



# The Seven Seas Club

'To promote and foster the Comradeship of the Sea'

*The Official Organ of the Seven Seas Club*



*Crosby and Massetania  
Kenneth Shoemith*

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[www.sevenseasclub.org.uk](http://www.sevenseasclub.org.uk)



# **The Seven Seas Club (1922) Limited**

A company limited by guarantee, Company Number 11812371. England & Wales.  
Registered office: 117 Elmshurst Gardens, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 3RA

Directors: Mr Derek G Bevan, Mr Kenneth Bushnell, Mr Tony Goodhead,  
Mr Robert Jones, Mr James O'Neill, Mr Martyn Taylor  
Secretary: Mr David Watson

## **Managing Committee**

*President:* Mr Tony Goodhead

*Immediate Past President:* Mr Bob Jones

*Vice President:* Mr Ken Bushnell

*Hon Secretary:* Mr David Watson

*Hon Treasurer:* Mr Derek Bevan

*Hon Dinner Secretary:* Mr James Cameron-Wood

*Hon Almoner:* Mr James O'Neill

*Hon Magazine Editor:* Mr John Callcut

*Additional Committee Members:* Mr Martin Earp and Mr Martyn Taylor

## **Hon Life Members**

HRH the Princess Royal, Mr Paul Antrobus, Mr Ray Kay,  
Mr Louis Roskell MNI, Mr David Watson, Mr Ray Williams,  
Capt Richard Woodman LVO FRHist FNI

## **Club Goods Custodian**

Mr Martyn Taylor

### **Hon Archivist**

Mr David Watson

### **Hon Examiner**

Mr Don R North

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



**Tony Goodhead** President



**Ken Bushnell**  
Vice President



**David Watson**  
Hon Secretary



**Derek Bevan**  
Hon Treasurer



**Bob Jones** Immediate  
Past President



**John Callcut**  
Hon Magazine Editor



**James O'Neill**  
Hon Almoner



**James Cameron-Wood**  
Hon Dinner Secretary

*Additional Committee Members*



**Martin Earp**



**Martyn Taylor**  
Club Goods Custodian

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*Front cover: Conway and Mauretania by Kenneth Shoesmith*

# Editorial

Member, Stephen Earp, attended the *Ardent* memorial service on Sunday 21 May 2023 at the Rose Garden on Plymouth Hoe. He read the roll of honour and his two daughters, Rebecca and Imogen, laid the floral tribute on the *Ardent* memorial.

Few will forget Stephen's talk to us at the January dinner when he spoke so movingly about his experiences on board the *Ardent* at the time of her loss in 1982 in the Falkland Sound.

He kindly sent these pictures of the ceremony:



With thoughts of a number of Club visits to the Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London, Derek Bevan spotted this picture of Clive Towell, Pete McGowran and Rob Fuller (Club member) in their new Yeomen of the Guard livery.



Many will remember seeing the *TS Queen Mary 2*, as she was then called, moored off Victoria Embankment. She was built by William Denny at Dumbarton for service on the Clyde. From 1981 to 2009 she served as a restaurant on the Thames and then she was towed to Tilbury.



The ship was arrested due to non-payment of berthing dues and put up for auction. Scrapping seemed the likely outcome but she was rescued thanks to a successful bid by the the Friends of *TS Queen Mary*. The late actor Robbie Coltrane along with the *Sunday Mail* spearheaded a fund-raising campaign and the ship returned to Glasgow in 2016.

The group has since raised over £3 million and in 2022 HRH the Princess Royal in her position as Patron announced that the ship will return to passenger cruising in 2024.

**John Callcut**, Hon Editor, [john.callcut@btinternet.com](mailto:john.callcut@btinternet.com)

## President's address



### Message from the Bridge

Since my appointment last May, it could be said that we have sailed through both smooth and turbulent waters. I must first say a **huge** ‘thank you’ to all the members of the committee for their dedicated support and work behind the scenes, without which my role and your Club would have been very different.

Rail strikes saw the Centenary River Cruise (twice) and the Christmas Dinner being cancelled. Refurbishment works at the National Liberal Club meant our dinners in January, February and March (postponed to the beginning of April) being held with restricted numbers.

However, we have experienced a number of highlights in this our Centenary year:

- The publication of the Club's history in a splendid book, which I again recommend to all of you who have yet to purchase a copy – it is a fascinating read. Contact John Callcut, who will happily divest you of the required funds.
- Following the Rule change at last year's AGM we have admitted five lady members, who I am certain will further the aims of the Club and assist with its growth.
- By the great teamwork of Bob Jones, Martyn Taylor and James Cameron-Wood in securing the House of Lords as our venue for our

February and March dinners, we experienced two very memorable events.

- Varied, interesting and inspiring after-dinner talks that have entertained and enlightened all those who attended.
- But I think our number one highlight was being honoured and graced by the presence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal at our Centenary and Trafalgar Night Dinner in October. HRH Princess Anne was also made an Honorary Life Member of the Club and we hope for further visits in the future.



I must single out Martyn Taylor for a special note of thanks for the extremely efficient and unflappable performance of his duties as our Hon Dinner/Events Secretary since his appointment. He has managed quite a number of curved balls extraordinarily well, especially over the past three years, to ensure we have all enjoyed every event. Thank you, Martyn! Martyn is standing down from this front-line role but will still be supporting us in the background.

Also a thank-you to Don North for ensuring our accounts are independently reviewed and signed off each year prior to submission to the AGM.

We must not forget the two challenges that IPP Bob Jones mentioned in his report last year, both of which are still prevalent today, will continue for some time to come and need all of our attention to ensure this Club flourishes. They are attendances at our dinners and social events, as well as the influence of inflation on our costs. The committee strive to keep the costs as low as possible, but your support is also required to achieve the minimum numbers.

I look forward to meeting you again soon at the belated Centenary Thames Cruise (12 August). Please put the date in your diary.

Yours aye **Tony Goodhead**, President

## **Hon Secretary's report**

Our Centenary Year has certainly been different but we are now through the other side and, hopefully, looking forward to 2023-24. Last year I wrote that we are now back to normal. However, that was before the rail strikes caused the cancellation of our Christmas Party and the planned Thames Cruise (twice) before the National Liberal Club had made us aware at short notice that three dinners would be disrupted due to the kitchens being refurbished, resulting in our using a small room on the ground floor of the NLC for one dinner and the superb facilities at the House of Lords for the other two.

We also had the exceptionally memorable dinner with HRH the Princess Royal as our Guest of Honour for our Centenary in October.

One other change for us this year is the admission of female members and it is wonderful that we now have five lady members who are already taking an active part in the Club.

This year we have had eight new members join, three resignations and, listed below, seven members who have passed away. They are as follows:

Harry Arman

Binney Hale

Ken Bryant

Capt Sandy Rogers

The Revd Peter Dennett

Andrew Thompson

Robin Gibbon

Attendance at dinners has fluctuated. Of course, the Centenary dinner and the dinners at the House of Lords were oversubscribed. However, attendance at other dinners has been very modest. This has sometimes been due to timing; bank holidays, school holidays, dinner on a Friday instead of Thursday etc but it would, as always, be good to see as many members attending as possible.

On that note I do look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in the future.

Best regards **David Watson**

Director and Hon Secretary, The Seven Seas Club (1922) Limited

Mobile: 07921 933808 e-mail: watson354@btinternet.com

# **Financial Director's report to the Annual General Meeting**

## **Balance sheet and accounts for 2022**

The following report refers to the balance sheet and accounts, as circulated to members prior to the AGM at the end of May.

The registration details of the Company and the names of those who have served as directors are given at the beginning of this document [ie as circulated]. None of the Company's directors receive remuneration and the Company has no employees. The Company's principal activities are registered as those of a dining and fraternal club.

The Company was incorporated in 2019, to take over the management of the Club as it approached its centenary. However it has yet to have what may be identified as a normal year for the following reasons:

- (a) Covid
- (b) the sudden although not undue (arguably overdue) increases in prices at the National Liberal Club
- (c) the disruption of the Club's programme by rail strikes or the threat of them
- (d) the need to find an alternative venue (limited as to accommodation) during the period of refurbishment at the National Liberal Club (not in fact applicable to 2022).

It follows that comparative figures year by year have to be viewed with circumspection, not for want of accuracy but for want of fair and valid comparison. Now the general effects of inflation and its effect on members' personal finances, at this stage of the economic cycle, can be seen to be having a bearing on some Club activities. Fortunately the Company's

finances are robust and able to weather the storms, including a small element of subsidy to ease increases in prices for dinners etc to members.

Costs related to the administration of the Club continue to be subject to some considerable savings, thanks in part to the wider use of email and the use of Zoom for meetings of the committee and the directors.

### *Accounting matters*

As usual, for various reasons, costs for dinners etc (see Note 1 in the accounts) are not always in strict proportion to the number of covers at a given event.

We do not attempt to write off, over periods of years, the cost of assets acquired. However stock for the slop chest does form part of the Company's accounting, albeit limited to items which are readily saleable.

Expenses such as postages are not recorded in detail or balanced accordingly. Postages have been reduced over the years, by the use of email or by having them included in the costs of bulk distributions. Other postages are covered within allowances paid to certain officers of the Club, in respect of untallied amounts spent on postages, telephone etc.

### *Hidden costs*

For many years now I have brought members' attention to how fortunate the Club has been to benefit, in various ways, from the generosity of particular members and well-wishers. I have also warned that such protection, from the impact of the full costs of goods and services provided, may not be expected to last for ever.

However we do continue to enjoy the goodwill and generosity of a number of individuals, some still saving the Company considerable expense, and I wish again to thank those concerned without causing embarrassment by naming names or publishing details here.

### *Laristan Fund*

The Laristan Fund enjoyed generous support from members at the 2022 dinners and from various well-wishers during the course of the year. Disbursements in 2022 concentrated on smaller sail-training initiatives and were clearly greatly appreciated. The Hon Almoner was customarily active,

concerned with the welfare of members and of the widows of former members, in his usual fashion.

### *Thanks*

My thanks are due to David Watson and Martyn Taylor who, with your President and IPP, have assisted my attempts to control the Company's finances and prepare the accounts for examination, while lending their unfailing general support.

Don North has again undertaken the rôle of Hon Examiner of the Company's accounts, with thoughtful and helpful performance of the task. This has been of great benefit and is much appreciated. His advice is greatly valued.

### **Derek G Bevan**

Financial Director, The Seven Seas Club (1922) Limited

## **Hon Almoner's corner**

The sun is shining and happily the horrible experience of the pandemic seems a long way behind us. Following the disruptions, cancellations and postponements of various events caused by rail strikes and other unforeseen circumstances, I am delighted to report that our managing committee has got our social activities back on track.

The members of the Seven Seas Club are the eyes and ears of our fraternity, we 'promote and foster comradeship of the sea' so may I make a plea to you all? Please let David Watson or myself know if a member is unwell, unhappy or suffering any type of crisis; we may be able to discreetly help or provide comfort.

Just as important: if you change your postal or email address, we do need to know.

Writing in a similar vein, when a member 'slips his or her cable' the managing committee has now in place a procedure protocol of how we deal with such matters, in what is an extremely sensitive and stressful time, so do please let either David Watson or me know. Again, thank you.

You are the ‘eyes and ears of the Club’; your help is needed.

Regards and aye

**James O’Neill**, Director and Hon Almoner  
The Seven Seas Club (1922) Limited  
mobile: 07970 467961      email: jamesoneillssc@gmail.com

## **Hon Dinner Secretary’s report**

After a good start to 2022 events outside our control impacted our Centenary year, with the already postponed river cruise being cancelled again! Despite this the autumn season of dinners began well with our first lady members joining the Club and receiving their brooches.

In September our speaker was Lt Cdr (SCC) Karen Fulton RNR, who gave us a talk about ‘Sailing in the Clipper Round the World Race’. The talk and presentation gave us a really good insight to the sailing experience as well as her experiences drinking rum! Our President also welcomed our first lady members, Hazel Watson and Janet Rivers.

The Grand Centenary and Trafalgar Night Dinner, which was a sell-out, took place on Thursday 20 October 2022 at the National Liberal Club – just under 100 years since the very first Seven Seas Club dinner was held. To mark the occasion our guest of honour was Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal. She was met by the Deputy Lieutenant of London, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns KCB CBE DL, and our President Tony Goodhead. She then met the committee and Club members in the lounge on the ground floor of the NLC. After dinner, port and the traditional ‘tot’ of rum were served. Her Royal Highness then gave a short talk and proposed the toast to ‘the Immortal Memory’ and we sung the hymn *Eternal Father, strong to save*. The President then presented Her Royal Highness with a copy of the Centenary book and thanked her for attending. A fantastic evening to celebrate the club’s first 100 years!

Our November dinner was not so well attended with only 34 members and guests. However, our speaker, Squadron Leader (Rtd) Shaun Pascoe gave us a truly inspirational talk covering his operational tours commanding the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) and Turn to Starboard. His

talk concentrated on his experiences in Afghanistan and what led him to set up Turn to Starboard. The talk included graphic pictures of the medical teams treating seriously wounded armed services personnel in extremely difficult and dangerous situations, the learnings from which have been adopted by the NHS to the benefit of us all. It was after Shaun retired from the RAF that he set up Turn to Starboard, a charity that enables veterans – and in some cases their families – to go sailing, providing vital support with their transition to civilian life.

Then in December fate conspired against us again and the decision was reluctantly made to cancel our popular Christmas dinner as it fell between two rail strike dates, which would have proved difficult and risky for members travelling to London.

The start of 2023 gave us further challenges, as the National Liberal Club decided to refurbish the main kitchens adjacent to the David Lloyd George room which we use for our dinners. Whilst the NLC could offer restricted dining facilities, the committee began looking elsewhere as the work was due to take three months.

The January dinner was attended by 30 members (the maximum the NLC could accommodate) and we were privileged to hear a talk by Stephen Earp (Club member) about his first-hand experience in the Falklands. His emotional and graphic talk described how, at the age of 18, he found himself on board *HMS Ardent* heading for the Falklands Island. Then on 21 May 1982 his ship was attacked by Argentinian A-4 Skyhawk planes and hit by seventeen bombs. The fire raged and she finally sunk the next day. 22 crew members, out of a complement of 199, lost their lives.

Our February dinner found us at the very prestigious House of Lords (thanks to Bob Jones IPP) where we met in the Attlee Room overlooking the Thames and enjoyed a superb meal. Again, we were limited to 48 attendees so the dinner quickly sold out! Our speaker for this dinner was Dr David Parry (Club member) who gave us a talk which was about the *Perisher* Submarine Command Course. David specialised in navigation and submarines, taking his *Perisher* in 1978, whence he went into submarine command. The talk was extremely detailed and gave us an excellent insight into the complex job of a submarine commander.

As the NLC kitchens remained shut, we held a second dinner at the House

of Lords. This should have been our March dinner but, due to planned train strikes, the decision was made to move it to 6 April. This dinner was another sell-out with an excellent meal where we enjoyed a talk by Glyn Evans (Club member). His talk entitled *Operation Title* told the story about the combined SOE/Admiralty mission in October 1942 using two-man torpedoes or ‘chariots’ in an attempt to sink the German battleship *Tirpitz*, which was at that time holed up at the top end of Trondheim Fjord. A most enjoyable talk, giving us snippets of information not commonly known about the unsuccessful operation and the human cost.

Partners night – and back at the National Liberal Club after nearly three months! Numbers were down to 39 but as the Hon. Secretary explained the dinner was on a Friday just before the bank holiday and it was our second

dinner in the month with more apologies than attendees! The food was excellent and our guest speaker Cynthia Robinson, one of our newer Club members, entertained us with her talk entitled *30 years behind the mast*.

Cynthia is a professional instructor for the RYA Offshore syllabus and she regaled us with tales describing ‘good’ captains and ‘bad’ captains.

The AGM and dinner were held on 25 May with 45 attendees for the dinner. After our meal we were treated to a talk by Bob Jones IPP, about the *Shetland bus* which was established in WW2 by the SOE to support Norway, occupied by Nazi Germany from 1940. Bob told us how over 40 sailors, mostly Norwegian fisherman, lost their lives undertaking the dangerous journey across the North Sea! In addition, we learned how Leif Larsen, a Norwegian sailor, was



*Martyn in characteristic pose collecting money for the Laristan Fund*

decorated by the UK Government for his exploits and was awarded DSO, DSC, CGM, DSM and bar – the most decorated non-British serviceman.

As I now step down from being your Dinner Secretary after nearly six years, I would like to thank you all for your advice, support, guidance and feedback whilst undertaking this privileged position to support the club.

**Martyn Taylor**, Hon Dinner Secretary

## **Club dates, 2023, for your diary**

12 August	Centenary River Thames Boat Trip
28 September	Chris Ball: Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat
7 October	ASTO Small Ships Race
11 October	Annual National Service for Seafarers
26 October	Trafalgar Dinner: Our speaker will be Graham Capel
23 November	Mark Smith: Operation Deadstick Pegasus Bridge
14 December	Christmas Dinner

## **Sister clubs**

To find out what is happening at our sister clubs in Australia and South Africa, visit:

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

**South Africa**      <http://simonstown.com/clubs/sevenseas/com>

*From David Lee:* I realised that it is over 40 years since I joined the Club and over 20 years since attending a dinner. Having returned to the UK in 2019, hopefully I will improve my visits in the future. I did manage to drop into the Seven Seas Club South Africa last month. I've attached a picture of

the bar and view towards the dockyard. The club is thriving and is open most days of the week in Simons Town. My wife, who served after the daily tot finished, did not recognise the jugs above the bar!



## **Baxter and Grimshaw Trust report to the Seven Seas Club 2023 AGM**

As the pandemic recedes into memory the Trustees of the Baxter & Grimshaw Trust [BGT] can report that grant applications are rising, and because of the Grant Secretary's personal contact with applicants, they are being actioned more quickly. Our focus, heralded last year, is aimed at socially disadvantaged individuals who would benefit from experience at sea. An added benefit is the gain in self-esteem from experiencing the application process.

In 2023 to date the Trust has received eighteen enquiries leading to ten grant applications covering 38 young people to whom £12,675 will be provided in grants. Five more applications are pending with a further £3,000 reserved for those applications if they get approved.

The trust was permitted to make a short presentation at a Seven Seas Club monthly dinner, highlighting the opportunity to contribute to the club's only external charitable activity - through legacies. As inflation takes its toll it will become increasingly more important to preserve and increase the Trust capital to maintain a useful level of grant.

**Chris Esplin-Jones**, Chairman of Trustees, Baxter and Grimshaw Trust

# Dinner photographs

**January Dinner 26 January 2023**

Attendance – 29



*Claire Denham is presented with her member's badge*



*Our guest speaker Stephen Earp*

**February Dinner 23 February 2023**

Attendance – 48



*The Attlee Room at the House of Lords*



*Our speaker Dr David Parry*

**HOUSE OF LORDS**

**Seven Seas Club (1922) Ltd**  
Requests the pleasure of the company of

For the April Club Dinner  
In the Attlee Room, House of Lords  
On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April at 18.00  
Address: Palace of Westminster, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW

Dress code: lounge suit/day dress      Allow 30 minutes for search and screening      Close: 22.00  
Please present this invitation with photographic ID at **Black Rod's Garden Entrance**

Average queue time: 30 minutes | Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday afternoons: 45 minutes  
Please note, if your event is taking place during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs), visitors will be subject to a more thorough search by security at our entrances and we would strongly advise allowing for more time for security checks.

**Search and Screening Information**  
Scan me before your visit using your camera or QR code scanner app

**Venue Feedback**  
Scan me after your visit using your camera or QR code scanner app

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*Diners gather at the Attlee Room*



*Glyn Evans, our guest speaker*

Welcome to two new members



*Stephen Earp*



*Capt John Quarrington*

**April Dinner 28 April 2023, Partners' night**

**Attendance – 39**



*Our guest speaker, member Cynthia Robinson*

**May Dinner and AGM 25 May 2023**

Attendance – 45



*The President presides over the AGM*



*John Goldsmith receives his ten-year tie*

**Cocktail Party 30 June 2023**

Attendance – 37



# They slipped their cable

by David Watson

## *The Revd Peter Dennett*

Peter died, peacefully, at home on Wednesday 1 March at 0245hrs, surrounded by his family. He had been diagnosed with terminal cancer just before Christmas and had spent his final days between home in Shoreham and a hospice.

As one of our two Club Chaplains, Peter was always willing to officiate when asked and oversaw carols at Christmas and said prayers when in attendance. He was full of life, wonderful company and an ebullient and kind man who loved people's company. He leaves his wife Denise, son Joshua and daughter Sara.

Peter's funeral was held at Worthing Crematorium on Monday 20 March at 1300hrs and afterwards at the Angmering Sports and Social Club, known locally as *The Tin Hut*. He wanted a great send off!

## *Ken Bryant*

I was informed that Ken passed away on Friday 24 February. He had been in hospital for the previous 6 weeks with fluid retention and had been suffering from early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Unfortunately his ward had an outbreak of Covid, which he caught, and he subsequently died.

Ken was a long-standing member of the Club, joining in 2006 and, before he retired as a Yeoman Warder at the Tower, attended most events. Ken had served in the Royal Artillery and was always jovial, good fun and good company at the Club.

His funeral was held on 31 March at South Essex Crematorium at 1320hrs and the wake, thereafter, was at the Upminster Golf and Bowls Club. Donations were split between the Air Ambulance, RNLI and Combat Stress Charity.

## *John 'Binney' Hale*

I am afraid that I have more sad news. On 6 March at 1340hrs in St Peter's

Hospital, Chertsey, John ‘Binney’ Hale slipped his cable after being ill for several months.

Binney joined the Club in November 2013 and had regularly attended dinners. He started his naval career in *HMS Ganges* and served on twelve Royal Naval ships finishing on minehunters (he was a member of both the Ganges and Ton Class Associations). He also held an Ocean Yachtmaster’s certificate. Binney was always unassuming, modest and very pleasant company, and will be sorely missed especially amongst his friends in the Club.

A collection was made at the funeral for the Seven Seas Club in memory of Binney. This amounted to £93.43.

## The Galley Radio

by Glyn L Evans

Most ships of the Royal Navy have or had a galley radio sometimes known as ‘the scuttlebutt’, a fabled transmitter with not a valve or transistor in sight. It was the mysterious means by which an observation, overheard or perhaps misheard, became a rumour that would travel round the ship like wildfire, morphing along the way like a child’s game of *Whispers* and eventually becoming distorted but accepted as the gospel truth. Common subjects for the galley radio would include the next port of call or the name and reputation of the next captain to be appointed to the ship. The Grimsby class sloop *HMS Wellington*, launched 29 May 1934, would have been no exception and her galley radio kept busy with the appointment of ten different captains between 1935 and 1944.



As to rumours of the next port of call, perhaps it came as no surprise after the end of hostilities of the Second World War that the final passage of *Wellington* as one of HM ships was made from Liverpool to Pembroke Dock on 6 August 1945 where the ship paid off to the Reserve Fleet. There she was ignominiously driven onto a mud berth at full speed with her anchors down and deemed redundant, sharing that fate with around fifty other HM ships at that location. *Wellington* had steamed 66,367 miles in her peacetime career and 248,586 miles during almost six years of war service, acting as escort either alone or in company to 103 convoys.

Eighteen months later *Wellington* was sold out of service to the Honourable Company of Master Mariners who had her towed to Chatham where she was converted to become the company's floating livery hall. In that capacity *Wellington* served at her mooring on the Thames at Temple Stairs on Victoria Embankment for many years, a familiar sight to Londoners and visitors to the capital alike.



To many people then, it came as a surprise to read on 6 April this year, 2023, the following:

It is with sadness and many fond memories that the Honourable Company of Master Mariners announces that we will be leaving our floating livery hall, *HQS Wellington*, which has been our home at Victoria Embankment these past 75 years. The safety of all members, guests, staff and visitors is, and always has been, of paramount importance to HCMM. The ship is now 90 years old; as mariners we know that no ship lasts for ever and, sadly, *HQS Wellington* is no different. Since 1948, the Grand Old Lady has served the company well but, increasingly, safety issues have been raised with its owner, the Wellington Trust. Those issues are now such that staff and visitor safety cannot be guaranteed by HCMM.

Unfortunately, the company's announcement omitted to mention that a decision had been made some while ago to leave the ship irrespective of 'safety issues.' And so it is that the galley radio begins to weave its old spell over those who will listen and take every word it spreads as gospel. The HCMM walked off the ship with the statement '...no ship lasts for ever' and almost inevitably, by whispers along the way, those words have become accepted to mean the ship is in a sinking condition. A certain City livery blogger has even tweeted 'the *Wellington* is full of holes and needs to go into dry dock for repairs.' News on the galley radio reaches beyond the ship with one member of the Thames River Police coming alongside in the police launch and offering her condolences upon hearing that *Wellington* was sinking! Nothing however could be further from the truth. As was often the case, the galley radio has got things completely wrong this time: the rumours are unfounded, misleading and detrimental to the preservation of the ship.

Through an independent fire survey and by electrical service testing the Wellington Trust has established that the ship is fit for purpose. A recent survey of the ship's hull classed it as fully serviceable, concluding that, with proper maintenance, *Wellington* may not need to go into dry dock for another 25 plus years. Work necessary to meet statutory compliance certification in some areas aboard is being carried out under the experienced direction of the ship's engineer of 33 years standing. This is to ensure that there is a continuation of the ship's hull-and-public-liability insurance, and is in addition to the normal programme of scheduled maintenance, all of which comes at a cost. The Wellington Trust, owners of *HQS Wellington* since 2005, faces a tough financial challenge and will shortly be putting into place a fundraising programme enabling it to restore full access to the ship as soon as possible for friends, private and corporate events and for the public on certain days. The ship, having been stripped by the HCMM of virtually every moveable asset, needs to be re-furnished and already indications of help in

this respect have been received from certain well-known maritime organisations. Information on how to become a Friend of the Wellington, with attendant benefits, can be found on the trust's website. The Wellington Trust appreciates the great privilege of having as its Patron Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal KG KT GCVO GCStJ CD QSO.

This news came as a shock to me personally. In November 2022 I donated my entire maritime library to the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. It comprised of 75 volumes, a number of which were over a hundred years old. I received a letter from the Company stating that 80 to 90 percent of the volumes were new to the collection and duplicates would be sold and proceeds go towards the cost of rebinding and repairing older volumes. All volumes would bear a book plate recording my donation and a similar notation was to be added to the library inventory.

All very satisfactory .. .. except that the library has been stripped bare and I have no idea what has happened to the books. Nobody from the company has so much as notified me of the situation.



*Happier days – I took this picture on 23 October 2021, on the occasion of the Nelson Society AGM which was held on board.*

Ed

**We are independent and proud of it**

## **No call for help, ever went unanswered**

by Chris Ball, Vice Chairman, Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat

Sea Palling is a small village on the North Norfolk coast. In 1840 a private lifeboat was established which, in 1858, was taken over by the RNLI. The RNLI operated it until closure in 1931. In that time, the service saved 795 lives, a record only bettered by three other stations.

In 1972 the local community started to consider the need for another lifeboat and, in the following years, Palling Volunteer Rescue Service was formed. This was the modern-day forerunner of what would go on to become, today, Sea Palling Independent Lifeboat (SPIL).

SPIL is a fully declared facility of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. It is a registered charity providing search and rescue services in its sector of the coastline. All its crew are volunteers, they carry a pager for 24/7 service and nobody receives any remuneration whatsoever.

So what makes it independent? Simply it is not part of the RNLI. Members of the public are often amazed to learn this fact.

But, they say, we have orange lifeboats and wear dry suits, lifejackets, helmets; we look the same and our crew train to the same standards. So what is the difference? Well, we are self-funded, our crew raise all the monies needed to remain on service and we do not have hundreds of people doing this for us nationally.

In fact around the UK there are hundreds of volunteers providing independent lifeboat services and in 2022, in recognition of this, the National Independent Lifeboat Association was formed, of which Sea Palling is a founding member. Whilst estimates may vary, it is thought around 20 to 30 percent of rescues are performed by independent lifeboats. By way of example in Norfolk, of the ten lifeboat stations, four are independent. But it is not a competition; at sea we are all as one and we have the utmost respect for the crews of all lifeboats and work with them to provide seamless cover to those in need.

So, if you come to the beach at Sea Palling, what are you going to see?

Well, the first thing that might strike you are the nine man-made reefs that were installed to assist in preventing coastal erosion. These provide sheltered bathing in the bays and make Sea Palling a very attractive place for tourists to visit. But they also create less obvious dangers, such as rip-tides and currents. The tide floods in and floods out, sucking the unwary with it.

Let us not forget, Norfolk is on the North Sea, with strong tides and cold winds. These together can carry a person great distances. Our training includes search and rescue patterns, taking account of the prevailing conditions. One crew member who helps us with this is *Dead Fred*, a life-size mannequin that can be adjusted to float vertically or horizontally and gives us an actual perspective of drift.

We have had to gear up for these sorts of situation and have invested heavily in four main pieces of equipment, generously sponsored by donation from local sources and staged events during the season.



*Canon Portal is our main lifeboat, a 6.3m Humber rib, powered by a 200hp Suzuki outboard. Radar will be a familiar sight to you but top of the tree is an infra-red camera, which is a very unusual piece of kit for a lifeboat of this size. Our mantra has always been invest in the kit, not the station; you cannot take a station to sea.*



*Ros Clipson, is our inshore lifeboat, an Arancia powered by a 30hp Tohatsu outboard. This is a quick launch boat, used for rescue within reefs. Usually it is swimmers or children on blow-up dolphins, that get a ride in this, but it is also amazing how many dogs are keen to get on board when they realize a swim to Holland is not a good idea.*



*Our Argocat, a multi-wheeled go-anywhere vehicle. Used to pull the Arancia (see above), its main purpose is casualty transportation. It is what is called a responder version. This means a stretcher can be fitted within the vehicle, thus allowing first aid to be administered on the move back to the lifeboat station or ambulance service.*



*Lastly our launch vehicle: seeing is believing because it is unique! It started life as a dumpster but now, with a hydraulic ram, it allows us to lift and lower the angle of the lifeboat trailer, whilst manoeuvring up and down the ramp and across the beach; then to push out another couple of metres into deeper water during launch and recovery.*

None of the kit illustrated above is of any use without our crew, all volunteers and generally living locally to Sea Palling. Whereas many years ago the crew would have literally been living within running distance of the sea, things have changed. Cars have widened the catchment area and allow us to recruit from further afield. Also we can no longer rely on the assumption that a place of employment is local. When the pager goes, it is dash from wherever you are. We are not allowed blue lights on our cars and so there are often frustrated stories of being stuck behind a tractor or sightseer, who are blissfully unaware that we are on a shout unless, maybe, they can lip-read!

We are often asked how many times does all this happen. Sometimes not a lot and, then like buses, three or four in one afternoon. Some are short, a quick grab, and others involve hours of searching at night. We are not always at sea, as sometimes we search for vulnerable missing persons on the beach and sand dunes. We administer first aid and extract ill or injured people to places where we can hand over to, for example, the ambulance service. But

it is fair bet that, for every official shout we attend, there are several more where the public come to us for assistance.

So this is us, the product of years of work, thinking outside the box, training to use a wide array of equipment and, when not doing all of that, having fun with crew-mates.

You can find us on the beach training, on Thursday evening and Sunday morning. The crew love to show interested members of the public what we do, so please stop by and say that Chris sent you.

## **The good old days**

by Jim Killen

Who is there midst us that can recall the ‘good old days’? The days of the general trader with five or six hatches and a workable speed of about between ten and twelve knots.

Who is there, midst us, that can recall the not so long ago days of the tramp ship? Days when, common enough on merchant ships were ’tween decks, masts and derricks, king-beams, queen-beams and hatch-boards, three tarps to a hatch, battens and wedges to be slammed hard in (long grain always to the outside).

Who of us can recall the union-purchase rig, jumbo-derricks, spar-ceiling and steering to quarter-points on a magnetic compass? All very nostalgic, tinged with a bit of romance: roaming the oceans, visiting foreign places basking in glorious sun from morning ’til night.

Well let me tell you this: it weren't always so romantic ... ..

See, us lot, the below-decks mob, the ABs, the ordinary seamen, the stewards and the engine-room hands, greasers and firemen and such, used to lead a different life to that lot up there, the captains, the mates, the engineers and the like.

Usually, almost invariably, we’d be allocated a ship in the merchant navy

establishment, the ‘pool’ as it was usually known. You’d get your signing-on chit shoved across the counter and head for the union office. There they’d check your wee blue book to make certain your union dues were up to date and you’d go to sign on. On most foreign-going tramp ships this would be a twenty-four month contract ... .. often with caveats, fiddles and extensions.

There were some, including me, who would not again sign on a tanker, others who would point-blank refuse a passenger ship, coaster, ferry boat or whatever. An advantage of being, in effect, casual labour was that you could decide not to sign on a ship that didn’t take your fancy. Royal Navy ratings never had that option. They couldn’t turn down a ship; we merchantmen could!

One that I turned down at the last minute was the *Baron Ogilvy*. Baron boats, more often referred to as barren b’tards, were infamous for being poor feeders, on long, long trips with not much overtime to boot.



*SS Baron Ogilvy* (photo courtesy of Clive Ketley)

A bunch of us arrived on board late in the afternoon with our gear. The *Baron Ogilvy* had been completely discharged and the holds and decks were in a mess. Rubbish and broken dunnage were everywhere, all derricks flying and the hatches wide open. We were to get her ready for sea, work through the night and sign on in the morning. She was a medium-sized, run-of-the-mill tramp ship and, after sailing, would probably not return to home waters for two full years – the duration of normal foreign-going articles.

It was often the habit of chief stewards to ensure the crew were generously fed while their vessels were running around the coast. They would build up a reputation as a good feeder, making it easier then to get the gullible to sign

on for foreign trips. That would often change the instant she headed deep sea! As soon as the pilot had departed, out would come the scales and the measuring pot and it would be the usual Board-of-Trade whack or less until the day you signed off. Two eggs a week, one of which you never saw: used in the galley, they'd say. Individual rations were a wee poke of tea, a paper bag with a scoop of sugar and a tin of 'Cannie Annie' (sweetened condensed milk) – one tin every ten days.

Your whack of meat included bone and fat; often that was mainly what it was, just bone and fat with the occasional, symbolic, sliver of meat. There were substitutes for everything and no come-back or compensation, if you did not get your due share; they would just say that it was not available at an affordable price and tell you they would store to capacity in the next port. However the bad feeders never did that.

Fresh milk? Ice cream? Biscuits? Fresh fruit or green vegetables? Real butter? Cakes? Tabnabs? Bovril? Forget that nonsense! More often than not it was: 'Vinegar and lime-juice by the Act and you can't complain, 'cos you've had yer whack.'

A few expressed no surprise that there was nothing to eat that evening; not a slice of bread, not a grain of sugar nor a leaf of tea. The galley, like the messroom, was deserted, cold and locked. We held a tarpaulin muster and two ABs set off to get some fish and chips. I think they may have had a pint or two with the proceeds for there wasn't a great deal of either fish or chips to be shared between us when they returned.

That night was cold and wild, windy and wet. We worked without a break, cold, wet and frigging starving until the first light of early morning. Hopes were raised when lights went on in the galley and someone was sighted there, doing things with pans and pots.

Seven twenty: we knock off and there's a dash for the mess. The boiler is bubbling and the tea made. Along comes a young fella who says he's the peggy and wants to know how many of us there are.

'Six!' we say.

So off he goes to the galley and comes back with three kippers, twelve thin slices of bread, a dish with a dollop of margarine and a small pot of jam. Half

a kipper each! That with the bread and jam didn't last more than about thirty seconds and we sent the peggy back to the galley to find out what came next.

'Lunch!' he declares on his return.

Signing on was supposed to be at ten. I didn't fancy existing on starvation rations for twenty-four months and told the mate I'd not be sailing with them. If I could just take what money was due for the night's work I'd be off. He wasn't too pleased and let that be known. He'd then have to contact the pool and organise someone to make a 'pierhead jump' in my place.

Then the b'tards made me wait until after lunch time and they were getting ready to let go the mooring ropes before I got my night's pay; they wouldn't let me eat in the mess either, saying I was neither signed on nor was I working by any longer and so had no right to any victuals.

B'tards!

*Note:* 'peggy', in the merchant navy was usually a first-tripper responsible for looking after the crew's messroom.

'tarpaulin muster' is where everyone donates all their spare coinage and someone is sent ashore, to purchase whatever that would buy, then to be shared out equally.



*In 1969 whilst under Greek ownership and called the Aghia Anastasia the former Baron Ogilvy was abandoned and sank in the Indian Ocean.*

Ed

# A miscellany

by Martin Earp

The tales behind the names of several of today's most commonly utilised family gadgets and also devices have actually become part of folklore.

Take, for example, the Biro – a brand that has ended up being associated with the ballpoint pen. The name comes from Hungarian reporter Laszlo Biro, who created the ballpoint in his search for a pen whose ink would certainly not smear. One more instance is the brand name Hoover, which stemmed from William Henry Hoover whose business was the very first to standardize upright electric hoover.

However the very first worm-drive hose pipe clamps were called Jubilee Clips; they offered a basic layout that exists virtually a century later.

## **What is the tale behind the name *Jubilee* clip?**

The hallmark *Jubilee* goes back to 1921 when the worm-drive hose pipe clip was created as well as patented by Commander Lumley Robinson. Lumley had served in the British Navy and throughout his time knew that a brand-new means to affix a tube to a pipeline was required. Lumley started a company L Robinson & Co to manufacture the *Jubilee* clip, which still operates today from a base in Gillingham, Kent. The origin of names continue to be a mystery including that of the *Jubilee* clip; I am terrified to report that while a number of concepts exist none can be confirmed.

I discovered that people have got in touch with L Robinson & Co requesting the tale behind the name *Jubilee* clip, and were told that Lumley took the key with him to the grave.

The date 1921 does not associate with any royal jubilee. Queen Victoria had commemorated her diamond jubilee in 1897 and it would not be until 1935 that another significant royal spot would certainly occur, King George V's silver jubilee.

An additional theory is that Lumley could not consider a name and for that reason utilised the name of a bridge over which he walked daily on his way

to work. We have actually examined a map of Gillingham and can find no reference to a Jubilee Bridge, only a road called Jubilee Terrace.

It would certainly appear that the source of the *Jubilee* clip brand name is still an enigma, although Lumley's invention remains as necessary and also as valuable today as it did over 100 years ago when the worm-drive hose pipe clamp was first developed. The company owns the trademark for *Jubilee* clip. There are similar types of clamp for hoses including the Marman clamp, which also has a screw band and a solid screw.

A *Jubilee* clip is a type of band clamp, consisting of a circular metal band or strip combined with a worm gear to one end. It is designed to hold a soft, pliable hose onto a rigid circular pipe, sometimes a solid spigot, of smaller diameter.



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London Chambers, Gillingham,  
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*A number of iconic vehicles, including the cross-channel hovercraft, the Hawk training jet, Harrier jump jet and Concorde, were fitted with Jubilee® Clips*

Other names for the worm-gear hose clamp include *worm drive*, *worm gear clips*, *clamps* or just *hose clips*. In the United Kingdom, Ireland and some of the former British colonies, the *Jubilee* clip dominated the market to the extent that such clips tend to be known almost exclusively by their brand name *Jubilee*.

## Patent history

The *Jubilee* brand clamp brand was started by Commander Lumley Robinson of the British Royal Navy, who was granted the first patent for his

device by the London Patent Office in 1921 while operating as a sole trader. It is now subject to a registered trademark in many countries around the world. The design has been copied with many variations, and there are many other hose clips of a similar design.

### ***Jubilee brand creator***

Lumley Robinson was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, in 1877 to a family of strict Methodists. His first job was working for John Fowler's, a highly respected engineering firm in Leeds, before later joining the Royal Navy. He married Emily Boyd Sykes at the Mint Chapel, Holbeck, Leeds, on 23 October 1906, and they moved to Gillingham in Kent when Lumley was based at nearby Chatham Dockyard, which at the time was almost exclusively dedicated to the Royal Navy. During his time in the Navy, Lumley was on *HMS Aboukir* when it was sunk in the North Sea, along with two other ships during World War I, and he spent several hours in the sea before he was rescued.

Together, Lumley and Emily had four children: Henry, who went to Cambridge University and became Director of Education for Rochdale; Leonard, who joined the Royal Navy and then later worked for an advertising company called Ripley Preston in Bristol, where the first well-known advertisements for *Jubilee* clips were created; Dorothy, who married and stayed in Gillingham; and John, who eventually ran the family business.

During his time in the Royal Navy, it had often seemed obvious to Lumley that a new way needed to be found to attach a hose to a pipe. After leaving the Navy he spent much time with a friend, who had a lathe in his garage, making things and in particular looking for a simple and effective solution to the problem. Once he had the first clips made, he went to London every day attempting to sell them. His wife Emily had such faith in her husband that she suggested re-mortgaging their house, to pay for the first lot of steel, but this was never necessary because the company became successful.

Robinson collapsed and died aged 62, while touring Grosnez Castle in Jersey, on 20 August 1939. His widow, Emily, died in 1985 at the age of 100.

The UK declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, just 14 days after Robinson's death. Before the end of the month, the War Ministry had

realised the importance of *Jubilee* clips for the war effort and men arrived from the ministry to take over the company. His widow, Emily, was not agreeable to the idea however. She changed her surname by deed poll to Lumley-Robinson and ran the business herself throughout the war. During the Battle of Britain, Mrs E B Lumley-Robinson presented a Spitfire fighter plane to the RAF, appropriately named *The Robinson Fighter*.

After the war L Robinson & Company (Gillingham) was founded with Robinson's youngest son John appointed managing director and Mrs E B Lumley-Robinson at the helm as governing director. After the end of the war, she continued to run the business until her youngest son John Lumley-Robinson took over. He, being under 21 when his mother had changed her name, had been the only other member of the family to take the surname Lumley-Robinson. During and after the war, other hose-clip manufacturers started to emerge all over Europe but Jubilee continued to be successful. The business was incorporated on 1 April 1948 as L Robinson & Company (Gillingham) Limited. Subsequently the group grew with Jubilee Components Limited and Jubilee Clips Limited being formed to take on the manufacturing processes, alongside L Robinson & Co (Plating) Limited, an electro-plating company established in 1968.

In 1982 the group established its first overseas company, when John Jennings (John Lumley-Robinson's son-in-law) founded Jubilee Clips Deutschland GmbH in anticipation of Britain leaving the European Economic Community, under growing political pressure at that time. This company continued to be a success selling *Jubilee* products in Germany and mainland Europe.

In the year 2007 to 2008 the group acquired a new site in Gillingham, Kent, where all of the UK-based manufacturing and distribution activities of the group's UK companies were consolidated on a single site. This was the same town where the first *Jubilee* clips had been made by the original inventor Lumley Robinson.

## Slop chest

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