The CACHALOT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHAMPTON MASTER MARINERS' CLUB

No 100 **September 2022**

Captain's Log

We all enjoyed the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, celebrating the 70th anniversary of her accession to the throne. This makes her the longest serving British Monarch who has given 7 decades of service to the people of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. In her Platinum Birthday Honours, the Queen awarded our Post Captain Andrew Moll an OBE for all his work in promoting marine safety. Well done Andy – well deserved. I'm sure there will be free drinks for all next time he is in the Clubroom!

A bit of history now: On the evening of 29th January 1990, a Greek -flagged cement carrier "Flag Theofano", on a voyage from Le Havre to Southampton carrying 4,000 tonnes of cement, anchored at St Helens (near Bembridge on the Isle of Wight) in a severe storm as there was no ready berth available for her within the port. The following morning when the port tried to contact her to give the good news that her berth was now available, she was not responding to radio calls. A full-scale search in the ongoing extremely bad weather was conducted but no trace of the ship could be found. It is very rare for a ship just to disappear without sending any distress signals or being seen by other vessels. On 30th January the bodies of the Captain and 2nd Officer were found on West Wittering Beach and in mid-February the bodies of a further three crew members were found locally. Four of the crew were returned to their native Greece for burial but the fifth, that of Able Seaman Ibrahim Hussein from the Maldives was buried in the Muslim section of Kingston Cemetery, Portsmouth, in an unmarked grave. The remaining 14 bodies still lie in the wreck which was later found near the Dean Tail.

On 2nd September at Kingston Cemetery there will be a ceremony, which will be attended by the High Commissioner for the Maldives, to place a headstone on Ibrahim's grave. The Southampton Ship Owners are funding a plaque to commemorate the event which will be placed in Holyrood Church on the QE2 mile.



This event will be followed by Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September when we raise a Red Ensign to honour and remember the sacrifices of the often forgotten and invisible, Merchant Navy Seafarers. Merchant Navy Day was started to address the "sea blindness" that appears to afflict a huge proportion of the population and the public's ignorance about the UK's dependence on merchant seafarers, who are responsible for transporting more than 90% of the UK's imports and exports.

I attended the "priesting" of our Honorary Chaplain, Rev John Attenborough, at Winchester Cathedral in July. John was a good friend to the Master Mariners and was the area Chaplain for the Mission to Seafarers. John has been promoted to look after seafarers in the Middle East and will be based in Cyprus. He will be greatly missed in Southampton.

At the Southampton Sea Cadets we now have our Marine Management approval to extend our pontoons and refurbish the slipway which will give us a longer boating period on each tide and make launching and recovering boats much easier. We still require a few local consents but we can now start planning and fundraising in earnest. We still have tickets available for the Trafalgar Night Dinner on 21st October which is a fund raiser for the Sea Cadets – see the Boatsteerer's report for details. If you are unable to attend this and happen to be at the Southampton Boat Show you can assist, by buying raffle tickets from the Sea Cadet stand.

Martin

Captain Martin Phipps MBE, Captain of the Club

Boatsteerer's Locker

Meeting's at RBL – our Friday meetings at the RBL Club room have generally been busy. At the last meeting of the MC in June we agreed to allow the Club to continue to open on a Thursday. A suggestion was made about opening on a Thursday evening from 1700-1900 but the RBL is not open on that day. A previous attempt to do evening opening at the Seafarer's Centre failed too due to lack of take up. My last blog in this newsletter did not elicit any responses and we expect to make a final decision about Thursday opening at our next meeting of the management committee on 1st September.

Zoom gatherings – I am continuing where possible to maintain a Zoom gathering on a Thursday morning, opening from 1045. It has been good to see some new faces, and regular ones. For the most part I am free on a Thursday so not too onerous and happy to continue hosting this for members. I am away on a road trip to Lake Como through the first two weeks of September but will hopefully be able to resume zoom for Thursday 22nd September.

250 Club – Remember, you have to be in it to win it!!! The Wheel of Name's using a random name generator has been used for the past three months and works well. Extra 'razzamatazz' at request of TC now available through the Smart TV when played from my laptop.



You can find the latest 250 Club winners on the notice board in the centre pages.

Sea Pie Supper – Friday 3rd February 2023
St. Mary's Stadium has been booked and a deposit paid for this event in 2023.

Trafalgar Night Dinner - Friday 21st October 2022
This event has been promoted and led by Post Captain Andrew Moll. A flyer has been issued in the last Cachalot. We need to attract at least 120 attendees to ensure we do not make a loss. We will also be joined by the Portsmouth Shantymen for some post meal entertainment. Please submit your request for tickets to the office or myself at the soonest opportunity.

Harpooner's Dinner –Friday 18th November 2022
I am working with The Star Hotel in Southampton to arrange a dinner for current and past Harpooners. Details have been circulated as appropriate.

Cachalots Golf Day – Thursday 29th September
I now have the 36 players which gives us nine teams of four to compete for the Cachalots Webb Cup.

Functions
Our curry lunches at Everest Cuisine appears to have been well received with another completed in good company 13th August.
We have been having difficulty in making contact with the Chef who provided good service for our suppers at the RBL and Julia is working on some ideas as an alternative.

In closing!!
Some weeks back my illustrious predecessor, Ken Dagnall, came into the Club room with a mascot given to him by one of his grandchildren, thinking he was still Boatsteerer.



Ken enjoying his 'brown sauce' and the mascot.

Robin

Captain Robin Plumley MBE

Boatsteerer

boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk

Cachalot reaches 100

No, not 'a' Cachalot but *The Cachalot* which started its life in June 2001 as a four page newsletter which stated:

> *This Newsletter comes to you as the result of a debate in the Entertainments Committee of the Southampton Master Mariners' Club. The members of that committee found that they continually faced an uphill struggle to raise support among the Club Membership for the various functions that they devise throughout the year. Until now the dissemination of such information has been relegated to the annual calendar of events followed by notice board announcements in the Club Room. We now feel that you, the Members, would be better served by an occasional mailing like this one, hopefully twice a year apart from the annual calendar and subscription mailing.*

Ian Stirling produced the first one and at that time the Club didn't even have an email address. I have edited and produced all the subsequent editions so please allow me some self indulgence as I relate its progress over the past 20 years.

I use a desktop publishing program on my home computer and at the start I had no experience of such things so all the mistakes are totally self taught and will probably continue until some expert puts me straight. The last version of the program that I use was issued seven years ago and it is no longer updated but it seems to be holding up in this age of rapidly changing technology.

The Cachalot soon became a quarterly publication and by #6 was 8 pages long, by #16 it was 12 pages and by #25 it had increased to 16 pages. Some colour pages were introduced but were limited due to costs and it took a great deal of juggling to fit the colour elements into the appropriate colour pages.

You may wonder how, as a quarterly publication, we have reached #100 in less than 25 years but with the advent of the pandemic lockdown we were unable to produce printed copies and, in an effort to keep in touch with members, introduced monthly digital copies instead. These were distributed by email to those on our distribution list. Regular printed copies were resumed from September '21 and altogether an extra 15 editions were produced from May '20 through to March '22, when 'normal' service was resumed.

Our original printer, who we had been with from 2002, was a casualty of the lockdown but we have found another local printer who, with modern printing techniques, can produce an all colour copy, on quality paper, for little more than the cost of previous issues, although paper prices are starting to ramp up now.

The majority of members now opt to receive the digital copy by email and this edition will go out to the 219 members who are on the email distribution list and to 27 others such as widows, friends of the Club and other nautical organisations. Printed copies will be posted to the 61 members who have not given us email addresses or who have opted to receive the printed copy, as all members are entitled to do. (Contact the office or myself). The edition will also be posted in the members' only section of our website, as are all 99 of the previous editions.*

I have yet to embrace the full potential of all-colour printing and am well aware of the pitfalls in trying to produce an editor's technicolour dream which can turn out to be a readers' nightmare. Bells and whistles are kept to a minimum.

From the start I have tried to keep to the original intention of it being a newsletter rather than the Official Organ of the SMMC. As such it is less formal and some might say at times irreverent. I have tried to keep it about The Cachalots or written by Cachalots and avoid reprinting content that can be found in the many other nautical publications.

That stance was sorely tested at times as we quickly exhausted the memories and anecdotes of those members who were prepared to put finger to keyboard. I have been greatly assisted over the past few years by the input of commentator Michael Grey, former long-term editor of *Lloyds List,* whose excellent and authoritative articles, although not written specifically for *The Cachalot,* are written by one and can therefore pass my inclusion criteria. Having said that, I have excluded very few contributions over the years but I cannot include all of Michael's monthly articles in this humble quarterly newsletter. What I can include let us call 'Editors choice' and the rest I can put direct links to on our Blogalog web page and members can then read them on the original publishers web pages.

I am also very aware that under Rule 2 our Club shall be non-political and since just about everything seems to be political nowadays this is another dictum that is hard to conform to in practice. What is just 'stating the bleedin' obvious' to one is met with horror by some of a more woke disposition. Luckily most of our members seem to be of a similar persuasion and I have received few complaints. To such an extent that I sometimes wonder if anybody actually reads it anyway.

What of the future? I shall not be around to produce the next 100 issues and change is inevitable. It's not the sort of thing that can be produced by committee and I must state that from the start I have had *carte-blanche* and never had any directions or comment from management regarding content or style.

As far as I know, I am still in reasonable nick and I hope to be able to produce many more editions yet, computer updates permitting. But, as an arch procrastinator, even I am unable to put off one thing: the march of time.

So, I am always on the lookout for someone with enough knowledge of the Club to perhaps act as an understudy and step in when the time comes. No experience necessary.

All in the spirit of our Club motto: *In Omnia Paratus*

**You are probably reading this digital edition as sent to you by email. To facilitate transmission, the file size, a hefty 9Mb, has been compressed down to less than 2Mb, a size that most of our ISPs will tolerate. One consequence of this compression is a degradation of the quality of the included photographs. You may wish to view the edition as posted on our website, where the original file size and quality have been maintained.*

Terry Clark

Honorary Editor

Post COVID cruising on Queen Mary 2

Q&Q on the QM2

Background



John, sporting his Cachalot cummerbund, and Louise at 'Black & White Night' on QM2

I sailed on my first Cunard trip as a passenger on the grand old lady Queen Mary in 1966 having paid off in New York. Sadly, she ceased sailing shortly after. Later, with my wife, Louise, I sailed as a passenger on some 5 or 6 voyages on the QE2, first with Peter Jackson as Master and finally with Ian Macnaught. A fine ship and I have visited her several times in Dubai.

More recently, we have completed a couple of voyages on the Queen Mary 2; Southampton - New York - Southampton with 13 days at sea and 12 hours in New York!

The purpose of this short digest is to offer some critical comments on the post-covid experience on the QM2.

Queue and check

The one common factor was the queue and check routine.



Q here for a NY gouging

1) On joining in Southampton there was a queue to have the covid documents checked (Vaccination and test paperwork.); the next queue was to actually check in and confirm the reams of paperwork filled in by computer before even leaving home; this included a "Health Declaration". Then, there was a 45-minute wait before the boarding process began. Another queue for security checks; as strict as I have experienced at any airport. Once able to board, there was a further queue on the boarding gangways while voyage cards were issued.

2) On board queueing was fairly limited during the voyage until arrival in New York. Disembarking involved a long queue! Perhaps surprisingly the immigration queue was short and the officer most polite! Then the fun started – there was a long queue for a taxi and it took over an hour. Worse still the taxi would not go on his meter and wanted (and got) twice the fare – a real New York gouging. Never again. Returning to the ship involved a 30 minute queue for security checks.

On board

If the old Queen Mary can be described as a Grand Old Lady, the Queen Mary 2 is best now described as a post-menopausal Duchess. There are many signs of poor upkeep. In some places the carpets are severely worn. Grease on some of the lifeboat falls seemed to miss the wire round the blocks – a favourite place for wire failure. An emergency exit door in the Queens Grill dining area was blocked with a dining table.

The "elegance", usually associated with Queens grill dining, was not as fine as 4 years previously. For example, I like my Darjeeling tea and in 2018 it was served loose leaf with teapot and strainer. Now all tea comes in a tea-bag!

In the post-covid period ALL the crew still had to wear face masks. This made communication difficult when speaking to crew members whose mother tongue was not English. Indeed, I found it dehumanising. The ship still showed the "Hands, Face, Space" signs all over and in the Kings Court dining area many tables were indicated as not in use. It was like going back to the immediate post lockdown era of the late 2020s.



Uneven greasing around blocks

Finally



Enjoy your trip

Had I been undertaking a condition survey, I would probably have made a few observations or deficiencies:

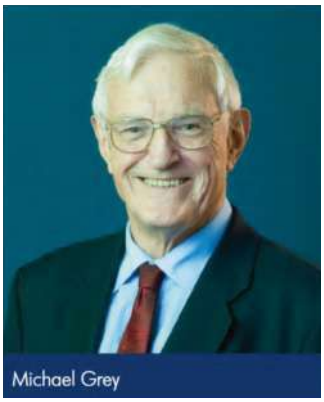
3) Carpets : Where there are defects in the carpets causing a "trip hazard" I would have noted location and made a strong recommendation that suitable remediation action was taken immediately.

4) Lifeboat Falls: Where grease had been applied unevenly, especially round the blocks, I would issue a deficiency. There are a number of serious instances where ungreased wires have failed resulting in mishaps, sometimes serious.

5) Emergency exit: In the Queen's Grill dining area, at the very aft end inboard, the doorway is marked "Emergency Exit". There is a small area coved off where a table is placed right next to the door. This effectively blocks the exit; not good in an emergency if diners have to flee aft. I think this would merit a serious deficiency, if I am right.

John Noble

A bit of rest for seafarers


Michael Grey

Seatrade Maritime Opinion & Analysis August 2022

By Michael Grey MBE

We were watching a warship tie up in a "civilian" port recently where normally merchant ships berth. It was one of the most sophisticated of its kind, vastly expensive, packed with amazing weaponry designed to deter the nation's enemies, manned by a couple of hundred highly trained specialists whose expertise had been honed by long period of "working up" to peak performance.

The visit, however was not one of showing the flag, or to undertake some secret training evolution, but to give the crew a few days off - R&R - Rest & Recreation, it was termed and who could begrudge the hard-worked complement their short break?

It is conceivable that there was some grasping admiral who was looking at the ship's relative inactivity and asking why the vessel was not at sea on its martial tasks, not loafing about in port, but sensible people who run navies know that their employees are not robots and benefit from occasional R&R. It makes an interesting contrast with the attitude of those who run merchant vessels, who expect their voyages to be operated with optimum efficiency and their ships and those aboard to work 24/7, regardless of their state of exhaustion and to the very limits of their rest hours regulation.

Just imagine the sparks that would fly if a ship arrived in port and it was announced that no visitors would be permitted until the crew had been fully rested, with all the customs officers, agents, inspectors, stevedores, auditors etc forced to wait a few hours at the bottom of the gangway, until the ship was open for business. You can get something of the flavour of the reaction when a master tells the company that the crew have exceeded their working hours and the ship must lie over before sailing. It most probably will not be one of cheerful and ungrudging consent. There is a horrible term that probably emanated from American business colleges – "sweating the assets" – and when the assets are expensive ships being run by human beings who sometimes get a bit tired, that sadly is just what life at sea is all about these days.

Seafarers, who might in years past have looked forward to some time ashore in foreign ports now regard their arrival with some apprehension, as they know they will be stretched to the limits by the demands upon them. Crews which have been cut to the bone, justified by all the clever automation designed to make their life easier (but rarely does) will struggle to fulfil all that has to be done in a port call, not that the shore side would have let them have any shore leave in any case. And in an industry which now pretends to be obsessing about seafarers' "wellness" and their mental health, while being careful not to prejudice the balance sheet, few in management seem to make any connections between the pressure to perpetually perform with insufficient bodies aboard and seafarers' health and happiness.

It has been pointed out by serving seafarers that there is not much point in equipping ships with lavish recreational facilities (if only), when the hours in the day are just not available to use them. It probably won't get any better, either as the new environmental pressures will make the sea passages longer, but port calls will become ever more frenetic and lost passage time must be made up. And there will be doubtless all sorts of clever equipment and software that operators will buy from clever salesmen, which will enable another crew member to be dispensed with, so there will be even greater sweat from the depleted human assets.

Maybe it is just part of the human maritime condition. In the middle of the last century there was a great story about one of the then liner lords who fiercely objected when his naval architect showed him a plan of the proposed officers' accommodation on the new ship. He pointed to the space labelled "officers' lounge" and roared –"my officers don't have time to lounge around – they should be on deck- working!!!" *Plus la change*.

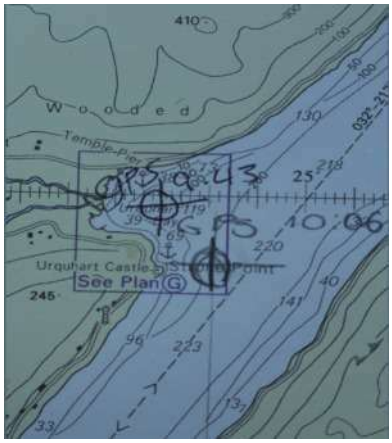
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Bursary Report

Winchester Sea Cadet Matthew Sugden recently completed a voyage onboard the sea cadet motor vessel the 'TS John Jerwood'. With the assistance of the club's bursary, Matthew a cadet for four years, was able to gain his first offshore experience from Aberdeen to Oban via the Caledonian Canal**.** As well as the normal duties onboard a vessel such as cleaning and watch keeping the cadets also have a programme of practical seamanship and navigation. On this voyage an additional feature was tending the vessel through the twenty nine locks and ten swing bridges that make up the Caledonian Canal including the eight lock complex called the Neptune Staircase designed and built by Thomas Telford. We wish him well in the future and hope that he has gained a lot from the voyage especially meeting new people, living and working in a close environment and from water bombing 'TS Royalist', having good fun with new friends. *John Mileusnic*

CFC Matthew Sugden – Winchester Sea Cadets
TS John Jerwood 11th to 17th June 2022

(I) was given the opportunity to visit the John Jerwood ship for a week and what an experience it was. I joined Warsash Sea Cadets who had booked the voyage for their unit together with cadets from other Wessex District units.



Day 1
We left Southampton bound for Gatwick Airport on a minibus where we caught a flight to Aberdeen. Once at Aberdeen we then took a mini bus to the John Jerwood. We unpacked our bags, we're shown around the ship, had dinner & settled down for the night. Lights out at 10pm.

Day 2.
We were woken up at 6am every day. We had to make our beds, brush our teeth, then breakfast. Kitchen area would then be cleaned & we start lessons involving rope & buoys, knots.

Day 3
After breakfast, we sailed through the lochs, placing ropes with fenders in position to avoid banging into walls. Later we had dinner, shower then bed.

Day 4
We finally arrived at Loch Ness which was stunning. I got to steer the ship along Loch Ness which was brilliant. We also had some shore leave and visited the ruins of a Scottish Castle, which was quite big.



Did the crew of TS Royalist retaliate?

Day 5
Still on Loch Ness, we came across TS Royalist. Our captain gave us water balloons to throw at TS Royalist, which we did.

The trip was amazing and a first experience for me. It was good joining other cadets and putting navigation and seamanship I had learned at the unit into real practice. I look forward to my next voyage.

Day 6.
Last day, up at 6am, packed our bags for the journey home. Had lunch, said our goodbyes, got the minibus to the airport & flew back to Gatwick. Nice to be home.
It was a great week, full of great experiences & would love to get the chance to do it all again.

Matthew Sugden

Solving the sea-time dilemma

The Maritime *Advocate* online Issue 810 August 8th 2022

By *Michael Grey MBE*

It may offer less in the way of adventure, while an enthusiasm for foreign travel is universal these days, but the sea career still remains attractive to a surprising number of young people. Those organisations offering scholarships for cadet training report there is still plenty of demand out there, even though there is widespread ignorance in the general population about the function of merchant ships. Maybe, with the sealift from the Ukraine getting under way, and dock strikes causing concern about goods for Christmas, people won't be so certain that all the stuff they buy comes by air. Perhaps this will encourage even more demand for cadetships with numbers obviously slumping during the long months of the pandemic.

But there also remains a critical demand for sea-experienced ships' officers throughout what we have learned to describe as the shore-side maritime infrastructure, with warnings about the demographics of the current workforce, with its grey or thinning hair. So, adding the recruitment to the shore side demands, there has been a great deal of concern about the need to supplement the recruitment of cadets in order, several years in advance, to fill these shore side posts where sea-experience is either useful or vital.

There is no faulting the logic of this, except that there is a problem in the middle of this transition from cadetship to maritime lawyer or technical superintendent, harbourmaster or shipping company executive. It is, quite bluntly that the UK no longer offers a range of seagoing opportunities for ships' officers to acquire the experience that will equip them for all these important roles. Just finding training places for cadets aboard ship so that they can fulfil their sea time obligations is increasingly difficult, while newly qualified officers also struggle to find employment as they seek to build their careers.

In this country, (and this is a problem found in many former "traditional" shipping nations), we no longer have a reasonably sized merchant marine that is domestically owned and managed. Sure, there may be cadet placements with foreign owned companies that subscribe to the Tonnage Tax scheme, although there are fewer of them and many have questioned the benefits of a life lived as the sole trainee Brit aboard a foreign-manned ship. And there will be no possibility, once qualified, of an ongoing career in such an operation.

If this is the reality, how many trainees should the UK shipping industry be recruiting, if they are not to become disillusioned by firstly the sea-time conundrum and secondly the problem of acquiring experience as a ship's officer? There are too many anecdotes about qualified officers sailing aboard excursion craft or as ABs on ferries, while they endlessly apply to prospective employers. Once the purpose of recruiting young people was to man the merchant fleet, but if we no longer have one to man, its only purpose is to provide experienced staff for the shore. You see the disconnect here, as the numbers really will depend on the demand for UK officers in the "international" fleet., which is really like that question about the length of a piece of string.

Writing in the latest Nautilus Telegraph, there is a very thoughtful article by the former secretary to the Maritime Skills Alliance Iain Mackinnon, which points out that so many of our assumptions about the supply and demand for cadets and ships' officers are based on information that is decades out of date. He thinks that studies undertaken in 1996, which suggested that the UK needed 1200 cadets to enter the industry each year, "need a fresh look". That number has been endlessly repeated as a sort of desirable target over the years, even as the circumstances have changed.

If most of the entrants are eventually to serve in the "international" fleet, with even the domestic ferry fleet less of a safe berth these days, maybe we ought to be more realistic about their expectations. There is no arguing that UK trained ships' officers are in technical terms "gold standard" and that organisations like the Trinity House Cadet Scheme and the Maritime London Officer Cadet Scholarship Scheme (soon to celebrate its 30th anniversary) do a truly excellent job, but it would be good to have a better idea of industry demand and what might be done to enhance this. There is little point in providing brilliant maritime colleges turning out excellent officers, but these young "customers" need to feel there is something better than temporary work as a seasonal AB on a ferry, after their long years of study.

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



Admiral of the Port's

Trafalgar Dinner

At Grand Café
South Western House
Southampton SO14 3AS

Friday 21st October 2022

1900 for 1930

Black Tie

Tickets £55 each

Available only from
Southampton Master Mariners' Club
First Floor, Southampton Royal British Legion Club,
Eastgate Street, Southampton. SO14 3HB (sae please)
Tel: 023 8022 6155 (Thursday & Friday 1130 - 1430)
Email: office@cachalots.org.uk
Full details on our website: www.cachalots.org.uk

In Aid of the Southampton Sea Cadets

Sea Pie Supper 2023

Plans are well advanced for the SPS next year and it will probably come as no surprise that we will have to increase the ticket prices.

The final decision on those increases will be taken at a meeting of the Management Committee due to be held on 1st September, too late to be included in this newsletter.

All hands will be advised by *Cachalite* and the information posted on our website.

Tickets will go on sale, through the office, on

Friday 11th November

Due to staff holidays the cut-off date for the next edition will be a little earlier than usual, on

4th November 2022

Shore Admirals

Ken Dagnall, while catching up with his 1948 edition of **The Nautical Magazine,** came up with this gem:

"A number of the Mayors who recently assumed office have found themselves in a curious position. While boasting no knowledge of matters nautical they will be expected as the opportunity occurs to serve as Admirals. True, they will not have command of ships; neither will they enjoy the full splendour of epaulettes and gold braid. Yet, within the maritime limits of their borough, these civic dignitaries are authorised to visit ships, supervise points of harbour administration and generally maintain an interesting link with the past. Southampton seemed to be unaware that its Mayor was also an Admiral until a lady donned the civic robes between the wars with Germany. She started a commotion by hoisting her flag on board the U.S. liner 'Leviathan', and announcing that she would expect a salute of 13 guns from warships, as well as being piped over the side."

The current Mayor of Southampton, Clr Jacqui Rayment, is in no doubt about her nautical status and will be attending the Trafalgar Dinner which we are holding in her name, (see notice above) complete with her Admirals Flag, Cap and Silver Oar of Office.

Another Admiral, Sir Alan Massey, will deliver 'The Immortal Memory'

The annual Merchant Navy Memorial service, which is organised by the Solent Branch of the Merchant Navy Association and held at Holyrood Church, Southampton, will take place at

12 noon on Sunday the 4th of September.

The Mayor of Southampton will be in attendance and Captain Martin Phipps will be laying the usual wreath on behalf of the SMMC. Standard bearers will assemble by 11.30 and the Mayor will arrive at 11.45.

There have been some problems with trying to set up the proposed Club Supper at the RBL on 28th September
With time running out it has been decided to go instead for a Chinese Lunch on the same date. So:

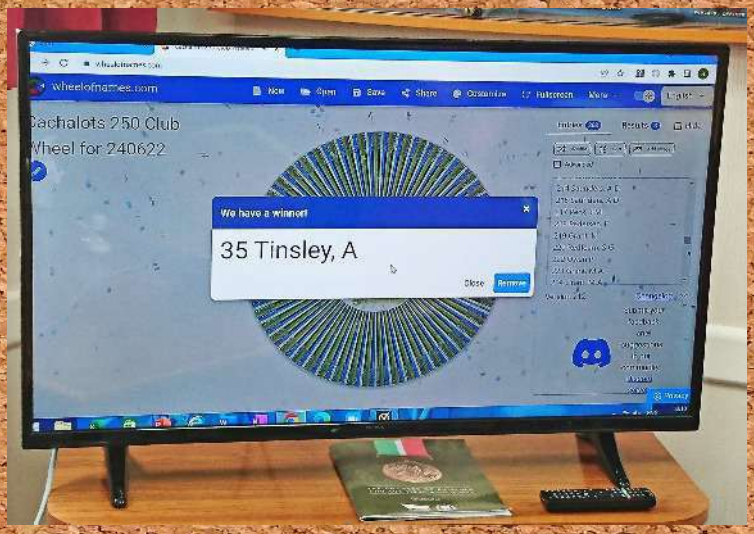
SZECHUEN KITCHEN

137A High Street, Southampton, SO14 2BS
(That's opposite Holyrood Church)

Wednesday 28th September
1230 for 1300

Price £27.50 per head
(Excluding gratuity)

Names to the office or Functions Officer





The draw for the QE2 watch (Cachalot 98 refers) was won by Les Morris and raised

£80

For the Captain's Charity

250 Club

May	**J Losty**	**Judith Peck**
June	**B E Peck**	**A Tinsley**
July	**R Kelso**	**I Odd**
Aug	**C N Phelan**	**I B Thomson**



Captain Ken

Here are two more contributions from Ken Owen that have appeared in his local Mellor Church Parish magazine "Outlook" of June and July 2022.
Ken lives in the Derbyshire Peak District and has been writing about some of his sea going experiences for the Magazine, so his stories are not particularly aimed at maritime folk.
"Outlook" is an excellent Parish magazine and it can be read online at https://mellorchurch.org/outlook-magazine/

Before actually going to sea in the Merchant Navy, at the age of seventeen, I was quite keen on jazz music, and expected it would be just one of many interests I would have to forgo. To my surprise, this did not turn out to be the case. In the late fifties and early sixties I was serving as a junior officer on the 'Ulysses' running between the Far East and east coast of America. Of course in those days, BC, (before containers), cargo ships spent at least fifty per cent of the voyage, in port, loading and discharging cargo. This of course gave us a wonderful opportunity to enjoy shore life and make many friends, all over the world. We were in New York, in a particularly bad spell of winter weather, and people had been advised on the radio, not to venture out, as snow blizzards were rampant. I had noted that my favourite jazz singer, Peggy Lee, was appearing at the 'Copa Cabana', which I considered to be the greatest night club. All road traffic had ceased, but we were berthed in Brooklyn close to the underground railway, and so could make the journey. Although hardly any audience had been able to make it, the huge cabaret and orchestra continued as normal, and was fantastic. The Copa dancers being equal to the famous Tiller girls. And it felt as if Peggy Lee was singing specially for us. Her greatest hit at the time was 'The folk who live on the Hill'. I've often wondered if that had anything to do with my eventual choice of residence.

On another occasion when berthed in Boston, Massachusetts, my friend and I were outside the Storyville night club, where the Count Basie Orchestra was expected to play. A friendly chap at the door approached us and asked if we were English, having heard us talk. He asked if we had heard of a place called Warrington, as he had been stationed there while serving in the U.S. Air Force, and loved every minute. This must of course have been Burtonwood. We managed to get a table, right at the front and, as one of the greatest swing bands in the world prepared to play, Count Basie himself introduced the man who had just been voted the finest Jazz singer in the world ….. Joe Williams. Of course we then realised it had been Joe, with whom we'd been talking, and he gave a special wave to us, and said 'Hi Boys', as the band began to play, and we realized that we were probably the only people to know that the world's top jazz singer loved Warrington. We also noted that the secret of Count Basie's unique sound, was that his percussion section was led by his brilliant guitarist, Freddy Green. Sometime later we berthed in New York's Manhattan, and loved to frequent Greenwich Village. While we were actually in the pub, 'Cafe Bohemia', listening to Donald Byrd's group playing, we noticed Donald say to the group, 'Miles has just come in', then immediately changed the tune they were currently playing to Bye Bye, Blackbird', which was Miles Davis's most recent hit tune. Later, as I collected two pints from the bar, I actually stumbled into the man standing next to me. Realizing who it was, I apologised, saying 'Sorry Miles'. He replied in a most agreeable manner, 'That's alright'. Although that was the full extent of our conversation, I was quite astonished, as it was top news at the time that Miles Davis, considered the world's top trumpet player, had been assaulted by the New York police, in the doorway of the 'Bird Land' night club, on Broadway, where he was top of the bill. The Press had reported that Miles had become very bitter after the experience, so it was good to find him so friendly.





In the early nineties I was Captain of the P&O Containers' recently built container ship, 'Peninsular Bay'. We had a completely British crew, of only 20, and were employed in a joint service with Denmark's M a e r s k company, to run between the Far East (mainly China) and North Europe.

On one memorable occasion, we were homeward bound in the Mediterranean following a successful voyage, i.e. a full cargo of containers and exactly on the advertised schedule, when to our horror, smoke was observed emitting from the container stack on deck. Although we were carrying some four thousand containers, we generally only know the actual contents of those that are declared as 'hazardous'. We were able to identify the one that was on fire as from the cargo plan we knew it was hazardous. Strangely enough the cargo was simply charcoal, packed in polythene bags in cardboard cartons. The problem is, it can be liable to spontaneous combustion. And that is exactly what had happened. Because of the hazard it had been stowed on deck in a position that the crew could actually reach, and thus we were able to insert high pressure fire hoses into the burning container. Our very serious worry, was that in the same container stack we had numerous containers of manila hemp, which was also highly inflammable, and could easily cause the entire cargo to go on fire.

As an aside, regarding the bales of manila hemp we were carrying, they were once a very common cargo imported from the Far east in order to make into rope. I had been surprised that despite that now rope was made from polythene and nylon, we seemed to be importing even more bales of hemp. The solution was that the changeover coincided with the invention of the tea bag. The wet strength of the hemp was ideal for making the tea bag paper. A wonderful illustration of the proverb. 'When one door closes- another door will open.'



I had telephoned to our head office in London to advise the Fleet Management department of the circumstances, and explained how we were fighting the fire. To our horror, each time we thought we had managed to extinguish the fire, it flared up again, and I realized, we would have to jettison the cargo. The 40 foot container, with its 23 tonnes of charcoal, in hundreds of cartons, was stowed at deck level in the centre of the ship. So it was possible to access it. While the Chief Officer and Second Engineer, wearing protective clothing and breathing apparatus, entered the smoke filled container, the rest of the crew operated the fire hoses and then formed a queue between them and the ship's side. And thus with extreme difficulty they managed pass the cartons, hand to hand, and jettison all the 23 tonnes of boxed charcoal, into the sea.

I remained on the bridge and the Chief Engineer in the engine room, and every other person on board, helped in the operation. The operation was successful, and we and the Company were highly relieved. Having once actually seen a large Evergreen container ship, aground in the Elbe river, with the entire deck stow ablaze, I was particularly grateful to everybody on board. As required by law, I notified the Authorities at Southampton, our first port of call, and when we arrived there, the incident was duly investigated. And the ship continued her voyage to Rotterdam and Hamburg. I was reminded of another of my favourite proverbs, 'No good deed goes unpunished', when on the following voyage I received, by post, a hundred guilders personal penalty fine from the Dutch port authorities who had mistakenly assumed that our call there had been our first following the Incident.

\- *Ken Owen*

MV Flag Theofano

The MV Flag Theofano was a Greek-registered cement carrier on a journey from Le Havre to Southampton carrying 3,920 tons of cement. Her crew were Greek, Egyptian or Maldivian nationals.

Approaching the Solent on the evening of 29 January 1990 in rough weather she was told to anchor in St Helens Anchorage off the Isle of Wight. The last contact with the ship was at 1932hrs when she was passing the Nab Tower. When she was called by radio the next morning and given permission to enter Southampton there was no reply. A search was carried out and when a lifeboat and two bodies were found it was assumed that she had sunk during the night.

Eventually an oil patch was found close to the Dean Tail Buoy and the wreck was found 20 metres below the surface. When the weather had calmed divers inspected the wreck and found that she had settled upside down, and that her cargo of cement had already started to harden.

All of her crew of 19 died. Five of their bodies were recovered while the remaining 14 have no known grave other than within the wreck or in the sea. Four of the recovered bodies were returned to Greece for burial, but the remaining crew member was buried in Portsmouth. Ibrahim Hussain's body was found at Bracklesham Bay. A 19-year old seaman from Kulhudhuffushi in the Maldives, he was buried in the Muslim Section in Kingston Cemetery in Portsmouth.

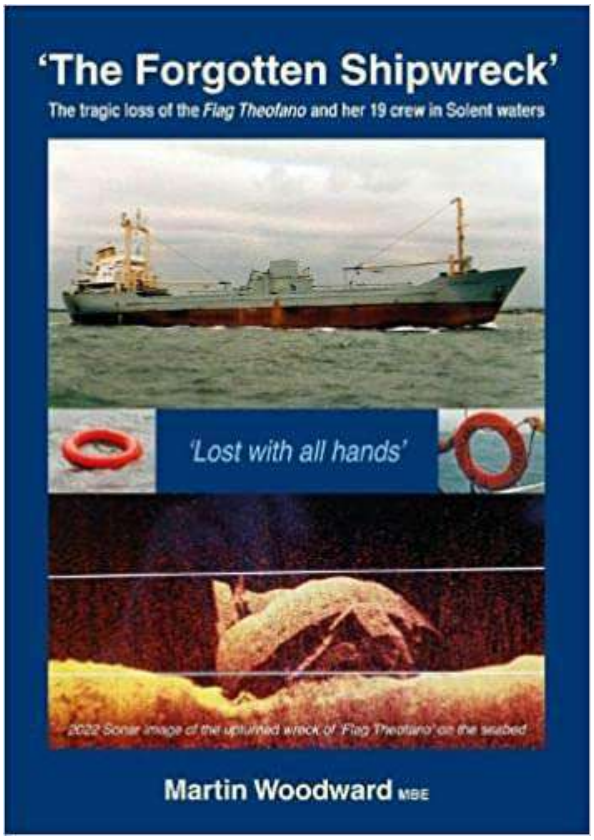
The Marine Accident Investigation Branch Inquiry found that her loss was due to capsizing in bad weather, possibly after her cargo shifted. The Inquest was held at Chichester in July 1991 and returned a verdict of Death by Misadventure.

Martin Woodward MBE has written a book on the loss of the Flag Theofano which will be launched on 2 September. He was one of the divers who investigated the wreck for the Marine Accident Investigation Branch and the vessel's owners and insurers and was also Second Coxswain of the Bembridge Lifeboat when the Flag Theofano sank.

As a naval and commercial port, Portsmouth holds an annual service to commemorate Seafarers in partnership with Portsmouth Cathedral. Portsmouth City Council will consider options for a memorial to the crew of the Flag Theofano as part of the Southsea Coastal Scheme.

Open invitation.

On the 2nd of September at 10:00 a head stone will be unveiled on the grave of Ibrahim Hussain. Ibrahim was the last to be found of 5 crew that were washed ashore after the Flag Theofano sank on the 29th January 1990 in the Solent. The grave is in Kingston cemetery Portsmouth and those attending are expected to include the Mayor of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Council leaders, Maldivian High Commissioner, MPs, etc. There is also going to be a book launch at Southsea castle, the book titled "The Forgotten Shipwreck" is the story of what happened to the Flag Theofano. The author Martin Woodward worked for the MAIB and the ship's insurers and did many dives on the ship.



The book, "The Forgotten Shipwreck", is available from Amazon at £7.99 plus £1.75 postage

This page was prepared before the receipt of the Captain's Log

Waking up to the fragility in the chain

Baird Maritme Ship World, Grey Power August 18 2022



Containerships at the Port of Hamburg

It is interesting to see just how the importance of ships has suddenly imprinted itself on the public attention, after decades of oblivion, with their presence taken for granted, rather like the fact that people only notice their drains when they block up. The first intimations of this change came with the pandemic and ports at a standstill in countries like China, when people began to realise that the stuff they had cheerfully ordered wasn't going to arrive anytime soon.

Then there was the wonderful reminder of the Ever Given mishap and the global attention suddenly focused upon the big containership bunging up the Suez Canal. People learned about the resultant chaos to the supply chains that could be caused by one single ship, large though it was. And since that exciting interval of almost a week, there have been regular reminders of the fragility of what had seemed to be an amazingly robust maritime supply chain, as one by one, its weakest links were tested and found wanting.

Ports – already bursting at the seams because of the arrival of giant ships, dumping huge numbers of boxes on their quays before the feeders, trains, barges, and trucks could manage to take the earlier consignments away – have been unable to cope with the sheer numbers of containers being shifted in the post-Covid rush. While the ships somehow managed to keep trading, workforces stricken by the effects of the pandemic have found it far harder to recover and the whole system has dramatically slowed, with queues of giant ships outside the ports. Delays have registered in weeks rather than hours or days in some of the busiest and worst-congested ports.

"In years past, those hundreds of foodstuff-laden ships would have departed their Ukrainian ports without anyone even noticing."

People demand to know why the shelves are empty and, for the first time in years, begin to realise their dependence on sea transport, the delays merely underlining the fact that the goods they depend on don't all arrive on aeroplanes. And if you lived on the coast of California or many other seashores, you just looked out to sea and saw this huge fleet of gigantic ships darkening the horizon, day by day.

A different kind of shipping has entered public consciousness after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the realisation that the food crops produced in that beleaguered country weren't going anywhere and that large tracts of the world were facing shortages or even starvation without the passage of those bulk carriers. In years past, those hundreds of foodstuff-laden ships would have departed their Ukrainian ports without anyone even noticing. Now, the eyes of the world are on the Black Sea convoys, with their voyages registering as crucial in the public eye. We can't after all take ships for granted, it seems.

In these febrile times, scarcely a day passes without some reminders of ships and their essential nature. This week we were told about the impending shortage of LNG carriers, as the fragile nature of energy provision becomes apparent in so many advanced countries previously driven by "net zero" policies that have demonised fossil fuel. Coal shipments are surprisingly at a record high, and with the readjustment of trade after sanctions on Russia, ton-miles are set to keep more ships busier. Will it be a severe northern winter, because there will be a lot riding on uncertain meteorology?

"Once the systems are working properly again, the shipping world will retire behind its cloak of invisibility."

Weather really matters and it looks as if people who live on the major European rivers who depend on sea-river ships and barge traffic will soon be realising their dependence on shipping, as the falling river levels after a prolonged drought bring trade to a near standstill. And as with all ships and trades, the alternatives available to move substantial tonnages are so severely limited.

Might this abrupt reminder of the value of marine transport make people more aware of their dependence on ships, the industry that operates them, and those who sail in them? It will probably be something of a "nine-day wonder" and once the systems are working properly again, the shipping world will retire behind its cloak of invisibility.

But there are downsides to consider; one being that there may be rather less enthusiasm for supply chains that stretch halfway around the world, and there may be significant moves to source goods that come from somewhere nearer.

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Gone Aloft



Captain Bryan Chipperfield

Bryan Victor Chipperfield, who has gone aloft, aged 77, was born in 1944 and did pre-sea training on HMS Worcester from 1959-61. He was apprenticed to P&O S N Co and joined them as a junior officer. In 1969 he transferred to Container Fleets Ltd and was promoted Master of the *Jervis Bay* in 1978. After 26 years in command he retired from the *P&O Nedlloyd Cook* in 2004.

He joined the Club in 2014, recently widowed, and was a regular attendee at the social functions until ill health took its toll. Initially he experienced some melanoma problems but it was a rapid onset of motor neuron disease that took him aloft on 17th June.



Lt Cdr Michael Cox RD*RNR FIChemE

Michael Javaid Cox was elected to the Club in 1993 when he was Project Manager for AMEC, a major construction group.

He was born and educated in Liverpool before attending the University of Edinburgh where he graduated in 1971 with a Bsc in Chemical Engineering . By that time he was already a Sub Lieutenant RNR and was promoted Lt Cdr in '81. He went on to command HMS Kedleston and other TON-class minesweepers in the early '80s and HMS Arun and other River-class sweepers later in the decade. He was co-author of a book on Minesweepers, '*Last of the Wooden Walls'.*

He enjoyed the Sea Pie Suppers and was a regular attendee at the Zoom meetings that were held during the recent lockdowns.

Michael was proud to be a Cachalot and would wear his silver whale whenever he could.

Early this year he developed a rare brain disease which, distressingly, left him unable to communicate with his wife and family.

Michael went aloft on 1st August and our deepest sympathy goes to his wife Marcia and their family.

He lived in Maidenhead and his funeral will take place at Hampden Chapel, Chilterns Crematorium, Amersham, on 8th September at 1145. The service can be followed by webcast using the following links:

https://www.wesleymedia.co.uk/webcast-view Webcast Login PIN 480-4661

There is also a Tributes page at https.//ltcdrmichaelcoxrnrrd.muchloved.com



Chris at the helm of *Thetis Dolphin*

Lt Cdr Christopher Coote RN (Rtd) CEng MRAeS Bsc

Christopher Coote, who went aloft on 15th August, was Chartered Engineer who served in the Royal Navy for 25 years in charge of helicopters.

He joined the Club in 2003 and was an elected Harpooner from 2012 - 17. He stood down from that in 2018 due to ill health.

He held a quarter share in *Thetis Dolphin,* a cruising yacht that he shared with some other Cachalots.

Our deepest sympathies to his wife, Cheryl, and their sons.

We understand that there is to be a family funeral on 30th August which will be broadcast on webcast. Details will be posted on our website when known.

Gone Aloft

Past Cachalots and others who have gone aloft:

Lt Cdr G H Draysey RD RNR, RNLI Bronze Award, was ex Bibby Line and worked for Red Funnel and on the cross channel ferries.

Gerry served the Club as a Harpooner from 1996 - 2013 and was a past Chairman of the SRNOA. He resigned from the Club in 2017 and passed away peacefully on 11th July 2022 at Little Haven Care Home, Hythe, aged 88.

Captain Simon Waite, who joined the Club in 1969, was an ex-BI man who worked for a time as a marine officer on the Southampton Harbour Patrol before moving on to Townsend Thoresen and European Ferries as master. In 1990 he had the distinction of becoming the last master of the *Cutty Sark* at Greenwich. His membership lapsed in 2015 and we understand that he was suffering with dementia. He went aloft on 27 June, aged 84.

Mavis Stirling, wife of Past Captain (2002) Ian Stirling has died at the Dawson Lodge Care Home, West End, Southampton, on 28th July, aged 91. Ian is also a resident at the care home.

Although he was not a Cachalot, some of you will remember **Roy Stanbrook FNI** who has died in Australia, aged 65, of a heart attack on 14 July. He was educated at the Greenwich Royal Naval College and after pre-sea at Warsash he was with the RFA, on the Sir Galahad in the Falklands and later Ch. Off on RFA Argus. He worked for BT on the cable ships and then became a Senior Lecturer at Warsash, teaching radar, vessel handling, and bridge team management. He was very active then in the Solent branch of the NI. He was a surveyor for a P&I Club and Operations Director of Lapthorns of Rochester and later became Harbour Master for the Lower District of the PLA. In 2012 he moved to Gibraltar where he was CEO of the Port Authority and Captain of the Port, being succeeded by Capt Bob Sanguinetti in 2014. Roy moved on to Australia where he was Harbour Master at Melbourne until his retirement in 2020.

New Member

Paul Owen is a Master Mariner who spent 15 years with Blue Star Line and then 24 with the MCA and EMSA. Now retired he is currently a Volunteer ship Visitor for Stella Maris. He says he is joining us so that he can stand up at the Sea Pie Supper and toast 'Our Guests'.

News from our Past Honorary Chaplain Bill McCrea



Bill reports that when he went to Italy for three weeks to visit his son he has ended up staying for nearly three months, including five weeks in hospital. He was taken in to an Intensive Care Unit with pneumonia, pleurisy and an infection and his family say that he would be appearing in the above columns if it wasn't for the quick work of the doctors. He has now been conditionally discharged for convalescence and is receiving physiotherapy to get him walking again and fit for travel.

When he was released into convalescence someone took the picture, above, of him and Rosaleen admiring a hospital painting. As Bill says, "United again".

The World Ship Society WORLDSHIPSOCIETYDORSETBRANCH

Zoom Meetings are resuming

2.30pm, Saturday, September 10th 2022

~ Ocean Liner Extraordinaire:
The Fabulous Normandie ~ with Bill Millar ~
She was "floating Ginger Rogers"
… pure Art Deco, top heavy with glamour & the finest Atlantic liner ever…
she was triumph, innovation, notation, but the victim of a far too short life at sea.

Their Secretary, Steve Pink, says:

There is no need to request an invitation to our September event … everyone on our circulation list will be sent a Zoom Invitation Link about a week beforehand … but do make sure its in your diary.

If you are not yet on that list, visit their website shipsdorset.org and follow the links.

The CACHALOTS

The Southampton Master Mariners' Club

1st Floor, Southampton Royal British Legion Club, Eastgate Street
SOUTHAMPTON, SO14 3HB

Tel: 023 8022 6155

Web site: www.cachalots.org.uk

E-mail: office@cachalots.org.uk

captain@cachalots.org.uk
staffcaptain@cachalots.org.uk
boatsteerer@cachalots.org.uk
storekeeper@cachalots.org.uk
postcaptain@cachalots.org.uk
functions@cachalots.org.uk
membership@cachalots.org.uk
editor@cachalots.org.uk

The Club room is currently open on just one day of the week, Friday, 1130 - 1500. Liz will be only too happy to serve you a drink. There is no catering on site but there are many sandwich outlets within easy walking distance.
Suggestions for events, for improvements, offers of help, articles and anecdotes for inclusion in this newsletter will all be received with pleasure. We are even prepared to receive complaints if they are constructive.

Milk bottle tops

In an age where we are constantly urged to recycle everything it comes as a bit of a surprise to receive the following report from Barry Peck in Dibden Purlieu.

St Andrews Church is no longer collecting milk bottle tops for charity. As the next nearest collection point is in Portsmouth it is no longer practical for the Club to collect milk bottle tops so please do not bring any more into the Clubroom. We have done this for a long time now so it is a shame that this small contribution to charity has to end.

Free books available

In the course of his work within the maritime publishing industry Michael Grey used to review books for BIMCO and as a result has been left with a lot of relatively new volumes which he cannot use, and somebody else might. They are free to anyone who might want them:

Management Level Stability BJ Wardle
Operational Level Stability for deck & engineer officers BJ Wardle
Guide to Port & Terminal Management Capt. Bill Chalmers
Marine Heavy lift & Rigging operations BJ House
Elements of Navigation & Nautical Astronomy Chas. Cotter
Thomas' Stowage 8th & 9th Editions Capt GM Pepper
Boatswain's Manual WM. McLeod
Brown's Guide to Survival at Sea McSweeney
Nicholls Seamanship 30th Edition Capt. GM Pepper
Collisions and their causes NI

All are in mint condition and are available free for anyone who might be able to use them.

The books are available from Michael Grey MBE greyrjm@gmail.com 01444 415 761