltered. It was proposed that the thirty per-cent placed at issue should be retained by the Commissioners. Notice was given to the three pilots via their co-operative that the reduction in rates paid to them would be implemented in twelve months time (i.e. by 1st February 2015) whether the pilots might agree or not. It was obvious as a matter of chronology that if the pilots might not agree to the reduction in income payable to them then, on and after 1st February 2015, there would be no qualified pilots available to serve in the compulsory pilotage scheme, for the simple reason that the two years and three months minimum probation prior to full qualification for any replacement pilots could not be condensed into twelve months.

7. The three pilots did not agree to the thirty percent reduction in their income and in April 2014 applied to the High Court in Belfast for judicial review of the Commissioners’ proposal. On hearing the initial application in June 2014 Mr Justice Seamus Treacy asked whether there might be any reason for the proposal other than financial gain for the Commissioners. Counsel for the Commissioners (David Scofield QC) admitted that there was no other reason; and permission was granted for the application to proceed to a full hearing, listed for hearing in November 2014.

8. In July 2014 reports were served to both the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Department for Transport at Westminster, asking for intervention in the judicial review proceedings in order to ensure the maintenance of the public safety standards. Admiral Massey (Chief Executive of MCA) responded by letter of 7th July 2014 that he had forwarded his concern to the Department. By letter of 15th August 2014 the Department responded that it would not intervene, stating also that the matter should be determined by the Court.

9. At the hearing in November 2014 proceedings were adjourned by direction of Mr Justice Wear. On 31st December 2014 the Commissioners renewed the authorisations of the three pilots for a further twelve months (i.e. until 31st December 2015). By

1st January 2015 the funds of the three pilots were exhausted and they were unable to pursue the judicial review proceedings any further. In those circumstances the pilots agreed with the Commissioners that the judicial review application should be withdrawn on the condition that the Commissioners and the pilots should each meet their own costs. Accordingly on 8th January 2015 the judicial review proceedings were concluded without judgment of the Court.

10. On 1st June 2015 the Commissioners discontinued all payments to the three pilots and obstructed them from taking any further part in the pilotage arrangements; while at the same time continuing to operate a compulsory pilotage scheme by the use of underqualified pilots. The names of the underqualified pilots are for the greater part unknown because the relevant records are yet to be disclosed to the criminal investigation. It is clear, however, that none of the underqualified pilots was qualified in compliance with the Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners' Rules and Regulations for the Engagement of Pilots. None of the substitute pilots had been examined by any Senior Pilot; and it was a chronological impossibility that any one of the substitute pilots had completed any part of the prescribed two-year probationary service in the pilotage of smaller ships before the pilotage of the largest ships using the port could be undertaken. Accordingly, the Commissioners by their misconduct had wilfully placed in hazard the pilotage of the largest ships using the port, including oil tankers, chemical tankers and large passenger-carrying cruise liners.

11. The three obstructed pilots, in the knowledge that the largest ships using the port were being provided with underqualified substitute pilots, offered nonetheless to continue to provide their services. The offer of the three obstructed pilots was rejected by the Commissioners

12. Reports of the further misconduct of 1st June 2015 at Londonderry were sent to both the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Department for Transport at Westminster. By letter of 16th June 2015 the Shipping Minister at the Department for Transport authorised for release to me a letter acknowledging the repeated warnings, ignoring altogether the Rules and Regulations and pledging the best support to the Commissioners. A copy of the letter of 16th June 2015 is appended to this explanation.

13. The letter mentions a "Pilotage Manual" adopted by the Commissioners. The manual, in common with both the Commissioners and the Department for Transport, ignores, omits and overlooks any reference whatsoever to the standing Rules and Regulations created in accordance with the Act. It is clear that the Rules and Regulations were simply dismissed and abandoned whilst the Commissioners continued nevertheless to impose compulsory pilotage and to levy charges fraudulently in respect thereof, purporting all the while that standards had been maintained within the compulsory pilotage scheme, when the truth is that regulated standards had been abandoned altogether and without legal authority of any kind. The public fraud and breach of public trust were both clear and remain so.

14. The maintenance of the compulsory pilotage scheme obliged the Commissioners to maintain the regulated standards, which they failed wilfully to do; and in which regard the Commissioners continued their failure with unrestricted abandon.

15. On 7th July 2015 a report was sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions and, twelve months later on 11th July 2016, the Metropolitan Police Service opened its criminal investigation 6530204/16 which remains unresolved.

16. It is obvious that in order to provide resolution to the Metropolitan Police criminal investigation the public record of events at Londonderry during 2015 and subsequently will need to be disclosed. At present those records are being suppressed wilfully by persons in the Department for Transport who have the power to obtain the records and, in perversion of the course of criminal justice, have declined to exercise their given power.

Here is the reply from the DfT of 16th June 2015:

Dear Mr Youde,

Thank you for your correspondence addressed to Rt. Hon. Patrick McLaughlin MP and Sir Alan Massey of 10, 12, 14 and 16 June, which alleged there had been breaches of the Pilotage Act 1987 during the piloting of several named ships at Foyle Port. I have been asked to reply.

The Department has sought information from the Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners (LPHC) in respect of the allegation about the Lerax and has been assured by the LPHC that the act of pilotage in question was undertaken by an authorised Class 1 pilot in accordance with their pilotage manual. The LPHC has also provided Information about their provision for piloting Class 1 and 2 vessels generally.

The Department notes that you have written to the Foyle Port harbour master asking a number of questions, and trusts that their reply will satisfy you about the pilotage of the Lerax and other large vessels. The Department will continue to consider how it can best support LPHC to verify that the provisions they have put in place are appropriate.

To date, there has been no attempt by any authority to inspect the LPHC pilotage records of 2015, nor to interview any witnesses.

MetPol consider the case as closed, even though they admit that no investigation has taken place. In the absence of any new evidence they now refuse to engage further with Mr. Youde.

In October 2015, Robert Goodwill, the Shipping Minister at the time, instructed the MCA to issue a 'clean bill of health' to LPHC. He faces allegations of Misconduct in Public Office from Mr. Youde.

The current Shipping Minister, Robert Courts, said in a letter to Justin Madders, Youde's MP, dated 16th November 2021, that he (i.e. the Minister, together with the entire Department of Transport) has "no power" to obtain copy of the pilotage records of a United Kingdom CHA, which begs the question, "then who has?" Youde considers that this claim has no credibility, is plainly dishonest and to date has obstructed the criminal investigation.

Barrie Youde continues to persevere with his criminal investigation and to maintain his sense of humour. See page 13.

In Southampton, to get to unrestricted First Class takes a pilot around five years.

Terry Clark, retired Southampton Pilot

Uncontrollable monsters

The Maritime Advocate online Issue 802 April 22nd 2022

By Michael Grey MBE

“She’s not answering her helm, Pilot!” It is not what anyone on the bridge of any ship wants to hear from the helmsman, particularly when the ship is very large, approaching a bend in the channel or some other nail-biting element of the passage from berth to sea. We don’t yet know if this terse message was called out on the bridge of the Ever Forward, departing the port of Baltimore, just before she slid elegantly into the mud, a berth which she would not vacate for the next 35 days.

We will learn, in due course, because the United States, unlike too many shameful countries, conducts a proper examination of marine incidents and through its excellent agency the National Transportation Safety Board, publishes the findings, usually with commendable speed. After the embarrassment of the Suez Canal grounding, the well-publicised struggle to get the Forward to move backward was probably the last thing a quality carrier wanted at this stage, with the world agonising about its stuttering global supply lines.

It was one of those salvage jobs which, at first sight, did not seem to be that difficult. The ship was apparently undamaged, there was a decent tidal range in the channel and no shortage of towing power to haul the thing off. But with each successive attempt, the situation seemed to deteriorate, with a sort of suction effect of the glutinous silt holding the hull fast over much of her length. The fact that the ship had apparently plunged into the bank at a considerable speed, as she failed to make the bend, would also be responsible for her extended stay, the eventual declaration of General Average, the discharge of some 500 containers and a great deal of dredging around the ship. It would take six powerful tugs, a couple of pulling barges with powerful winches and the lift from the near-spring tide to get the ship moving, to everyone’s considerable relief.

But it won’t be the last time that questions are asked about the low-speed manoeuvrability of these very big ships, which are brilliant at doing their designed tasks in the open sea, but decidedly difficult to handle in tight places. And as the ships have got bigger, the tight places have got tighter, the margins for error have become smaller and what would have been a routine port approach with smaller ships has become somewhat buttock clenching, as these hazards approach.

We now have whole classes of ship which need to operate at faster speeds just to keep sufficient water flowing over the rudder to provide an adequate

turning moment. The faster speed in shallow water, brings with it problems of squat and bank effect, while the huge windage and the changing wind forces from gusts, or different aspects in a turn, require really quite unusual skill and anticipation. The situation may not be assisted by shallow water alarms sounding and even the engine management system deciding to act on its own initiative.

It’s not just monster container ships, or car carriers which seem to require super-dextrous handling in difficult places or unpredictable weather conditions. There are modern big bulk carriers with very slow turning propellers directly driven by their slow-speed engines which, when light ship, are almost un-steerable at the sort of speed a prudent pilot might prefer for a safe passage in a channel. I recall reading an account of a pilot from one well-known bulk port who wrote about having to run at what seemed to him to be a dangerous speed in a channel, crabbing along in a cross-wind and with a tight bend to negotiate before the berth, praying that the tugs would be connected and their skippers alert. You might reasonably argue that there should be tighter weather limits on such ports, or question whether they are legally “safe”, except that the lawyers seemed to be adept at squashing that suggestion, even after a couple of capesized ships were lost trying to leave port in an emergency.

Designers and ship operators focussed upon carrying capacity tend to attribute these occasional groundings to human error – “that’s why we pay for expensive pilots etc.” avoiding any issues of greed and speed. The old saying “quarts into pint pots” comes to mind, although it wouldn’t hurt to look a bit more carefully at the ability of a rudder to actually change the direction of what appears to be an un-steerable modern monster.

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The Maritime Advocate online ([here](#))
www.maritimeadvocate.com

and the author, Cachalot Michael Grey greyrjm@gmail.com



An Old Friend.

My age is almost eighty and my mental age is twenty.
Great kindness have I known. No lack thereof. It's been a-plenty.
It's seen me through the harder times, when going has been tough.
I wonder, was my mis-spent youth just quite mis-spent enough?

Perhaps it was. I do not know. Life has not all been wasted.
Much pleasure and much benefit has been my way and tasted.
Delightfully, exquisitely, with many laughs and titters.
Today I met a long-lost friend, named Angustura Bitters.

Now, Angus is a friend of old. He kept my father happy.
I knew his name in childhood when my mother changed my nappy.
Enough of that! Such reminiscence wastes the passing time:
And yet, to meet a long-lost friend brings happiness sublime.

Old Angus is a dapper man. His tipple is pink gin.
He has a word with Gordon, then a Bitter-drop goes in.
It's topped up, then, with water. Not too much. Don't let it drown.
Sleante mhor, my friend! And time to chase another down.

And such was life in days of yore, before the breathalyser.
When life was very different. Was it worse or was it wiser?
A bit of each, I rather think, the answer has to be.
Predictions for the future? My good friend, don't look at me!

BY 16.05.22



New Members

Mark Hooper is Head of Operations at DP World at the Port Terminal in Southampton where he has been for five years. Previously he was 16 years with Mitsui OSK and 14 years with Elliott Sargeant logistics. Having been in shipping/logistics for over 35 years he wishes to support the Club. In his leisure time he enjoys golf and sailing.

Jason Losty is a Master Mariner and a Southampton Pilot. He lives in Cowes and his leisure interests include sailing and hill walking. He joins us to expand his maritime knowledge and add value where he can.

Imogen Smart is Internal Communication Lead at the MCA in Southampton, having previously undertaken roles there in seafarer certification and Receiver of Wreck.

She worked on Queen Mary 2 for six years as Social Hostess and joins us because of family ties (father Jeremy has been Captain of the Club twice) and because of the 'great social events', some of which, it should be noted, that Imogen herself had no small part in making a success.

Darcy White is another Southampton Pilot and Master Mariner living in Southampton whose interests include classic cars and history. He is also a keen runner and joins us to meet old and new friends.



Captain Ken

Another contribution from Ken Owen which appeared in his local Mellor Church Parish magazine "Outlook" of March 2022.

Ken lives in the Derbyshire Peak District and has been writing about some of his sea going experiences for the Magazine, so his stories are not particularly aimed at maritime folk.

"Outlook" is an excellent Parish magazine and it can be read online at <https://mellorchurch.org/outlook-magazine/>

In 1966, I was serving as Second Officer on one of Blue Funnel's finest cargo/passenger liners, S.S. 'Peleus', One of a series of four fast ships, which ran between U.K. and the Far East on a very accurate schedule. It was noted that 'Peleus' had berthed in Liverpool at 12.00 on the same day for the previous four years.

However on this particular occasion, at the pre voyage interview with the Nautical Advisor in India Buildings, Liverpool, I, as main Navigating Officer, was asked to plan a sight-seeing cruise of the Japanese Inland Sea, (The enclosed sea between Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu.)

This seemed to me, to be a rather unusual request, as although we would move heaven and earth to enter any port to discharge or load items of freight, our bread and butter, beautiful scenery was not a normal consideration of our passage planning. The planned sight-seeing trip became even more mysterious, when I was told to commence the route from the industrial city of Nagasaki.



Gradually the reason for these strange requirements came to light.

The Japanese were just building a new ship for us. The first since the end of World War II, and she was going to be launched by none other than Her Imperial Highness, Princess Chichibu. (The Sister in Law of the Emperor.)

What a great occasion this little cruise turned out to be. The launch of the 'Glenalmond' in Nagasaki went ahead as planned and some thirty high ranking people from the Launch Party joined our ship. This included, besides the Princess and her Lady in Waiting, Mr Yoshitomo Tokugawa of the old Shogun family, the British Ambassador to Japan, the chairmen of British and Japanese shipping and Agency Companies and their wives, and hosted by Sir John and Lady Nicholson, from Mottistone Manor on the Isle of Wight.

The cruise started brilliantly as we entered the Inland Sea, and steamed through one of the most beautiful seas in the whole world. It was hard to believe that we were steaming only a few miles from the remains of Hiroshima, devastated by the atomic bomb. Then shortly past the port of Kure, last port of 'Yamato' we world's most powerful battle ship, and later, the British and United Nations' base during the Korean War. All was going well when we anchored towards the east end of the Sea to enable all our guests to proceed in a Coastguard launch, and visit a particular Holy Island (Miyajima). The wind began to blow, and to the extreme concern of Captain Charlie Collet, Master of 'Peleus', and a wartime veteran himself, it became unsafe for the coastguard launch to come alongside and allow the passengers to re-board our ship.

We arranged for the launch to land the party in Shikoku, and take taxis several miles to the nearest ferry port, where they could take a ferry to Honshu and we could then take them all back on board in a much more sheltered anchorage.

With much relief we proceeded on to Tokyo, and resumed our normal voyage. Princess Chichibu who was actually born in England, when her father was the Japanese ambassador, said she had thoroughly enjoyed the excitement, as it was the first time in her life that the Japanese authorities didn't know exactly where she was. I was very pleased that she liked my painting of 'Peleus', which we presented to her as she disembarked.

It was many years later, when I was attending a management seminar, when the speaker, Sir Lindsey Alexander, then Chairman of OTT and Lloyds Bank, and who had been on the Cruise, told us that it was then, when the Japanese and British ship owners agreed to gradually change world trade from Cargo liners to container ships. And at sea, our world changed, as did the Global Economy



Sailing towards the self-wrecking ship

Baird Maritime Work Boat World, Grey Power 26th April 2022

As we hurtle towards ever-greater levels of autonomy, it was predictable to read about proposed UK regulations for the self-driving car, which will enable the person in charge of the vehicle (who can hardly be termed the “driver”) to look at films or TV, while the car rushes onwards. It might just conceivably keep them awake, although it is doubtful that they will be sufficiently stimulated to intervene, should some emergency arise which requires instant action. Indeed, a couple years of this sort of driving and any skills they might have enjoyed in the pre-autonomy age will have probably eroded.

Almost on cue that very day I had received my copy of the excellent Marine Accident Investigation Branch Safety Digest, containing lessons from marine accident reports. Its presentation has been “refreshed”, and very attractive a publication it is. In his introduction to the Digest, the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents Andrew Moll, who confesses that he began bridge watchkeeping in the pre-digital age, writes about the constant stimulation of a busy coastal bridge watch, with plenty to occupy the mind of the OOW. He compares this to the modern bridge, with so many of the tasks being done automatically by all the clever equipment, although the OOW still has to somehow remain alert for a 4-6 hour spell.

“These developers never seem to consider that their inventions may de-skill or demotivate those who have to use the stuff.”

From the incidents that his teams investigate, he cites the frequency of these accidents in which the watchkeeper, in the absence of any other stimulation, has been maintaining the alert level by focusing on a personal “device”. And it is happening all over the world, with people who have become disengaged and distracted while their ships stand in danger. It seems a very good indicator of future carnage on the roads once the self-driving cars become common. The Chief Inspector suggests that the role of the human in the digital workplace “needs a serious rethink; if we don’t, it is us that will be asleep at the wheel”.

There is nothing new about this as clever equipment developers have been beguiling ship operators for decades with their amazing new products, although they never seem to consider that their inventions may de-skill, or demotivate those who have to use the stuff. Perhaps they think this is what the owners want – to enable even the dumbest navigator to behave like Vasco de Gama. I can remember suggesting that putting watch alarms on the bridge to keep the watchkeeper vaguely awake was pretty dehumanising and one move short of giving them electric shocks, but it is all part of the life that is on offer afloat these days.

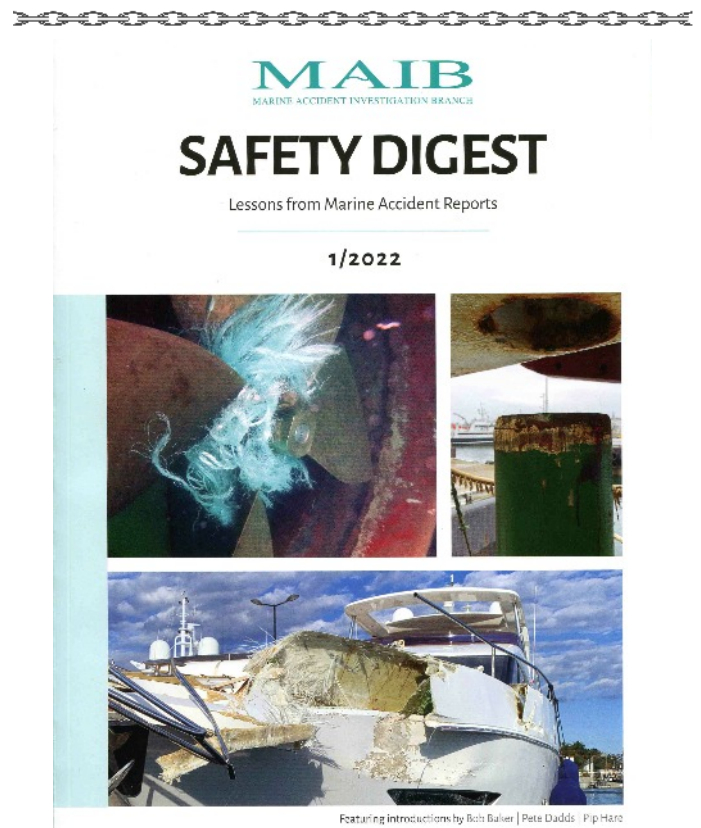
“The promoters of the technology invariably live in a perfect world of unreality, where voyages progress smoothly and nothing ever goes wrong.”

You can’t put the genie back in the bottle, but with scarcely a week going by without some progress towards the “autonomous ship” being triumphantly advertised, I would suggest that Andrew Moll’s serious rethink is actually quite urgent. I was reading about some agency on the Netherlands

which is advertising a system where a “captain”, snug ashore, will be able to simultaneously control three ships. They will have a few lonely folk left aboard, who will be able to intervene should there be some emergency. Once again, quite how the wretched seafarers will be sufficiently alert to leap to the controls, or drop the anchor, is rather smoothed over in the enthusiastic blurbs. Maybe they will be wired up and given a quick jolt of electricity, if the computer detects that they have drifted off into a catatonic trance, are engaged with their personal devices, or indeed, are sound asleep.

Amid all this digital progress, the promoters invariably live in a perfect world of unreality, where voyages progress smoothly and nothing ever goes wrong. I am no engineer, but have listened and read the words of experienced marine engineers who know better than me that things break, or fuse, or get gunged up with oil, grease or salt and require human beings to fix them. Quite often. In this Safety Digest, there is a rather graphic photograph showing a fuel filter aboard a ship burning bio-diesel (Fatty Acid Methyl Ester) which has completely bunged up solid with the dreaded “diesel bug”. I just vaguely wondered, in our terribly green future, how this is going to be cleared aboard a ship with nobody aboard.

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The MAIB Safety Digest can be read online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/maib-safety-digest-12022-published>

There is a printed copy in the Club room.

Gone Aloft

Captain Cameron Smith, on 29th March

Cameron started with Clan Line in the 1950s and rose through the ranks of Union Castle to Staff Commander, sailing under Reg Kelso as Chief Officer of the Reina Del Mar in '74.

He was Dock Superintendant in Southampton and after B&C he went on to attain command with London Ship Managers.

He joined the Club in 1967 but in later years he suffered from acute dementia and his membership had lapsed.



Captain Norman Alford, on 11th May.

Norman was Master with Arklow Shipping and sometime Berthing Officer with ABP in Southampton. He returned to sea as Master with Crescent Shipping then back to ABP Southampton on the Harbour Patrol vessels. He was married to Angela, sister of Julie Hall. He was a Lt Cdr RNR and joined the Club in 1992.

The CACHALOTS

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club

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

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

The cut-off date for the next edition will be
19h August 2022



WORLD SHIPSOCIETY DORSET BRANCH

Zoom Meetings

are suspended for the summer break and will resume on September 10th

~ Ocean Liner Extraordinaire: The Fabulous Normandie ~ with Bill Miller ~

She was "floating Ginger Rogers" ... pure Art Deco, top heavy with glamour & the finest Atlantic liner ever ... she was triumph, innovation, notation, but the victim of a far too short life at sea.

Their Secretary, Steve Pink, says:

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