



The Seven Seas Club

TO PROMOTE AND FOSTER THE COMRADESHIP OF THE SEA

The Official Organ of the Seven Seas Club



Volume 90, No.1

SUMMER 2014

OFFICERS

President – Mr. Bill Murray

Immediate Past President – Mr. Martin Earp

Vice President – Capt. Chris Esplin-Jones CBE.

Acting Hon. Secretary / Club Goods Custodian
– Cdr. John Mankerty OBE., RN

Hon. Treasurer – Mr. Derek Bevan

Hon. Membership & Dinner Secretary – Mr. Dominique Watson

Hon. Almoner – Mr. Martin Earp

Hon. Magazine Editor – Mr. John Callcut

Committee Members – Mr. Mark Scoular, Mr. Stephen Wheatley,
Mr. Eugene Kelf, Mr. Louis Roskell & Mr. Fez Wood

Hon. Life Members – Mr. Paul Antrobus, Mr. George Kingston,
Capt. David Matthews, Capt. Richard Woodman LVO., FRHistFNI,
& Mr. Ray Williams

Committee Advisor on Historic and Protocol Matters
– Cdr. John Mankerty OBE., RN

Hon. Chaplains – Revd. Canon Paul Thomas OBE., & Revd. Peter Dennett

Hon. Auditor – Mr. M.J. Buck

The committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month throughout the ‘dinner season’.

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Slop Chest

Front Cover – This picture appeared on the front cover of the Seven Seas Shanty Book under the title 'Rolling down to Rio'.

EDITORIAL

Thank you so much for the kind words following publication of the first Seven Seas Magazine under my editorship. I will try to keep the standard up!

Those with sharp eyes will have seen that one of our Life Members, Captain Richard Woodman LVO., FRHistFNI has been listed in the New Year's Honours List as a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order. On behalf of the membership, our Secretary has spoken to him and warmly congratulated him upon receiving this prestigious honour.



Queen Victoria established the Royal Victorian Order on the 21st April 1896 to enable her to recognise people who had given loyal and personal service to the Monarch. It was established a year before the Diamond Jubilee in order to give the Queen time to make up a list of suitable inductees.

When I agreed to become editor of the magazine there was a serious omission in the job description. On taking on the post I assumed that I would merely be sitting in front of my computer, little realising that I would be expected to take on the role of 'Life Boat Skipper – Surrey Rural Branch.' On the 1st February there had been a lot of rain, in fact a serious amount of rain, but our intrepid secretary Commander John Mankerty, and our former Mr. Vice Bill Murray, set out from their homes in Kent to pay a visit to our former President, Martin Earp in Newdigate. To men of the sea, a small rivulet in front of a bridge seemed of little consequence, so they plunged fearlessly in. "We've sprung a leak!" called out the Commander when he realised that he had water around his ankles. "I think you're right", observed Mr Vice as he climbed out of the window and paddled to dry land. A kindly farmer towed the car (not a boat.! Ed.) out of the water and kindly took them to the Red Barn pub at Lingfield..... and that was where I found them tucking into sausages and mash and a pint of the landlord's finest.

I hope that you enjoy the magazine and please keep the articles rolling in.

John Callcut – john.callcut@btinternet.com

A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM OUR PAST PRESIDENT



Dear Gentlemen,

As President of the Seven Seas Club my year is sadly over. It has been a privilege and an honour to have held this office, as well as being fun and – at times – a challenge.

My year started in May at our AGM and dinner when we enjoyed the music and clowning of Shep Woolley, Bill Mc Cinnon and Gary Blakeley. Once again Shep made us laugh, and gave a practical demonstration of how to string a guitar whilst playing it.

Our cocktail party took place on the 14th of June on the terrace of the National Liberal Club, then – as the sun went down and with a chill in the air – we continued inside where Mr Nick Crawford was playing sweet music in the David Lloyd George room.

The Club's Tower of London visit took place in July and was hosted by Mr Keith Hanson, who gave us a very entertaining tour of the Tower followed by a good cold buffet in the Mess, prior to us all attending the Ceremony of the Keys.

The first talk of the season in September was not a good start! Mr Gordon Frickers could not attend. But Mr Louis Roskell - like the Dutch boy - plugged the hole with a splendid talk on maritime painting, giving the proceeds of his card sales on the night to the Laristan Fund.
(Thank you Louis)

In October we were, once again, allocated 30 seats in the prime spot under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral for the Annual National Service for Seafarers. It was a superb service, with dinner afterwards at the local pub.

On Trafalgar Night, Dr Nick Slope gave us an insight to Nelson's navy with his excavation of graves of sailors, marines and women's remains on Nelson's Island. He gave a toast to "The Immortal Memory" at the dinner which was very well attended. The Chip Leonard Anchor was awarded to Commander Will Barker SAN

In November came one of the highlights of my life, when I represented the Seven Seas Club by laying a wreath, in remembrance of those from the Merchant Navy and fishing fleets who died and have no grave but the sea, at the Memorial at Trinity Square Gardens, Tower Hill. (I only just made it in time....)

At our November dinner, Club member Mr Graham Capel - at short notice - gave a talk on Tall Ships which was well received and most interesting. He was standing in for Mr Liam Kettering who could not make it. The recipient of the Chip Leonard anchor was Capt. Chris Esplin-Jones, who has recently joined the committee and travels from Romsey to attend meetings.

The Christmas dinner was great fun and well attended. Revd Peter Dennett led the singing, accompanied by Mr Derek Bevan on the piano. We experimented with an alternative to singing carols in the normal way which was very enjoyable. The Chip Leonard Anchor went to Mrs Marian Murray, it being a tradition of the club to present it to a lady at the Christmas dinner.

In January, Mr Chris Martin spoke about Rowing the Pacific, to one of the most well-attended dinners for some time. The members and guests were inspired by the passion of our speaker, who was very appreciative of his club cufflinks which were posted to him the next day. The Chip Leonard Anchor was awarded to Mr John Callcut for his work on the club magazine

February's dinner went off with a bang! But no sound from the film "The Doomsday Ship". The SS Richard Montgomery was the subject of the talk. Mr Michael Fellows was out of the country at the time blowing up things, so Mr Colin Harvey - a historian - stood in for him at short notice, with quite an eye-opener of a talk entitled a Disaster Waiting to Happen. Mr Bill Murray was unfortunately unable to attend, so Capt. Chris Esplin-Jones gave an excellent reply of thanks to our speaker.

In March, our very own school teacher Mr Andy Thomson gave a very educational talk - with the expertise of a really great scholar - on the setting up of the War Graves Commission; this was well received by all who were present. Andy was standing in for Mr Graham Capel who was unable to make the meeting on this occasion. The Chip Leonard Anchor was presented to Mr Charlie Scoones, our member from "down under".

The Ladies' Night in April was very well attended. Commander Jim Phillips, accompanied by his wife, presented a memorable talk on London's lost route to the sea (the Wey and Arun Canal) which was commented upon as most enjoyable by all who attended. On behalf of the ladies. I take this opportunity to thank the members of the club and the committee for the generous gifts which were given out to the ladies on the night.

I would like to thank Mr David Watson for his support, and all the committee for their help and guidance throughout my year, and sincerely wish Mr Bill Murray a successful year as President. I look forward to working with the new and not-so-new members.

Martin Earp

.....AND A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT



I wish to thank one and all for the great privilege of being appointed President of the Seven Seas Club, following - as one is - in the footsteps of my predecessors, to whom I am in appreciation.

The Seven Seas Club is unique with a diverse membership coming from all walks of life, and above all each and every member having a genuine interest in the sea and its services.

It is wonderful that, thanks to its members past and present, we are able to enjoy our dinners in such an iconic and historical venue within Whitehall, namely the Liberal Club.

The Club Membership, the venue, as well as the traditions of the Club, are very important to me - as I know they are to every single member of the Club. The Presidency, as well as the committee, are all but temporary positions within the Club; it is the Club that is the unchangeable element. Both my committee and I will work tirelessly in the interest of the membership in every aspect, so as to promote the Club's interest and to preserve its integrity and honour.

My wish for the coming year is one of concord and harmony, so that at the end of my term as President I may hand over to my successor a Club that is sound, happy and above all, I hope, in accordance with the very wishes of its founders.

Yours Aye,

William (Bill) Murray - President

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Committee Business: During the period between last year's AGM and that of this year, some changes to the structure of the Committee were necessary.

David Watson, who has held the post of Hon. Secretary since the 2012 AGM, had a change of employment and found it impossible to allocate the amount of time required for the Secretary's post. The Committee has asked me to take on the task until a suitable replacement can be found? David was also the Membership Secretary and it was agreed that this task be given to Dom Watson, which makes sense as he needs to hold an-up-to date membership list on his computer to send out the dinner notices; David is able to retain and update the Club's Archive Records.

Graham Capel was also unable to continue serving on the Committee; Stephen Wheatley volunteered to fill the gap and was co-opted

At this year's AGM, Stephen's place was confirmed and Euey Kelf was elected to fill the space caused by Captain Esplin-Jones CBE, RN moving from the Committee to Mr.Vice!

This still leaves me holding the post of "Temporary Hon. Secretary" which obviously I will continue to do, but after some 12 years I would welcome a rest. If any member would wish to try his hand at being Club Secretary I would welcome him with "open arms". I would provide adequate training and be there for support. Please contact me if you feel tempted, and I will explain all!

Membership: Dom Watson is working on the production of this year's membership list which will be sent to the members in printed form shortly. I know in this electronic age the temptation is not to print, but personally I find it most convenient for it to be in pocket-book form and not to have to "flash up" my computer.

Briefly, we have some 243 members. 8 joined this year and we lost 4. One "Crossed the Bar, one resigned, and two members failed to pay their Annual Subscription. Letters are sent to late payers, and this usually resolves problems such as changing banks and failing to renew Standing Order forms, but on average every year we lose contact with two or three members. Full details of the membership will be in the printed book!

As regards to applications from new members, we have agreed that Dom take responsibility for the new member once they have been elected by the Committee. Therefore, as before, would you please send the forms to me.

Future Committee Meetings: Stephen Wheatley has taken on the task of enabling the Club to hold its Committee Meetings on **Skype**. This will save cost of members travelling to the National Liberal Club to attend meetings. At present, Chris Esplin-Jones travels from Romsey and Louis Roskell from Harwich. So far we have conducted two trials which have proved useful

and we estimate that - once we have the system up and running - we will reduce the “live meetings” from 10 to 4.

****NOTE**** To anyone who was concerned about the travel element of being Club Secretary, this will therefore be much reduced!!

John Mankerty

NEW MEMBERS

November 2013 – Ken Bushnell, John Hale

April 2014 - Capt. Christopher P. Bordas MN., David M. Ford, Kenneth McGrath

May 2014 - Neil McAlpine

ALMONER'S REPORT

The club sends M & S vouchers to former members' widows. This is much appreciated, as evidenced by extracts from the following letters:

Mara Jones – What a lovely surprise and such a generous voucher! Many, many thanks for that and for your lovely letter. We are coming to terms with our loss but still cannot believe he is not coming back. (see obituary in the last magazine)

Pauline Cutler – Thank you and all the kind members of the Seven Seas Club for the voucher you sent me for Christmas. I know Ken would be delighted to learn of your continued success.

Pat Wood – Very many thanks to you – the President and Officers of the Club - for your very generous M & S gift voucher, which is such a great gift to have – I do enjoy finding “goodies” and not having to pay for them!! Thank you also for your little phone calls – I really appreciate them and it's so nice to feel there is someone at hand if urgently needed. I am about to have a second hip replacement in February so hope to be able to ‘do’ a bit more in 2014.

Mary Turner – Thank you for your magazine, which I find very interesting. Thank you also for the gift and good wishes received today. I hope you enjoyed the Christmas dinner party.

G. Bowie – I am writing to thank you for your lovely gift card. I wish you and all the members of the Club a Happy New Year. I am keeping well and my family are looking after me.

M. Johnson – I thank you for your diligent concern and interest in the well-being of us many widows. I very much appreciate it as I am sure do others. I made you aware at the excellent Christmas dinner, that I received the M & S gift card safely and with delight but I would request that you express my appreciation to the members of the club; so I realize that it is due to the generosity of its members that I am able to ‘have a fling’ in M & S each year.

CLUB DATES

25th September 2014:

The Airship Heritage Trust – Dr. Giles Campling

23rd October 2014 (Trafalgar Night):

Toast to the Immortal Memory – Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey KCB, CBE

20th November 2014:

BAE Systems – Speaker to be confirmed.

18th December 2014:

Christmas Dinner

29th January 2015 (Burns Night):

Piper - Sgt. Major Bill Kerr. Address to the Haggis - Graham Dare

26th February 2015:

Life on HMS Britannia – Commodore Tony Morrow

26th March 2015:

The Merchant Marine – Captain Richard Woodman LVO., FRHistFNI

24th April 2015 (Ladies' Night):

Entertainment by Shep Woolley and crew.

28th May 2015 (AGM)

OBITUARY

Frank Thorniley

by Commander John Mankerty

I first met Frank when we were serving together in the 8th Destroyer Squadron based in Singapore in 1962. I was a Petty Officer Gunnery Instructor in *H.M.S. Cassandra* and Frank



was a Petty Officer Marine Engineer (Still referred to as “Stokers”) in *H.M.S. Carysfort*. Serving in the *Carysfort* at the same time was a very young Junior Seaman named John Woolley (Most people now call him Shep). We had come across each other on various occasions and I was so glad to see him more often when Frank joined our ranks in the Seven Seas Club

Another of our members, Captain Bob Dole, gave an excellent tribute to Frank in his Order of Service which I have reproduced below:-

Some of you will have known Frank much longer than Tris and I have. We first met Rosemary and Frank 12 years ago, when we arrived alongside their yacht *Daydream* in Ramsgate marina, having just sailed up from Dover. Helping us tie up, Frank said the magical nautical expression ‘Fancy a beer?’ We have been the best of friends ever since.

Like everyone who met Frank, we came under his spell.

One of the first things I noticed was that whenever I went up to the town in Ramsgate it took me about 3 or 4 minutes, however if I was with Frank it always took about half an hour. Everyone we met knew Frank and we would stop and chat. Frank always remembered their names and the last things that had occurred in their previous meetings. Frank’s ability to remember names, sometimes of people he had not seen for years, was one of his most endearing features.

His ability to fix things mechanical and otherwise was exceptional. He would turn his hand to anything, not only pertaining to himself and Rose, but for anyone else who had a problem. He usually managed to fix it without causing greater problems. Jointly we undertook plumbing problems in my house that I would never have dreamed of doing alone.

Frank's recall of events, usually of a nautical nature, was remarkable. Going back many years he would talk about his seagoing experiences, made even more realistic as he could recall the names of all the participants.

He loved gadgets, especially those that he could fit on *Willowind* their lovely yacht. In the end there were so many aids to Safety, Navigation, Radars, radios and Vessel recognition, the vessel had more equipment on board than I had ever had on any large merchant vessel I had commanded myself. On sailing from port, once clear of the breakwaters, Frank would hand the helm over to Rose, her favourite position, and proceed down below to his engine, charts and equipment. Only returning to deck when Rose shouted down that she needed assistance in tacking or some other task requiring more than one person. This being accomplished he would return to his below-decks empire. I came to the conclusion, after sailing with them a few times, that Frank didn't actually like the sea itself. He certainly preferred being below with his engine. Being a Ship's Engineer all his Naval life it was only natural I suppose.

Frank's generosity was unbounded. The number of times someone said they were missing this or that or needed a piece of equipment he would say 'I've got one of those' or 'I can make one you can have'.

Frank and I shared a hobby. It was model making. Some of his endeavours, such as a magnificent brass cannon, can be seen in their house. When Frank realised he was not going to be able to build the 'Victory' from a kit he had purchased, he said he would like me to have it. It was a magnificent gift that I am having great pleasure in building. It will always bring back memories of our times together.

Memories, memories are all we have now he has left us. But "Thank you Frank", for leaving us with such Happy and Fascinating ones!

We will miss you.



SISTER CLUBS

South Africa

Martyn Wheatley and his wife Valerie visited South Africa to celebrate thirty years together. They visited the Seven Seas Club in Simonstown at lunchtime on the 3rd January, where they were welcomed by Theo Kent. Martyn said that the club's location is wonderful and their clubhouse is packed with paintings, pictures and hundreds of photographs plus other naval and nautical memorabilia. Here are some pictures sent in to us by Martyn.



Australia - <http://sevenseasaustralia.com.au>

Our friends in Australia have recently received the following enquiry which has been swiftly answered:

Further to our recent telecon, while in Tasmania I stayed for a few days at Ormiston House on the west coast in Strahan, where the owner is a retired former Royal Navy and Australian Royal Navy man. When in conversation with him, he became aware of my background and he mentioned a bit of a mystery to me and promised to send photos for when I arrived home. The photo and the enlargement of a section of it attached were taken at John Brown's shipyard on the Clyde in January, 1913. The ship is *HMAS Australia* an Indefatigable Class Battlecruiser.

What nobody seems to know, including me, is the identity of the white, bell-shaped items held by the crew in the picture.



I am familiar with this photo which appears in the book *Clydebank Battlecruisers*. I am confident that this picture depicts one of the first drafts of seaman to join the newly built *HMAS Australia*. In their hands are what I believe to be their sennet hats (straw hats) in their duck (white cloth) covers. I wrote about this in my book entitled *Kit Muster*. Extract follows:

'Headwear for seamen consisted of either a peakless round blue or white cloth cap, or a straw sennet hat for use in hot weather. The hat, derisively referred to as the 'donkey's breakfast', was always a source of worry to sailors when proceeding on draft as it was housed in a loose cover of light duck and usually arrived at its destination resembling a pancake'.

Information from John Perryman - Senior Naval Historical Officer, Sea Power Centre – Australia.

The Australian Club recently held a Banyan Night and for the benefit of their members explained the origins of the word. Banyan is derived from the Banyan Days which were meatless days in the diet of seamen in the English Navy, so called from the name of Hindu merchants noted for their abstinence from eating flesh . The custom was introduced during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, to economize on the cost of meat -- fish or cheese being issued on Banyan Days in place of salt meat . Meatless days in the Navy were officially ended in 1824 and were followed by an Order-in-Council established to provide a new and improved scale of victualling for the Fleet .

The editor of the Australian Club magazine notes that ‘at present , we have 84 Members , including 4 Life Members . A recent survey of attendance shows we are having an average 35% attendance . The London Club now has 242 Members and has similar attendance numbers . It is interesting to note an article written in the London Newsletter by Past President Commander John Mankerty OBE , on their Club’s Dinner protocol – and how it compares to our own’ .

Have a look at their website to see all the varied activities taking place at the club – and not one mention of the cricket!

DINNERS

Photographs: Dom Watson

21st November 2013 – Attendance : 60

Ties: Binny Hale, Rob Fuller, Russell Hicks.



Speaker – Mr Graham Capel



Chip Leonard Anchor – Comdr. Will Barker SAN

19th December 2013 (Christmas Dinner) – Attendance: 98



Chip Leonard Anchor – Mrs Marian Murray

30th January 2014 – Attendance : 80

Ties: Kurt Eyre, Roger Dobson, Ruari Chisholm, Kenneth Bushnell, Stephen O’Shea.



Chip Leonard Anchor – Mr. John Callcut



Speaker – Mr. Chris Martin

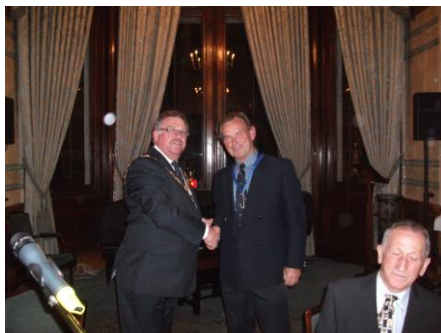
27th February 2014 – Attendance: 58



Speaker - Mr. Colin Harvey

Lionel Willis – Commodore of the Greenwich Yacht Club

27th March 2014 – Attendance : 68



Speaker – Mr Andy Thompson

Chip Leonard Anchor – Mr. Charles Scoones

25th April 2014 (Ladies Night) – Attendance: 81



Speaker – Commodore Jim Phillips

29th May 2014 (AGM) – Attendance : 71



Shep Woolley receives the Chip Leonard Anchor from President Bill Murray

The Cocktail Party hosted by our new President, Mr Bill Murray, was held on the terrace of the National Liberal Club on a warm evening on the 6th June.



Report to the Trustees of the Seven Seas Club Baxter & Grimshaw Trust on 17th March 2014....and to be given as a courtesy to the members of the Seven Seas Club at their AGM in May 2014.

Over the past 12 months the Trust has assisted 129 disadvantaged young people under the age of 25 years with a financial grant to enable them to take part in sail training/nautical training. As in previous years the greater proportion of applicants have come from the Sea Cadet Corps. The number of Sea Cadets is lower this season than in recent years. There are two immediate causes. Firstly that organisation has had monies of its own for grants at Divisional level. Secondly some 24 cadets we had agreed to sponsor had their voyages cancelled due to one of the motorships being in dock with engine trouble.

The breakdown is as follows.....Sea Cadets.....117

Others 12

TOTAL..... 129

The young people came from the Sea Cadet Corps, The Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project and The Marine Academy Plymouth. They sailed on vessels belonging to the Sea Cadet Organisation and the Island (Cutter) Ltd. One of the Sea Cadets has been assisted financially in his participation in a leg of the Round the World Clipper Race (China to San Francisco).

Additionally, Newtownards Sea Cadets, Co. Down, Northern Ireland were assisted with a grant towards the purchase of a Trinity 500 dinghy. This unit has 13 cadets and is ambitious and keen.

All in all a good year and I must express my thanks for the support and assistance of all my fellow Trustees. Thanks must also be recorded to Brewin Dolphin our financial wizards and in particular John Willoughby, and Alan Hills our Accountant, who continue by astute investment and advice to make the Trust viable each year and with excellent prospects for the future.

A Trip Down the Thames

by Nick Crawford

I had thought for some time how interesting it would be to take my Shetland 27' cruiser downstream from its home mooring at Walton on Thames, through Teddington lock and then into the Pool of London. I fancied repeating the Monty Python trip when they fired a broadside at the Houses of Parliament from their Chinese junk - and got no reaction!

Not having ventured on to the tideway before, I did some homework by studying the Pool of London Authority's guide for recreational sailors visiting the city. It didn't take me long to realise this would be a significant undertaking. I discussed my proposed voyage with a friend at the marina who had made the trip on several occasions. He suggested we form a convoy of two boats and make for Limehouse Marina, spending a few days in town. Good plan - and my wife Ann agreed, so it must be OK. Friend Gerry studied the tides and a September date was fixed.

There are many crucial differences between navigating above Teddington (non-tidal) and below (tidal). One is that there are no riverside moorings to be had. It is vital that the visiting matelot secures a reserved parking spot at one of the few marinas available. Our plan was to stay at Limehouse, but we were disappointed to discover it was fully booked for our dates. So, we opted for the RNLI base at Chiswick. Very nice mooring and within a short stroll of Fuller's brewery and Tap house (which it would have been churlish to ignore).



By the way, I discovered that the river flow is measured at Teddington. During floods, up to 15,000 million gallons a day washes through. That is correct, fifteen thousand million!

We were most fortunate in opting for the first week in September. The weather was glorious. Leaving Walton at lunchtime on the Monday, we cruised slowly down through Sunbury and Molesey, tying up at Hampton Court for the evening. Dinner and a few tighteners were enjoyed at The Mitre; a lovely position overlooking the river by the bridge. It never fails to amaze me, the contrast between the hustle and bustle of the road traffic and the tranquillity of the water.

Next morning we resumed the expedition en route to Chiswick. We lunched at Teddington, waiting for the tide to favour us. Vital to ascertain which way and for how long it's flowing, as my boat is powered by 54 horses and achieves about 8 knots. We reached Chiswick late afternoon, and I had my first experience of turning the boat into the current and coming up slowly onto the pontoon. Managed fine and was lucky to have a couple of able-bodied lifeboat men to take the ropes. The RNLI have three fast ribs (two small, one large) on station and were kept busy during our stay. We even witnessed a dinghy capsize nearby and watched the guys in action. Very impressive. The current is strong, fast and treacherous.

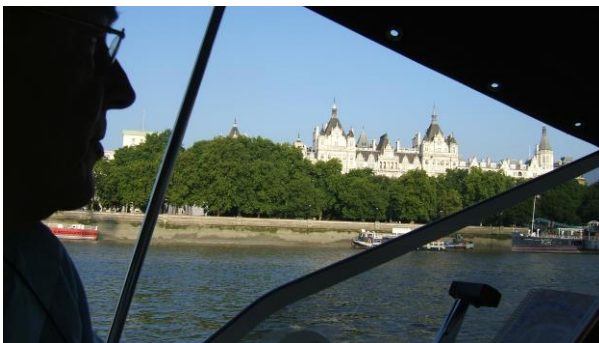


Wednesday morning, we slipped our moorings at 0715 in order to get the tide. I was struck by the difference between high and low water. I would guess the jetty rose and fell 18' overnight. We cruised along in beautiful early morning sunshine with almost no traffic on the water. Just a few rowers getting their exercise before the working day commenced. Past the imposing Harrods depository, Fulham FC, the boat race finish and start (that's a long way to paddle flat out!), Battersea power station and the heliport.

Indeed, not until we reached Vauxhall did we start to see some activity, mostly from the fast commuter clippers roaring past. That's a challenge for the small boater. When they pass it's prudent to turn into the wake at right-angles, open up the throttle and charge through the waves. OK when you see 'em coming. Not so easy when they wizz up from astern! We got some attention from the river authority and the police but weren't stopped when I assured them that the only suspect cargo on board was an ancient packet of extra-strong mints. They seemed satisfied and screamed away in a flurry of surf to continue protecting the realm. Strikes me, they're just rushing around having a good time!



We continued north into the heart of the city, floating under the numerous bridges which are all so different. We made sure we selected the correct span to negotiate, obeying the traffic light system.



Past parliament (I didn't salute); past the National Liberal Club, home to our Seven Seas Club (I did salute) bathed in easterly sunshine; then County Hall and the London Eye followed by the

Embankment and on to the Tower of London and then close by HMS Belfast. Now that is a big cruiser when you're in a small cruiser.



But of course the biggest thrill is going under Tower Bridge. Busy with red buses and scurrying commuters, it is a sight to see from your own boat. Marvellous.



We carried on to Limehouse past a pub I haven't been in since the 70s. The Prospect of Whitby brings back happy memories for me, but not for many I suspect in years gone by. They say there are more dead bodies there under the mud than anywhere else on the Thames. Dark deeds enough to put you off the house speciality. The Prospect used to be in the Egon Ronay guide for the best Spotted Dick in the country and I seem to remember the beer was pretty good too. We turned at Limehouse timing the tides to perfection and came back up on the flood.

This time the sun was behind us and everything took on a fresh aspect. We sailed back to Chiswick in time for coffee. It took only 3.5 hours for our sightseeing, thanks to my fleet commander's expert interpretation of the tidal flow. We arrived back at our base at the end of the week just in time for the weather to change. Perfect.



Our little plastic bucket did us proud on the grand old river. She's called Body & Soul, and performed accordingly.

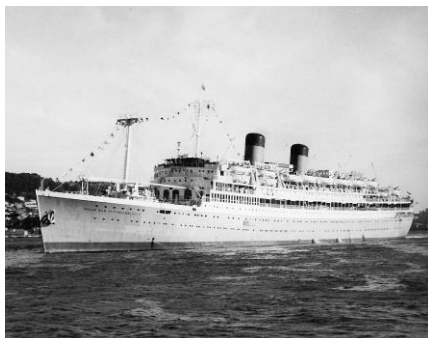
Author's Note: It is with no little apprehension that I submit these notes as I am only too aware of the careers of the readership! Please give ground (or should that be 'way') to this very amateur sailor's attempt at a watery tale.

Maybe I'll stick to aeroplanes next time.....

The End of a Proud Ship

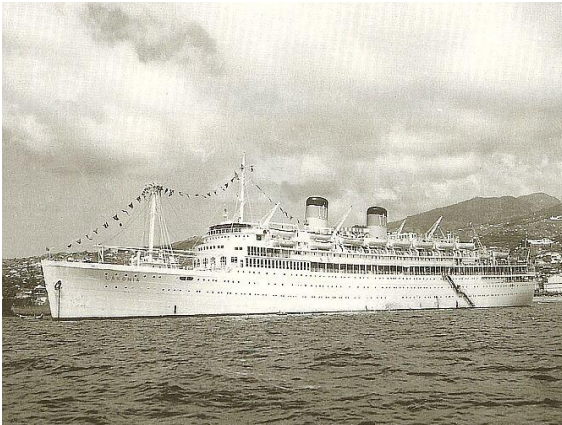
John Callcut

As a young boy my grandfather used to take me to Southampton to see the ships. The *Johan Van Oldenbarneveld* (19428 grt) always struck me as being a very grand and proud vessel.



She was built for the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland, better known as the Netherland Line, and her maiden voyage took place in 1930. She was designed for the Dutch East Indies trade and had been fitted out to an amazingly high standard. During the war she was converted to a troop ship and was known as the 'Lucky Ship' as she never sustained serious damage. After the war, with declining passenger numbers to the Indies, the *JVO* was put on a regular schedule to

South Africa and Australia. Before that she was refitted to a one class ship. Now at 19787 grt, she held 1414 passengers but still maintained a high standard of food and accommodation. In 1959 she underwent an extensive overhaul which reduced her accommodation, but also changed her appearance as her funnels were extended and topped (as can be seen in the picture). She later operated Trans Tasman cruises which became very popular with Australian and New Zealand passengers. By 1962 there was a serious fall in passenger numbers, so she departed her home port of Amsterdam for the last time on the 29th September. She was decommissioned by the Netherland Line at Sydney in 1963, and from there she sailed to Genoa where she was taken over by the Greek Line to commence a new career as the cruise liner *Lakonia*.



Although she was 33 years of age she had only recently had a major refit so the Greeks clearly thought that she was a viable proposition. So a further refit took place and she commenced her cruising duties in Europe and the Mediterranean. By November the owners decided that the ship needed a further refit; this was carried out at Southampton where all safety aspects were also inspected. Indeed, my grandfather witnessed some of the lifeboats being tested whilst she was berthed in the Western Docks. In the December

the *Lakonia* was ready for her cruise, and she looked splendid with her gleaming white paint and new profile. On the fourth evening of the cruise at about 10.00 pm on the 22nd December 1963, a passenger thought that she smelt smoke. It was discovered that there was a fire in the barber's shop which had been alight for some while. It rapidly spread and passengers were ordered to the lifeboats. 128 people died that fateful night. This was the result of the enquiry as recorded by Wikipedia:

The Greek Merchant Marine Ministry launched a two-year investigation into the *Lakonia* disaster. The board of inquiry maintained that the *Lakonia* never should have passed safety inspections before sailing. Lifeboat davits were rusted and lockers containing lifesaving equipment failed to open. The drain holes in many lifeboats were without stoppers, so that passengers had to constantly bail water. While a lifeboat drill had been conducted by the crew a week before the fateful voyage, only five of the boats had been lowered in the drill. All of the boats should have been tested, the board argued.

Charges of looting were dropped after extensive questioning. The crewmen maintained that they had only broken into cabins to search for extra lifejackets. The board of inquiry issued a number of other charges. The order to abandon ship was given too late. Operations on deck were not supervised by responsible officers. The crew, despite a few cases of self-sacrifice, failed to rescue sleeping passengers from their cabins below decks.

Eight of the *Lakonia's* officers were charged with negligence. Captain Zarbis, his first officer and the ship's security officer were charged with gross negligence. The other five men were charged with simple negligence. The cause of the fire was ultimately determined to be a short-circuit of faulty electrical wiring. Thus ended the life of a once proud ship. She lies at the bottom of the sea, 230 miles south-west of Lisbon and 250 miles west of Gibraltar.



A strange fact to emerge from the *Lakonia* disaster was that one of the survivors was also rescued from the *Titanic* in 1912 when he was a small boy.

The Sultan Apudin

Did you know that our former President has thespian talents? He recently took the part as Sultan Apudin in a production of *Dick Whittington* which was staged to raise money for the Newdigate Pavilion & Scout Hut Appeal. It was a great success and raised £5,000 for the appeal. Here he is, being serenaded by the head of the harem 'Tuffazell'.



This I witnessed many years ago when I was Second Mate of the tug "*Neptunia*." It was a relative simple job to rig the unit that had to be towed from Southampton to Arzew in the Mediterranean. Mid morning, in very fair weather, we departed, dismissed the assisting harbour-tug, and were soon making a fair speed (maybe 5~6 knots) down the Solent. That tow, while within restricted waters and on a relatively short scope, had a peculiar habit of following behind quite docilely for awhile then, with neither rhyme nor reason, taking one or two gentle sheers - yawing out to maybe ten or twenty degrees on either side. Then, seemingly, she would get the bit in her teeth and haul out to about sixty degrees or so before settling docilely astern again.

I was Second Mate of the tug *Neptunia* and had not been in ocean tugs more than a few months at the time. Neither "Slam Sam" her Master, nor "Crazy Jimmy" the Mate, seemed at all concerned about the antics of our tow. She'll settle down once we get outside, and veer out a few hundred metres of tow-wire was their opinion.

While I was being kept busy with plotting positions and overseeing the helmsman, Crazy Jimmy, the pilot and "Slam Sam" were in a huddle on the starboard bridge wing. Swapping yarns about previous escapades in distant seas and far-flung harbours. Pilots always seem to have an infinite scope of yarns about near and some not-so-near misses. Anyway, we'd swung round to starboard and were heading for the western entrance to the Solent. The Isle of Wight was to port while the rest of England filled out on our starboard side. The sun was high and a point or two on our port bow. Under a light to moderate breeze a few light clouds were easing across an otherwise blue sky. The tide, although not strong, was in our favour. A beautiful afternoon to take a tow to sea. Everyone was completely relaxed, everything was under control - it was all far too good to last!

I didn't really take much notice of the fleet of largish yachts bunched some way ahead of us. I was concentrating on the plotting and course-keeping of the tug and tow. The yachts were, mainly, directly in the reflected path of the sun and it was difficult to make out exactly what they were up to. Suddenly the huddle on the bridge-wing broke up, the tone of their voices altered, and they were all peering intently into the glare of the sun reflected on the water, peering at this tight bunch of yachts as they raced, full pelt downwind, straight at us. The Gods decreed that - when they were about a mile ahead of us - the tow should begin to sheer! Just a few gentle sheers to port then starboard; then, when the nearest yachts were only a few hundred yards ahead of us, the tow took a really strong sheer to starboard, heading for shallow water at a fair lick!

Pandemonium broke out! "Slam Sam" made a dash to set the telegraph to "Slow Ahead" while "Crazy Jimmy" was hauling on the fog-horn lever - blasting out a warning. The pilot, I noticed, was chewing his cap! There was nothing I could do, neither to hinder nor to help. The tow-wire had been just skimming the water when we had been towing. With the relaxed tension - after Slam Sam reduced power - the wire dipped just below the surface.

The tow carried on, sheering unrestrained, to starboard. Just as the first yachts were almost within hailing distance, the tow reached her maximum scope - the line came tight! The big nylon towing strop, rigged between our wire and the towing bridle pendant, sprung like a breaching whale, about six feet clear of the sea surface, and the towing gear stretched directly

across the space where a good number of these sleek, expensive-looking, yachts were heading. Although our towing gear was above the level of their decks and - to us - perfectly visible, these yachts all seemed to be blinded by their own huge sails and spinnakers. A multiple collision seemed inevitable! I was thinking "Holy Jeeeesus! This is going to take some sorting out - insurance wise."

Then, just as the nearest yachts were almost abeam of us, there came a cacophony of yells and screams and spinnakers were flapping wildly in the breeze as the yachts undertook some spectacular and drastic evading manoeuvres. I was quite impressed how quickly a yacht could turn. I was also very impressed at how well these gentlemen yachties could express their feelings. Their yells and screams of abuse, the profanities that were hurled at us, would have embarrassed a time-served whore! The sheer broken, the tow wire sagged under the surface and the tow returned to, once again, follow like a lamb meekly behind us. The outcome of it all was that not one of their "Tupperware" boaties touched either the tug, her gear or the tow. I'm not too certain that they all managed to avoid each other in the melee though - that had, however, nothing to do with us and we were soon clear of those Play-play mariners and our power was eased up to normal full ahead. That pilot, I felt, could then add another wee incident to his repertoire of yarns that would be swapped with Masters of future ships that he would guide up and down the Solent Waters.

Nothing had really happened and - when I enquired about what should be noted in the log - "Crazy Jimmy" the Mate also showed some prowess in the use of profanities.

Just Boasting

by Rodney Pell

After the St Katharine Docks Classic Boat Festival we took *Sheemaun* down river on 27th September and - given a poor forecast - put into Chatham Marina, lovely and excellent facilities if a bit pricey. Due to the dubious forecast and indeed the actual poor weather and high winds, we left *Sheemaun* there (easy train to & from Ramsgate) and on 5th October in lovely weather I cruised her back to Ramsgate with good friend Brian Chapman crewing (Maura could not make it unfortunately).

At St Katharine's and to my surprise there was a Prize Award Ceremony. To my amazement *Sheemaun* - by unanimous findings of the four judges - won 1st Prize! That from amongst some 40 beautiful Classic Vessels from the 26 feet *Chumley* (the late Tommy Trinder's boat) up to 400 ton steam tugs. And so apparently as judged by History, by Seaworthiness, on being Shipshape and Best Dressed overall, old *Sheemaun* was the winner! The prize turned out to be a 200-year-old St Katharine Docks mooring bollard, beautifully painted and mounted on an oak plinth - I could only just lift it and it had to be transported to *Sheemaun* on a truck! It now resides on our lounge fireplace plinth.

On Saturday 2nd November we were called to the Royal Temple Yacht Club Prize dinner and, again to my surprise and of course delight, *Sheemaun* was awarded the Fred Randall Plate and crystal mug for the most meritorious cruise of the year 2012.

No way did I foresee such happenings when in 1986 I found and viewed old *Sheemaun*, then for sale, and - common-sense departing - I bought her.

Yours Aye,

Capn. Pugsley (rodneypell@hotmail.com)

Australia Baxter & Grimshaw Trust in Action

A note from Mike Pinner..... The Seven Seas Club of Australia has its own Baxter & Grimshaw Trust. The late Frank Whymark and myself were instrumental in encouraging this and the Trust over here made a contribution of £10,000 to start them off. Their criteria for awarding a grant are identical to our own. Additionally they interview the prospective candidates as part of their selection process and invite them to a dinner to speak/give an account of their voyage. Below is the presentation by their latest success. Hannah Fabig suffers from cerebral palsy and is wheelchair-bound.

I am also sending you a copy of the letter her parents wrote to the Aussie B & G Trustapart from the donationthe effect on this young persons life is noteworthy. The TYLER referred to in the girl's talk will have been her able-bodied helper (standard practice on these trips).

As Tyler has already mentioned our schedule on the ship was incredibly taxing but it's an experience I will never forget. I learnt so many new things about sailing that I had no idea of before. For example if you don't put your lee cloth up on a rough night you're likely to end up on the floor.

The biggest challenge was overcoming exhaustion to adequately do our chores , but I soon realised that this was not just an individual challenge as everybody around you is feeling exactly the same way. In a sense you bond with those people in your watch group over exhaustion, getting to the point of counting down the hours of our watches till we could go to bed. But it's in these long hours that you learned so much about the people that you're in watch with and this was one of my favourite parts as I heard so many amazing stories on those nightshifts because we all encouraged each other no matter how exhausted we got.

This resulted in a large number of running jokes between us. It's a very encouraging thing to see so many volunteering to help on the ship and because of this it created a very warm and happy atmosphere.

It is because of these same volunteers that I was able to experience what is the most breathtaking adventure perhaps to date, the trip itself and my mast climb. I don't really have a word to adequately describe what the climb felt like. The best I can come up with is painful and awe-inspiring. Thank you very much for the opportunity to take this trip because without it I would not have the friendships that I now do and perhaps the comprehension of what true exhaustion means.

Start with:

1. Introducing ourselves- Hi my names Hannah etc.
2. We went on the Lord Nelson Tall Ship. Our journey began at Port Adelaide on the 1st September and finished up in Williams Town on the 8th September where we, absolutely exhausted, flew back to Adelaide.
3. When we first got there we were all herded down into the cabin for a team brief and safety talk. Afterwards we were introduced to our watch leader and group where we were allocated to aft port with six others who would be working with for the duration of our trip.
4. So a bit of a rundown of our everyday on the ship

5. Every day was full on. If we weren't up on deck keeping watch we were mustering sails, on mess duty, or trying to get in a quick shower and nap where you weren't even guaranteed to have enough water or time to be feeling fresh. Every day we would be woken at 7:30 regardless of whether you had had the 2am-4am watch shift or had been able to snatch a full 8 hours of sleep. First off was breakfast and general preparation for the day before we got into happy hour. Happy hour didn't have anything to do with cheap drinks or prepping for a big night out as most of us would hope. It was about cleaning the ship from stern to bow and not missing a spot. We did everything from mopping the deck to polishing the brass to cleaning the showers.

6. But we were rewarded for our hard work with smoko which usually included coffee, tea, cake and biscuits and the occasional birthday celebration. After smoko it was straight into pulling sails and avoiding getting on Steve's bad side. Steve was the first mate and wasn't one to cross when there was work to be done. If you were lucky there was time for a quick shower or sit down before it was time to get ready for lunch. After lunch was the most savoured time of all. Sleeep!! All the lights were turned out and you could get a good two hours sleep or spend some relaxing time above deck with other crew members.

7. After quiet time it was time to eat AGAIN! Sometimes it felt like we spent our entire time eating but it was necessary if you were to keep your energy up for the late night and early morning watches as well as the days chores. After that it was general things that needed to be done around the ship such as altering sails, getting coffee for those on watch, prepping for dinner and so on and so forth.

8. Watch was probably that most out of routine thing we did. Up at ridiculous times of the night or up super early and missing out on that precious wink of sleep before having to get up to start the day. Long stretches of dark with amazing stars, hot sun with dolphins jumping out of the water or beautiful sunsets and sunrises was what waited on watch so it wasn't all as bad as we can sometimes make it out to be.

9. In the sparse free time we had we got to try climbing the mast, which has to be one of the highlights for both of us.



T.S. Lord Nelson of the Jubilee Sailing Trust

Letter sent by Hannah's parents.

Today I have made a deposit into the Baxter and Grimshaw bank account for \$5200.

In addition to the costs of \$200, Marc and I would like to make a \$5000 donation towards the cost of sending your next scholarship recipient to sea on the Lord Nelson.

This trip on the Lord Nelson has contributed enormously to Hannah's personal growth. For most of her life as a teenager and adolescent she has felt she cannot compete on any level with her peers. Her sailing adventure has changed this attitude. She has now achieved something many able-bodied people are afraid to try. She also took a considerable number of risks in embarking on this adventure which is difficult for her.

Thank you all for the generosity you have shown Hannah in awarding her your scholarship. This project has been an overwhelmingly positive experience for her and has generated great memories for her. I am sure she will remember this adventure in the years to come.

With my sincere thanks and best wishes.

Annie Fabig

The Seven Seas Club remembers the Fallen

Remembrance Service – 10th November 2013, Trinity House.



MINUTES OF THE 90th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SEVEN SEAS CLUB

Minutes of the above meeting held at 18.00 on Thursday 29th May 2014 in the Lady Violet Room National Liberal Club, London.

1. Notice of Meeting: This was read out by the Hon Secretary. 46 members signed the Attendance Register.

2. To Receive Apologies: There were 3 apologies for the AGM only; these along with good wishes for the President and the meeting were received from Ray Williams, Sandy Rogers and Rob Fuller.

3. To Agree the Minutes of the 89th Meeting: Agreement of the Minutes was proposed by Derek Downs and seconded by Graham Painter. All members present agreed.

4. To Receive the Club's Audited Accounts and Adopt Them:

The Hon. Treasurer's report was sent to members along with the AGM Notice. The members present adopted the Club Accounts

5. To accept a Proposal from the Hon. Treasurer: That the Club's Annual Subscription be increased to £40.00 per annum with effect from 1st January 2015. Following the proposal by the Hon. Treasurer, Ian Shuttleworth asked why such an increase was necessary and suggested that an increase to £30.00 per annum might be better with a further £10.00 in a subsequent year. The Hon. Secretary explained that the Hon. Treasurer would need to send out some 240 Standing Order Forms asking them to be completed and returned by a certain date. Past experience has shown that 70% are returned by the date and then the Treasurer spends much time sending e-mails, making telephone calls and writing letters to recover the outstanding 30%. Cdr David Sandiford recounted a similar experience with another association to which he belongs; it took months to complete. The proposal was proposed by Martin Taylor and seconded by Euey Kelf and all agreed.

6. To Receive the President's Report: The President's Report was sent to all members along with the AGM notice and all members accepted the President's report.

7. To Receive a Report on the Activities of the Baxter & Grimshaw Trust: This Report by Michael Pinner was read out by Paul Antrobus and is attached

8. To Appoint Graham Painter as a Temporary Chairman and to Declare all Offices Vacant:

Graham Painter reported that there was only one nomination for President and **Bill Murray** was elected as Club President for the year 2014/15.

Bill then took the Chair and proposed the following nominations which were agreed by all members present:-

- a. **Martin Earp** Is the Immediate Past President.
 - b. **Capt. Chris Esplin-Jones CBE., RN.** was elected as Vice President.
 - c. **Mr. Martin Earp** was elected as the Hon. Almoner.
 - d. **Cdr. John Mankerty OBE., RN** was elected as the Hon. Secretary.
 - e. **Mr. Derek Bevan** was elected as the Hon. Treasurer.
 - f. **Mr. Dom Watson** was elected as Hon. Dinner Secretary.
 - g. **Mr. John Callcut** was elected as Hon. Magazine Editor.
 - h. The following were elected as Committee Members: **Mr Mark Scoular, , Mr. Louis Roskell Mr. Fez Wood, Mr. Stephen Wheatley and Mr. Euey Kelf.**
 - j. The following were appointed as Hon Chaplains: The Rt. Rev. Mrg. John Armitage VG., **Rev. Canon Thomas OBE.,** and the **Rev. Peter Dennett.**
 - k. **Mr. M J Buck** was appointed to continue as the Club Auditor.
 - i. **Mr. David Watson** has volunteered to remain available to the Committee and to organize the Club Archives.
9. The meeting closed at 18.22



The Seven Seas Club

TO PROMOTE AND FOSTER THE COMRADESHIP OF THE SEA

SLOP CHEST

Club Tie	Multi-motive £20.00 (plus £2.00 if posted)
Ten Year Silk Tie	Roman Numeral X under Club motive £20.00 (plus £2.00 if posted)
Shield	The Club Crest in enamel, mounted on a wooden shield. An excellent production. £20.00.
Club Burgee	18 inches, 12 inches on truck £15.00
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Ladies' Handbag Mirror	As given at Ladies Night £15.00
Bookmarks	As given at Ladies Night £10.00
Archives	Provided on DVD (2.55Gb) £5.00

Seven Seas Sweatshirts

Members are also reminded that Club Sweatshirts in navy, grey and red are available in standard, small, medium, large, extra large and double extra large sizes from Jeremy Miller (to whom cheques should be made payable) at a price of £22.50.

Slops are available from:

Commander John Mankerty OBE., RN.

29 Berkhamstead Road, Belvedere, Kent DA17 5EA.

Tel: 01322 442265

johnmankerty@waitrose.com

Mob: 07939 046692

