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Under the Clock



Issue 55 - April 2008



ANZAC DAY April 25th 2008



Padre Arthur White "As the Sun Rises"

In February 1918, young Anglican chaplain, Padre Arthur White conducted a service at the altar of St John's, Albany WA. He was as chaplain to the 44th Battalion on the Western Front from 1916 before he was discharged medically unfit and sent home. Following the service he and members of the congregation climbed to the summit of Mount Clarence where the people of Albany had gathered to watch the first convoy leave for Egypt. As Padre White looked out he said "Albany was the last sight of land those ANZAC troops saw after leaving Australian shores and some of them never returned. We should hold a service (here) at the first light of dawn each ANZAC Day to commemorate them." Padre White was then assigned as chaplain to the military hospital in Caulfield.

Padre White returned to Albany as rector from late 1928 until 1938. He commemorated ANZAC Day in 1930, by holding a Dawn Eucharist. Parishioners attended a 6am service and accompanied him to the war memorial to lay a wreath. They followed him to the summit of Mount Clarence to watch a boatman place a wreath on the waters at the harbour entrance. As the wreath began to drift out into King George sound, Padre White said these words, "**As the sun riseth and the goeth down, we will remember them**". He entered the details of the service in the church register, writing, "First dawn service held in Australia". This record is preserved at St John's Church, Albany. Word of this moving ceremony soon spread throughout the country with communities Australia wide beginning to emulate the ceremony.

The Ode

The Ode comes from For the Fallen, a poem by the English poet and writer Laurence Binyon and was published in London in The Winnowing Fan: Poems of the Great War in 1914. This verse, which became the Ode for the Returned and Services League, has been used in association with commemoration services in Australia since 1921.

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.**



Lest we forget



Secretary's Report

Our Meeting on Thursday 28th February was very well attended. We welcomed new members, Frank & Lindsay Blacow and Harry & Meg Lake. Our President, Doug announced the departure of our Treasurer, Alan Piper. Alan and Elaine are relocating to Melbourne and we extend our best wishes to them. Vindi Boy Robert Buxton has agreed to fill the position till our AGM in June. We are grateful for his willingness. After the Meeting, we all enjoyed a sumptuous sausage sizzle; we nearly run out of "snags" as we had more Members this time than the last Meeting.

The following issues were discussed:

1. The Anzac Day March was discussed and Gordon Cohen has collected some information from the RSL Headquarters. We will be marching with the Merchant Navy behind the Royal Navy as in previous years. We are in **Group 113**. We do hope that more Members could take part in the March in order to show that Vindi Boys as Merchant Seamen of whom some have played a role during the war and that we urge for better recognition. There is a request by Gordon Cohen that as we have recognition in Australia, it is good to show our FLAG by being in the March.

2. In lieu of our next Meeting on 24th April, we are having a social luncheon at the Redlands Sporting Club on the 17th April.

Since we moved our Meetings to the Golden Seniors' Centre, we are missing the Library which is now a heavy bulk to carter around. A cupboard is still needed to store the books, tapes, etc.

Since our last Meeting, we have had a visitor – Vindi Boy 1955 Arnold (Arnie) Piddington and his wife Mavis from Sussex Branch UK were visiting Brisbane. Arnie was a bit disappointed that he had missed our last Meeting which he would have very much liked to attend. They arrived just a couple of days late and stayed with hosts Gordi and Kim. Together they went to Caloundra for two weeks' holidays, which Arnie and Mavis thoroughly enjoyed especially our sunshine and beach walks that Arnie explored everyday.

Our next Meeting is 26th June 2008 which is our AGM. We urge all Members to attend this special Meeting. "Same place, same time, and sausages will be sizzling too!!!" See you then.

Kim Cohen, Secretary

Can You Help? Ring Clips required!

June Gallagher is collecting the "ring clips" from drink tins (that of the coke, etc) or from any other types of tin which has ring clips.

June sends them to St. Luke's Nursing Home and they then send away to a Company who melted them down to make medical instruments. Can you help to collect this item? If so, please bring to Vindi Meeting and they will be handed to June.



Easter Sunday. 23rd March 2008

Terry Creasey celebrates number 72.

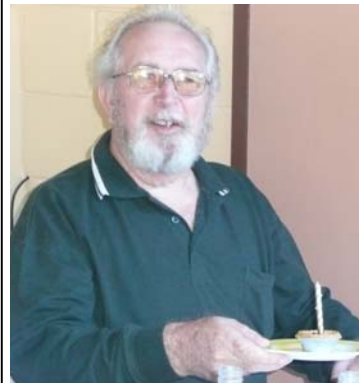
Kim and Gordi Cohen sent out some emails asking a number of Vindi members and their Ladies to attend a BBQ at their residence in Moorooka. I was under the impression this gathering was to promote their possible removal from Moorooka to places undecided. That was not so. By the way Moorooka means "Big Nose" in aboriginal (after the hill shape).

Upon arrival, we (Dulcie and I) were surprised to be introduced to Arnie and Mavis Piddington, all the way from the old dart. Arnie is a Vindi lad and attended the Vindicatrix Sea School from Sept: through Oct: 1955 in catering. His first trip to sea was on the Blue Star boat the Adelaide Star. There is a story in that happening, but I will leave that in the hope that maybe he will read this write up and set-to and send his story to our newsletter at a later date.

Over the years, he worked through the ranks from galley boy to ships chef and spent many years running around the African coast in Union Castle ships. He says his favourite ship had been the Braemar Castle. So, I thought to my self "I now know why we were asked to attend Kim's BBQ, to meet our brother from overseas." Right!!! Uh uh, wrong again.



Fifteen minutes later, Kim graciously announced that this gathering was to say, HAPPY BIRTHDAY to another



Vindi boy who actually chose that moment to make his appearance. Our own, (muted Drum Roll please.....) Terry Creasey, had been lucky enough to have his Birthday and Easter all at the same time. Double treats eh..... Terry? But make the most of it pal and remember that Easter will not be in that same time frame for another 150 years. See you there Pal.

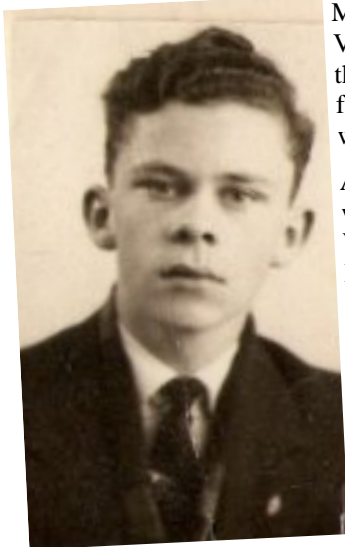
After Terry huffed and puffed mightily and managed to blow out the one 'candle' on his gigantic cup cake sized birthday cake, I was going to say second puff, but that's rude. We all then adjourned to the eating part of the party. Thanks to Kim and Gordi for a delightful spread of salads, rolls and delicious bangers, courtesy of Gordi. He could have had the services of a first class Chef, but Gordi said "a first class Chef should not have to lower his standards to cooking bangers." I would add the following sweets could have fed an army. Thanks Gordi, and thank you Kim for a delightful afternoon and evening.

Jack Secker

(More photos in Social Occasions on our website)

A Fifty Two Year Memory

By Robert Buxton, Tresurer



My Brother went to the Vindi and sowed into me the idea to follow in his footsteps even though he was eight years my senior.

At age 17 I had a good job with an Electrical Wholesale Business in London but one day had met a school mate in London, he had been to the Vindi and was now off to sea. My "follow my brother" thoughts now got a boost and a week later there I was at the registration place. Five Pounds paid, questions,

an exam, and we will let you know. And my Sea Adventure had begun. About a month later the letter came with the Vindicatrix report date.

On the train to Sharpness, I saw some other chaps whom I thought are they going too? One guy (Peter Lester - ex Royal Marine Band) who became a friend for the whole training period came over to me and said Vindicatrix? Yep! and so the experience began.

At the station some officer lined us up like the Royal Navy boys and marched us to the camp at a solid speed considering we had a suit case to handle. Vindi uniform, and gear, hat and badge that I still have, we headed to our dreaded six week home called barracks, cold, gravel floor, ablutions out side across the roadway. Next was a hair cut that left my hair all piled up on top.

The Bugle and early morning parades were the wake up call in the October to December cold. I thought they were mad as it did not do much for me or the training, and some days it was raining, but the Parade grounds were it seems essential to freeze our brains into obedience.

When on the Vindi and doing the training my imagination was at full throttle, loved it. Soon I would be away to see the world and someone else paying for the journey. We learnt the Vindi song waiting at the gang plank for meals, *Bless em all, bless em all, the long and the short and the tall, Bless all the Bosuns and their bosuns mates, bless all the new boys and their empty plates, etc etc.* We got used to picking half a cockroach out of the spuds, parcels and post flying through the air was the mail deliver system at meal times. The training was basic and easy going stuff. I had elected to train as a Steward as it was a shorter course, but when I got there wished I had gone for the Deck Training. Interestingly later on I was employed as a Deck Boy.

Pop Eye became my favourite Officer as to me he was such an old Sea Dog . I felt that even though he could not laugh much he did inside and was the unique character of the base, and I reckon just loved baiting the trainees.

On weekend leave times my mate Pete and I went to the Seamen's Mission a bit, scumped apples from the local farms, got chased by a couple of boars at one farm. I said

I'm not afraid of them, until they came at us. Torn trousers from the barbed wire jump over the fence we later we were off eating the apples and laughing at the experience. We knocked at a cottage door and a motherly figure appeared. Yes !! We're from the Vindi and hungry would you have a slice of bread please, Wait! she came back with a big smile having made us some sandwiches and had won our hearts in one act. What a winner that visit was! An understanding hero Mum.

One very dark night walking back from the local town I discovered that my hair could stand on edge. We had to pass through a gully on the walk home. A couple of Vindi boys waited until we were at the bottom of the gully and with coats off and white shirts glowing jumped out on us and howled, My hair went straight to attention, we said words not often used by me as a would be Christian, and chased them to the top of the gully. It was quite a laugh after my actually our hair settled down again.

After the exams I got an NCO's badge so could leave the Barracks when I wanted to and not wait for a gate inspection. Not much good when with Pete and other mates though as they had to wait. One day when waiting with Pete a guy was playing up bad, mucking around. I thought the officer would stop us from going out so told him to shut up and stand to attention like the rest of us. He carried on thought he was a bit of joker who liked to make a laugh. Well furious I walked up to him and dropped him a bunch of fives, that actually stopped the problem, but I thought to myself, idiot if seen I would have badly blown it and likely got demoted, or at least an aching arm for an hour under the clock.

One Sunday Pete and I went to the Brethren church in the local town. Pete went forward and made a commitment to follow Christ. On the way back we talked about it all. Pete said what do we say to our mates back at barracks. Most of them were in the barrack area where we slept. I said I'll tell you what, when we go to bed we will both kneel down at our bed side and pray for God's help. That will get their attention, be it rough. It did! but to my surprise none of them ridiculed us, they said you've got guts and asked us about it all. Ever experienced inner relief? we both did!

As an NCO steward I got the butcher job duty in the cook house, Slice bread and meat to cut up, separate sausages and keep the butchery clean as much as I could. The good bit was eat or smuggle out a treat as I also had care of the fruit handouts.

Exams all finished and living below decks on the Vindi, the end of training was in sight. I used to go to the top deck and walk down towards the wharf end by the life boats. I was going to be a hopeless steward I thought it's just not me. I breathed in the sea air and remember my brother's tales of life at sea, soon now it would be my experience.

We marched to the station and as Pete and I stepped on board the train the Vindicatrix experience was now over, we parted company on the underground in London saying we will write, but we never did. A wave, and see ya was the end of that journey as we headed for the shipping pool..... MV Rangitane sailing in two weeks and home to get ready for the adventure of my life.

MEMORIES

by Doug Duxbury

A certain ex-Vindi Boy of our acquaintance – who shall remain nameless – gleefully tells the story about an incident that occurred while he was training on the T/S Vindicatrix.

As he tells the story; for being a stand-out recruit he was duly promoted to Bo'sun which came with a few privileges and certain responsibilities. One of these responsibilities was to assist the Duty Officer at night which entailed patrolling the main gates and report late-comers returning to Camp after 'Lights Out'.

Not being the type to 'dob in' his mates, our gallant Bo'sun would often look the other way while the odd late-comer would sneak through the gates to disappear into the gloom, thankful not to be caught.

It became common knowledge around the Camp that a certain young lass would quite often be seen outside the Camp perimeter (more than likely searching for her lost puppy-dog!)...but occasionally stopping to pass the time of day with the odd lucky lad 'going ashore' - or returning to Camp. For being so friendly to a bunch of lonely young lads so far from home, this same young lass undeservedly came to be known by an extremely derogatory name.

It was by chance that late one evening this nubile young lass happened to saunter past the Camp gates and quickly caught the attention of this 'Duty Bo'sun.' Being a gregarious young fellow he proceeded to engage her in polite conversation during which he became aware how well-endowed the young lass was in the bosom department. As it was a slightly chilly evening our 'Romeo' offered to share the warmth of his 'Vindi issue' top-coat (with him inside, of course!) and naturally, things hotted up from then on.

Fully engrossed in the exploration of so much feminine charm, our 'Romeo' was oblivious to the approach of a third party in the form of the Duty Officer who proceeded to illuminate the startled entwined couple in the beam from his powerful torch. The words uttered by that officer will linger forever in that Vindi boy's memory:

"BOY, YOU ARE HERE TO GATHER A HEAD FULL OF MEMORIES - NOT A MOUTHFUL OF MAMARIES!"

A blind man was describing his favorite sport, parachuting. When asked how this was accomplished, he said that things were all done for him: "I am placed in the door and told when to jump. My hand is placed on my release ring for me, and out I go."

"But how do you know when you are going to land?" he was asked. "I have a very keen sense of smell and I can smell the trees and grass when I am 300 feet from the ground" he answered.

"But how do you know when to lift your legs for the final arrival on the ground?" he was again asked. The man quickly answered. "The dog's lead goes slack."



Every Time it Rains, it Rains.....

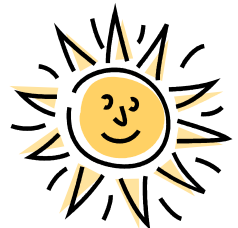


After his yearly health check-up the doctor said to David, 'You appear to be in good health. Do you have any medical concerns you would like to ask me about?' 'In fact, I do,' said David

After I have sex I am usually hot and sweaty, and then, after I have it with her the second time, I am usually cold and chilly.'

After examining his elderly wife Roberta, the doctor said, 'Everything appears to be fine. Do you have any medical concerns that you would like to discuss with me?' Roberta replied that she had no questions or concerns.

The doctor then said to her: 'Your husband had an unusual concern. He claims that he is usually hot and sweaty after having sex with you the first time, and then cold and chilly after the second time. Do you know why?'



'Oh that crazy old codger ,' she replied. 'That's because the first time is usually in December and the second time is in July.'

Mildred, the church gossip, and self-appointed monitor of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business. Several members did not approve of her extra curricular activities, but feared her enough to maintain their silence.

She made a mistake, however, when she accused Henry, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his sign written van parked in front of the town's only pub one afternoon. She emphatically told Henry and several others that everyone seeing it there would know what he was doing.

Henry, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just turned and walked away. He didn't explain, defend, or deny. He said nothing. Later that evening, Henry quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house... walked home.... and left it there all night.



Britain's War against History

The British Government and its instrumentalities connive at the destruction of historic icons, says Hal G. P. Colebatch

IS THERE ANY COUNTRY outside Ceausescu's Romania....so willing to outdo the Taliban in obliterating the past, so contemptuous of its own history?; British playwright and columnist Keith Waterhouse asked of Britain a few years ago. The answer, looking for the moment only at its maritime history, seems to be a definite 'No!' I certainly know of no country that has treated some icons of a splendid and patriotic heritage more contemptuously than has contemporary Britain.

Latest news is that Henry VIII's ship Mary Rose, raised from the mud of the Solent where it sank in 1545 and preserved at Portsmouth Dockyard, is to be closed to visitors because of costs. Public money, though spent on all manner of politically-correct causes and iconography, was denied to purposes like preserving boats from Dunkirk. Ms Jane Stancliffe, the Heritage Lottery Fund officer responsible for refusing this application, reportedly said: 'I suspect there are many other little ships of that type and from that era throughout the country.' Apart from anything else, the word 'suspect' suggested that she did not know, had not taken the trouble to find out, and did not care who knew it. The most famous Dunkirk vessel, the ferry Medway Queen, last ship away from the Dunkirk Mole in 1940, was allowed to sink at its moorings. Money was also refused for the preservation of the last motor minesweeper from World War II, rotting in Stoke Creek.

Funding was reported in the balance for the restoration of Brunell's SS Great Britain at Bristol, the first large ocean-going screw-propelled ship and one of the most historic steamships ever built, rescued from dereliction in a remote bay in the Falkland Islands, and a major tourist attraction in a run-down and derelict area of Bristol dockland. A lot of work on it was financed by donations, including American, but there was a major voluntary and self-funding component in most of these preservation efforts anyway.



Resurgam Replica

Britain's first submarine, Resurgam ('I shall rise again'), which had sunk in 1880, was discovered on the sea bottom in 1997. It was being gradually broken up by the sea, but could have been raised and preserved for an estimated £1,000,000. No money was made available to preserve it but £220,000 of lottery money was granted to provide snout-operated showers, porcine toys and under-floor heating in pigsties at an educational farm centre at Sellafeld at the same time. (100,000 was granted to drag a

boulder 240 miles from a Welsh mountain to re-enact the building of Stonehenge. However the project ran out of volunteer draggers and off the Welsh coast the boulder slipped off the raft transporting it, sank in 10 fathoms and joined the Resurgam. In the US, by contrast, the sunken Hunley, the Confederacy's heroic hand-cranked submarine, was found in 1995 and in 2000 raised with military honours.

The Scottish Maritime Museum applied to the North Ayrshire Council in 2001 to break up the clipper ship City Of Adelaide, the oldest of the very few clipper ships surviving anywhere in the world, for lack of funds to repair it. According to the latest reports, the ship lingers as a deteriorating hulk, but its destruction looks imminent. This is despite the fact that the National Historical Ship Committee listed it as one of the 'core collection' of Britain's historic ships. The Cutty Sark was also reported recently to be deteriorating.

Winchester has largely dropped Alfred the Great, founder of the British Navy, victor over the marauding Danes, patron of learning and culture and generally regarded as the noblest and most exemplary of Kings, whose bones are preserved there, from its promotional material. Focus Groups were set up to find a more up-to-date image for the town. Ms Eloise Appleby of the Winchester Tourist Board was quoted as saying: 'King Alfred represents the past. His image is not forward-looking enough for today's cut-throat commercial market place. Winchester is a town with many creative artists and new buildings and Alfred doesn't tell the whole story.' What a strange use of the term 'cut-throat' in connection with King Alfred, who saw off so many cut-throats of a more literal kind!

When it was reported that local people were angry over the announcement that King Alfred would be dropped from the City's logo, Ms Appleby said: 'We want to show that there are other symbols, such as the luminous motion monument in the cathedral grounds: The old 'King Alfred's College, Winchester' was re-named with the colourless, lack-lustre title 'University College, Winchester in 2004 (now Winchester University).

While it appears to have been changed now (possibly because I and others complained), the UK National Maritime Museum's website recently carried material claiming (with innumerable grammatical and factual errors), that the British had lost interest in the sea, and possibly Britain had never been a maritime nation anyway, but a fringe culture which is fascinated by the sea.

The intuitively maritime nations had been, as far as one could gather from the unclear prose, the Norwegians, the Dutch or the Greeks, though none of these were founded on an island or had had modern navies remotely comparable to the British. None had ever built a dreadnought or an aircraft-carrier, nor kept a large part of their navies at sea for decades to stamp out slavery. They had not left their names covering the charts of all the seas of the world, nor played a large part in the defeats of Napoleon, the Kaiser and Hitler through sea-power.

It is possible to see culture-war in the fact that the former Royal Yacht Britannia, instead of being broken up like so much else when out-dated, should be preserved as a museum-ship, for the gross contrast between the lavish Royal accommodation and the cramped squalid crew's

quarters, now on public display, makes Britannia a potential, almost too perfectly symbolic, icon for class-warfare and republicanism. (This was hardly the Royal Family's fault, by the way they were not responsible for the design, and Britannia was built in 1953 anyway, when things were different).

Although the yacht had many uses for Britain such as hosting mobile trade exhibitions, and was designed to be converted into a hospital ship in the event of war or disaster, the present government vetoed earlier plans to replace it. Even Spain has a Royal Yacht, and it was recently announced that Roman Abramovich, the billionaire Russian owner of Chelsea Football Club, was building a 550-foot private yacht with swimming pool, helipads, cinema and submarine. A British Royal Yacht in these circumstances-and which could probably pay much of its way anyway-hardly seems a huge extravagance.

Britain's loss of historical memory was emphasised to me by two incidents on the same day in London. Working there in the 1980s I had often walked beside the Thames embankment where certain old and historic ships were moored, including two First World War sloops, *President* and *Chrysanthemum*. I came to think of them, like the Thames itself, as familiar friends.



HMS Chrysanthemum

When I returned in 1997 there was only one. *Chrysanthemum* was gone. I asked several nearby shopkeepers and stallholders' what had happened to it, hoping it had been moved to a new berth or was undergoing maintenance rather than that it had been broken up. Surviving ships from the First World War and not exactly common. However, nobody I spoke to had any idea it had ever been there. Later an Internet search revealed that it had been broken up indeed.

The same day I noticed *Chrysanthemum* gone, I took a train to Richmond and, after admiring the Thames-side scenery, fell into conversation with some locals in a pub. I mentioned the Second World War, which had destroyed many historic buildings that once lined the Thames. After a time one of my companions, an adult and a Londoner, apparently of at least average education, remarked to me that he had often heard of the Second World War, and the thing that puzzled him most about this phrase was: had there been a First World War?

Our Gordi walked into Bunning's hardware and wandered down the timber aisle when some old fart dressed in a red shirt with a green apron asked if he wanted decking. Gordi fortunately, got in three good punches and sorted the blighter out. Not bad for an oldie..... the police are investigating.



Down-under Reunion Christchurch NZ

Well the band's practicing, the seats dusted and the tables decorated for the biggest hoe-down for many years in Christchurch NZ. Most of the close accommodation is now fully booked though nowhere is far, with many opting to stay in the city anyway.

The seats are filling up quickly, so if you haven't put in your application yet, please do it **now** so organizers can finalise booking arrangements.



Vodka Usage



1. To remove a bandage painlessly, saturate the bandage with vodka. The solvent dissolves adhesive.
2. To clean the caulking around bathtubs and showers, fill a trigger-spray bottle with vodka, spray the caulking, let set five minutes and wash clean. The alcohol in the vodka kills mould and mildew.
3. To clean your eyeglasses, simply wipe the lenses with a soft, clean cloth dampened with vodka. The alcohol in the vodka cleans the glass and kills germs.
4. Prolong the life of razors by filling a cup with vodka and letting your safety razor blade soak in the alcohol after shaving. The vodka disinfects the blade and prevents rusting.
5. Spray vodka on vomit stains, scrub with a brush, then blot dry.
6. Using a cotton ball, apply vodka to your face as an astringent to cleanse the skin and tighten pores.
7. Add a jigger of vodka to a 12-ounce bottle of shampoo. The alcohol cleanses the scalp, removes toxins from hair, and stimulates the growth of healthy hair.
8. Fill a sixteen-ounce trigger-spray bottle and spray bees or wasps to kill them.
9. Pour one-half cup vodka and one-half cup water in a Ziplock freezer bag and freeze for a slushy, refreshable ice pack for aches, pain or black eyes.
10. Fill a clean, used mayonnaise jar with freshly packed lavender flowers, fill the jar with vodka, seal the lid tightly and set in the sun for three days. Strain liquids through a coffee filter, then apply the tincture to aches and pains.
11. To relieve a fever, use a washcloth to rub vodka on your chest and back as a liniment.
12. To cure foot odour, wash your feet with vodka.
13. Vodka will disinfect and alleviate a jellyfish sting.
14. Pour vodka over an area affected with poison ivy to remove the oil from your skin.
15. Swish a shot of vodka over an aching tooth. Allow your gums to absorb some of the alcohol to numb the pain.
16. NEVER DRINK THE STUFF - IT'LL KILL YOU!!

British Merchant Navy



The British Merchant Navy comprises the British merchant ships that transport cargo and people during time of peace and war, and their crews.

For long periods of the last millennium, the Merchant Navy had the largest merchant fleet in the world, but it has slipped down the rankings. Today, there are 429 ships of 1,000 GRT or over, making a total of 9,181,284 GRT (9,566,275 DWT). These are split into the following types: bulk carrier 18, cargo 55, chemical tanker 48, container 134, liquefied gas 11, passenger 12, passenger/cargo 64, petroleum tanker 40, refrigerated cargo 19, roll on/roll off 25, vehicle carrier 3. There are also 446 ships registered in other countries, and 202 foreign-owned ships registered in the UK.

Due to the United Kingdom's island nature, before the Channel Tunnel and the advent of air travel the only way to enter or leave the country was on water, except at the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

For the United Kingdom, prior to the end of the First World War when she sailed more than half of the world's tonnage, it was known as the **Merchant Service**, and became the **Merchant Navy** by a Royal Proclamation of King George V, in recognition of the fact that the service sailed valiantly alongside the Royal Navy's fighting ships. British ships fly the Red Ensign, more familiarly known as the "Red Duster", at the stern.

A person hoping to one day become a Captain, or Master, prior to about 1973, had five choices. To attend one of the three elite naval schools from the age of 12, the fixed-base *HMS Conway* and *HMS Worcester* or Pangbourne Nautical College, which would automatically lead to an apprenticeship as a sea-going cadet officer; apply to one of several training programs elsewhere, or go to sea immediately by applying directly to a merchant shipping company at perhaps the age of 17 (with poor prospects of being accepted without some nautical school or other similar prior education.) Then there would be three years (with prior training or four years without) of seagoing experience aboard ship, in work-clothes and as mates with the deck crew, under the direction of the bo'sun cleaning bilges, chipping paint, polishing brass, cement washing freshwater tanks, and holystoning teak decks, and studying navigation and seamanship on the bridge in uniform, under the direction of an officer, before taking exams to become a second mate.

With luck, one could become an "un-certificated" 2nd mate in the last year. The modern route to becoming a Deck Officer comprises a total of 3 1/2 years (notably longer than Royal Navy training at Sandhurst and Dartmouth), of which at least 1 year is spent at sea and the remainder at a sea college. This training still encompasses all of the traditional trades such as celestial navigation, ship stability, general cargo and seamanship, but now includes training in business, legislation, law, and computerisation and other highly technical aspects of a modern ship.

Another essential seagoing career was that of the radio

officer (or R/O, but usually "sparks"), employed and placed by the Marconi Company. After the inquiry into the sinking of the *RMS Titanic*, and the nearby *SS Californian* which did not render assistance due to their radio being down for the night, it was ordered that round-the-clock watch had to be maintained on all ships over 1600 GT. Today, Marconi no longer supplies radio officers to ships at sea, because they are no longer required, due to the development of satellites. Deck officers are now dual trained as GMDSS officers thereby being able to use all a ship's communication systems.

Comsat launched their first commercial satellite in 1976 and by the mid 1980s satellite communication domes had become a familiar sight at sea. The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System or GMDSS was introduced and by 1 February 1999, all ships had to be fitted, thus bringing to an end the position of radio officer. This has led to a new career path, the recently introduced Electro-Technical Officer (ETO), who is a trained engineer with qualifications to assist the mechanical engineer to maintain vital electronic equipment such as radios and RADARs. ETOs are marine engineers given extra training. Although ETOs are relatively new, many companies are beginning to employ them, (although mechanical engineers are still employed).

Ship crews are of course made up of others, working under the eyes of the officers; the deck crew and bo'sun, responsible for general maintenance, sailing "before the mast", (which, due to exaggerated pitching motion in bad weather, is the least comfortable part of the ship). Other duties aboard ship are performed by the ship's carpenter, the cooks, the stewards, the quartermaster who steers the ship, and the below-decks crew, often referred to as "greasers". Ocean-going vessels with more than 12 passengers are required to have a doctor aboard.

For ships of the British Merchant Navy on foreign service, interestingly, it used to be that each of these departments were peopled with ethnically based workers. The deck crew would often be Malay, the quartermasters Filipino, the greasers and stewards Indian, the cooks Indian but from Goa where, being Christian, they could prepare Western style food, and the ship's carpenter ("chippy") would often be Chinese. The officers would be British or Commonwealth, headed by the Captain (or Master, but more often referred to as "the old man"). The Purser was in charge of the ship's stores. Nowadays, ships have turnaround times of less than twenty-four hours instead of several days, due to containerisation, requiring a much smaller crew. The passenger liners that once transported people now ply the oceans for pleasure seekers, cargo ships have switched to containers using efficient shore side cranes instead of the ship's derricks, and tankers have become monsters.

Sailing on the high seas has a long history, with embedded traditions largely inherited from the days of sail. Because of the ever-present concerns of safety for crew and passengers, the layers of authority are rigid, discipline strict, and mutiny almost unknown. The romantic lure for those "going down to the sea in ships" is less than it was.

Merchant mariners are held in high esteem as a result of their extraordinary losses in times of war. The ships were often "sitting ducks" in the sights of enemy combatants.

Rest in Peace Sailor

Raymond Steed, who at just 14 years and 207 days was the youngest British serviceman to die in World War II.

A Boy Scout, he joined the Merchant Navy as a galley boy in December 1942, only two months after his 14th birthday, the youngest age permissible with parental consent. He first served on the hospital ship *Atlantis* and was awarded the Africa Star. Then he was transferred to the freighter *Empire Morn*, taking munitions to Casablanca, but only a few miles off the north African coast she struck a mine laid by a U-boat. Raymond and 20 of his shipmates died.

Raymond's younger brother Kenneth, now 75, said "The ship's captain visited us to say how brave he was. But my parents never got the chance to visit his grave in Casablanca, it was a different world then. It would be good for today's teenagers to realise what youngsters went through for their country."



The New Zealand Shipping Company (NZSC)



The New Zealand Shipping Company (NZSC) was formed in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1873. They initially purchased four sailing ships, followed by 12 more built new for the company in the years up to 1877. All were just over 1000 gross tons. Two further second hand sailing ships were also acquired in 1876 and 1882. Many additional ships were chartered, chartered tonnage often outnumbering owned ships in the ratio two-to-one. The passage times between London and New Zealand for sailing ships were between 74 and a 100 days.

Following pressure from the New Zealand Government, the NZSC and Shaw Savill jointly chartered the *Stad Haarlem* for an experimental return trip in 1879. She ran with a full complement of 600 passengers in both directions, taking 57 days from London to Lyttelton via Capetown. Despite the operational success, the voyage was not profitable, and no additional subsidies were on offer to run steamships. The Government continued to push for a steam service, which they thought would encourage a more "suitable class" of immigrants, plus it would provide a more reliable service for their frozen meat exports. Despite not liking steamships, the NZSC chartered the *Fenstanton* in 1883, to inaugurate the first steamship service from the UK to New Zealand. *Fenstanton* was followed by the larger *British King*, built by Harland & Wolff. The NZSC also chartered the White Star Line's *Ionic* and *Doric*, both of which remained of the service with Shaw Savill. The NZSC then signed a charter with the Government to run a regularly monthly service (jointly with Shaw Savill). Five new ships were ordered from J. Elder and Co (later the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company). The ships were named after New Zealand mountains:- *Tongariro*, *Aorangi*, *Ruapehu*, *Kaikoura* and *Rimutaka (1)*, all just under 4500 gross tons. All had clipper bows, and were barque-rigged. They travelled out via the Cape of Good Hope, and back via Cape Horn, as the sailing clippers had done, but more than halved the passage times. Whereas the sailing ships frequently sighted no land between the UK and New Zealand, the steamers stopped at Plymouth, Teneriffe, Capetown and Hobart on the outward journey, and at Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro and Teneriffe on the return. These routes were maintained until 1914, when the Panama Canal opened.

The early 1890s were a time of depressed trade, and the NZSC found itself embarrassed by many difficulties and troubles. In 1890, Mr (later Sir) Edwyn Dawes took over a considerable number of shares in the NZSC from Sir William Pearce, and it was Edwyn Dawes who steered the company to successful solutions to its problems. He also transferred the financial control of the company from New Zealand to London. His reorganisation of the company involved the replacement of the existing fleet with larger, more economic ships, the first of which was the *Ruahine (1)* of 1891, which was over 6000 gross tons. She had a four-cylinder engine which was far more fuel-efficient than the previous ships. *Ruahine (1)* was a great success, and was followed by six even larger ships over the next ten years.

In 1912 the NZSC took over the Federal SN Co, but the two concerns retained their own identities. In 1916, both companies became part of P&O, but again they continued to operate separately, although the exchange of ships between constituent P&O companies became common. At the end of the First World War, the NZSC had only four passenger ships remaining. To maintain the regular monthly service, a fifth ship was needed, so the *Shropshire* of the Federal SN Co was rebuilt with extra passenger facilities as the *Rotorua (2)*.



In 1929, the three magnificent 16000 ton motor ships *Rangitane (1)*, *Rangitata* and *Rangitiki (2)* were delivered. They were followed by three equally fine motor cargo ships of 11000 tons in 1931, thoroughly modernising the NZSC fleet. The P&O liner *Mongolia* was chartered in 1938 as the *Rimutaka (3)*. *Rangitane (1)* did not survive the Second World War, but her sisters ran until 1962 alongside the three fine new liners *Rangitoto*, *Rangitane (2)* and *Ruahine (3)*, which were delivered between 1949 and 1951. They were joined briefly by the ex-Cunard liner *Remuera (3)* in 1962, following the withdrawal of the 1929 sisters, but all passenger services ceased in 1969. Towards the ends of their lives, the NZSC passenger and cargo ships adopted Federal funnel colours. In 1973, all remaining NZSC and Federal ships were amalgamated into the main P&O fleet.

RMS Rangitoto in Federal livery



*Aorangi: Cambridge: Celtic King:
Cornwall: Cumberland: Derby: Devon:
Dorset: Durham: Empire Avocet: Empire
Castle: Empire Flag: Empire Manor:
Empire Merganser: Empire Whimbrel:
Empire Windrush: Essex: Gloucester:
Haparangi: Hauraki: Hertford: Hinakura:
Hororata: Huntingdon: Hurunui:
Kaikoura: Kaimata: Kaipaki: Kaipara:
Kaituna: Kent: Leicester: Lincoln:
Manapouri: Maori King: Matura:*

*Middlesex: Monasses: Norfolk: Northumberland: Nottingham: Opawa: Orari: Otaio: Otaki: Otarama: Pakipaki:
Papanui: Papanui: Papanui: Pareora: Piako: Pipiriki: Port Chalmers: Puriri: Rakaia: Rangitane: Rangitata: Rangitiki:
Rangitoto: Remuera: Rimutaka: Rotorua: Ruahine: Ruapehu: Samkey: Samsip: Shropshire: Somerset: Stafford:
Suffolk: Surrey: Sussex: Tasmania: Taupo: Tekoa: Tongariro: Turakina: Waikato: Waimate: Waimea: Waipa: Wairoa:
Waitangi: Waitara: Wakanui: Wanganui: Westmoreland: Westmorland: Whakatane: Whangaroa: Wharanui: Wiltshire:
Wild Auk: Wild Avocet: Wild Cormorant: Wild Curlew: Wild Flamingo: Wild Fulmar: Wild Gannet: Wild Grebe: Wild
Mallard and Wild Marlin, if I have missed some I'm sure you will let me know!!!!*

A life on the Ocean Wave

by Bill Davis

After a stint on smallish passenger/cargo ships I landed a plum, juicy job on Shaw Saville's "Southern Cross" in the form of "Lift Boy". Still in the rank of boy and for the princely sum of £12 something a month with board and lodgings. A great voyage though through the Med and Suez etc. Tahiti, Fiji, Wellington NZ, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Fremantle and home via Cape Town SA. With 1100 plus passenger mostly migrants and one lift, times were going to be busy.

Originally my mind had been set on joining the Royal Navy as an "Artificer" (engineer), but lack of education saw an end to that, though I did address that lacking later in life. My next ambition was to become a seaman in the MN, but my eyes let me down this time, so it was catering or naught.

I had some real nice jobs in the past such as "galley boy" ha, or should I say whipping boy under the tutelage of an old and fat queer chef. He made my life a misery with 6 'clock starts till 7 or 8 at night, over 9 months - moaning, groaning, ranting and raving, throwing pots around full or empty and having me clear up after her. And if there was anything wrong during Captains inspections guess who was at fault..... He/she got paid off in Sydney under extraordinary circumstances thankfully, but that's another story.

The lifts on the Southern Cross were of the vintage breed, requiring a driver to manipulate a lever 'up or down' a fairly high degree of accuracy was required otherwise one had to step down or up whatever the case of poor judgment, though adjustments could be made they were a tad jerky. I would add the lever was removable and acted as a key. Two lift boys were employed taking it in weekly turns for the early or late shift and relieving each other for a meal break. It was also our custom to remove the key or you might find your self climbing many stairs to get control back. Ah, the trials and tribulations of being in charge and such an important job!

In rough weather we were stood down naturally and given other tasks and in capital ports the stewards might commandeer the lift to bring on or take off luggage, which gave us a break. One of the problems with our rostering was to take any shore leave meant that either of us had to do a double shift and shut the lift down for breaks, so in fact never got much leave. Though did get to see my first Melbourne Cup horse race and won a few pounds.

Between floors were hidey hole shelves to store a few nibbles, books for quiet periods or a drink if lucky on the late shift, brought out by the younger passenger set on such nights as 'Captains welcome evening' with free drinks. If the lads were smart they would take into the venue a bottle hidden in their jacket and filling it with 'shorts' whilst being screened by mates. The lassies where good fun too with a kiss and cuddle between floors after such events.

One incident sticks in my mind when called to the foyer by a bell push, looked at the passenger shocked face when opening the doors glanced around to see a girl propped up in the far corner and acrobatically perched on the hand rails with legs apart in a compromising position. How she did do

this and why remains a mystery, but I would later be summoned to front the Captain as a innocent bystander, ha. A few days later I was interrupted in my daily tasks by two burly Master at Arms accompanied by my relief to take over my duties and escorted up-stairs to a defaulters session. Outside the captain's door I was instructed to plead guilty to save any embarrassment to the girl or her family as they would be summoned if pleading innocent, Oh how naive I was. I was also instructed when entering the captains office to march up to his desk and stand at attention. With that the door was knocked, a voice came saying to enter. With the two master at arms at my side heard whisper *quick march - left, right, left.....halt*. The Captain sitting and the 1st Officer standing with a large book read out the charge, being that I was accused of fraternization (tampering with the human cargo) blah, blah and requesting how did I plead. With a squeaky voice answered guilty as advised hoping at least to state my case. But no, the skipper went ballistic and threw a barrage of long words at me that I had never heard of before and not knowing their meaning. I was also threatened with a DR in my Discharge Book and thrown off the ship at the next port of call and pay my own way home if another such another incident occurred and docked a week's wages. Thank you, I thought of this young lady.....



Serving only one trip on this beautiful, clean lined ship I had to front the Captain twice and on the second occasion he referred to me as an 'old sea dog' with a twinkle in his eye I thought, which made me feel special and thought this Captain knows the score. The second charge related to a crossing the line ceremony when one of the new crew members ran and hid in the funnel, the worst thing to do. So when eventually found, I, amongst many others stripped him, covered him with boot polish and gave him a Mohican haircut of sorts. My charge this time was assault and more pay lost - we did have a good laugh though. The unfortunate victim, who was a cabin boy and working in the dining room, was reassigned to the stinking hot laundry until his hair grew back. Well that's what you get for being a poor sport, if he hadn't resisted all he would have got was probably a bucket of water thrown over him - as we all did under the rules of King Neptune.

During meal times was usually the busiest time and times when a lift head-count would be required to knock a few off, I did say the lifts were aged. One particular night after dining a well dressed portly gentleman and his elegantly dressed wife approached the lift, he looking quite pale. These folks were defiantly captain's table type so held my tongue in saying anything (can't afford to upset Capt Bligh again). They step into the lift and just as the door closes with half a dozen other passengers inside he has a massive

hemorrhage of what I believe the stomach, as he threw up blood by the gallon, after gallon after gallon, wave after wave mixed with his stomach contents, so much so that the lift was 4 inches deep in it, and not very pleasant. Oh my god, panic..... I had led a sheltered life and not prepared for this.

When I got to the foyer I opened the door with a whoosh, the gory contents gushed out everywhere and where I summoned help to phone for the in-ship doctor. By this time the gentleman had hit the lift floor and out of it. I shaking like a leaf, with blood up over my ankles and in my shoes, over my white uniform, hands, arms and even in my hair. I was stood down to clean myself up, though never returned that night. Shaking like a leaf I hurried down below, tore of my whites and threw them in the laundry bag (clean uniforms supplied each day) and jump in the shower shoe's and all. Fortunately my cabin mates were asleep, as not being in the mood to talk. I lay for a while going though my mind what had happened, something I did for a very long time after. The gentleman sadly died that night and was buried at sea a few days later.

For counseling I got an arm around my shoulder by the Chief Steward and asking "you alright lad?" and walking off before I could answer. I was invited to the funeral though, which was most touching. This not being my first nor my last burial at sea and a ceremony I have never yet come to terms with.

A high light of this trip was when Marlon Brando paid us a visit in Tahiti, but with his nose stuck in the air he walked the ship as if he owned it and wanting to know who were the in-breeds daring to breath the same air as his and the temerity of being aboard his ship, say no more - he went down like a lead balloon

The Southern Cross like many passenger liners had its own crew pub, like other ships known as the Pig & Whistle. Cor' what a den of iniquity with a mini casino of Crown and Anchor, card games and other games along with race nights and bookies. The story I heard was that those running gambling tables etc. had to leave certain amounts of insurance money in the Captains safe, in case of bad debts or arguments. These thieves paid others to do their work - must have been some good money in that game to do that.

The bar sold most popular beers including Guinness, Newcastle Brown, Watneys, Red Barrel, Worthington, Bass to which I was amazed, they sold more kinds of beer than my local and a lot cheaper being duty free. The room was huge and could easily hold the entire crew of 400 plus, also at one end was a stage and a piano though seldom used on my trip.

Not wanting more ups and down I declined re-signing articles at the end of the trip and moved on, as we did in those days. Being only 17 years had circumnavigated the world 8 times, but wanted to see more different countries and places especially the east with Japan and China to look forward to.

Many years later I boarded the Southern Cross in Adelaide to wish Bon Voyage to friends traveling overseas and noticed that the lift had been updated and automatic. Also knowing the ropes had a quick look in the Pig and had a drink for old time sake, as you do.....

On the Beat

The scene: Leigh Police Station, The time: Just before 6.00am on a Sunday morning, still very dark, so it must have been in the winter.



The night shift guys were gathering preparing to knock off and wend their weary way home to their warm beds. The early shift, including me, PC 182, was getting ready for the Sergeant's parade when the day's beats were allotted and any information about what to keep our eyes open for was advised. The telephone rang. "Intruders on the premises at....." - and the address was given. It was the Information Room in Headquarters at Southend. As it was Sunday morning and change of shift the patrol cars were all in and the news was passed to the out station, us.

The address where the intruders allegedly were was quite a distance out in the town so there was a dash for some sort of transport. I managed to get a Noddy bike, the Vellolette 200cc water cooled job, the Police used in those days in the 60s. Other guys leapt on push bikes and the Sergeant even took his own car. Well, it was Sunday morning, and it was a pretty quiet patch at the best of times. Any excitement was most welcome. Our Nick wasn't important enough to have its own Police vehicle. The assorted rabble all headed for the house where the supposed heinous attack was taking place.

We arrived more or less together and were met by a very anxious householder, an elderly man who lived on his own. His story was that he had been asleep in bed when he awoke to see a person in the corner of his bedroom. He said that at first he didn't believe his eyes so he shut them and when he opened them again, the person was still there and 'climbing onto a chest of drawers'. He leapt out of bed and the person disappeared, presumably through the bedroom door.

We searched the house, checked all external windows and doors and could find no one nor any sign of entry. There was a little bit of a discussion among the assembled 'troops' and the Sergeant, knowing that I was just starting my shift, told me to sort it out and off went the rest of the guys, either to home or to take up their beats. So there I was with this agitated man who was still convinced that he had a stranger break into his house and intent on some felonious deed.

We went into his bedroom and I took him through his story again. 'Where exactly was this person?' 'What was he doing?' We looked at the chest of drawers where the householder said he saw the person was 'sitting' or 'climbing'. I ran my hand across the chest of drawers and left the imprint in the layer of undisturbed dust. Ah, ha the light came on! He could then see that there had been no intruder. It was obviously been the play of shadows, or whatever, and it had just been a trick of his imagination. We shook hands and I left him a lot happier, went back to the Nick, made my report and picked up my beat. That was the only excitement for that day. The next eight hours were just a typical dead Sunday morning.

Ron Kerr

We're Not Old. We're Just Mature

Today at the chemist, the clerk was a gent.
From my purchase this chap took off ten percent.
We asked for the cause of a lesser amount;
And he answered, Because of the Seniors Discount.

We went to McDonald's for a burger and fries;
And there, once again, got quite a surprise.
They poured out some coffee which they handed to us.
And said, For you, Seniors, the coffee is free.

Understand---We're not old---We're merely mature;
But some things are changing, temporarily, We're sure.
The newspaper print gets smaller each day,
And people speak softer---can't hear what they say.

Our teeth are our own (We have the receipt.),
And our glasses identify people we meet.
Oh, We've slowed down a bit...not a
lot, we're sure.
You see, we're not old...we're only
mature.



Kevin Rudd in rehearsing his speech for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. He begins his remarks with, "Ooo! Ooo! Ooo! Ooo!" Immediately his speech writer rushes over to the lectern and whispers in the Prime Ministers ear, "those are the Olympic rings, your speech is underneath."

My Daily Prayer



So far today, God, I've done all right.
I haven't gossiped,
haven't lost my temper,
or filled in the old woman,
haven't been greedy, or grumpy,
and kicked the dog,
nasty, or self-centered,
I'm feeling real good about that.

But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to rise up and get out of bed, and I'm going on the piss and then I'm going to need all the help you can give.

Thank you Lord.

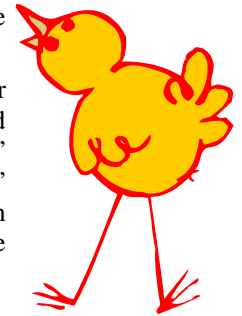
Prayer of ex MN Seafarers
[Tilbury Branch]

Chinese Restaurant

A couple go for a meal at a Chinese restaurant and order the "Chicken Surprise". The waiter brings the meal, served in a lidded cast iron pot. Just as the wife is about to serve herself, the lid of the pot rises slightly and she briefly sees two beady little eyes looking around before the lid slams back down.

"Good grief, did you see that?" she asks her husband. He hasn't, so she asks him to look in the pot. He reaches for it and again the lid rises, and he sees two little eyes looking around before it slams down.

Rather perturbed, he calls the waiter over, explains what is happening and demands an explanation. "Please sir," says the waiter, "what you order?" The husband replies, "Chicken Surprise." "Ah... so sorry," says the waiter, "I bring you Peeking Duck"



*A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough. **RECOGNIZING A STROKE***

Remember the "3" steps, STR. Read and Learn! Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster.

The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S - Ask the individual to **SMILE**.

T - Ask the person to **TALK** to speak a simple sentence (Coherently) (eg "It is sunny out today").

R - Ask him or her to **RAISE** both arms.

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out their tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke. If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call **000 immediately!!** and describe the symptoms to the operator.

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