

The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 90

Digital Edition

July 2021

Captain's Log

Our much-anticipated Management Meeting in the Club Rooms on 23 June turned into another virtual event due to the ongoing restrictions, but it was still pleasant to catch up with colleagues. Unfortunately, work and the office preclude my attendance at most of the Friday Zoom meetings, but I hear they are very good and it is well worth 'dialling-in' if you have the time.

The main news from the Management Meeting is that we are going to attempt to hold our own local service here in Southampton in lieu of the Winchester Shipping Festival. Whether or not COVID restrictions have played a part, our dialogue with the Cathedral team has not been successful this year, with the result that even before the restrictions were extended we would not have been holding our usual event in Winchester. However, the bright sparks of the Management Committee (there are some clever chaps there), have come up with the idea of holding a service at St Mary's church, Southampton, in the early evening on Friday 4 September. The Mission to Seafarers' chaplain, John Attenborough, has agreed to officiate, so all we need now is a congregation.

Astute readers will have spotted that Friday 4 September is Merchant Navy Day, and the consensus at our meeting was that we could not pick a better date in the autumn to hold our alternative service. Once timings and details have been finalised the editor will be circulating a *Cachalite*, so please look out for that. In a port city like Southampton we should have no shortage of support, but the decision to hold the service is quite a late one so when you receive the details please do pass them on the Merchant Navy colleagues.

Before turning to other matters, I should emphasise that the decision to hold a MN Day service in St Mary's does not mean an end to the Winchester Shipping Service. While we have not managed to make it work this time around, 2022 is another year and all things are possible.

Another decision of the management meeting was that while this e-newsletter would continue each month, perhaps in slightly shorter form, the Editor will also be producing a quarterly hard copy newsletter. The number of members and the number of e-mail addresses we have do not tally by some margin, and it was felt that many members might be missing out because that are not receiving a newsletter through the post. Also, if digital members' e-mail inboxes are anything like mine, there is a risk that Terry's email will have dropped off the bottom of the page and been forgotten before the e-newsletter has been opened and read. The hard copy newsletter is much harder to ignore and, we think, more likely to be read.

In closing, I should mention that John Attenborough, our Honorary Chaplain, is due to be ordained in Winchester Cathedral on Sunday 4 July. Due to the ongoing restrictions numbers are limited, so there is not an open invitation to attend I am afraid. However, I hope you will join me in wishing him and his family all the very best for the day.

Keep safe

Andrew Moll, Club Captain



Whatever happened to...?

You might have wondered what was the result of the 'NOBLE awards for Covid-19 behaviour' competition that was announced in Cachalot 87 back in April. Well, it resulted in no entries received at all...zilch! So it would seem that, one year into the pandemic, you can no longer find anything at all amusing about the situation, nor even summon up any vitriolic observations.

Or, perhaps, we are all extremely happy with the way that people have responded to the edicts of our leaders.

Whatever, John Noble and his wife Louise have now polished off the proffered prize chocolates themselves to celebrate their wedding anniversary.



Contents

- 01 Captain's Log**
- 03 Contents**
- 04 Boatsteerer's Locker**
- 05 From the Editor**
News of future editions
- 06 That Cap badge**
The results of a query in last month'
- 09 Slow down & stay safe**
Comment from Michael Grey, Sea-Trade Maritime, June 2021
- 11 Measuring ship's speed**
A personal reflection on a knotty problem by Bill Hargreaves
- 16 Justifying the unjustifiable**
More comment from Michael Grey, The Maritime Advocate, Issue 779 4th June
- 18 Great Expectations**
Reflections from John Noble
- 21 Will the Ever Given case lead to major changes?**
Comment from Alan Loynd, Baird Maritime, Tug Times, 22nd June
- 24 Of ships and their crews**
More comment from Michael Grey, The Maritime Advocate, Issue 780 18th June
- 26 Compulsory Pilotage**
Opinion and comment from Barrie Youde
- 26 Stop bashing the IMO**
More comment from Michael Grey, Baird Maritime, Workboat World, 24th June
- 30 Gone Aloft**
Gerry Cartwright & Tony Brindle
- 33 Captain Richard Olden**
An update
- 34 250 Club**



Boatsteerers' Locker

Using the phrase from Burns and adapted by Sir Vivian Fuchs, 'The Best Laid Plans of Ice and Men', our Dear Leader has seen fit to extend the lockdown through to the week beginning 19th July. That means we will look to re-open the Club room from Friday 23rd July. Archie at the RBL and Liz are both aware of this and Liz sends her best wishes to all members and is looking forward to seeing us as soon as we can open up.

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.

We provided an update to corporate groups who have joined us in the past and we have been encouraged with the positive responses of support in returning to the Sea Pie Supper in 2022.

Zoom - Our Friday Zoom gatherings continue to attract a good and lively audience, often up to twenty members resulting in a good interchange of news, with maritime flavours as well as other topical news of the moment along with attendee's outings. We will be swinging the Zoom lamp for a few weeks yet. Anyone is free to join us.

250 Club – the next draw will be held at the Zoom gathering on Friday 25th June. Results will be in the next edition of the Cachalot.

Robin

Captain Robin Plumley MBE Boatsteerer

boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk

From the Editor

With the government's promise of a return to some sort of normality and the resumption of our office routine we will be returning to the production of a quarterly printed magazine.

While the monthly digital edition has been well received by some, it is recognised that reading such publications while sat in front of any sort of screen is not to everyone's taste. I also suspect that when it drops into a busy inbox it is quickly overwhelmed or forgotten if not picked up almost immediately. I know I am guilty of that with other such periodicals, even some printed ones.

So, from **September**, a resurrected *Cachalot* will be produced, in full colour throughout, instead of just on selected pages, and posted to those members who wish to receive it. A pdf version, identical to the printed one, will be emailed to those that prefer to receive and read it that way. The current 'printer friendly' version will be discontinued. Interim digital editions will also be produced monthly, much in the current format, but they will not necessarily include a 'Captain's Log' or material that is not time sensitive. They **will** include updates on club matters and those must read pieces from Michael Grey and other commentators, or maybe links to them.

These *Cachalot-lites* will continue to be numbered sequentially so the printed editions would be 92, 95, 98 etc.

There is little extra cost to the Club in distributing the online email versions, so all those members currently receiving them will continue to do so.

We need to draw up a new distribution list of those of you who would like to receive the quarterly printed edition.

Members can opt to receive by post (p) or, for those who visit the Clubroom regularly, collect (c), as previously.

Just email me at cachalots.editor@gmail.com with a simple Yes, (p) or (c) and an update of your postal address if it is likely to have changed from what we have on file. Please remember that with the cost of posting each copy now exceeding the printing cost by some 33% we would like to keep the over-all cost to a minimum.

Also remember that **all** editions of *The Cachalot*, past and present, are posted in the members' only section of our website.

That Cap Badge

Captain Stuart Lawrence's cry for help in identifying a cap badge in the last newsletter drew a swift response from Richard Smith, the son of the late Captain George E Smith of Cunard. George, a Cachalot, was the second ever Captain of QE2, was its first Staff Captain and was one of only three Cunard Captains who were Masters of both the original Queen Elizabeth and the QE2. For the last 2 years of his career before retirement in 1972 he was Master of *RMS Franconia* on the New York - Bermuda run.



Richard, a Southampton solicitor who retired in 2008, is not a member but occasionally has the newsletter forwarded to him. He and his wife are inveterate cruisers, mainly with Cunard, and from Richard's blog <http://www.smithycruiseblog.com/> it would seem that they have more sea-time than many of us, recent travel plans sadly curtailed by the coronavirus.

Anyway, Richard identified the badge as from the Sierra Steamship Company, later the Oceanic Steamship Company. He emailed me a page from 'Scottish Built Ships' which detailed the *Sierra Miranda*, a steel 3 masted ship built in 1884 for the Sierra Steamship Company – Thompson Anderson & Co. Liverpool. He also included a link to an eBay page where the badge, described as 'Rare Sierra Steamship Company - Thompson, Anderson & Co Liverpool Cap badge' was on sale for a mere £200 (reduced now to £190, if you are quick).

The better photograph there revealed that what I had taken to be two crossed canons was just part of the detail in the filigree design.

The next response was from Peter Sara, ex MCA Senior Engineer Surveyor and fellow Cachalot. Peter said, "*I contacted my good friend and local maritime author Alastair Arnott who was also the historian for Southampton Council before his retirement. For those who are interested he has a recent publication "Heraldry Of The Oceans – The Garb of the Merchant Seafarer". In his book there is a chapter containing a plethora of Merchant Navy Officer cap badges. He was excited to see this cap badge as it is not within his book. He is pretty certain that it is the badge of a Liverpool sailing ship company, Thompson, Anderson & Co., that traded as Sierra Line. Their ships were all*

named with the prefix Sierra, the Sierra Miranda being one of their first sailing vessels.

I did a bit of research myself on this company and it seems that they were heavily linked to the Charente Shipping Co., and in that instance traded mainly in cargoes of Brandy from the Bordeaux and Charente regions of France to the United Kingdom and probably to Liverpool, hence the link. Alastair mentions that they then went on to become a Steam Ship Co. but did not know where else they traded. The company did however lose a ship in the 1st World War. He also mentions that the company and their ships are referenced in the State Library of South Australia. He does not know when the company ceased trading.”

In a second email Peter said, “*With reference to the design of the badge I wonder the following:*

The Papal Cross has been mentioned. Seeing that the company was born in Liverpool and initially traded with the Charente region of France due to the high number of Catholic people in both regions it could perhaps be so – a Papal Cross?

Another interpretation could be solely maritime one, in that the company started with sailing vessels hence a mast and three spars and the chain representing that of an anchor chain?”

Your editor’s own searches online revealed some more interesting snippets and the pitfalls of trusting everything one reads there.

I found photographs of eleven smart white sailing vessels built for Thompson, Anderson & Co between 1875 and ‘89, all named with the

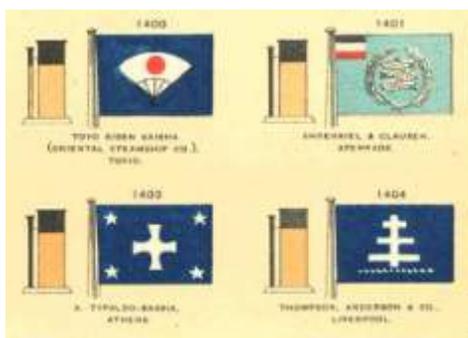


prefix *Sierra*. One, the *Sierra Nevada*, (left) was built in Woolston, Southampton in 1877 by Oswald Mordaunt & Co. at what later became the Thorneycroft yard.

Online, the company is variously referred to as the Sierra Steamship Co., the Sierra Shipping Company or, as is more likely, Sierra Line. After all, why would a company operating sailing vessels call itself a Steamship Company? And, ‘Sierra Line - Thompson Anderson & Co.’ sounds much more appropriate.

My initial searches did not come up with an Oceanic Steamship Line and I did not pursue it. Nor did I follow up the Charente link.

But I did find a picture of the house flag, described as ‘a blue flag with a white cross with 3 vertical (sic) arms and below (most probably) 12 white stars.’ Well, horizontal arms actually and more probably an anchor chain, as per the badge.



The author had included a link to *Lloyds Book of House Flags and Funnels 1912*, excerpt left, on which he had based his assumption, and we can forgive him his error. What is interesting is that a buff funnel with a black top is also shown so it would

appear that the company did continue with motor vessels. I didn't have time to investigate further but perhaps somebody out there may be encouraged to do so. I didn't think I had ever heard of the Sierra Line, but.....

While studying the ship photos, [here](#), something began to nudge my memory cells and I realised that I should have been looking closer to home. Here is a picture of the *Sierra Estrella* that I used to illustrate an article in *Cachalot* 69 of Dec.2018. It was called ‘Lost vessels and saved treasure’ and included a letter home from George Thomson, who was Ian Thomson's great uncle and was sailing as one of the mates on the ship in 1883. You can read it on our website in the Club Journal pages, or [click here](#).



And look at the House flag flying at the mizzen! Proof enough, I think, that the cap badge is that of the Sierra Line and I concur with Peter Sara that it probably represents a mast and yards (or sails) of a sailing ship, not a Papal Cross.

So, that one small query in our magazine has resulted in revealing a connection to a late Cunard Captain and Cachalot, to a fleet of smart three masted sailing ships, one built locally, and to yet another link to Past Captain Ian Thomson's forebears. It has also given some satisfaction to at least five retirees. And to you too, I hope.

Editor

Slow down and stay safe

Seatrade Maritime Opinion and Analysis June 2021

By Michael Grey

“Speed kills” is a slogan familiar to anyone who drives a car and is constantly urged upon us by the authorities, anxious that we observe speed limits. It is not such a bad injunction to marine people, either, and not entirely directed at those who drive ships for a living. Ships themselves might be slowing down on passage, ostensibly to save the planet, but from the shippers who use them, to the management hastening them through ports, all are united to maintain their productivity, despite their more pedestrian sea passages.

Those aboard are urged to get their ships alongside faster and depart sooner, pilots in some ports being rated on their progress. Stevedoring firms are being told that carriers will take their business elsewhere if the dockers dally too much. Where once there was a degree of prudence, impatience and urgency are being almost bred into behaviour, on both ship and shore. The respectable phrase of “utmost despatch” has been relegated by a fierce injunction to be always in a tearing hurry.

How many expensive accidents can be attributed to this desperate urgency? If the master of the Ever Given thought that his management would tolerate a weather delay waiting for the cross winds in the Suez Canal to abate, might he have postponed his transit? There was that collision case that went all the way to the Supreme Court in the UK, with learned and very expensive counsel arguing about Rule of the Road – I wondered whether the issue of impatience was actually more relevant. Surely, prudence might have suggested that an inbound ship might have kept well clear of a port entrance while another vessel was leaving?

Scarcely a week goes by these days without viewing a video showing an inbound ship spectacularly wrecking a multi-million dollar ship loading gantry, in a cascade of crashing girders and flailing booms. You might argue that speed is essential to maintain steerage way, or the tugs were slow off the mark, but I just wonder whether less haste might have kept all that steelwork intact. And you might also find it relevant to make a connection with the urgency to get ships off to sea, the time available for lashing, and all those containers that ended up wrecked or in the sea.

There are some highly relevant suggestions made recently by Gard P&I Club to those both afloat and ashore on car carrier berths, following expensive and spectacular incidents where these huge multi-decked ro-ros have ended up on their beam ends.

Heaven knows the advice offered is simple and basic and if a master or mate in a less frenetic era had been told not to leave the berth before the stability had been calculated, they would have been insulted at being told the blooming obvious. But the clues are contained in Gard's preliminary remarks, pointing out that car carriers today operate against tight schedules and quick port rotations, with the cargo planning being done ashore. Is there any need to say any more? Will the world end if they slow down a bit?

But what is also absent in the practices that lead to these nasty incidents is any respect or latitude being shown to those aboard the ships, who have to take them away to sea. It's that "tearing hurry" – the cargo has finished - raise the ramp, shut the door and let go fore and aft. Gard notes that cargo planning can be something of a moveable feast – nothing wrong with that, if the ship is informed in a timely manner about alterations to the cargo plan, so that stability calculations can be adjusted. It is pointed out that the ship needs more than just estimates of weights – accurate weights are essential along with a proper stowage plan, not something that follows the ship in an email as she leaves port.

And the P&I club urges the master not to leave the berth until stability calculations are complete. If they are not, the departure should be delayed, although in "real life" you might imagine the screams and threats that may follow such a thoroughly sensible and seamanlike action. But a bit more respect for the ship and some thought to the possible consequences of instability would not go amiss. Slowing down does indeed save lives.

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Measuring ship's speed - a personal reflection of a knotty problem

By William J M Hargreaves



Capt. Lincoln A. Colcord standing at the taffrail of the ship State of Maine.

Joanna Colcord Collection; Penobscot Marine Museum, Searsport, Maine

The other deck cadet and myself had just been to the bridge to see the Chief Officer and had been allocated our jobs for the day. We were a little bit worried, but why? It was another beautiful tropical morning in the Pacific. The second cook had already done a round of the main deck to pick up any flying fish that might have landed during the night. The bosun had beaten us to the bridge and discussed the deck crew's tasks for the day, and we could hear the noise from the messroom as the crew finished their breakfasts. There were a lot of crew. Due to a lack of any automation the ship had 48 souls on board. The engine room was permanently manned and the eight pairs of derricks plus the jumbo (heavy lift) derrick seemed to need almost constant maintenance. Though I didn't realise it at the time, the ship was one of the last of a breed: a tramping general cargo ship of about fifteen thousand tonnes deadweight, built in 1967. Its days were already numbered. The first fully cellular purpose-built container ship had already entered service in 1964. (Today, over 90% of non-bulk cargoes are carried in containers).

The mate was old school. We called him “Chief” and, from my perspective as a first trip deck cadet, he seemed very old, very wise - and mildly eccentric. (He had a penchant for wandering round, when not on duty, in a sarong and teeshirt). Looking back over the years, I was lucky to have him as my “Chief”. His bark was a lot worse than his bite, and he was fiercely protective, almost paternalistic, of and towards “his” cadets. The Captain, a martinet with no sense of humour, had once hauled the other cadet and myself over the coals for some perceived indiscretion. The mate, we learned later, had told the Captain that if rollicking’s were to be given, they would be given by himself and not by the Captain! On that particular morning the job we’d been tasked with was, under the supervision of the third officer, “to stream the log”. And, under no circumstances, were we to lose overboard the rotator or any other parts of the equipment. The consequences, we were assured, would be extremely unpleasant. And that is why we left the bridge in a slightly worried and agitated state.

And so it was that, at 0830 on a fine June morning in the mid-70s, two cadets found themselves on the poop deck with a heavy wooden box between them waiting for the arrival of the third officer. The Captain had graciously deigned to keep the bridge watch while we streamed the log. If the



The Walker’s “Cherub III” Taffrail Ship-Log

ship was at the end of an era, then the Walker Cherub Log was from another age completely. First patented in 1878, the latest variant, i.e. the “Walker’s “Cherub” III Taffrail Ship-Log” was manufactured between 1930 and (amazingly) 1994. Beautifully crafted, primarily from solid brass and bronze, it was - as is typical of equipment from that period – over-engineered. Nowadays they are considered as antiques; then we just thought

the equipment a little bit “agricultural.”



Rotator with shell/frog.
(One pound coin to show scale)

The box contained four principal items. First a bronze Rotator fitted with a short length of logline and a brass connector referred to by the manufacturer as a shell, but more commonly known

for some obscure reason as a frog. There was space in the box for another rotator, but that was missing. We could only speculate as to the fate of the individual who had lost it. Like the Flying Dutchman, is there a ghostly cadet forever condemned to wander the oceans searching for the lost rotator?

The second item was a galvanised steel spoked wheel of about thirty centimetres in diameter. This was the Governor and at the axis was fitted with a short piece of log line with Inglefield clips at each end.

Accompanying it was about one hundred metres of non-kinking log line with an Inglefield clip at one end. The final item was the brass Log Register.

Hidden by its cast brass casing, an assembly of cogs measured the rotations of the logline and displayed them on three small dials indicating one tenths of a mile, miles and 100s of miles. (Similar mechanisms were found in odometers fitted in vintage



Log Register with Shoe Fitting

cars). This too had an Inglefield connection on the back. The third officer arrived and took charge, though – by his own admission – he knew as much about the equipment as we did. The first job was to zero the pointers. Needless to say, that was a job which could only be performed by a skilled and knowledgeable operative. Mere cadets would probably damage such delicate machinery, even though the direction to turn the pointers was clearly marked on the dial itself. So the task was performed by the third officer. With great power comes great responsibility! The next phase of the operation was particularly nerve wracking, but shouldn't have been. We had to slot the Log Register into the shoe bolted to the swinging arm mounted on the taffrail. A simple enough task, and apart from the risk of dropping the item on the deck, it should have been fairly straightforward. Except that the swinging arm, and the associated bracing piece were seized in the outboard position; the arm itself was corroded, and the shoe was covered in paint. It was painfully obvious that the log hadn't been deployed very often - if at all. Once we managed to fit and secure the Log Register the rest of the operation was comparatively simple and risk free. The Governor was attached to the Log Register by an Inglefield clip and, in turn, the logline was attached to the Governor by another Inglefield clip. Finally, the logline was attached to the Rotator by threading the line through the frog and

jamming it in place with a figure of eight knot. Once assembled, we lowered the rotator into the water and slowly paid out the line until the strain was taken by the Log Register. We then had the satisfaction of seeing the line and the governor start to spin.

The whole operation had taken about an hour and for the next three weeks, as the ship gently wallowed its way across the Pacific, the other cadet or myself would at noon dutifully record the distance travelled and take the information to the bridge. There it was treated with a certain degree of scepticism and although the figure was recorded in the deck log book the information was essentially ignored. Thomas Walker and Sons did give vague instructions about adjusting the length of the logline in order to improve the accuracy of their equipment. (For speeds of up to 11 knots, they advised “40 fathoms was usually sufficient” and above that they suggested a length of between 50 and 60 fathoms. Even as a very junior cadet it seemed somewhat archaic to give instructions for lengths of rope in fathoms). We were never allowed to adjust the length of line. Possibly because we could have shortened it by cutting it, but there was no provision in the design for lengthening the line other than to buy a new logline. However, watching the logline tighten and slack as the ship rolled, pitched, heaved, surged, swayed and yawed (!), and seeing the governor wheel noticeably change its speed of rotation as the strain on the logline changed made me understand why the daily figures were treated with such derision, and why it would have been futile to try and fine tune the equipment. Indeed, if there hadn't been any cadets onboard I'm sure the log wouldn't have been streamed at all. The whole exercise was really for our benefit and for our training. Thanks Chief.

Forty-five years later, at the end of 2020, I piloted my last ship. After we'd berthed and as I was packing up my PPU (my Pilot's Portable Unit), it is perhaps predictable that I started thinking about the journey so far travelled – and not just the recently completed act of pilotage from boarding to berth. I was thinking about how I had changed and developed over the years, and, of much more importance to everybody else, how the industry had changed and developed over the same period. How, like the rest of the world, shipping has embraced the digital age. On my first ship, the attempt to measure the ship's speed was mechanical and highly inaccurate using equipment designed in the nineteenth century. Today, using either a differential GPS or Real-time Kinematic (RTK) signal,

manufacturers claim a speed accuracy within 1 cm/sec. (Though of course the purists will argue that my PPU is measuring speed over the ground compared to the Walker log's speed through the water).



The old and the new

Furthermore, the display component of my PPU, shows ground speeds in both a fore and aft direction and sideways, and, if preferred, it could show the athwartship speeds at both the bow and stern. For the younger me, the thought of having all that highly accurate information available in real time was unthinkable. The industry – and myself – have come a long way from the Walker “Cherub” III Taffrail Ship-Log.

This article, by Cachalot Bill Hargreaves, previously appeared in the Royal Institute of Navigation's magazine 'Navigation News' of May/June 2021.

With thanks to the Penobscot Marine Museum for supplying the image of Capt. Lincoln A. Colcord standing at the taffrail of the ship State of Maine.

The photograph was taken by his daughter, Joanna Colcord, while sailing off the Cape of Good Hope in 1900.

Penobscot Marine Museum has many photographs, artefacts, and letters from the Colcord family. The letters were collected and annotated by Parker Bishop Albee, Jr., in the book Letters From Sea (published jointly in 1999 by Tilbury House and the museum).

If you would like to find out more about the

Penobscot Marine Museum

please visit [www. penobscotmarinemuseum.org](http://www.penobscotmarinemuseum.org)



Justifying the unjustifiable

The Maritime *Advocate* online Issue 779 June 4th 2021

By Michael Grey

Nobody should be surprised that there has been something of a fight back by ship operators after the World Maritime University's research earlier in the year showed up widespread "adjustment" in the recording of seafarers' hours of work and rest (see A Culture of Adjustment). It was a shocking report, although it merely gave chapter and verse to what is reality aboard so many hard-pressed ships, with exhausted crews. But as reported in the Nautilus Telegraph, rather than looking constructively at the WMU's recommendations to make seafaring more humane and 21st century, the shipowners' representative at the Maritime Labour Convention Special Tripartite Committee sought to denigrate the report as unfounded. (<https://www.nautilusint.org/en/news-insight/telegraph/fatigue-another-inconvenient-truth>)

Adopting the time-honoured strategy of suggesting the research was suspect because of its sponsors and dubious methodology, the owners' representative went on to attack the university itself, doubtless provoked by the amount of publicity the report received in the media. You might suggest that such a response, of a lobby group that "don't like it up 'em", was entirely predictable, but a little humility would not have come amiss, rather than trying to bluff their way out of trouble. There were a whole host of serious points made in the research document, which surely deserved to be properly considered. I would be willing to bet that plenty of decent ship operators, rather than rubbishing the research, will have looked closely at the situation and are seeking to address some of the points made.

To take just one of the issues that the report highlighted, the idea that a 6/6 hour watch system can be operated legally is utterly laughable, but remains in place for a huge fleet of small ships. The UK, led by organisations like the Nautical Institute (hardly a trade union) has been trying to stop the practice for years. While the UK remained in the EU, every attempt to outlaw this practice was shot down in flames at the pre-IMO meetings insisted on by Brussels, where the antediluvian Dutch,

German and Scandinavian views on “acceptable manning practices” predominate. It might be argued that such practices are economically necessary, but if they cannot be undertaken legally in a culture that never permits ships to lay by, they should stop pretending. It doesn’t say much for the notion of “decent work”, when inadequate manning is allowed to become institutionalised and is defended by employers who like to emphasise their commitment to safety all the time.

Let’s face it, this is usually why short sea ships regularly run aground on their coastal passages, with tired people slumped in their chairs in their climate-controlled wheelhouses and no separate night lookout posted as this would interfere with the day work. It is why there are serious accidents, like the mooring fatality investigated recently by the Dutch authorities, where nobody aboard had been asleep for 17 hours and a cook and trainee were trying to handle the lines down aft.

It’s all very well to suggest that adequately manning these ships and operating them with less of a rush would make them uneconomic against road haulage competition, but it’s basically the same argument that failed to prevail against the common humanity that ended the sweat shop and child labour in more civilised countries. The problems outlined by the WMU researchers won’t go away and it’s time that the industry took them on board.

Maybe it is the sort of cause that Frank Coles, formerly of Wallem, might take up in his latest role as a supporter of seafarers’ human rights. He surfaced last week in the e-journal Splash 247, with an excoriating attack on those who treat seafarers, especially during the pandemic, as people of little account – the “scum of the earth”. It was explosive stuff, which will doubtless have plenty of industry folk stroking their chins, but welcome, as too many people who depend on the ships coming and going never give a thought to those who live aboard them. When somebody who has been one of the world’s biggest ship managers says these things, they get noticed. See <https://splash247.com/seafarers-scum-of-the-earth/>

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS

(With apologies to Charles Dickens)

John Noble was asked by the IIMS to highlight some differences in seafaring over the past 50 years! Here are his thoughts.

Introduction

I am going to look back over the start of my seagoing career and look at some of the factors that laid the path of the past 59 years!

Like many a young seafarer, my career began with great expectations for the forthcoming years! I will take it in steps and trust this look backwards will help you appreciate where my generation is coming

from. To borrow another publication, I do not “Look Back in Anger” (with apologies to John Osborne, who wrote the play in 1956)!



In the beginning

Back in the dark ages (1962 in my case) prospective officers had the opportunity to undertake a two year pre-sea training course. My training was undertaken at HMS Conway, by that time a shore based residential school. Much of the history of HMS Conway can be found in the book *The Conway* by John Masefield first published in 1933. The training course in my day followed a combination of academic and practical lessons. Boat craft was a central feature along with more traditional subjects like navigation and seamanship. After two years I could tie most knots, handle a sextant and communicate using the morse code, semaphore or international flags.

The apprentice

My three year seagoing apprenticeship was conducted under Indentures with Alfred Holt and Company (Blue Funnel). Training involved 18 months on deck, working as a deck-hand alongside the crew. Work involved such tasks as “Soogi-moogi” (cleaning paintwork with a sooji (strong soapy) fluid and waste rags). Topping the ships derricks (26 in total), chipping, scraping, red-lead painting and applying Stockholm tar to the standing rigging were all jobs we undertook. The philosophy was that no ships officer should ask the deck crew to undertake a task that he had not done himself! The second part of training involved

understudying an officer on watch either on the bridge or on cargo watch in port. Bridge training involved navigation using a sextant, compass and paper charts. Even today the sextant remains the most versatile navigating instrument capable of taking readings for sun and star sights plus horizontal and vertical angles used in coastal navigation. All too soon, once the training phase was over, it was time to sit the Board of Trade Second Mate (now Class 3) exams.

Seagoing career

My first job after obtaining my second mate's certificate was as mate on a small ship, the Albatross, a 650gt ungeared coaster. The Albatross had been designed as a feeder ship, but on the mistaken assumption that containers would be 7ft 6ins in height. The tween deck was built for 7ft 6ins boxes; as a result she could not be used in the container trade. Keeping watch and watch about with the Master proved a demanding role. The ship was fitted with a magnetic compass controlled auto-pilot. This worked very well, with one issue; just after Cuxhaven on the river Elbe there was a (charted) wreck that was marked as a magnetic anomaly. If the ship passed too close to this area the magnetic compass reacted and, being on autopilot, the ship would take a veer. On board we were prepared, but the river pilots would be highly alarmed when this did occur!

After my RNR training (List 1, course P71), some time was spent sailing to the Baltic with the United Baltic Corporation. The ships were ice-strengthened and that was just as well. An interesting experience while on watch one evening was running the ship hard into a free flowing ice field. I had never seen what ice looked like on the radar and I misinterpreted the image on the screen and piled the ship into the ice, so much so that an ice breaker had to be called to free the ship! Occasionally, while sailing along the ice channel we would become stuck. One method used to "free" us was to place a heavy weight on a runner and swing the derrick from side to side. This caused the ship to roll slightly, thus breaking free and able to sail onward!

Having obtained my Mate's certificate (Class 2) and married, the short deep sea trips to West Africa were appealing and I sailed with Palm Line. Ships sailing round this coast (Dakar to Lobito) we called at many ports. Loading logs while at anchor in a swell was challenging; huge 10 ton

tree trunks would swing about and the skill was to stow them without damage to the ship. Navigationally, the creeks in the Niger delta offered some interesting ship handling experiences. One was to round a sharp bend by digging the bow into the soft mangrove mud and allow the current to swing the ship onto the new course required! Another ruse when sailing loaded from the creeks across the Escravos Bar, where the water depth was, say, 21 feet, was to load the ship to 21ft 3 ins and go full speed. The action of the river bed on the ship's hull was to clean off all the debris that had built up in the bottom plating and leave a smooth hull bottom. This had the effect of giving us an extra half knot at sea speed, which resulted in gaining a tide when docking in Liverpool or Europe, thereby paying off early!

Shore side employment

After passing my Masters Certificate of Competency (Class 1) and sailing as Chief officer I was encouraged to take my BSc in Nautical Studies at Southampton University and the School of Navigation at Warsash. This was not an easy option as I had to abandon my dreams of command, but given the decline in the British Merchant Navy in the 1970s the only realistic option was the offshore supply sector. Having seen the North Sea at its worst, the option of “driving a desk” seemed more appealing. Limited space means this paragraph is a precis of my shore career. Essentially, I ended up as a marine surveyor working out of the City of London. I did travel world wide between 1980 and 2005 and had many interesting experiences. I ended up specialising in major casualty response and investigation. There are far too many tales to recount, some quite harrowing, where a casualty involved loss of life. I recall back in 1979, while still lecturing at Warsash, becoming involved in the training for “entry into enclosed spaces” following a tragedy when several individuals had died. It worries me today that there are still too many incidents resulting in death following entry into an enclosed space.

Throughout my career the number one consideration has been “Safety of Life”. Nothing, even pollution response, must ever be allowed to impinge on the safety of life message.

John M M Noble

May 2021



Will the Ever Given case lead to major changes?

By Alan Loynd Baird Maritime Tug Times 22nd June 2021

Once upon a time, Riviera Maritime Media organised a webinar to discuss, among other things, the fallout from the *Ever Given* case and its possible implications for the salvage industry. The panelists were George Tsavlis, Richard Janssen of Smit, and John Noble of Constellation Marine Services, so there was no lack of expertise and experience on the panel. I was not able to attend, so I base my comments on reports of the event.

One conclusion drawn by the panel, and supported by 90 per cent of the delegates, was that salvage stations should be set up around key waterways. Mr Tsavlis pointed out that there used to be salvage tugs stationed near likely trouble spots, but this is no longer the case because, apart from anything else, “salvage needs to be paid for”. He also noted that ship and cargo values are rising steadily, and claimed a modern container ship could be carrying goods worth US\$2 billion.

To prevent such losses, it would make sense to invest in decent salvage equipment and the training of skilled salvors. The majority of delegates also agreed there is insufficient investment in salvage equipment and training.

Mr Tsavlis is absolutely correct, but the question that has to be asked is where will the money come from? Having tugs on salvage station was a good idea when there was a reasonable chance they would make a profit, but the statistics show the number of major incidents has declined over the years. Add to this the fact that, if towage is required, there is generally a powerful offshore supply vessel not too far away, and it is easy to see why there are no longer salvage tugs loitering near every congested waterway.

It is also true that even a fleet of salvage tugs at the ends of the Suez Canal, or spaced regularly along its course, would not have prevented *Ever Given* veering off course and jamming herself across the canal. As Mr Janssen noted, the Suez Canal Authority had dredgers and powerful tugs readily available, which helped speed up the salvage but could not prevent the grounding in the first place. He proposed an integrated approach by all interested parties to determine whether large container ships can be manoeuvred in restricted waterways in order to mitigate potential problems.

And that, I believe, is the heart of the problem. I have tried to imagine how a powerful tug could be used effectively to prevent the next canal blockage, and I cannot come up with a foolproof solution that would

guarantee a reasonable chance of success without slowing operations significantly.

Years ago there were a series of trials of escort tugs to answer questions about directional stability, so it would be possible to conduct similar trials to seek an effective means of preventing groundings and blockages of major waterways, but who will donate the large container ships and tugs for lengthy trials, and which major waterway will permit itself to be used (and probably blocked) for such trials? I suppose some form of trial could be carried out in testing tanks or aboard manned models, but would the results be trusted without full-scale verification?

And even if we find a way to bring big ships safely through restricted waterways, we still have to sort out the vexed topic of who would be responsible for the passage. John Noble rightly pointed out that “the master-pilot authority relationship in the Suez Canal needs to be resolved”, and he reminded delegates that at the moment the master is always in command and can override a pilot. But if a complex escort scenario could be devised, is it reasonable to place all the responsibility on the master for operations he probably would not understand, or expect him to recognise a potential disaster and intervene in the five seconds between the disaster developing and his ship becoming wedged across the canal? I tend to agree with Mr. Noble that the “Suez Canal Authority would have to take control and then take responsibility”.

Delegates were not so sure. They were asked, in light of the *Ever Given* incident, who should have ultimate responsibility for a Suez Canal transit? A worrying 56 per cent said it should be the master while 26 per cent thought it should be the Suez Canal Authority and 18 per cent said the pilot. I am not sure where the 18 per cent think they will find pilots who are willing to accept a job in the canal if they are expected to carry the can for every incident, or face a claim for US\$900 million every time they cause a blockage. Perhaps we should be thankful nobody thought it should be the tugs who are held accountable.

It does not matter what the delegates thought, of course, but the three panelists raised very important questions that really deserve to be answered. Unfortunately, finding those answers will cost an awful lot of money, so who should pay?

I have a cunning plan.

At the time of writing, the Suez Canal Authority has detained *Ever Given* and are demanding an unbelievable sum of money for her release. Their justification for this is the amount they claim to have lost as a result of the incident, but it seems to me they probably lost very little since most of the ships that were delayed simply waited at either end of the canal until it

opened again. Only a few ships opted to take the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope.

So my idea is for the Suez Canal Authority to screw the ship's owners and insurers for every penny they can get, retain a few million for their inconvenience and reward the pilot who created the windfall, then donate the remainder to research into preventing future incidents. To keep it all transparent they could invite suitable research institutes and other learned bodies to form joint ventures with salvage, towage and pilotage experts, etc, and bid on the project. The winner would be the joint venture that had all the requisite skills and offered the lowest price. I would even be prepared to offer my services to help them assess the bids, for a modest fee. And they all lived happily ever after.

Published with the kind permission of Baird Maritime and the author,

Alan Loynd



ALL AT SEA describes the career of a ship captain and salvage master from the time when he joined his first vessel to his present status as a marine consultant in Hong Kong. He writes of the remarkable changes he has seen and experienced in a career which has spanned more than half a century. By turns amusing and thought-provoking, this is an enjoyable tale of a most interesting life.

ALAN LOYND left school at sixteen and joined the merchant navy as a deck cadet. At the time, the British merchant navy was at its peak and general cargo ships dominated the world's shipping lanes. After six years with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Loynd joined the Swire Group and served with the China Navigation Company, Swire Pacific Offshore and Hongkong Salvage & Towage for the next thirty years. He is a Fellow of the Nautical Institute and the International Tugmasters Association, and a Freeman of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners.

"Alan ... has done readers a service by putting on record so many of his experiences in such a charming and accessible manner. ... it is both an honour and a pleasure to commend this volume to almost any curious and enthusiastic reader."

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ALL AT SEA

Alan Loynd



ALL AT SEA

A MEMOIR

Alan Loynd

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Alan Loynd's recently published book is available through Waterstones and Amazon. A Kindle edition is priced at £7.06 and downloaded onto my Fire tablet OK but with the pictures in b&w. However when I tried to read it on my Kindle Paperwhite it said "The item is not compatible with this device". I have not had time to read it all yet but what excerpts I have read so far have fully satisfied my expectations - Ed

Of ships and their crews

The Maritime *Advocate* online Issue 780 June 18th 2021

By Michael Grey

I have always been terribly enthused by Oliver St. John Gogarty's poem *The Ship* and its first stanza –

“A ship from Valparaiso came
And in the Bay her sails were furled,
She brought the wonder of her name
And tidings from a sunnier world.”

It came back to me this week reading about all the congestion in the liner trades with Covid-19 in the China ports and 400 or so ships swinging around their anchors in roadsteads across the world. My next door neighbour has been told that the new garden furniture he ordered in time for summer will be delivered, if luck is on his side, around the time of the autumn equinox.

It is a salutary reminder that the next time your company's finance director starts burbling on about Just In Time and the cost of carrying stocks of goods against interruptions in the logistics chain, you should take him outside and shoot him. Or at least issue him with his P45. Congestion or not, you cannot surely grudge the carriers their current time in the sun, after so many years of financial gloom. Rest assured, it won't last, as they move with alacrity to produce the next containership slot surplus.

But the poem mostly came to my mind reading about peevish complaints by those favoured folk who live on Puget Sound, voicing their outrage at having their sea views spoiled by container ships anchored off as they wait for berths in Seattle and Portland. The noise of their generators irked them no end, while their exhausts were polluting the pristine air. Couldn't they, it was inferred, go some place else.

I would probably admit that a couple of 15000teu monsters swinging around their hooks does not conjure up the same romantic vision as a barquentine inbound from Valparaiso, but it might occur to them that they could need some of the stuff they have in their containers. It might be their new garden furniture, lovingly crafted in some rustic haven up the Pearl River. Selfish blighters. They certainly won't give a thought to the

steel accommodation block amidships and the twenty people living in it. The crew might be enjoying a few days relative rest, the frantic time in port being postponed for a while.

It is a truism that ships today and those aboard them only intrude into the public consciousness when something goes wrong, and then everyone who has never noticed them before is swift to complain. But it is sad that something so important to our lives is so invisible, like the drains. The miserable two-month saga of the containership *Ital Libera* which ended this week in Italy, spoke volumes about attitudes to those who go down to the sea in ships in 2021. With her dead master aboard, cases of Covid among the crew, the ship was rejected by no fewer than eight countries when they requested leave to enter port and repatriate the corpse of her captain. In the end the operators very decently decided to bring the ship, with both the cargo and her late master, back to Italy.

It is one of the pandemic stories that will, at least among shipping people, probably be imprinted on the memory, long after the world gets back to normal. It ranks alongside incidents of ships being denied medical assistance by coastal states, and the glacial pace of vaccinating seafarers, while taking for granted the goods they carry in their ships. Will the history of this past couple of years even acknowledge the debt owed to the world's seafarers?

And while thinking of attitudes to requests from ships, and the ease with which problems can be moved on to somebody else's jurisdiction, it will be interesting to see if any lessons are learned from the ruins of the *X-Press Pearl*, sitting on the bottom off Colombo as her cargo washes ashore. Two wayports, we are told, refused requests for the container of leaking acid to be discharged, leaving it for the ship, or somebody else down the line, to deal with the problem. Maybe a more robust master would have refused to take the ship to sea and insisted that it was hazardous to do so. But masters aren't encouraged to be too assertive, these days. If a ship from Valparaiso comes into your bay, move it on, as quickly as possible, before the residents complain about the noise.

Compulsory Pilotage.

Suez Canal – Ever Given. United Kingdom Pilotage Act 1987

The case of the Ever Given, as far as the editors of maritime publications are concerned, would seem to be Ever Giving. Here, Barrie Youde, a retired Liverpool pilot and specialist in Maritime Pilotage Law, gives us some professional opinion and comment.

The 1987 Pilotage Act provides, at Section 31, that “pilot” means any person not belonging to a ship who has the conduct thereof; and “pilotage” shall be construed accordingly.

The recent accident suffered by the container-ship Ever Given in the Suez Canal raises once again the matters of safe navigation and compulsory pilotage. More particularly, it raises the matter of compulsory pilotage; as the matter of safe navigation remains in any event at the forefront of the mind of any responsible person whenever navigation at sea is considered.

Recent reports make it clear that Ever Given was under pilotage when the grounding occurred, with world-wide repercussions as to trade and commerce. Few single accidents have caused global repercussions in trade on a similar scale. The reports now received illustrate vividly what is meant by the expression “the conduct of a ship”. The meaning of those words is of precise legal importance in light of their use in the laws of the UK and other maritime nations throughout the world. It is clear from reports received that the senior of the two pilots on the bridge of Ever Given at the relevant time was, in simple terms, giving orders as to the steering and the propulsive speed of the ship. The facts are as simple as that. Far more significantly, in any case where the pilot does not give orders as to the speed and direction of the ship then he does not have (and cannot be said to have) “the conduct” of the ship and the ship is therefore not under pilotage.

So far so clear and so far so simple. Complication arises when the ship is made subject to compulsory (as opposed to voluntary) pilotage by law. It is worthwhile to make the point, in general terms, that pilots do not make the law. Rather, the law is made by national rule and the law dictates what should be the qualifications of the persons who should be pilots in any particular place. What, then, is meant by the compulsion, as in “compulsory pilotage”? Plainly it means more than that the ship is obliged to take a pilot on board. In order for any pilot to have “the conduct” of the ship he needs to be given the

conduct by the ship; otherwise he does not have the conduct and the ship is in breach of the compulsion. Having given the conduct of the ship to the pilot, the ship is permitted to re-take the conduct only if circumstances of manifest danger have arisen and it is shown that the pilot is manifestly incompetent to address those dangers.

Reports seem to make it clear that there was no breach of any compulsory pilotage legislation by either the Ever Given or her pilot(s). The pilot retained the conduct of the ship. And still the disastrous accident occurred, as happened also in the Sea Empress case at Milford Haven in 1996. In that case the Courts made clear in express terms that whenever compulsory pilotage is imposed by persons appointed to represent central government at local level, then those same persons who impose the compulsion are obliged to maintain (quite literally) “the highest possible standards” of qualification. Those words are no idle mantra; and neither are they any exaggeration. The law does not expect anybody to perform the impossible. It does, however, require that the highest possible standards are maintained wherever compulsion might apply; and particularly in the United Kingdom.

It is for those reasons that the present circumstances at Londonderry were reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions almost six years ago and that a criminal investigation arose in consequence, conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service. The investigation remains unresolved. Metpol has now washed its hands of the criminal investigation with a declaration on 17 June 2021 that “ the enforcement of the Pilotage Act 1987 is for the Department for Transport”, whilst the Department has not only refused to assist the criminal investigation but also directed that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency should remain silent. The corruption in the Department for Transport is crystal clear. It is in those circumstances that the laws of compulsory pilotage are presently administered.

Barrie Youde

27th June 2021.



Stop bashing the IMO!

Baird Maritime Workboat World, Grey Power 24 June 2021

It may be unfashionable to say so, and had I been on anti-social media I would be probably “cancelled” for even suggesting it, but isn’t it time we cut the International Maritime Organisation a bit of slack. It is an easy target for the seething band of environmental activists who like to demonstrate outside the building, even though all its recent meetings have been on-line. Gearing themselves up for COP 26, the green super-circus planned for Glasgow at the end of the year, the environmentalists are anxious to maintain their momentum and can be guaranteed to continually voice their impatience at whatever the IMO and shipping industry do in their joint efforts to make the industry more sustainable.

From rabid journalists “door-stepping” the IMO Secretary-General at his home in pursuit of their “truth”, to the more extreme elements attacking ships carrying cargoes of which they disapprove, the IMO and the world’s shipping will be increasingly branded “polluters”. Whatever constructive emerges from IMO meetings, (and the recent MEPC 76 was a good example of progress) it won’t be enough to satisfy those who think that “de-carbonising” shipping is as easy as turning off a light.

Politicians don’t help, either, giving the impression that intention is identical to accomplishment, as they boast about their targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by percentages plucked out of the air against impossible timeframes. It is an easy political win to state that cars must be all-electric by 2030, but a different matter to build a supporting infrastructure. Similarly, the shipping industry, which the world utterly depends upon for its international trade and is largely propelled by big diesels, must find some way to operate without fossil fuels. And this must be done within the lifetime of ships being designed today, with novel fuels and cleaner power plants still at an experimental stage.

Improvement is darned complicated, as anyone trying to make sense of the Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index or the Carbon Intensity Indicator rating ought to agree. Should there be bunker levies, or is there a space for “market-based measures”? But the activists, who don’t understand the complexities of maritime technology regrettably see everything in black and white and inevitably accuse the international organisation and the shipping industry, of dragging their feet and resisting the necessary change.

It is very easy to criticise the IMO and industry for its “glacial pace”, but neither get any credit for what has been achieved over the years to make the sea and atmosphere cleaner. There is never the slightest acknowledgement that IMO moves at the pace of its membership, all of

which are countries jealous of their own sovereignty, and that progress requires consensus. The noise made by shouting minorities tends to be heard less against that of an international debate.

Similarly, it is unfair to accuse the shipping industry of resisting change and failing to act with sufficient urgency for the “climate emergency” we face. The industry’s own organisations have made it abundantly clear that they support the aims of decarbonisation and a sustainable shipping industry, but these are practical people who have businesses, and a world fleet to run. They are also acutely aware of the public demand for a cleaner world and the need to tackle this huge bugbear of climate change, but also of the need for international, rather than regional or national solutions. It isn’t helped that the European Commission, still furious at its subordinate status at IMO, is continually trying to force the pace of change and threatening its own regional interpretation of what needs to be done.

But scarcely a day goes by without some news of practical work being undertaken by the industry towards its goals, although it may not reach the mainstream consciousness and will be dismissed by the activists as a smoke screen. The diesel manufacturers, despite being demonised, continue to work hard to make their engines, which will be essential for the foreseeable future, cleaner and more efficient. There is important research being undertaken into alternative fuels, to try and eradicate some of the problems posed by the adoption of ammonia, hydrogen, methanol and various bio-fuels, all of which have a substantial down side. There are exciting developments in the use of wind assistance, with rotors and sails being installed on surprisingly large ships. None of this happens overnight. Similarly, you don’t easily extrapolate the small-scale electric and hybrid solutions suitable for short range ships of modest size into large, deep-sea units. All of this takes time, and a great deal of money, which does not exactly wash around the shipping industry.

Maybe IMO could be better at publicising its achievements, although it is worth noting that none of this will resonate with the armies of impatient activists who shout a lot, but contribute little to the technical debate. Amid all the point-scoring and demonstrating there is also rather less about what the decarbonisation of the industry is likely to cost everyone, like you and me, who, largely unaware, depend upon ships for the stuff we need. It is also worth pointing out that IMO was initially begun as an agency to improve safety at sea, and this role continues today, although those who shout endlessly about the environment probably don’t care about that.

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Cachalot Michael Grey. rjmgrey@dircon.co.uk**



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.”

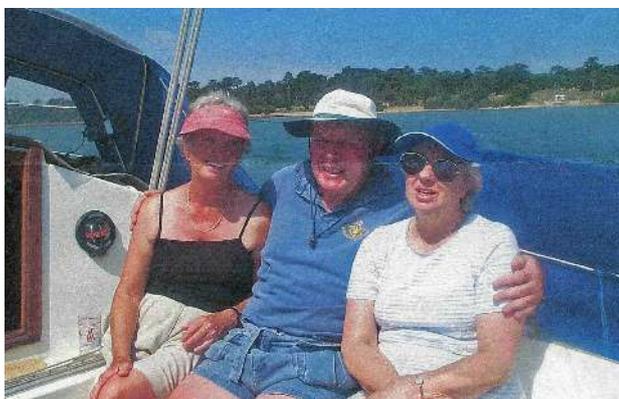
When the Union-Castle Line passenger service ended in 1977 he joined Townsend Thoresen Ferries at Felixstowe, working mainly on the Europoort service, with occasional forays on the Zeebrugge and Cairnryan to Larne routes. Townsend Thoresen was taken over by P & O European Ferries in 1982, shortly before 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.

Captain Charles Anthony Brindle MRIN AMImarE

Cachalot Tony Brindle has died, at St.Mary's Hospital, Newport, IOW, on 4th May, aged 94. He was a former Royal Navy engineer who began engineering training with the RN in 1943, and subsequently had an expansive career in the maritime business world..

In 1965, as Managing Director of British Rail Hovercraft Ltd, he established the world's first passenger carrying hovercraft services between Southsea and Ryde and Southampton and Cowes and was also responsible for the introduction of the larger cross-channel hovercraft in 1968.

He can be credited with insisting on having master mariners pilot the craft against the interests of the aviation world and used the smaller cross Solent craft to train up the handlers of the large hovercraft.

He was Technical Advisor to the Minister for Technology in 1969 and Maritime Advisor to United Nations in 1970 and was also involved in the drafting of several publications including the Economics of Coastal & Inland Water Shipping (1974) and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea Training Manual (1986).

He was later co-director of a safety and training company, 'Aim Safety', with one of his sons, Ian, who is also a Cachalot.

Captain Brindle was a Papal Knight and a longstanding parish council member of St. Thomas of Canterbury Church in Cowes, where his funeral service was held on the 18th June.

He also held office in various faith-based organisations including Chairman/Joint Founder of the Catenian Association Vocations Initiative and was Founder/Co-ordinator of an early Planned Giving scheme in Shrewsbury Diocese.

Tony was also a former Chair of Trustees and long time supporter of Stella Maris.

Stella Maris CEO Martin Foley said, "Captain Brindle, as well as serving as a ship visitor, was our Chair of Trustees during the reorganisation of the then Apostleship of the Sea from a series of diocesan entities into one national charity. He was pivotal to the foundation of Stella Maris as we know it today.



Captain Richard Olden - An Update



Over the past few months, I have been in contact, initially with Richard just after Christmas and then with his daughter Nicola.

Nicola has provided me with updates on Richard's health and has agreed for these to be circulated to members.

On November 14th Richard had a fall in his garage which transpired to be due to a bleed on the brain. After a successful operation he was discharged from

hospital to the care home where he is now. He was doing amazingly well with his recovery - until he got covid mid-January. All the residents were confined to their bedrooms for about six weeks as covid swept right through the care home and visiting wasn't allowed. Physically Richard was ok with covid but it affected him mentally and there was a gradual decline in his health until he fell & broke his hip at the end of March. After another two week spell in hospital, having had half a hip replacement Richard's health had sadly deteriorated to the point where he couldn't do anything for himself - all because of covid.

Nicola writes: *Please feel free to include an update on Dad's health in your monthly Cachalot newsletter. It is comforting to know that Dad had so many friends at the Master Mariners' Club in Southampton. I know he always enjoyed the times he spent there.*

Dad seems to be in a better place than he was a month ago. He is a bit brighter than he was although he has to have everything done for him which is so sad. He has appreciated all the letters/cards he has received in recent weeks. Shipping is one area that he is usually quite chatty & responsive about so cards with ships on always helps generate a conversation with us and the carers. The attached photo of Dad was taken fairly recently and as you can see, he still looks the same – he is not looking frail or anything. Sadly covid has just affected him mentally.

You are welcome to send a card or letter to Richard at the nursing home at

Braemar Lodge, 18/20 Stratford Road, Salisbury. SP1 3JH

Robin Plumley Boatsteerer

The CACHALOTS

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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.

[Read it on your Kindle too](#)

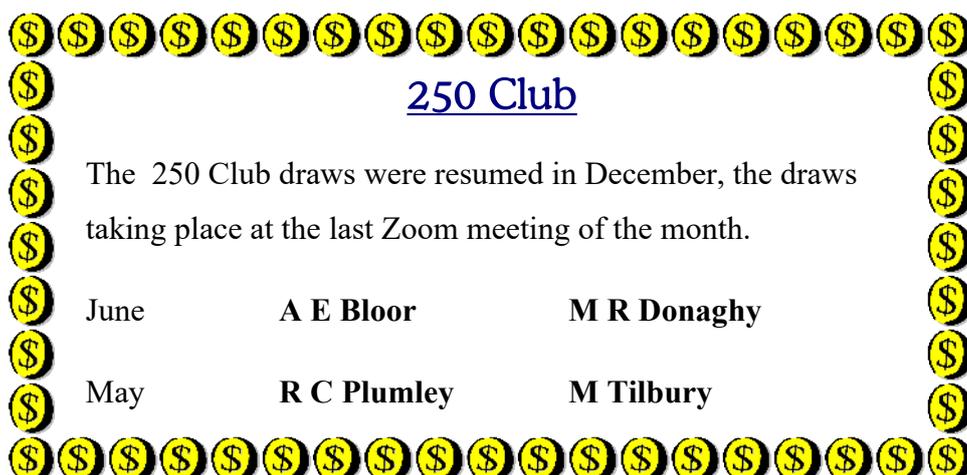
We can also send a copy of these newsletters, (including ALL the previous ones, on request) direct to your Kindle device, as well as to your normal email address.

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The cut-off date for the next edition will be

23rd July 2021



[250 Club](#)

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

June	A E Bloor	M R Donaghy
May	R C Plumley	M Tilbury