

*No. 92*

*July 2026*

# *The CADET*



*Unveiling of Memorial Window  
Malaysian Cadets  
The Dawhah Cannon Incident*

# The Conway Club - Founded 1910

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The Late Captain Harvey W Broadbent RD RNR (1880-81)

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## CONTENTS

### Features

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Hon Co of Master Mariners | 4-5   |
| Dawhah Cannon             | 6-10  |
| Malaysian Cadets          | 12-13 |
| Myrina                    | 15-16 |
| Ramb Ships                | 20-21 |
| Cadet Goes Bananas        | 26-28 |
| OC Visit to Kenya         | 31-34 |
| Colour Blindness          | 37-39 |
| What a Load of Balls!     | 45    |
| Seven Ages of Conway      | 46    |

### Club Announcements and Events

|                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Useful contacts            | Inside front cover       |
| President's Message        | 1                        |
| Hon Sec                    | 1                        |
| Memorial Window Dedication | 2-4                      |
| Thanks to Alfie Windsor    | 14                       |
| Teaser Club                | 10 and Back Cover        |
| Memorial Cups              | 17                       |
| AGM 2026                   | 24-25                    |
| Some We Have Heard From    | 29-30                    |
| Conway and Mount Kelly     | 36                       |
| Branch Events              | 43-44                    |
| Shop                       | 48 and inside back cover |

### Lest We Forget

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| From The Archives | 35    |
| Obituaries        | 40-42 |

### Conway Associated News

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| CMNT                        | 18-19 |
| Conway Cruising Association | 22    |
| Friends of HMS Conway       | 47    |

## July 2026 - No 92

### Deadline

Material for possible inclusion in the January 2027 *Cadet* must be received by **1st December 2026**. All contributions are, however, appreciated as early as possible.

### Disclaimer

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### Submission of Material

The Editor welcomes articles, letters, items, comments and especially, relevant hi-res photographs or illustrations to accompany them. Please enclose SAE for photo return. Items can be submitted by email to conwayhonsec@gmail.com with your surname and 'New CC Article' on the subject line, or by post to the Hon Sec (Letter or CD in Word format).

Please, ALWAYS include a telephone contact, (telephone numbers will not be published if requested) and your Conway dates PLUS full postal home address - particularly when sending emails.

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Front Cover: Tanjung Pelepas, West Johore  
Ahmed Suffian Rashid (64-67) established Tanjung Pelepas.  
See Page 11-12.

# President's Message

Fellow Old Conways, welcome to the July '26 edition of *The Cadet*, again splendidly composed and published by Mike and Penny Reeves.

In late January, I learnt of another achievement of OCs, namely the Seven Seas Club which was founded in 1922 by a group of former officer cadets from HMS Conway as a meeting place for past and present officers of the British Sea Services. Vice President Matt Burrow, who is a member of the Seven Seas Club, invited Alfie Windsor and me for a dinner held at the Army and Navy Club on Pall Mall with Admiral Sir George Zambellas, a former First Sea Lord, as the guest speaker who afterwards was delighted to learn that three OCs were present.

Earlier in January, I had attended, along with Alfie Windsor, the memorial service of David Fletcher Rogers, a stalwart of the Conway Club, and gave a brief address on behalf of the Conway Club.

As we live in these increasingly challenging times and witness events unfolding, particularly in the Gulf Region, I wonder how many OCs have sailed those waters in bygone years in more peaceful times and the memories they will evoke. I suspect the answer is many.

The Conway Centre weekend, held in mid April, with the dedication of the Conway memorial window at Llanedwen Church on the Saturday was superb. All splendidly organised by Alfie Windsor, conducted by the Padre Simon Douglas Lane with Les Hesketh doing sterling work as the flag bearer. A report of the weekend is elsewhere in the *Cadet*. On a personal note, I had never actually been into Llanedwen Church before but had run past it on numerous occasions, as indeed many of us have done, as it was adjacent to the cross country course, and what a delightful church it is.

In early May, my wife and I attended the Conway Club Midlands Branch in Darley Dale, splendidly organised by



Tom and Ann Mason, with John Heath who had been on the Ship in 44-45 also in attendance. The following week, we flew to Edinburgh for the Scottish Branch Spring lunch organised by Tom and Ruth Astbury at the Malmaison Hotel.

We have just returned from Sydney, Nova Scotia where we had been invited to the Graduation Ceremony of the class of 2026 at the Canadian Coast Guard Academy and the presentation of the Conway Queen's Gold Medal. There will be a report in the January 2027 *Cadet*.

A few weeks ago, a true stalwart of the Conway Club, Alfie Windsor, a fellow Kenyan and good friend, and essentially the face of Conway to so many OCs worldwide, informed us with great regret that he was resigning from the Committee. An immediate phone call established that nothing untoward had happened to prompt this sudden action and

fortunately all was well. It is purely because, in his own words, 'I have to rein things in including Conway stuff.' A sentiment I can understand fully, what with all that he does, and for which we are all hugely appreciative. That said, he has promised to offer his sage advice as and when it may be asked, and of course will remain a member of the Conway Club.

The next major social event is the 2026 AGM and Dinner at the Voco Hotel, Telford, again efficiently organised by Mim Smith. As a reminder, bookings for rooms for this must be made directly with the hotel and to qualify for the special negotiated rate by 24th July. Bookings for Saturday night's dinner must be made through the Dinner Secretary.

Again the members of the committee have been magnificent in their support, endeavours and diligence for which I am grateful and I do hope I see many OCs at the dinner in October. In the meantime, my very best wishes to you and yours wherever you may be on the globe.

## Hon Secretary's Notice Board

The biannual Committee meeting was held at the offices of Verdantix Ltd. in London on Tuesday 16th June at which twelve were present including three non-Committee members. The Dinner Secretary was unable to attend; however, she had given an update on the forthcoming dinner and AGM, together with plans for 2027. The editor of *The Cadet*, Mike Reeves, was present as were Phil van Bergen attending to advise on the way forward with the website, and Mike Butterfield who was present as an invited observer in respect of the silverware dispersal.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

It was noted that Stuart Johnston (62-66) had been in touch with the other 'ships' OB Clubs and the Arboretum regarding the continued upkeep of the memorial dedicated to the staff and cadets of the former training ships. The memorial was rededicated at a ceremony involving all five establishments in September 2016. The General Botha newsletter in November 2025 expressed concern as to the future of the memorial when the old boys' associations inevitably cease to exist. Some research has established that, for a fee, the Arboretum will assume maintenance of the memorial in perpetuity and this requires



further contact and agreement between all the 'ships' and the Friends of Conway to fund this.

It is public knowledge now that Alfie Windsor has stepped back from the many commitments that he is involved in, including the Committee, Friends of Conway and other things outside of Conway. We expressed our appreciation for all the work that he has put in over many years.

This includes the two meetings at Plas Newydd, the recent one in April for the dedication of the window at Llanedwen Church. Alfie's departure leaves a gap in the Committee and Mike Butterfield has agreed to put his name forward to be nominated at the AGM in October.

Phil van Bergen had given the Committee a comprehensive report on the website and its running. To carry matters forward, he has

agreed to contact Alfie Windsor and to report back as soon as possible in regard to the future running of the website.

Matt Burrow had arranged an 'alternative barbecue' at the Horniman Pub following the meeting. However, due to other commitments and travel arrangements, some of the Committee were unfortunately unable to attend.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled to be held at the offices of Verdantix on Tuesday, 1st December.

# Dedication of Llanedwen Church Conway Memorial Window

By The Friends of HMS Conway

At 11am on Saturday 18th April 2026, over 100 OCs, families, friends and guests filled the tiny parish church of St Edwen's, Llanedwen (on the Plas Newydd estate) for the dedication of a Conway memorial window and the laying up of a Conway ensign. It was the culmination of an 18-month project kick-started by professional photographer John MacLeod (65-67). In October 2024 he attended an open day at the church and got talking to the church wardens and members of the congregation about Conway's long connection with the church<sup>1</sup> which was something of a revelation to them. They asked if it might be possible to have a small Conway display in the church so John passed the baton to Alfie Windsor (64-68). Alfie is a Trustee of The Friends and had masterminded the Conway memorial windows on Bangor Pier and at Plas Newydd dock so he spoke to the church wardens and raised the possibility of a memorial window in the church. In December 2024 Alfie, the Vicar, church wardens, Diocese representatives and Jayne from Jayne Ford Glass & Design (who had designed and created the previous windows) met at the church to discuss the opportunity.

It's a beautiful rural church overlooking the Menai Strait and Eryri (Snowdonia) and was effectively the Marquis' family and estate church. Given its location there is no electricity so services are candle lit, creating a unique atmosphere. A memorial window in this church would be something very special. Several windows were considered of different shapes, sizes and positions but the group quickly concluded that the broadly south-facing triple lantern window opposite the entrance door (*shown on the right*) was the most suitable. Following the meeting, a business case was prepared for the Friends' Trustees consideration. Indicative costs of £18K were identified, with a target completion date of late 2025. The Trustees concluded that the memorial had considerable merit and would probably be The Friends' last major project since being formed in 1996. They agreed to proceed.

It was decided to adopt the theme of the Gulls Window in the Conway Chapel which depicts the spirits of OCs who have Crossed the Bar returning to their old wooden mother as gulls. This tradition was immortalised by John Masefield (1891-94) in his poem *The Conway Gulls*:

*... And being gone, they wander home again  
Here, to the Ship, and settle on her spars,  
Mewing and going gleaming in the sea.  
They are our brothers, so let them be,  
Old Conways, fellow-sharers of the stars,*

Two designs were created, a traditional one and a contemporary one. The church wardens and Trustees favoured the traditional design so Jayne was commissioned to produce it. An appeal fund was launched with the Friends match-funding all donations.

The church has a formal approval process for new windows that requires comprehensive details about the window's rationale and its design, materials and installation, scale drawings, location and maker. The wardens created the required case which was submitted for approval by Bangor Diocese and then by 'Head Office' in Cardiff. Approval was forthcoming on 16th May 2025, allowing Jayne to start work. A dedication service was planned with a drinks reception and buffet lunch in the Conway Centre (part funded by the Conway Club) and an accompanying residential weekend, also in the Centre. Availability forced us to the weekend of Friday 17th to Sunday 19th April 2026.

The window presented special challenges as the detailed design had to fit and scale with the ornate shapes of the frame and the three lanterns. In February 2026 Jayne reported progress with her usual incredible attention to detail:

*I'm immersed in the glass work, seven days a week now, I've got a good flow going and I'm currently working on the staining and etching of the blue and white/yellow background for all three windows, plus lots of test firings. I always do mock-up tests on new glass and paints for important projects, taking them through the same processes as the final pieces because glass and paint characteristics can be inconsistent, plus kiln temperatures drift. Most of the glass I'm using for this project is antique mouthblown, it's beautiful glass. Attached are images of the Ship artwork ... just to show the scale, angle etc. For the Ship I've settled on something similar to the previous windows and slightly looser, with a little less detail and partially scratched out rigging-lines. It will*

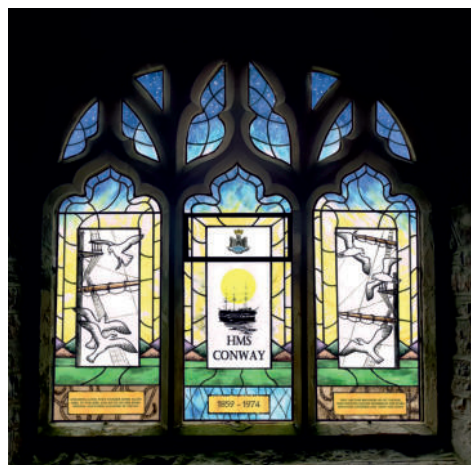


Above: St Edwen's Church, Llanedwen with Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) in the background

Below: The chosen window space



Above: The contemporary design.  
Below: The traditional design



<sup>1</sup> Every Sunday from 1953 to 1963 a party of Cadets would march from Plas Newydd to attend the morning service at St Edwen's. One Cadet was designated to hand pump the organ and often played fast and loose with the pressure available to the organist. Cadets nicknamed Boogie-Woogie Annie. The Marquis and his family attended the services and seemed unperturbed by the erratic music.

# Dedication of Llanedwen Church Conway Memorial Window

look more dramatic on the white opal background. I chose that angle so I can get it to fill most of the central lower section. I included the small boats as they give a sense of the length of the Ship.

Arrangements for the dedication service proceeded apace. Father John Davies, Honorary Priest of Llanedwen, and Father Simon Douglas Lane, Honorary Chaplain The Conway Club, agreed to officiate, with Capt Les Hesketh (64-66) MNM as the ensign bearer.

Before we knew it, the dedication weekend was upon us. Twenty OCs and partners made a weekend of it, arriving in the Conway Centre on Friday 17th April. Following drinks backstage where the extensive Conway displays were admired, dinner was served in a private dining room to much excited chatter about the following day. Unbeknown to the group, Alfie was slightly anxious as he had just arrived back from the church where Jayne and the professional church window installers were still at work! He left the installers with a dire challenge, 'Even if it's just propped up by poles, it has to be *in situ* by 10am!'

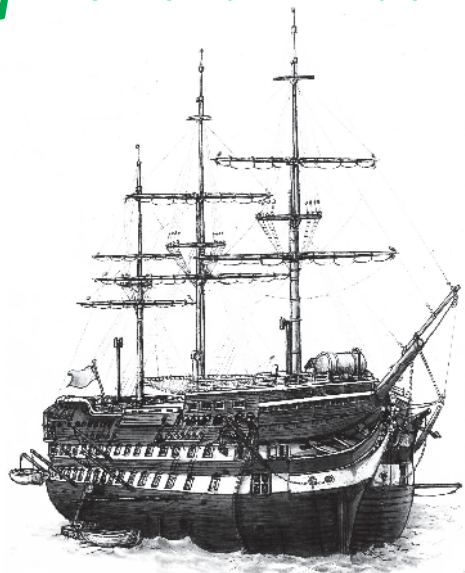
Saturday dawned fine and dry but cold. The 'weekenders' made their way to the church to meet up with the 80+ day visitors and guests. We had decided not to have a guest of honour but to keep it as a private Conway 'family' event. To Alfie's and Jayne's relief, the window was completed at 7.30pm on Friday night and looked stunning. Everyone was full of admiration for Jayne's work, the church wardens and members of their normal congregation were simply stunned by the window which faces visitors as they enter through the church door. It all became quite emotional. A local Welsh language BBC News crew attended to film a piece for their main Saturday evening news and were most impressed when we were able to stand up three Welsh-speaking OCs for interview. The church was packed to the gunnels and looked magnificent with sunlight streaming magically through the Conway memorial window and candles casting a warm glow over proceedings. The service started promptly at 11am. Fathers John Davies and Simon Douglas Lane processed into the church led by a Conway ensign carried by Capt Hesketh. Les had to skilfully execute a few chicanes to avoid low hanging candelabra. The ensign was draped over the altar for the service, as was done for the Paying Off Service in Liverpool Cathedral in 1974. After the first hymn (*Eternal Father Strong To Save*), Simon welcomed everyone, Capt Derrick Kemp MNM (OB), Chairman of The Friends of HMS Conway, explained the background to the window and Paul Heaver (66-71), President of The Conway Club, gave the Bible reading (John 15: 9-17). The ensign was blessed and laid up next to the window, then the window was blessed

followed by a moment's quiet reflection. That peace was shattered by an impromptu *Hullabaloo*. Following further hymns, addresses and intercessions there was a retiring collection for the church. Suddenly it was all over, the organist played the (unaccompanied) Conway Song as the clergy and congregation departed, stopping to admire and photograph the new window. The church is on the Anglesey Coastal Path and so gets lots of passing visitors. The church wardens report that the window attracts lots of favourable comment. A model of the Ship has been gifted to the church and the Friends are also gifting them the recently restored Conway Arnott Bible (see *The Cadet* No 90 - page 45).

Following the service there was a drinks reception for everyone in The Conway Centre courtesy of the Friends of HMS Conway and the Conway Club. Alfie Windsor (64-68) gave an illustrated talk on *Conway's Windows* which covered a few oddities in the Ship and described nine other memorial windows in the Conway Chapel and elsewhere. After that, guests had the rest of the afternoon to wander and reminisce around all their old haunts.

The weekend was rounded off with a gala dinner in the old Wardroom hosted by Club President Paul Heaver and his wife Kim.

The window is reproduced overleaf. It was very important that it was not a solid mass of colour as it still had to let light into the church. Jayne achieved that by keeping a lot of plain opal glass. The central panel shows the Ship's crest, below which the Ship is backlit by the setting sun whose yellow rays spread across the rest of the window illuminating the blue firmament above. The two side panels show Conway Gulls around the Ship's masts. The triangular shapes across the back of these three panels represent the mountains Conway Cadets spent much time exploring. The lower, central panel contains the Ship's years: 1859-1974. The two lower side panels contain words from Masefield's *The Conway Gulls* poem. Cleverly, the background to these three small panels includes some of the materials Cadets worked with - rope, wire and chain. It is a wonderful memorial to Conway and her Cadets which should last for hundreds of years.



Above: Jayne's draft image of the ship for the window's centre panel.

Below: Installation proceeding slowly!



Above: The congregation gathers

Below: The ensign & Clergy process in



# Dedication of Llanedwen Church Conway Memorial Window



*Cooks to the galley!*

The Friends of HMS Conway thank all those who donated to the appeal fund and helped make the window possible. The fund is still open and donations are still very welcome. Online payments can be made to Sort Code: 40-52-40 (CAF Bank), Account No: 00005735, Account Name: The Friends of HMS Conway, using 'CC' and your name and initials as reference. Alternatively cheques payable to The Friends of HMS Conway can be sent to Mike Butterfield, 2 Tros Yr Afon, Beaumaris, Ynys Môn, LL58 8BN.



## Centenary Dinner of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners

A total of 524 HCMM members, guests and dignitaries, plus representatives from 96 Livery companies attended this gala event at the Guildhall in June. The Master, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, was in attendance, as was past Master HRH The Princess Royal and her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence. IPM Matt Burrow (72-74) was sitting next to Her Royal Highness; Matt also had some Conway guests including Paul and Kim Heaver and the Rev Simon Douglas Lane. Also present was Capt Robert Bellis (CMNT) and Capt Ben Monks (TS *Starling*).

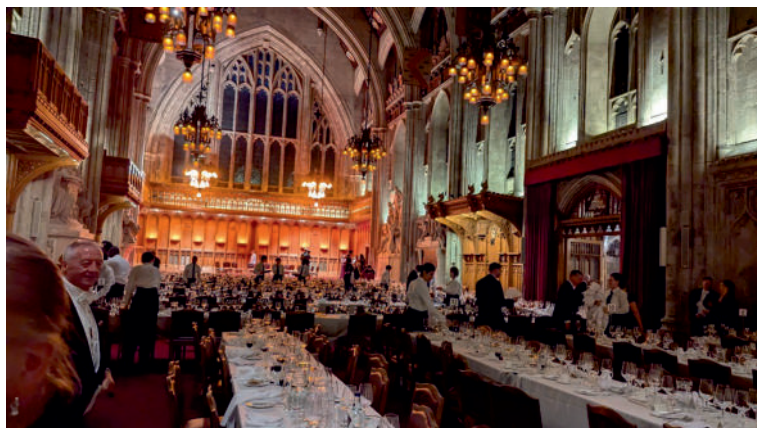
The event was quite a milestone in that HCMM is the first of the modern Livery Companies to celebrate a centenary.



*Left l-r: Jan Hesketh, Les Hesketh (64-66), Peter Eaton (63-66), Peter McArthur and Sue McArthur*

*Right: Kim and Paul Heaver*  
*Below left: the magnificent Guildhall*

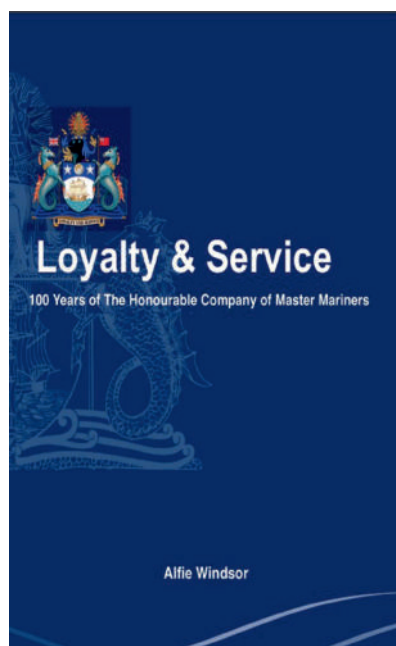
*Below right l-r: Rev Simon Douglas Lane, Kim Heaver and Neil Smith (63-65)*



# Centenary of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners

## LOYALTY & SERVICE

### *The Official History of the Honourable Company Of Master Mariners*



The Honourable Company's first 100 years was summarised in the last issue of *The Cadet* and its official centenary history is now available. The author is Alfie Windsor (64-68) so if you've read his *History of Conway*, or his *Conway Yesterday & Today In Photos*, you'll know what to expect in terms of research and attention to detail.

The Company's story is a grand one and the book explains how the company germinated, how Master Mariners then gained their proper seat at the nation's table through unparalleled Royal patronage, a Royal Charter and admittance to the City Of London's prestigious Livery. Based on years of research and full access to the Company's archives, it explores every phase of its existence and documents the achievements and challenges of each decade up to the present day. It describes the MMSA's attempts to smother the Company at birth and Conway's significant involvement in the story. It describes the Company's influence on national and international maritime affairs, how its organisation and operation have evolved, how it adjusted to the collapse of the British merchant fleet and much more. With an OC effectively at the helm in 2025, it also explains how the Company is launching its second 100 years as a very different body to that established in 1926.

It is a 247 page hardback book with dust jacket, is copiously illustrated and is in Royale format (234x156mm/9.21"x6.14"). The cost is £30 a copy +P&P.

## ORDER FORM - THE CENTENARY HISTORY "LOYALTY & SERVICE"

Email this form to [alfie@hmsconway.org](mailto:alfie@hmsconway.org), or post it to: Loyalty & Service 2 Lyndhurst Bungalows, Bradford on Avon, Wilts, BA15 1DX

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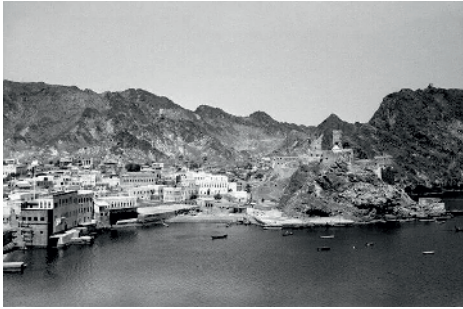
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# The Muscat Cannon *by Gordon Wood (62-64)*

## aka The Dawhah Cannon Incident (A true story!)

During early February 1973, the British India Steam Navigation Co Ltd (BI) cargo liner *Manora*, (*right*) en route from Khorramshahr to Karachi, was discharging general cargo at the Omani port of Muscat. Muscat (*below*) virtually sits astride the Tropic of Cancer on the shores of the Gulf of Oman, being somewhat strategically placed to the southeast of the Strait of Hormuz, which marks the entrance to the Persian Gulf. At that time, the deep-water cargo berths at nearby Mina Qaboos were still under construction (eventually opening in 1974), and vessels anchored off to work cargo, which was discharged into dumb lighters.



The cove where the ship was anchored was very

picturesque with a number of Portuguese-built forts and watchtowers, complete with cannons at various prominent places, conspiring to give the whole area an almost medieval appearance. Portugal had colonised the area in the C16th, conquering the town of Muscat in 1507, and had constructed the town walls and the forts to repel their enemies. However, in 1649, the Iman Sultan bin Saif defeated the Portuguese and captured many of their warships. His empire rapidly expanded and soon extended from Gwadar in Pakistan to the island of Zanzibar off the east African coast.

Muscat became the capital of Oman in 1793, and the focus of the country's great seafaring empire of the C18th and C19th. These were prosperous times until the transfer of the capital to Zanzibar in 1853, and the enactment of British anti-slavery laws which led to a major decline in Oman's development. The participation of the British in 1892 resulted in the British Protectorate of Trucial States of Oman being created.

Interestingly the city gates remained locked and secured against the influences of the outside world until 1970 due to the then Sultan's dogged refusal to acknowledge change and move his country into the C20th. In an almost bloodless coup, and aided and abetted by the British, the Sultan's son, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, became the new leader and immediately instigated progressive policies of social, educational and military reforms which greatly benefitted Muscat and the Omani people.

The old ships' names painted on the steep black rock faces at Muscat harbour (*below left*) were a virtual archive of BI, other shipping companies and naval ships which had called there, a custom extending back over several decades. Indeed, the rock walls had become known as The Sultan's Visitors' Book.

Onboard *Manora*, some of the officers had noted on previous visits that several old cannons lay at the foot of cliffs, having fallen there when the ramparts of one watchtower had collapsed. Binoculars and telescopes were brought into play to provide reconnaissance for a suitable watchtower which still housed a complete cannon. Amazingly, the watchtower nearest to where the ship was anchored was found to be the most appropriate candidate, with at least one cannon being spotted pointing seawards from a gunport. There was even an inclined pathway covered by loose stones, providing reasonable access from the sea. (*right*)

(Nowadays the local watchtowers and forts are either occupied by the police or military and are accordingly 'off-limits'.)



The weather in Muscat in February can be very pleasant with blue, cloudless skies and a comfortable temperature range of 17-25° C. Given such agreeable weather conditions, permission was obtained to lower the ship's four-metre work-boat during the forenoon and the two 3rd Mates were able to reconnoitre the location from just offshore. Some of the officers' wives went along for the sightseeing trip.

Returning on board in time for a couple of cold beers before tucking into the traditional curry lunch, the potential acquisition of a cannon became the subject of some lively discussion in the Officers' Bar. Some say that a throwaway line to the effect that a cannon would make an excellent adornment for the South Australian driveway leading to the captain's farm house kickstarted the whole idea! A plot was soon hatched and subsequently swung into action with the Senior 3rd Mate, the main

instigator, being in the vanguard. The Chief Officer warmed to the plan and justified the virtues of acquiring a cannon as an 'exercise in initiative'. In that sense, he was way ahead of his time, as nowadays, political correctness aside, such an idea would have been hailed as an intuitive, brilliant management technique to promote team bonding, etc!

The ship's Captain was a bit of a serial hobbyist, and at that particular time, his interest was focused on cannons. According to his daughter, he would meticulously research the various weapons of different eras and draw up precise scale drawings of his



## The Muscat Cannon *by Gordon Wood (62-64)*

favourites. He possessed superb woodworking skills, constructing the gun carriages and carrying out the assembly. Usually the ship's engineers would be prevailed upon to turn the barrels out of brass or steel utilising the engine room lathe and other equipment. Several of his pieces remain in the family to this day, together with a folio of his technical drawings.

Although a number of the ship's Engineer Officers had indicated an interest in participating in the adventure, once the Chief and 2nd Engineers got wind of it, the Chief allegedly banned his staff from taking part. (Some cynics believe that this was a belated 'arse-covering' exercise to avoid possible recriminations).

However, whichever version is believed, there was no shortage of volunteers, including three Junior Engineer Officers who were apparently blissfully unaware of their boss's views on the matter, having possibly either been on watch or turned in, at the time of the alleged order! In fact, the biggest decision related to who was unfortunate enough to remain on board for back-up, cargo-work and watch-keeping duties! In addition to the three Junior Engineers, the operation was spearheaded by the two 3rd Mates, with the Radio Officer making up the numbers together with a volunteer GP (General Purpose) crewman.

The basic plan was fairly straightforward: the ship's workboat would be pressed into service to retrieve the cannon spotted earlier. The workboat was duly lowered and made more than one trip ashore ferrying the six volunteers and their associated equipment. This consisted of such items as a large crowbar, nylon slings, chain blocks and other useful implements. Somewhat audaciously, the 'raid' was carried out in broad daylight!

The first part of the plan went relatively smoothly, with the boat party landing and climbing up the steep shoreline to the chosen watchtower. The climb up to the watchtower was relatively easy and was apparently witnessed by a few local boys and men who seemed to watch the progress with a degree of indifference. The watchtower revealed not just the single cannon spotted earlier mounted on a gun carriage which was completely worm-eaten and rotten, falling to bits at the touch, but also a second.

One cannon had been 'spiked', the priming hole having had a pin driven into it. The second was in better condition, although the gun carriage was also rotten. This was the cannon that had been selected to begin a journey back to the C20th!

It should be noted that the cannon were not exactly small-fry, at least one photograph having been taken on board *Manora* depicting six members of the salvage party squatting alongside the barrel. (*below*)



The original plan was to manhandle the cannon clear of the watchtower and slide it down the slope, manoeuvre it onto the workboat and bring it alongside *Manora*, whereupon the cannon would be hoisted on board and positioned by means of one of the ship's cranes.

The raiders had little trouble manhandling the cannon, although heavy, out of the watchtower at the top of the loose stone slope. With the cannon teetering on the brink, one final shove had it sliding fairly rapidly 80 to 100 metres (approx 300') down the slope, taking only a short period of time to reach the bottom. A minor mishap now occurred. Unfortunately, during the rapid descent, the large 'ball' (about 350mm diameter) at the rear of the barrel broke off and could not be subsequently located.



At the bottom of the incline, it had become obvious that the workboat would be unable to manoeuvre anywhere near the proposed loading point due to the presence of large rocks. Further investigation revealed that the water was very deep just beyond the rocks.

The team quickly came up with a solution.

The workboat was dispatched the short distance back to where the ship was anchored estimated to be about 5.5 cables (roughly 1,000m) and returned towing some six mooring lines, connected end-to-end, and paid out from *Manora's*

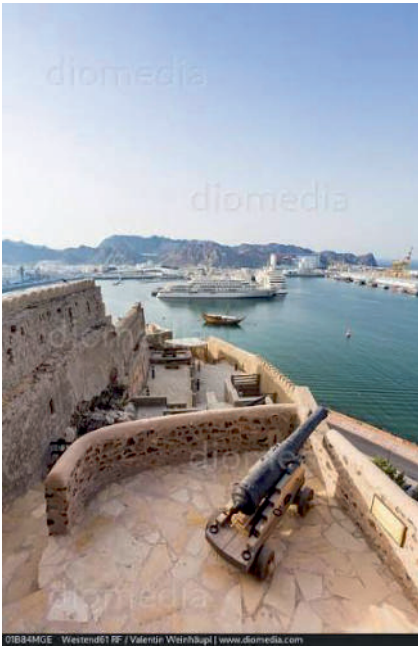
stern by the back-up team. One end of the mooring line was secured to the cannon and the back-up team began heaving away by means of the after mooring deck capstan. The cannon was slowly but surely manhandled over and around the rocks with much arm waving and plenty of Hindi commands such as 'avis' (heave), 'udar' (avast heaving!/hold on!) and 'aria!' (slack away!).

However, things again did not go entirely to plan and the cannon snagged on rocks just metres from the shore. At one stage, this resulted in the anchored *Manora* being dragged stern first towards the shore! After several attempts, a temporary re-alignment of the hauling part back to the shore and round a rock helped clear the obstruction and, somewhat fortuitously, at the moment of maximum concern, the cannon came clear of the rocks and *Manora* resumed her original anchored position. The cannon eventually broke surface alongside *Manora* and at that stage, the hoist was transferred to the aft ship's crane and lifted onto the deck, ultimately ending up outside the Officers' Smokeroom/Bar. The entire operation had taken several hours of thirsty work!

Mission accomplished!

The cannon remained in its position outside the Officers' Bar for the next two days whilst cargo work continued. It was in

# The Muscat Cannon *by Gordon Wood (62-64)*



reasonably good shape (apart from the broken-off ball) but needed a gun carriage, a scrape and some paintwork, none of which was beyond the capability of the onboard expertise and equipment available.

The following evening at sea, whilst the Captain and off-duty officers were enjoying a pre-dinner drink, a worried-looking Sparks came looking for the Captain. The resultant conversation was said to have gone something along the following lines:

Fortunately, two Arabian cadets (who were not involved in the incident) had recently joined the ship and were able to provide the Sultan's full name and various titles (which ran to two lines). A single letter of apology was penned and signed by each of the participants.

Initially, it appeared to those on board that the cannon had not been missed. However, as it turned out, the matter had been reported and officials had been to visit the ship's agent that very evening. The agent, realising the possible ramifications, managed to delay the officials from boarding *Manora* until the following morning, knowing that the vessel was due to depart at 0130 hrs and would be on the high seas by then.

The rendezvous with *Dwarka* was in the 'wee small hours'. This operation turned out to be no mean feat. *Manora* turned and maintained station with the *Dwarka* and *Manora's* lifeboat was launched with the cannon well secured athwartships.

Fortuitously weather conditions were ideal for such an operation, the sea being virtually calm. Initially *Dwarka's* speed was too high and the lifeboat was unable to keep pace with her. The cannon (and the letter of apology) were gingerly hoisted on board, not without some difficulty, utilising *Dwarka's* derricks which were rigged in union purchase. The fact that nobody had the faintest idea of the cannon's actual weight and the relatively low Safe Working Load of *Dwarka's* derricks in union purchase meant that the hoisting operation was not exactly rushed!

The cannon was on passage home!

However, the saga was far from over. The R/O appeared at the Captain's cabin:

'Excuse me, Captain, a message from London.'

'What do those \*\*\*\*\* want now?'

'A company enquiry into the cannon incident will be held in Karachi by Mr \*\*\*\*\*.' (The most senior local management representative from the company's Agents).

'Excuse me, (Captain) sir, London are on the Radio Telephone.'  
'Wonder what those \*\*\*\*\* want? You'd better get the Chief Officer up here pretty damn quick.'

The Captain then disappeared with the R/O to answer the call, returning some ten minutes later.

'London wish to know do we have a cannon from Muscat on board?'

(There followed an urgent discussion between those concerned during which they assessed the best strategy and course of action. The general consensus was that, as somebody had obviously reported the incident, it would be virtually impossible to deny the facts, and information would only be provided on a minimal 'need to know' basis.)

The Captain thereupon returned to the Radio Office to contact London.

'Have you got a cannon onboard from Muscat?'

'Err, yes.'

'What on earth possessed you to do this?' (Strong hints of a diplomatic incident unfolding.)

'Ummmmmm!'

'I want the names of everyone involved in the incident!'

'Right.'

'You will turn the ship around and return the cannon to Muscat immediately.'

At this point, the Captain suggested that returning to Muscat was not a good idea, especially bearing in mind the penalties for theft in that part of the world!

'Very well. You will rendezvous at sea with the (Company's vessel) *Dwarka* and transfer the cannon for return to Muscat.'

At this stage, someone made the suggestion that 'Everyone will write a letter of apology to the Sultan of Oman and send them all, together with the cannon, to the *Dwarka*'.

'Over and out!'

The suggested letter resulted in a bit of a conundrum. What do you write to a Sultan? What was his full title? How should he be addressed?

One comedian suggested:

*Dear Mr. Sultan,*

*Sorry I stole your cannon. I had no idea that you wanted to keep it.*



Legend has it that, as the members of the Enquiry team boarded the ship at Karachi, and entered his cabin, they were allegedly confronted by the Captain sitting behind his desk with his uniform cap on back to front. With his entire collection of miniature cannon

lined up on his desk and facing the door, he shouted 'Fire One, Fire Two!'

'Do you want to be interviewed singly or collectively?'

'Collectively.'

Individual interviews were conducted in the Officers' Saloon.

'Why did you do it?'

'Sounded like a good idea at the time.' (What else is one supposed to say?)

'You had a crewman with you, where is he?'

'Sorry, don't know anything about any crewman.'

'Did anyone put you up to this?'

'No.'

The Enquiry's conclusion was that the incident was a prank (what else could it have been?).

The final irony about the whole incident was 'The Letter' (See p10) addressed to all participants.

## The Muscat Cannon *by Gordon Wood (62-64)*

By now known as 'The Dawhah Cannon Incident' (allegedly named after the watchtower), a collective fine of 1000 Dinah (£812) was imposed on all the participants and arrangements were made for deductions from wages on a pro-rata basis depending upon each individual's salary. (For example, the senior 3rd Officer was fined £184, and the Assistant Engineering Officers £102 each. The Chief Officer, who remained on board throughout but nevertheless played an active role, opined that his share of the fine was at least half of the total! Actually, he also paid £207 or virtually one-quarter of the total). It is thought that the Captain was personally fined a substantial sum, as this delicate matter was never fully disclosed, not even by him to his own family!

It was subsequently revealed that the original fine demanded by the Muscat authorities was considerably higher at 5000 Dinah (£4048) but that negotiation had resulted in the smaller figure, as it was pointed out that the then annual salary for a 3rd Officer was only about £2000.

The Captain bore the final responsibility for the incident, even though some believed that he was apparently unaware of the plan until the deed was done.

Whilst *Manora* was discharging and loading on the Australian coast, the Captain was relieved, recalled to London Head Office for a 'please explain', and transferred to a group vessel on an entirely different run. Contradictory views remain as to whether or not his transfer was intended to be a form of punishment but, by all accounts, he enjoyed his time in command on the so-called 'punishment ship'!

And what became of the Letter of Apology?

It never made it to the Sultan, being intercepted and shredded by the Muscat ship's agent!

It has been suggested that a British Military Adviser, seconded to the Sultanate of Oman, raised the alarm with the Foreign Office in London, who in turn contacted BI's London HQ.

Another version states that some 'locals' complained to the ship's agent who deliberately delayed informing the police until after *Manora* had sailed.

Subsequently, it came to light that the British Army (Artillery) had apparently earlier carried out an audit of all the cannons in the area. *Manora's* raiders had just happened to select one of those!

'The Letter' received by the participants nevertheless took a very stern official view on proceedings, conveying a severe reprimand, thinly veiled threats towards ongoing employment and promotion, and, as already mentioned, a substantial fine.

Such a serious view of the incident was taken by the local authorities that there was talk of repercussions affecting all westerners working in Muscat (of which there were many eg the new port project, the oil refinery, etc) such as possible deportation, and shore leave for all ships' crews was apparently banned for a period of time.

Interestingly, in addition to the indiscretion of being involved in the 'removal' of the cannon, the recipients were accused of 'misusing ship's equipment and of failing to comply with local immigration laws'. The latter arose because the raiders failed to enter the country via a recognised immigration channel, having illegally landed on a beach directly from the ship!

When *Manora* arrived in Australia, several of the participants were genuinely concerned about their future employment, with some expecting immediate transfers to other vessels.

Most were more worried about the consequences of returning to Muscat and being dealt with by the local legal system. At least one seriously contemplated signing off from Ship's Articles of Agreement in order to avoid returning to Muscat. As things

turned out, with the exception of the relief of the Captain, and the Chief Officer who proceeded on planned leave, there were no transfers. Team members each received a letter from Head Office whilst *Manora* was on the Australian coast, making it clear that there were to be no further actions from the company or indeed from the Muscat authorities. None of the participants was subsequently fired or overlooked for promotion. Later visits to Muscat by *Manora* and the participants revealed that the whole incident had been forgotten.

However, it is alleged that *Dwarka's* Captain was given a bit of a hard time by the local authorities upon handing over the cannon, some saying that he even faced the threat of arrest.

Whilst on the Australian coast, various ex-Company men informed the *Manora* Officers of several Muscat cannon already in Australia. The Sea Scouts in Williamstown had one, so did the Sea Rangers in Adelaide, one of the Company's 'B' class ships had sported one on deck, and crew members from one of the Company 'C' class ships and the *Jelunga* had each allegedly 'acquired' one!

Obviously *Manora's* team were simply following the traditions of a long line of kleptomaniacs, and were unlucky to have been caught out!

Finally it was learned that a helicopter had been utilised to transfer the cannon from *Dwarka* to the shoreline, and later it was said to have been reinstated in the original watchtower.

### The Guns of Muscat: An Epic

They heaved, they pulled  
They tugged, they hauled,  
Their hands were mangled  
Their hands were mauled...  
But still, they carried on.

They swore at this, they swore at that.  
The young third mate near lost his hat.  
At last the mate, of the gun he thought,  
Aha, upon the rocks 'tis caught...  
But still they carried on.

And, at last, they freed it!  
The air was thick with cheers,  
The boys they drank near thirty beers  
(They said that they did need it.)  
But still, they carried on.

That same night they sailed away...  
All was merry, all was gay.  
Until at half-past ten,  
The 'Sparks', he entered the captain's den  
And said, 'From London, it's a call...  
Methinks it spells our doom and fall!'

'Tis London here,' the voice it drawled,  
'Do you have a gun aboard?'  
'Pardon, sir?' Did the captain say...  
'Hang on a sec, methinks we may!'

They held a hurried council o' war,  
The men they stamped, the men they swore.  
'Tis best admit our guilt,' said they.  
So the captain, words of doom did say,  
'Indeed we have a gun with us,  
Pray tell us all, what is the fuss?'

The man in London said at last,  
'Your fate is sealed, the die is cast,  
Eight hundred pounds you all are fined,  
And henceforth your business and your manners mind!'  
So ends the greatest tale,  
That never the like was heard of

# The Muscat Cannon *by Gordon Wood (62-64)*

Dear Sir,

You will no doubt be relieved to learn that the Muscat authorities have informed Gray Mackenzie that no legal action is to be taken against the Officers involved in the removal of the cannon, neither will they be declared persona non grata either permanently or temporarily.

You must realise that had the decision in the latter respect been adverse the Company would have found it necessary to dismiss you all as it would have been quite impossible to retain on the establishment any employee who could not be appointed to a ship likely to call at Muscat - a port where a large proportion of the GCD Fleet calls regularly or from time to time. The manning problem so presented would have been intolerable.

The Muscat authorities have insisted that each of the Officers involved in this incident should be severely reprimanded and warned about the serious consequences and penalties likely to arise should they commit any further indiscretion in that area - especially one likely to offend national or local susceptibilities.

There can be no doubt that your action was extremely foolish in that you failed to appreciate the inevitable repercussions upon the Company, our Agents and yourselves, especially in the light of our trading activities in the area. Additionally you were at fault in misusing ship's equipment and in failing to comply with local immigration laws.

A full report of this incident together with a copy of this letter will be placed in your personal file and will be taken into account should you, in future, fail to meet the standards we expect.

While the Muscat authorities have decided not to take any form of action against individual Officers involved in the Dawhah cannon incident, they have imposed a collective fine of £812, and we are asking each Officer to contribute a proportion of this sum based on his salary. In your case this amounts to £102.

You are asked to acknowledge receipt of this letter and at the same time, indicate how you wish to pay, i.e. by lump sum or over a period by means of monthly deductions.

To simplify arrangements for repayment to the Company we attach an outstanding debit due form for the amount in question. Please indicate on this the method you elect for repayment and return the yellow copy to this Office together with your cheque if appropriate.

Yours faithfully,  
for P & O General Cargo Division

*R.F.A. Hosking*  
Fleet Personnel Manager

By any man asail.

Crime does not pay, or so they say,

But still...

Try if you will.

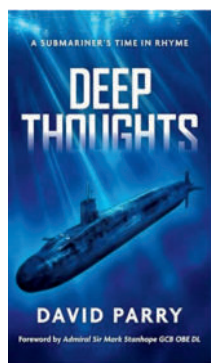
*Penned by 'J', the then 14-year-old daughter of Manora's Captain, who was accompanying her dad, together with her mum and brother, at the time of the incident.*

As a final parting shot, and several years later, the Captain of the *Cormorant Arrow*, a New Zealander, was telling a shipmate about 'Some pommie seaman who pinched a cannon from Muscat'. Unbeknown to him at the time, the officer to whom he referred was not only a fellow 'kiwi' but also well known to the shipmate to whom he was talking!

*Gordon Wood - I compiled the narrative with the assistance of input from Officers serving on board the vessel at the time and the Captain's daughter and son-in-law. Names have been deliberately withheld for reasons of privacy.*

## Deep Thoughts *by David Parry (61-65)*

*The Royal Navy Submarine Museum have published a collection of my submarine poems. This is the blurb:*



*Deep Thoughts: A Submariner's Time in Rhyme* is a poetry anthology that gives voice to life beneath the waves, drawing on the lived experience of RN submariner David Parry. Through a sequence of tightly observed, often moving poems, the book traces the emotional, professional and domestic realities of submarining, from the night before sailing and the wrench of departure, to patrols in the Cold War depths and the long-awaited return home.

The poems explore the unique culture of the Submarine Service: friendship forged under pressure, leadership and command, demanding training such as 'Perisher', and the constant discipline required to operate safely in a hostile, enclosed environment. Alongside moments of tension and danger sit humour, ritual and everyday life on board, including food, uniforms, ship-handling and improvised routines that mark the passing of time at sea.

Historical awareness runs throughout the collection, with tributes to submarine museums in the UK and Australia and reflections on shared international heritage. The verse is complemented by imaginative illustrations by Sandy Freeleagus, which add warmth and visual wit. Written with clarity, affection and honesty, this book offers both submariners and general readers a rare, human insight into a hidden world, while standing as a tribute to those who have served.

ISBN: 978-1789635935 £14.99 on Amazon

## London Barbecue

Some OCs recently enjoyed a get together at the Hornimans at Hays pub on London Bridge. Two who attended but are missing from the photo below are Mr and Mrs A Pope (69-72)

*L-R: Paul Heaver (66-71), Chris Larkin (60-63), Tosh Neal (61-64), David Coulthard (62-64), Matt Burrow (72-74)*



## The Teaser Club

The winners of the Teaser Club draw, made at the recent Committee meeting, are A Coates (62), J Poyntz (62-64), C Pell and M Burrow (72-74).

# Conway, Malaysia and Singapore Part 1

By Term mates Hamzah bin Mohd Noor (64-67) & Alfie Windsor (64-68)

From 1889 to 1973, at least 380 boys joined Conway from 52 foreign countries. Most of them were the sons of permanent settlers or temporary expatriates but on 7th May 1959 two boys, Ahmad Husni bin Haji Zakwan and Keong Choon Keat joined Conway from Malaya. As indigenous Malaysians, they were the first of nine Malaysian Cadets through to 1966.

## Malayan/Malaysian Cadets

As we shall see, these Cadets were all academically gifted, great sportsmen, particularly in hockey, and excellent all-round Cadets.

**Ahmad Husni bin** (son of) **Haji Zakwan's** (59-61) father was a school master in Taiping. Husni was the first Malayan to join Conway as the recipient of the Malayan government's inaugural Federal Marine Scholarship so his fees etc were paid in full by the Malaysian Government which was using Conway to train a cadre of MN officers for its national merchant fleet, the MISC<sup>1</sup>. Husni might have been impressed that one of the MSoDs was apparently named after his home town. He was Captain of boxing, played rugby and was a 'good bat' in the Junior XI. He obtained a 1st Class Passing Out Certificate and joined Alfred Holt & Co. He remained with Blue Funnel Line until he obtained his Master's Foreign Going Certificate of Competency at Liverpool in 1968. The Malaysian Government appointed him Harbour Master of Johor. About 1975, he was also appointed as Maritime Advisor to the new Johor Port Authority at Pasir Gudang, then being constructed. About 1978, Husni left the Malaysian Marine Department and joined the Trio Ship Planning Unit (SPU), dealing with container ship loadings at Port Klang. About 1981, he was appointed Marine Manager of Penang Port Corporation (PPC), inter alia, taking care of the ferries across the Straits which were as iconic as the Hong Kong-Kowloon Bay ferries. Husni retired as Chief Marine Officer at PPC in about 2005 and lived in Penang with his wife Fauziah and four children and several grand-children. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on 1st June 2019.



Above: Easter Term 1961  
QB Husni on the Quarterdeck

**Keong Choon Keat** (59-60) was from Penang where his father was a 'Merchant'. He was awarded athletics colours in 1959 and was Victor Ludorum (Middle Section) in 1960. His eyesight failed in July 1960 so his government grant was terminated and he left before completing his course.

Below: Khong Shen Ping in Later Life

**Khong Shen Ping** (60-62) was from Ipoh. He was SCC Hold and won the Shell Tankers Prize for the greatest proficiency in all subjects and the Clan Line Seamanship Prize in his last term. Unsurprisingly he gained an Extra Passing Out Certificate. He joined Blue Funnel and, after gaining his Master Mariners certificate, became Harbour Master Johor, Malaysia in 1970. In 1971, he joined the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). In 1980, the Minister of Transport, Malaysia, invited his Singaporean counterpart for a three day working break at Malaysia's Tioman Island. Khong was ADC to the Singapore Minister and Hamzah (see below) was the ADC to the Malaysian Minister. Khong Shen Ping Crossed the Bar in August 2025 and his obituary is on page 42 of the last *The Cadet*.



**Suhaimi bin Shamsuddin** (61-63) (where 'uddin' means 'of the religion' or 'of the faith').

Suhaimi joined from the boarding school Malay College Kuala Kangsar but lived in Pahang. He was an excellent athlete, obtaining athletics standards in 100yds, 200yds hurdles, 220yds, 440yds, 880 yds, long jump, high jump and hop, step and jump. Another very bright Cadet, he won the History Prize, the Clan Line Seamanship Prize, the Odyssey Navigation Prize and certificates for top marks in Rule of the Road and Most Efficient Working Hand, all topped off with an Extra Passing Out Certificate. He joined Ben Line. After obtaining his Master Mariner's Certificate, he joined the Marine Department of Peninsula Malaysia. In 1982, having achieved the rank of the Deputy Director of Marine, he took up the post of Manager of MISC's LNG operations where he stayed until his retirement. He Crossed the Bar about 15 years ago.



Above:  
Paul Hennell (61-64) on a  
Smoko in Teaping

**Paul Hennell** (61-64). Paul was born in Kampar, Perak State and joined Conway from the Anglo Chinese School Kampar. He was Junior Victor Ludorum in 1962, Captain of hockey in 1963 and Middle Victor Ludorum in 1963. He was awarded hockey and athletics colours. He joined Alfred Holt & Co as an Engineer Cadet. He was a private student, ie he was not sponsored by the Malaysian government, and nothing is known of his subsequent career.

**Syed abu Bakar** (61-63) also joined from the Malay College Kuala Kangsar. The 'abu Bakar' part of his name translates literally as 'Father of a Young Camel' but is actually a deeply respectful historical name honouring a key figure in Islamic history. He was Captain of hockey. He joined Ben Line but left the sea at the 2nd Mates level, concluding that a Mates Certificate would be a bridge too far for him. He joined MISC's Fleet Management Office at Kuala Lumpur. He worked there until his retirement in about 2006, perhaps the longest service person with MISC. Syed Abu Bakar passed away about three years ago.

<sup>1</sup>In the early 60s, the Foreign Office was still negotiating reparations from Japan for the loss and destruction following the Japanese occupation of Malaya during World War II. Through these negotiations, two custom built vessels, MVs Bunga Raya and Bunga Melor were built by Japanese shipyards. They became the foundation of the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation (MISC), incorporated on 6th November 1968, to help establish Malaysia as a maritime nation.

# Conway, Malaysia and Singapore Part 1



*Above: Ghani Ishak (62-64) in 1962 and 2007`*

**Ghani Ishak** (62-64) was a student at the English College in Johor Bahru in Malaysia (where he was Hamzah's neighbour and friend). He won the Federal Marine scholarship for 1962, to study at Conway. He joined Ellerman Lines and on his first voyage, his ship was hit by a typhoon off Hong Kong, several crewmen were injured and the ship strayed 100 miles off course. In 1970, he joined Kuwait Shipping Company's Europe to Persian Gulf service but in 1971, the Malaysian government called him to serve in MISC's Far East to Europe service. Aged only 26, he was given command of *Bunga Orkid*. From 1976 to 1999, he worked ashore for MISC but eventually left MISC to fulfil a lifelong dream of studying law. He was called to the Bar from Lincoln's Inn towards the end of 2002. He worked on maritime claims and disputes in Istanbul and became a member of the London Maritime Arbitrators Association. In 2008, he, his wife Alison and their then three-year-old son Adrian embarked on a two-year overland expedition from London, through 46 countries on four continents, before returning to Malaysia where he founded Nautical Inclinations (M) Sdn Bhd, offering legal consultancy.

He was hugely respected and much loved, particularly for his outreach work with the Orang Asli indigenous communities in Malaysia. Ghani died of a massive heart attack in March 2014.

**Kamarul Baharin bin Abdul Hamid** (63-65) was from Ipoh and won the Federal Marine Scholarships in 1963. Another athletic boy, he was in the tennis team, hockey XI and sailing group. Having failed his eye-sight tests, he joined Alfred Holt & Co as an Engineer Cadet. He obtained his First Class Engineer's Certificate from South Shields Technical College where he was accompanied by his wife, Rosmah who gave birth to their first daughter about three weeks before his Finals exams. Kamarul was then appointed as a Marine Engineer Officer at the Marine Department Headquarters at Port Kelang. In 1979, he was seconded to the Federal Government Treasury Department where he supervised all government departments, including Marine, Customs, Police, Immigration and Health, procurement of marine vessels and assets; a very heavy responsibility. About 1998, Kamarul left the Malaysian Civil Service to be a Special Assistant to the founder and owner of the Malaysian PLC Westports Berhad, Port Kelang. Kamarul passed away about 2008.

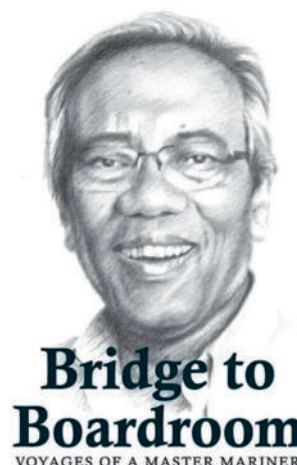
**Hamzah bin Mohd Noor** (64-67) joined from the English College, Johore Bahru. Another very gifted academic, he gained 13 O Levels and four A levels. He won five prizes, hockey colours, gained an Extra Passing Out Certificate and was a Queen's Gold Medal nominee in 1967. He joined Ocean Fleets (Alfred Holt & Co) and completed an MSc in Ship Technology at Newcastle University and an MSc in Sea Transport Economics and International Trade at Liverpool John Moores University. He obtained his Masters Certificate at Liverpool in February 1979 and returned to Malaysia to join the Malaysian Ministry of Transport to produce Malaysia's Domestic Shipping (Cabotage) Policy which became law on 1st January 1980. He was then appointed Harbour Master Johor where he led the Malaysian Committee to determine the maritime border between Johor (Malaysia) and Singapore. In November 1981 he was appointed Principal of the Maritime Academy Malaysia (Akademi Laut Malaysia (ALAM)). He saw to it that ALAM would train and discipline à la Conway and tried to replicate much of Conway's ethos. In 1989 Hamzah became a Malaysia UN diplomat as an IMO Maritime Safety Expert/Consultant, assisting all ASEAN governments' maritime administrations in their compliance with IMO Conventions. After IMO, Hamzah was promoted to an Acting Deputy Director General of the Marine Department and was also the Registrar of Malaysian Ships at Port Kelang as well as Chief Examiner of Master and Mates at Port Kelang. In 1995 he took early retirement from the Malaysia Civil Service and became a shipowner, managing his own ships on international trades. He is a Datuk, a prominent Malaysian honorary title equivalent to a knighthood, conferred by the King of Malaysia for exceptional contributions to the nation or society. He was conferred an Excellence Service Medal by His Excellency the Governor of Melaka (1987), a Honorary Doctorate in Maritime Management by the Netherlands Maritime University College to which he remains an Adjunct Professor and Head of their Celestial Navigation and Astronomy Faculty.

**Ahmad Suffian bin Abdul Rashid** (64-67). 'Suf' was in the same term as Hamzah and, like him, joined Alfred Holt & Co before the government invited him to join MISC. At 29, he commanded his first merchant cargo ship and so became the first Malaysian Master Mariner. He was a pioneer in LNG shipping. As implied by the title of his autobiography, *Bridge to Boardroom*, he soon transitioned into business where he had an extremely illustrious career. He built Malaysia's second national line, PNSL, and chaired Global Maritime Ventures, the country's first maritime venture capital firm. He helped to establish the Kuantan Port Consortium and was instrumental in the creation of Johor West Port (now known as Port of



*Above: Suffian (left) & Hamzah (right) in 2025 with the Hobson Cup. They are working on behalf of the Club Committee to gift it to the Netherlands Maritime University, Malaysia as an HMS Conway Memorial Cup.*

*Below: The Cover of Suffian's Autobiography*



# Conway, Malaysia and Singapore Part 1

Tanjung Pelepas). He has been a Director of the Shipowners P&I Club, Chairman of Malaysian Bulk Carriers, Chairman of a construction company WCT Berhad and a co-founder and Director of GDex Berhad, a Malaysian courier company. He was President of Malaysian Nautical Institute (1987-91), Director of Kuantan Port Authority (1981-95), President of The Chartered Institute of Transport (Malaysia National Council (1994-96) and Chairman of Global Maritime Ventures (1996-2003). If that wasn't enough, one of his companies built the Formula 1 race tracks in Sepang, Bahrain and Dubai. At 77, Suf is still active working as Chairman of Malaysia PLC PPB Group Berhad. Like Hamzah he is a Dato.

**Kamaruddin Abdullah** (66-68), like all his predecessors, was an exemplary student and an extremely competitive sportsman as the photo on the right shows. He was Middle Victor Ludorum in 1967 and was awarded Athletics and 3rd XV colours. Having failed his eyesight tests, he joined Ocean Fleets as an Engineer Cadet. After obtaining his Chief Engineer's ticket, Kamaruddin returned to his home state of Terengganu, on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia where he worked for Esso Petroleum, Malaysia. He, Hamzah and Suffian are the only three surviving OCs in Malaysia.

## 'Expat' Cadets

Many boys had parents who worked or were stationed in Malaya/Singapore/Malaysia including Robin Hilliard (52-54) whose father was an Army Major in Singapore, Mitchell Gall (56-58) whose father was a Life Assurance Underwriter in Klang, Nial Wood (56-59) whose father was a Fl Lt in the RAF, Michael Battson (57-59) whose father was an Army Major in Singapore, Glynne May (59-62) whose father was a Senior Principal Prison Officer in Singapore and Michael King (64-66) whose father was a Fl Lt at RAF Singapore.

*We'd Like To Hear From You....*

*If you served in Malaysia or Singapore, we'd like to hear from you for the next edition*



## Liverpool Maritime Museum and the Conway Anchor

A popular landmark on Liverpool's Royal Albert Dock has moved to a temporary new home.

The (approx.) 5 tonnes HMS Conway anchor, part of the Maritime Museum's collection, was recently lifted from its current position on the quayside in front of the museum, opposite Canning Dock, and transferred to near the north steps of Museum of Liverpool, Mann Island.

HMS Conway, a two-decker vessel, lent by the Royal Navy to the Mercantile Marine Service Association, was moored on the Mersey from 1876, as a school ship and the site for thousands of Cadets to be trained. She was anchored on the Mersey for many years before being moved to North Wales during WWII. Following the loss of the Ship (wrecked in the Menai Strait) in 1953, the Admiralty pattern anchor was recovered and kept by the parade ground at the 'Stone Frigate' in Plas Newydd, Anglesey. The anchor, along with other relics, was later donated to the museum in 1980 by the Conway Club.

In the 40 years the anchor has been on display outside the Maritime Museum, it has become a popular meeting place and photo backdrop for the millions of visitors who visit the historic waterfront location.

The temporary move of the anchor will enable access for the redevelopment of both the Maritime Museum and the International Slavery Museum.

Both museums closed to the public on 5th January 2025 for essential repairs and maintenance works ahead of a major redevelopment project, with £19m promised by the government, and are not scheduled to reopen until mid 2028. Find out more at [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/waterfront-transformation-project](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/waterfront-transformation-project)

*Top right: the anchor being inspected by Rob Tubb (67-70) in its temporary position*

*Bottom right: Proposed entrance vestibule to Maritime Museum with the anchor reinstated*



## Thanks to Alfie Windsor (64-68) by The Friends of Conway

In May, sadly for us, Alfie Windsor came to a decision that he could no longer continue as a Friends of HMS Conway Trustee. We, the other Trustees, were immensely disappointed Alfie could not continue the tremendous commitment he had shown as a Trustee over a considerable number of years. It has been a pleasure for all of us to have worked with Alfie as a fellow Trustee in recent years. Indeed, Alfie's influence goes beyond his work as a Trustee and has, for instance, deeply touched TS Conway, the Liverpool Sea Cadet Unit that proudly bears the 'Conway' name.



His commitment has been absolutely huge and really, beyond measure. This, in addition to the immense amount of work Alfie put into the Friends' website, and the generic Conway website, and, most importantly of course, his writing and publication of the two books, *HMS Conway 1859-1974* and *HMS Conway in Photos Yesterday and Today*. Two books which are an absolute 'tour de force' and a tremendous record of what the few of us left, and those who have gone before, would wish to have recorded and remembered.

Also, in the Trustee meetings, Alfie was the initiator in organising the huge task of establishing and carrying out the absolutely necessary dispersal plan. The Plan which has ensured mementos of the Cadets and the Ship, are now shared across several institutions and organisations for many, many years to come. This, particularly at the Plas Newydd Conway Centre where youngsters will be inspired for years to come by the displays Alfie organised.

Then, in very recent times, his amazing achievements leading to the creation and installation of the three hugely impressive stained-glass windows. One each at Bangor Pier, Plas Newydd Dock approach and Llanedwen Church. These achievements were only attained after many hours, weeks and indeed months establishing and developing the necessary contacts and arranging all the complex requirements of such projects.

Alfie's legacy is something all Conways, and their families, the Sea Cadet Unit TS Conway, and non-Conways will appreciate and enjoy whenever they come across what Alfie has so faithfully recorded – the story of an amazing nautical school – HMS Conway.

*The photo top right shows Alfie with his wife Jan, beside the canal they love so much.*

*The photo above shows Alfie with another of his passions - Morris dancing.*



## Stranded In The Persian Gulf

Three trainees from the Institut Maritime du Québec (IMQ) who were aboard the vessels N/M *Rosaire A Desgagnés* (top right) and N/M *Miena Desgagnés* (bottom right), trapped in the Persian Gulf since February 28, have now returned to Quebec.

Due to ongoing uncertainty regarding the timeline for implementing security measures that would allow the two vessels to leave the Persian Gulf via the Strait of Hormuz, Desgagnés, the local maritime agents, in collaboration with the IMQ, implemented a repatriation plan for the three trainees aboard the two vessels. Desgagnés and Saudi authorities worked together to ensure that the trainees could first take a safe flight from Saudi Arabia to Europe and then continue their journey to Canada.

For its part, the IMQ provided support services to the trainees on board and their families from the outset of the conflict in the Middle East and throughout the repatriation process, including personalised psychosocial support tailored to each individual's needs.

The trainees were aboard the two vessels as part of a sea training programme required for their college diploma (DEC) in Navigation and a deck officer's certificate issued by Transport Canada, both of which are necessary to pursue a maritime career aboard a merchant marine vessel.



## Fresh Milk!!

2nd April 2026: I bought a jug of milk today. It has a 'sell-by date' of 22nd April. Three whole weeks! That would have been great sixty years and more ago when going to sea. Fresh milk lasted about three days at that time.



*The article above is reprinted courtesy of Seatemis.*

*The article on the left is reprinted courtesy of The Bumph.*

# Myrina from Graham Holden (55-56)

## 50 years ago a large tanker was adrift and aground in the River Mersey.

On the evening of 2nd January 1976 a dangerous storm, the worst for many years, hit Britain (storms were not named by the UK in those days). The gale forecast increased to over 100mph in a few minutes when the barometric pressure dropped suddenly to 962. (At Strathclyde in Scotland 116 knots



{133mph} was recorded.) In the Port of Liverpool the anemometer rotor was blown away at 100mph. As Hydrographic Officer with Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC), I was Duty Officer on call at home that night. I got a phone call about 2045hrs from the port's Radar Control Tower that the large tanker *Myrina*, (left) berthed at Tranmere

Terminal, had all its 14 mooring ropes parted, plus all the oil discharging Chiksan hoses. *Myrina* was in Deutsche Shell ownership and, when launched in 1967 at Belfast, was the largest vessel built in Europe: 1050' length and 193,000 tons deadweight. The vessel was adrift in mid-river and was in a prohibited anchorage area so she decided not to drop anchor. The Master used the engines to stem the incoming tide but the hurricane force wind was blowing the ship over to the east side of the river where she eventually grounded head east on the south end of Pluckington Bank and part of Garston Devils Bank.

I received more phone calls at home, one of which was about Liverpool ferries landing stage sinking alongside the river wall at the Pierhead. Dockside cranes had been blown along their quaysides and bunched at the end. Other vessels had parted moorings, mainly in the dock systems. I decided I could not handle the increasing number of problems so called my boss Commander David Knight RN, Manager of the Marine Operations Dept (now deceased). He decided to call out several other duty staff and organised that I would meet him plus Capt LeBesque and two Pilots at Tranmere Terminal around 5.30am the next morning to board the *Myrina*. Tugs were alerted and the *Myrina's* Master informed. (Capt LeBesque was from the Channel Islands, was MDHC Salvage Officer and previously was a technical officer on board HMS Conway 1950-51.)

We all assembled at Tranmere north stage, and were joined by a few *Myrina* crew members who had been ashore legitimately the previous evening. It was low water, still dawn but wind and waves had dropped slightly. The river pilot launch came, picked us up and took us across to the *Myrina* which was aground but had enough depth of water round her for the launch to go alongside the starboard, lee side. A rope ladder had been dropped over the side so we all climbed up individually to the deck about 30' above us. Once on deck, it was like a skating rink with a thin film of crude oil covering the whole place but we made our way up to the bridge right aft. Engines and generators had been cut off due to sand and silt being drawn into the cooling systems so there was no lighting or radar. I had a MDHC folding River Mersey chart with me and a flashlight so I was able to indicate on the chart where exactly the vessel

had grounded. Whilst doing this, I noticed that the stern was moving slightly southwards which indicated the flood tide had started and was lifting the stern. Thirteen tugs were cruising in the deeper water nearby and had also noticed the movement so they began nudging the stern gently. Daylight was arriving and the *Myrina* began drifting southwards up-river with tugs getting alongside when they had enough depth. The ship was just south of Bromborough (close to a mile away) before tugs had control and began slowly moving north again but stern first for the ship. Engine room staff cleaned out the sand and silt in the cooling water systems and were able to start generators and the main engine. Abeam of Tranmere, *Myrina* was slowly turned 180 degrees to be heading outward bound. Most equipment including that in the galley was functioning again. Tugs were gradually cast off and we headed out, preceded by the largest of the tugs, with the intention of dropping off the Pilots and the Marine Ops Staff at the Bar and returning to the Mersey. However, the swell at the Bar was too high to safely pick us up so we remained on board until we reached Anglesey and disembarked in the lee of Moelfre, courtesy of the local pilot launch, about 5pm and took taxis home to Merseyside. We had been fed on board the *Myrina* - a bowl of soup and a cup of coffee! *Myrina* steamed slowly up and down for some time awaiting orders which required her to drydock in Europe. She worked for several more years but was scrapped in 1981 in South Korea.



Above: the collapsed landing stage

Whilst all this havoc was taking place, another OC Roy Williams (54-56), the Chief Officer of Alfred Holt's vessel *Laomedon* (overleaf) entered the Mersey as instructed at 2000hrs on 2nd January 1976 to enter Gladstone lock. The vessel was informed there was a delay at the lock and instructed to anchor mid river. At 2045, the 100 mph hurricane struck and *Laomedon* dragged her anchor and almost grounded close to the river wall near Langton Lock. Her anchor was foul of old chains and wires but remained overnight and they decided to head out of the Mersey to seek a lee off the Isle of Man. This she did the following mid morning after clearing her anchors with considerable difficulty. Roy spotted that astern of them was *Myrina*, a huge, light tanker also heading out of the Mersey. It was years later that Roy and I realised we had been in adjacent vessels in the hurricane winds experienced in the Mersey.

The storm discussed here crossed the UK, hit the east coast, North Sea and the northern coast of Europe from France and

# Myrina from Graham Holden (55-56)



Belgium to Netherlands, Denmark and Germany. The storm was named Capellain Europe after a small German coaster which had capsized and sunk in the storm. It was reported that during the storm, approximately 100 lives were lost, 80 in

Europe and 20 in UK and Ireland. Ironically 1976 became one of the hottest years in the UK that summer.

Note: The *Myrina* incident was recorded by yours truly in a Marine Casualty Ledger kept by MDHC. The report displayed several photos taken on board and had more facts and details of events which had taken place that night. I left MDHC a few years later and eventually Peel Ports took over. I have not had access to the Ledger and so the facts above may have a few errors. My apologies. Many thanks to Capt Roy Williams who provided me with his experience in the storm at Liverpool.

*The 'Great Gale of January 1976' (often called the Capella Storm in Europe) was a devastating cyclone that struck the British Isles and North Sea coast from 2nd to 5th January, 1976. The storm caused a massive tidal surge that peaked in Liverpool at 1.98 m, resulting in the infamous flooding and collapse of the city's Pier Head landing stage.*

*The storm was widely considered one of the most severe storms of the century in the British Isles, causing 82 fatalities across Europe (24 in Britain). The combination of hurricane-force*

*winds and a record tidal surge caused major damage to the River Mersey Docks. The iconic Isle of Man Steam Packet vessel, the RMS King Orry, broke free from her moorings at nearby Glasson Dock during the violent storm on 2nd January and grounded on the mudflats (top right). She was eventually refloated in April 1976 (bottom right).*

*During this ferocious storm, the Laomedon broke her moorings or encountered severe trouble while docked at Gladstone Dock in Liverpool. The hurricane-force gusts caused multiple large vessels to tear away from their berths, requiring emergency operations by local Liverpool tugboats to prevent catastrophic collisions in the port.*



# Labrats at the Palace from Terry Hughes (53-55)

The Not Forgotten Association supports veterans of all ages, ranks, backgrounds and disabilities across the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and the Merchant Navy. The annual Garden Party remains one of their most significant events, bringing together beneficiaries from across the Armed Forces in the historic surroundings of Buckingham Palace. This year (2026) Labrats International were invited and I was one of the lucky ones asked to accompany five of my fellow nuclear veterans, wives, widows and descendants.

Afternoon tea was laid on in the main marquee and we rubbed shoulders with some VIPs. During the afternoon we met Russell Watson and Jeremy Vine. Both sat with us during tea and were very interested in our nuclear history. The latter part of the afternoon was given over to the Band of the Royal Marines who ended their repertoire by Beating Retreat, a magnificent ending to a great afternoon.



LABRATS (Legacy of the Atomic Bomb. Recognition for Atomic Test Survivors) represents veterans, scientists, civilians and families affected by the atomic/nuclear testing programme. I became a nuclear veteran when I was in the RFA at Christmas Island in 1958 and the UK Government decided to test the biggest H-bomb ever.

The Labrats are one big family, connected with a common bond, offering comradeship to our atomic family which includes veterans, civilians, descendants, indigenous people and

organisations that represent all aspects of the atomic tests which affected thousands of people. Labrats are not affiliated with any UK political party and are not a political campaigning group.

At the moment, I am the only RFA survivor who is a member of Labrats. I would certainly like to know where all the other RFA personnel are who were involved in all the atomic tests in the Pacific area.

*Terry is second from the right in the two photos on the right. His wife Karen is next to him.*



# Update On The HMS Conway Memorial Cups Awards Scheme



*From Alfie Windsor (64-68)*

Proposed recipients for 2026 have been identified and negotiations have started, first to agree that the recipient will accept the cup and then to decide its precise future use. This year we are awarding 12 cups and there is a strong international flavour to the recipients and a special focus on national equivalents of BRNC Dartmouth.

- ☛ **The Conway Calcutta Cup** aka Conway-Worcester Boat Race Cup (originally awarded for a one-off gig race in Calcutta in 1893) was originally offered to the Kolkata Pilot Service but negotiations petered out. It was then offered to the Indian Maritime University, Mumbai, the inheritors of TS Dufferin, India's Conway but they did not respond. Given OCs' long and influential association with the Indian Navy, it will now be offered to the Indian Naval Academy, India's Dartmouth. Hopefully it will be a case of third time lucky.
- ☛ **The Junior Cross-Country Challenge Cup** has been offered to Gordonstoun School in memory of the joint courses run by Conway and Gordonstoun during WWII.
- ☛ **The Norbury Cup** (originally for cross country running) has been offered to Kenyan Schools' RFU in memory of the 84 Cadets from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. They were described in *The Cadet* No 90, page 6.
- ☛ **The Perkins Cup** (originally for 7-a-side rugby) will be offered to either Rydal School (one of our most challenging rugby competitors) or the North Wales Schools RFU Academy, Bangor.
- ☛ **The Pledger Cup** (originally the inter-divisional cricket cup) has been offered to the Royal Canadian Navy Officer Training College, Kingston, Ontario, Canada's Dartmouth, in memory of the 71 Conway Cadets who served in the RCN.
- ☛ **The Powles Cup** (originally the inter-divisional sports challenge cup) will be offered to the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay, Australia's Dartmouth.
- ☛ **The Powles Sports Challenge Cup** has been accepted by TS Starling in Liverpool. Les Hesketh (64-66) is heavily involved with the unit.
- ☛ **The Scorpions Cup** (originally for Sportsman Of The Year) has been accepted by Teddington RNLI Station.
- ☛ **The Sims Cup** (originally for swimming) has been accepted by the West Lancashire Yacht Club, Southport. They will award it to the fastest U16 Helm in their annual 24 hours race.
- ☛ **The Tug of War Cup** will be offered to the RNZN Officer Training College, Devonport, New Zealand's Dartmouth, in memory of the many OCs and Dhobi Clark who served in the RNZN.
- ☛ **The Vaynol Trophy aka Drew Cup** (originally for the cross-strait swim) has been accepted by Eton College Boat Club.
- ☛ **The Wilson Reid Challenge Cup** (originally for first aid) has been offered to BRNC Dartmouth in memory of the countless OCs who joined the RN.

There will be an update on progress in the next *The Cadet*.

## HMS Conway Memorial Cup – Arthur Roberts Football Challenge Cup



At the Birkenhead Sunday League Annual General Meeting on 10th June, the Arthur Roberts Football Challenge Cup (1905) was awarded to Matt Lydiate of Lions FC as the League's overall Leading Goal Scorer for 2025-2026 with 33 league and cup goals. The trophy, now named the HMS Conway Memorial Cup, was presented by Rob Tubb (67-70), the BSL Fixture Secretary (and purely by coincidence the Lions FC Secretary).

## Conway Masfield Prize



The Club has continued to fund the Conway Masfield Prize for creative writing at Mount Kelly which will be presented at prize giving in July. In previous years, there have been three awards made; this year, the Club was delighted to learn that five pupils have been awarded for their excellent creative writing. They will each receive £15 to be spent on books. The five pupils are Erin Neman, Tiegan Hutchings, Eloise Leswell, Harley Short and Sash Kilbane.

*Above: three of the winners with headmaster Guy Ayling*

# Associated News - Conway Merchant Navy Trust

By Training Manager Capt Les Hesketh MNM, CMMar.FNI (64-66)

**Cadet Update:** All our cadets are managed by Watermark which is part of the Marella group. Cadets now have the chance to gain experience on passenger ships, LNG ships, Antarctic survey ships, tankers and ferries. Craig Coates, Watermark's manager, and I have an excellent working relationship and we keep in regular contact.

## Applications for Sept 2026

We have received over 20 applications for entry in September 2026. Three students have been provisionally accepted: Jasmine Green, Charlotte Lee and John Clarke. All three were excellent candidates and have relevant experience of life at sea. The students are expected to attend Warsash Maritime Academy, which is part of Solent University in Southampton. The decision to use Warsash rather than Fleetwood was made for several reasons and will allow us to compare cadet training between the two colleges.

## Our Sept 2025 Cadet (Phase One BSc)

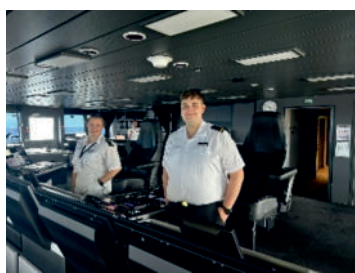
James Houghton successfully completed Phase One at Fleetwood but has resigned on medical grounds.

## Our Sept 2024 Cadets (Phase Three/Four BSc)

Amber Mallon and Beau Denton both successfully completed Phase Three at Fleetwood in March. **Amber** (left on bridge)

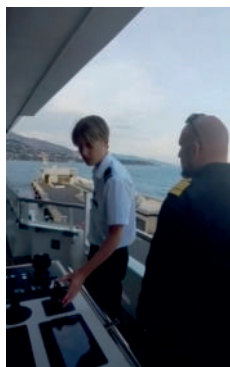


began Phase Four in March and joined *Marella Discovery 2* at Oranjestad Aruba. The ship was cruising in the Caribbean around St Kitts, Bonaire and Aruba. While in the Caribbean, Amber met fellow cadet Andrew Lindley, who gave Amber a guided tour of his ship (below left), the ultra-luxury cruise ship *Scenic Eclipse 2*. The Scenic ships are the benchmark in 6 star ocean cruising designed for ultra luxury exploration in comfort, with only 114 spacious suites.



It's an all-inclusive and once-in-a-lifetime experience. The ships have state of the art amenities and are equipped with a helicopter and a submersible.

**Beau** began Phase Four in March and joined *Scenic Eclipse 1* at Porto Belo Brazil. (Left: berthing the



ship supervised by the Master). The ship sailed towards Santa Cruz de Tenerife Spain, then proceeded towards Casablanca, Sevilla, Monaco and Mediterranean ports. The ship will visit Ireland, Scotland, Iceland and Greenland before returning to the Eastern United States. Beau will leave the ship in New York in October. During a port call Beau's ship (*Scenic Eclipse 1*) was berthed next to Andrew Lindley's ship (*Scenic Eclipse 2*) and both Cadets met on the quay. (Top right)

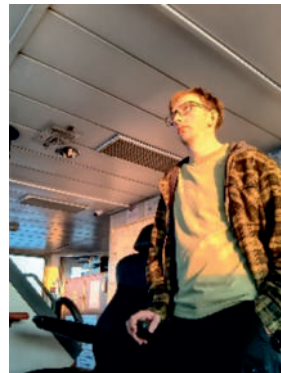
## Our Sept 2023 cadets (Phase Four/Five BSc)

James Spencer and Andrew Lindley completed their final sea phase (Phase Four) and commenced Phase Five in May.

**James** (right, second down) started Phase Four sea time on *Grand Princess*, sailing around the Caribbean Virgin Islands. He then transferred to Whitaker tanker's *MT Keewhit* in

Portsmouth. The ship was sailing between UK and European ports. James left the ship in April and commenced Phase Five at Fleetwood in May.

**Andrew** was on *Grand Princess* at the same time as James and then



transferred to the ultra luxury cruise ship *Scenic Eclipse 2* in Auckland. The ship sailed around the South Pacific Islands, Cocos Islands and French Polynesia Islands. He was on 8-12 watch supervised by the Master until the ship's 3rd Officer rejoined, when Andrew moved on to the 4-8 watch with the Chief Officer. The ship headed north to Panama City, transited the Panama Canal and called at Aruba and



Tenerife before returning to Barcelona in May, where Andrew left and returned to Fleetwood to start Phase Five. Andrew (above on *Scenic Eclipse 2* overtaking the sister ship *Scenic Eclipse 1*) enjoyed his 6 star luxury cruising with Scenic.

## Our Sept 2022 Cadet (Phase Six)

**Alexander James Mason** (right) passed his degree and spent time revising for his OOW which he passed in April. He received his COC in May and will probably be joining a passenger ship or super yacht as 3rd Officer.

## Our Sept 2021 intake

**Tom Edwards** is sailing as 2nd Officer with Schmidt Ocean Institute on *MV Falkor (Too)* (below), a research vessel sailing around Antarctica and the east coast of South America.



**Adam Cozens** started his career with Virgin Cruises as 3rd Officer and then transferred to Four Seasons Yachts and promoted to 2nd Officer. Adam was standing by their first luxury yacht built in Ancona Italy, before sailing on its maiden voyage in the Mediterranean, then onto the Caribbean and Bahamas. Four Seasons Yachts offers

# Associated News - Conway Merchant Navy Trust

*by Capt Les Hesketh MNM, CMMar.FNI. (Maintop 64-66)*



an all-suite experience with just 95 accommodations on the ship, offering one of the most exclusive cruising experiences to date. (Left: Adam at the helm. Below: Tom and Adam met up on a port call before duty called)

## Our Sept 2020 Cadets

**Matthew Clark (2nd Officer) and Theo Deasy (3rd Engineer)** are both sailing with Seapeak LNG vessels trading worldwide. They are enjoying LNG trade.

## Our 2019 Cadets

**Charles Warrington** has been sailing as 2nd Officer with Saga cruises and is now studying for his 1st Mates FG Certificate at Fleetwood. **Scott Brughts**, we believe, is on a Stena ferry sailing as 2nd Officer, between Holyhead and Dublin.



## Fleetwood Open Day

The Fleetwood Open Day (below) on 6/7th February had several students expressing an interest in pursuing a maritime career with CMNT. The Conway cadets provided excellent advice to the students and parents about life onboard ship and at college.



## Warsash/Solent Open Day

The Warsash/Solent Open Day on 13/14th March was exceptionally busy with many A level students interested in a career at sea with CMNT and Watermark. (Below right: Capt Alex Downes (Watermark) and Capt Les Hesketh)



**Sebastian Russell**, grandson of John Ivor Jones (48-49), from Fremantle WA, graduated in engineering from Southampton Solent in September 2020 assisted by the CMNT. He is now a naval architect with Austal, the leading Australian defence company involved with the AUKUS partnership.

## The Old School

In these days of shipmanagers it is difficult to recall that there was once a time when some shipowners knew all the seafarers who worked for them. At least, they gave that impression.

Lawrence Holt, one-time senior partner of the Blue Funnel Line, certainly knew well all his senior officers and cadets, together with many of the senior ratings. After a completed voyage, he would interview the Master and Chief Engineer and, if the voyage had been economically successful, they would receive a bonus. Whenever it was practical, he would also visit a ship before she sailed from Liverpool and greet her upon her return.

Such men become the subject of legend, and stories of Lawrence Holt were legion within the Blue Funnel fleet, a fleet that at one time numbered over a hundred Homeric heroes – *Ajax, Diomed, Agamemnon* etc. He was not a dressy man. His garb for ship visiting was an old trilby hat and a raincoat, which had seen better days. His staff tried to keep up with him and, if he left his headquarters in India Buildings to visit a vessel, the Master would normally receive a warning, not from Lawrence but from someone else at head office who had been detailed to keep a watching brief. Even so, he could defeat them.

A newly promoted Chief Officer was keeping a weather eye open for him on one occasion, only to discover that he was already on board enjoying a cup of tea with the cook. In his trilby hat and dirty raincoat, he had sneaked aboard unrecognised. In the same garb he was said to have been hailed from a ship coming alongside and asked to receive a line to help secure her. He did so but, afterwards, he sent a bill to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board to secure payment for his services in berthing the ship.

In the half-deck – the cadets' or Midshipmen's' quarters – he supplied the textbooks necessary to their craft, volumes of seamanship and navigation, and urged the young men to study them when he saw them off on one occasion. On their return, he asked if the books had been read and was solemnly assured that they had. Rifling through the pages of one, he dislodged pound notes that he had put there when the vessel sailed. 'I see,' he remarked, pocketing the money, 'that you had no use for these.'

Ship managers in today's industry, one fears, are really not quite of that same ilk.

(Ronald Hope - Of Shoes & Ships *Fairplay Magazine*. February 7th 1991)

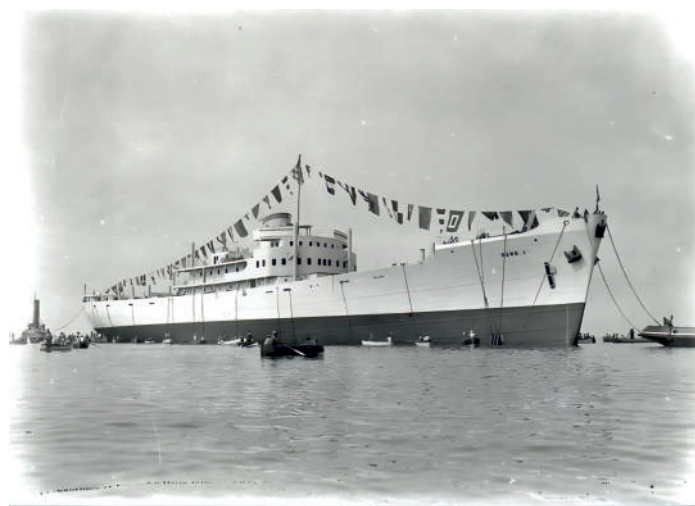


# The Italian Ramb Ships *from David Parry (61-65)*

Luigi Amedeo Giuseppe Maria Ferdinando Francesco di Savoia (*right*) was an extraordinary man, a record-breaking mountaineer, Commander-in-Chief of the Italian fleet from 1914 to 1917 and after the war, the founder of the 'Village of the Duke of Abruzzi', or 'Villabruzzo', about 90 km north of Mogadishu. This was an agricultural venture experimenting with new techniques. It was outstandingly successful and developed into a colony of 16 villages with 3000 Somali and 200 Italian residents. The villagers had roads, dams to provide water, schools, hospitals, churches and mosques, respecting different religions. He was to die there in 1933.

Among the products of the village of the Duke of Abruzzi were bananas, and a railway was built between Villabruzzo and Mogadishu on the Indian Ocean. During the Great Depression, Italian workers found bananas to be a cheap, nutritious food. To meet this need, a Genoese shipowner, Andrea Marsano, started the Società di Navigazione Italo-Somala and had three ships of 3120 dwt built in Sweden, named after famous Italian explorers, Capitano Bottego, Capitano Cecchi and Duca degli Abruzzi. The ships were fast, capable of 16 knots, to preserve the bananas, which were in four refrigerated rooms in three holds.

In December 1935, Mussolini's fascist regime also decided to invest in the profitable banana business and established the Royal Banana Monopoly Company (Regia Azienda Monopolio Banane), known by its initials RAMB. The existing three banana reefers were requisitioned by the government and transferred to the new company. At the same time, four new ships were ordered, two from Ansaldo in Sestri Ponente near Genoa, and two from the Cantieri Riuniti dell'Adriatico shipyard in Montalcone at the very north of the Adriatic Sea. Unimaginatively, they were named *Ramb I* (*below at launch*) and *Ramb III*, (Ansaldo), and *Ramb II* and *Ramb IV* (Cantieri); importantly, their hulls



were shaped more like a warship than a conventional merchant ship, with six transverse watertight bulkheads, and patches fore and aft to take two 4.7" (120mm) guns and eight 0.52" (13.2mm) anti-aircraft guns. The stores for conversion were kept in Massawa and Naples, enough for two ships at each location, so that, when fitted, the ships could operate as auxiliary cruisers. There were only slight differences between the 3600 gross ton ships fitted with Fiat diesel engines driving two propellers, which gave the ships a maximum speed of 19.5 knots. Alongside the 2400 tons of bananas carried was accommodation for 12 passengers, two in luxury. They were to have interesting careers.

When Italy entered the war in June 1940, the guns and equipment for *Ramb I* and *Ramb II* were taken out of storage and the two ships were fitted out in their auxiliary cruiser

role. *Ramb I*, under the command of Lt Cmdr Bonezzi, launched into her 'privateer' role, but it was limited to one raid into the Red Sea and abandoned, due to lack of targets. Because there were no more stores for *Ramb IV*, she was requisitioned and registered as a State Auxiliary Ship on 7th



February 1941 to act as a floating hospital with 272 beds (*below*). She was appropriately marked in the livery of a hospital ship, with a green line along the hull interspersed with red crosses, and red crosses on her funnel. Just before the British arrived on 8th May, *Ramb IV* left Massawa and



headed towards the Suez Canal, hoping to be allowed through under the Geneva Convention. The British, however, had different ideas and *Ramb IV* was returned to Massawa where she was transferred to the British Ministry of War Transport and managed by the English Coaling Company as a hospital ship. She acted in that capacity in the Red Sea until early 1942 when she went north to work in the Eastern Mediterranean along the coasts of Libya and Egypt. On 10th May 1942, while en route from Tobruk to Alexandria, loaded with soldiers from the battle for Tobruk, she was attacked by German JU88 aircraft, bombed and set on fire. Despite the efforts of the destroyer HMS *Kipling*, sent from Alexandria to help, and the further help of the destroyers HMS *Harrow* and HMS *Hasty*, the ship was a total loss and had to be sunk by gunfire from the *Hasty*. One hundred and fifty patients were lost with the ship.

Rear Admiral Mario Bonetti, the naval commander at Massawa, sailed the now-armed *Ramb I*, with the German freighter *Coburg*, on 20th February with orders to go to Nagasaki in Japan. Unfortunately, she ran into HMNZS *Leander*, which was out hunting for the *Admiral Scheer*. Initially, Bonezzi tried a *ruse de guerre* by showing British colours, but when he could neither show the appropriate identification flags nor answer a challenge, it was clear to *Leander* that she was not British. *Ramb I* showed her Italian colours and opened fire but her shooting was poor and slow. *Leander* replied with five salvos in just one minute and *Ramb I* was fatally hit. She sank following two explosions shortly after, taking about 150 Italians with her; the remaining 100 were rescued by *Leander* and transferred to a tanker at Addu Atoll in the Maldives.

# The Italian Ramb Ships *from David Parry (61-65)*

While *Ramb I* (bottom right) had made some effort to pursue the war, *Ramb II* stayed in Massawa harbour, acting in an anti-aircraft role, until she left to follow *Ramb I* to Nagasaki in Japan. She sailed on 22nd February. After sailing, *Ramb II* had her orders changed, and instead of Nagasaki, she was told to make for Kobe in Japan. She made her way through the Sunda Strait and the Philippine Sea to reach Kobe on 23rd March 1941. Italian diplomats tried to argue for *Ramb II* to continue as an e-commerce raider to interdict British shipping in the Indian Ocean, but because Japan was neutral at the time, the Japanese could not allow it. *Ramb II*, therefore, left Kobe within 24 hours and, while at sea, dismantled her guns before returning to Kobe as an ordinary merchant ship. In May 1941, management of the *Ramb II* was transferred to the Linee Triestine per l'Oriente Company, and the ship was renamed *Calitea II*. She remained in Kobe until September 1942, when she was chartered as a store ship to the Imperial Japanese Navy. As a store ship, she transported munitions and other war stores to Bali, Java, Sumatra and Singapore. At the Italian Armistice on 8th September 1943, *Calitea II* was being repaired in Kobe when, despite the possible consequences to the Italian crew, they scuttled the ship. The Japanese, however, refloated her and renamed her *Ikutagawa Maru*, putting her to work as an auxiliary transport ship, a job she continued to do until 12th January 1945, when she was sunk by aircraft from the American Task Force 38 in the South China Sea off the southern coast of Vietnam.

The *Ramb III* (below) was in the Mediterranean when Italy joined the war. She was immediately requisitioned by the Italian Royal Navy and converted into her cruiser role with the addition of four 120/45 mm guns and two 13.2 mm machine guns, with depth charge throwers being added later. She then embarked on a career as a convoy escort with initial duties as an armed transport and patrol vessel in the Adriatic and central Mediterranean. She then took on the role of protecting supply



convoys bound for North Africa, including Libya, and the Dodecanese Islands. She put her depth charges to good use on 9th October 1940 by beating off the British submarine HMS *Regent* (Lt Cmdr Hugh Browne), which had attacked the two merchant ships *Ramb III* was escorting. And she had a narrow escape on 12th November when the British 7th Cruiser Division, under the command of Vice Admiral Henry Pridham-Wippell, sank all four of the transports *Ramb III* was escorting in the Battle of the Strait of Otranto. After that fight, the *Ramb III* took to either independent sailing or escorting convoys on the dangerous Tripoli-Naples route. In all, she did 12 convoys in between which, while in harbour, she acted as an anti-aircraft platform.

When the German Afrika Corps conquered Cyrenaica, the *Ramb III* was the first ship into Benghazi. It was while she was in Benghazi, on 30th May 1941, that the submarine HMS *Triumph* (Lt Cmdr Wilfred Woods) torpedoed her in the bow. The refrigerated holds' strength saved the ship and the Italians

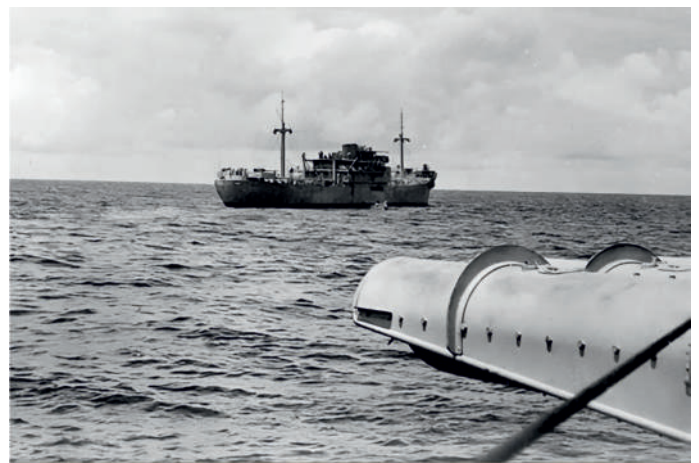


were determined to salvage. To do this, they re-ballasted her to restore her trim, fixed the rudder amidships and rigged what were effectively otter boards on either side to help steering. In this configuration, she steamed stern-first home over 900 miles with a tug in escort in case of emergency (above).

She was repaired in Trieste, unfortunately just in time for Italy's capitulation, and while attempting to leave port on 8th September 1943, she was captured by the Germans, renamed *Kiebitz*, and refitted for a new role as a minelayer in the Adriatic capable of handling up to 240 mines, and the addition of extra 37 mm Breda anti-aircraft guns for enhanced defence. But first, she was used as a transport in November 1943 in Operation Herbstgewitter (Autumn Storm) to reclaim the islands of Krk, Cres and Lošing at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea, which had been occupied by Yugoslav partisans.

*Kiebitz* took part in many minelaying operations until July 1944 when, laying mines off Ancona, she lost power and struck one of her own mines, severely damaging the hull. She limped to Fiume (Rijeka), ironically using astern propulsion, for temporary repairs before transfer to Pula (Pola). Back in Fiume, in November 1944, she was hit and badly damaged during heavy bombing raids. Best efforts could not save the ship and she was abandoned and sank alongside. And there she stayed as the Germans withdrew and the war came to an end.

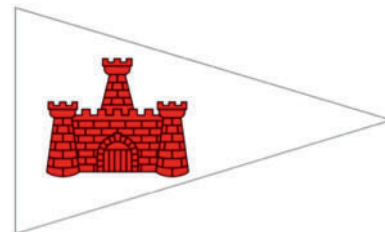
*Ramb III/Kiebitz* was finally salvaged in 1948 after a year of work and taken to Pula for reconstruction and transformation into a training ship for the Yugoslav Navy. She was given yet another new name, *Galeb*, meaning 'seagull' in Serbo-Croat. After four years as a cadet training ship, she became President Tito's yacht and embarked on an illustrious career hosting diplomats, national leaders and film stars across the world. But with the collapse of Yugoslavia, the ship decommissioned and was sold to a Montenegrin interest. The ship was recovered from there in 2009 by the Croatian government in payment of unpaid berthing fees, and then bought by the city of Rijeka for conversion into Croatia's first dedicated museum ship. The completion of that conversion has just been delayed in 2026 by a berthing accident. But when complete, her presence in Rijeka will be a monument to a fascinating history of both the ship and its association with the Italian Red Sea Flotilla.



# Associated News - Conway Club Cruising Association

From Simon Ludgate

The boating season will be well on the way by the time this *The Cadet* is published. Sadly but inevitably, the number of OCs with boats is diminishing. Each year, fewer applications are made for permits to wear the Conway Ensign. With the fleet spread so widely, the chance of seeing a Conway Ensign at sea is slim. The Conway Ensign was of course the principal reason for forming the Conway Club Cruising Association (CCCA) by founder members David Cooper, John Southwood, David Fletcher Rogers and Captain David Smith RN.



The RYA recently featured an article on flag etiquette, which is relevant to CCCA members flying the Conway Ensign. Under Section 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, flying a special ensign, such as a defaced Blue Ensign without a proper warrant, is a criminal offence and carries a fine of up to £1,000 per violation. The permit, obtained from the Hon Sec, to fly the Conway Ensign requires the CCCA burgee to be flown as well. If the CCCA burgee is not worn when the vessel is wearing the Conway Ensign, the conditions of the permit will not be fulfilled and this is unlawful.

Etiquette dictates that burgees of more than one club should not be flown together. If two yacht club burgees are flown at the same time, this is called being 'double flagged'. CCCA members might be members of another yacht club and wish to fly the burgee of the other yacht club. Etiquette would prevent this if the Conway Ensign and burgee are being flown. Although considered incorrect, flying more than one yacht club burgee is not illegal and is frequently done. The correct procedure would be to fly the CCCA burgee with the Conway Ensign and a 'Member's Flag' of the other yacht club from the port spreaders.

The seniority of flag positions can present dilemmas. The most senior position is the stern of the vessel where the ensign should be flown. The next most senior position is at the masthead, where the CCCA burgee should be flown. The third is the starboard spreader hoisted close up and the fourth is the port spreader hoisted close up. Fifth would be below the top flag on the starboard spreader and sixth would be under the top flag on the port spreader. Some yacht clubs insist on their burgee being flown from the masthead but this can create issues for some yachts. There is concern that the burgee will interfere with expensive wind-indicating instruments and the VHF aerial. It's worth noting that placing a metal pole supporting the burgee at the masthead close to the VHF aerial will probably affect the radio's performance. The metal pole will act as an aerial, disrupting the antenna's radiation pattern, absorbing and reflecting the signal, possibly even damaging the VHF transmitter. A non-metallic pole, such as a cane or fibreglass rod, would be more appropriate.

Although incorrect and frowned upon by well-seasoned mariners, an alternative to mounting the burgee at the masthead is to hoist it on the starboard spreaders. This is legally acceptable and often done. An issue arises when visiting a foreign country. The starboard spreaders are used for signalling and where courtesy and Q flags should be flown. More than one flag can be flown on the same halyard. Etiquette, however, states that no superior flag can be above the CCCA burgee on the same halyard and no superior flag can be worn above a courtesy flag. This creates a conundrum for which there is no acceptable solution other than to



Starlight in Cherbourg

put the burgee at the masthead. Skippers unable to fly the burgee at the masthead must decide how to overcome the issue themselves. Some suggest that the obvious thing to do is move the burgee to the port spreader. This means the burgee will be inferior to the courtesy flag, which is incorrect, but appears to be the least worst solution. In all cases, the burgee must be flown higher than the ensign.

There is no legal requirement to fly a courtesy flag. Wearing a courtesy flag acknowledges that the vessel will respect the laws and sovereignty of the foreign country being visited. The RYA advise that if a courtesy flag is not flown or is tatty or faded, it may cause grave offence and in some places lead to a fine. It is customary to take the courtesy ensign down at the same time as the yacht's own ensign.

The Conway Ensign can only be worn on a vessel when the permit holder is on board or in effective command. In accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act, a UK-flagged vessel must wear its ensign when entering or leaving a foreign port and on demand by one of His Majesty's ships. The

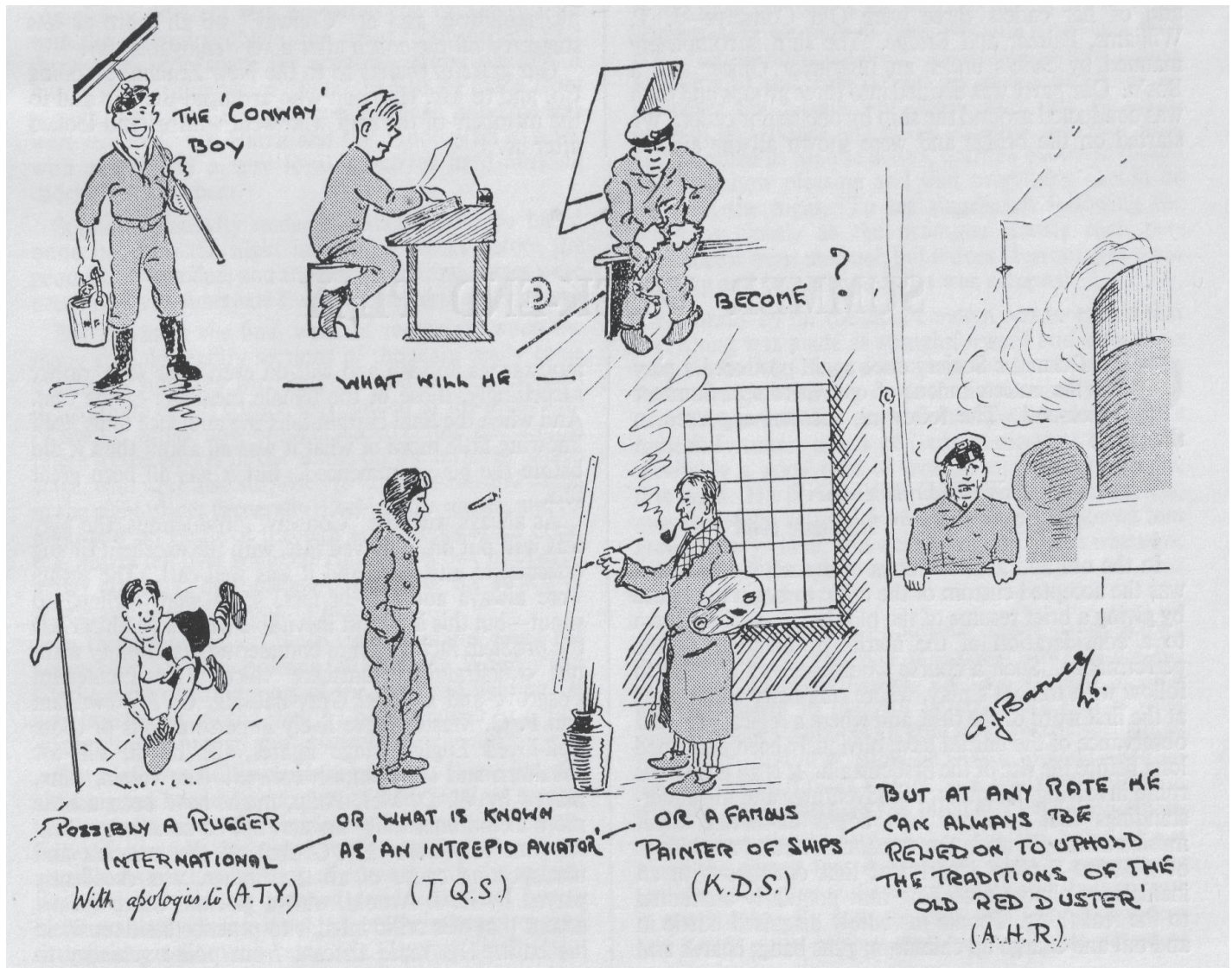
ensign should be worn during daylight hours. It's advisable that yachtsmen wear their ensign at sea, unless racing. Wearing it means you are claiming protection of your flag state.

When in British waters at anchor or in harbour, it is customary to take the timing of raising and lowering the ensign in order of precedence from first, a vessel of the Royal Navy or shore Naval establishment; second, the senior yacht club ashore; third, the Senior Flag Officer present; and fourth, the ship's clock. The timing for raising the ensign is 0800 local time from 15 February to 31 October and 0900 local time for the remaining period. The ensign should be lowered at sunset or at the latest 2100. When abroad, the local custom should be followed. Common practice is to strike the ensign and leave the burgee flying during the hours of darkness while the owner is in the vicinity and in effective control of the yacht. This is incorrect as only the Flag Officer's broad pennants are worn at night so that the precedence of timings set out above can be observed.

The CCCA is affiliated with the RYA and thanks them for the very comprehensive explanation of flag etiquette on which this article is based. CCCA members wishing to renew or change their permit to wear the Conway Ensign should contact the Hon Sec, Simon Ludgate. Vessels must meet the following criteria: it must be at least 7m in length or over 2 tonnes and registered in GB under the Merchant Shipping Act Part 1, the Small Ships Register or the register of ships of a relevant British possession. You don't have to own a boat to join the CCCA. Membership is £5 annually if paid by direct bank transfer or £10 if paid by cheque. Please contact the Hon Sec for further information. Members wishing to terminate their membership are requested to advise the Hon Sec to enable the correct numbers to be reported to the RYA.

|                         |                          |                              |              |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Commodore:              | Mike Butterfield (68-73) | pmbutterfield@msn.com        | 07973 228636 |
| Vice Commodore/Hon Sec: | Simon Ludgate (66-69)    | hon.secretary.ccca@gmail.com | 01258 840079 |
| Acting Treasurer:       | Mike Butterfield (68-73) | pmbutterfield@msn.com        | 07973 228636 |

# From *The Cadet* Thirty Years Ago



A.T.Y. was Arthur Tudor Young (15-16) (*right*) who left the Ship in December 1916, went to Tunbridge School and thence to Caius College, Cambridge. He captained at rugby his college, his university, Blackheath, Kent and was capped eighteen times for England between 1924 and 1929. He joined the Royal Tank Corps and died at Bareilly, India of pneumonia in February 1933.

T.Q.S. was Theodore Quintus Studd (09-11) who was Chief Cadet Captain, King's Gold Medallist and won the MMSA's Gold Medal in 1911. He joined the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, but when war supervened joined the Royal Flying Corps. He became a Group Captain in the RAF.

K.D.S. was Kenneth Denton Shoesmith (06-08) (*left*) whose record leaves an aching void in Ledger No. 15.

A.H.R. was Sir Arthur Rostron (1885-86)

(*right bottom*) of whom much has been written by the more articulate brethren of our cloth, particularly about his rescue in the Western Ocean of survivors of the *Titanic* when Rostron was Master of the *Carpathia*. He was nicknamed the 'Electric Spark' by his shipmates, and he believed devoutly in the power of prayer.

And, of course, Alfred John Barnes (09-11); was a contemporary of KD Shoesmith, whose art took a slightly different direction and whose cartoons appeared with great regularity in *The Cadet* during the twenties. He was a director of a firm of printers and gold blockers, Glover & Barnes, and was founder of the Seven Seas Club.



# AGM and Dinner 2026 Telford 16th-18th October



## Voco Hotel TELFORD (Note new name)

Telephone (+44) 01952 527000 or 01952 527388

The Voco Hotel Telford is next to the International Centre Telford, with a restaurant, indoor pool and meeting rooms. It is a five-minute drive from both the M54 motorway and Telford Central station which has rail connections to London and Birmingham. Birmingham Airport is 55 minutes away by car.

Telford's iconic C18th Ironbridge is 10 minutes' drive; museums and historic sites along the Ironbridge Gorge hark back to the Industrial Revolution. Behind the hotel, Telford Park includes a nature reserve, trails, fishing lakes, crazy golf and play areas.

The Leisure Club has a pool and gym but requires pre-booking an hour slot to avoid disappointment. The Olive Tree restaurant serves breakfast and dinner daily, and the welcoming Open Lobby lounge has comfortable seating areas to relax.

**The arrangements for booking have changed this year and you should now have made your reservation with the hotel. Anyone wishing to book the hotel may contact the hotel but you will be subjected to whatever rates the hotel is currently quoting. Worth also checking Booking.com/Trivago etc**

### **Friday Night Dinner**

£25 pp for a three-course meal in the restaurant. A varied menu will suit all tastes. **To get the deal for £25, you must book this when you reserve your accommodation.** This price is only available for those staying at the hotel. Anyone not staying at the hotel who wishes to join Friday's dinner may do so but will need to book and be subject to paying the prices on the menu, which are good. Those of you who wish to book a table with friends may do so when you check into the hotel unless you are requesting a table for a large number in which case bookings must be made at least a week in advance.

Bookings for Saturday night's dinner must be made through the Dinner Secretary as usual. The cost for the 4-course meal will be £40. See booking form opposite. I am concerned that some of you may have booked the hotel and forgotten to book the dinner with me. If you have not had a confirmation email for your dinner reservation, then please contact Mim asap.

## SATURDAY ACTIVITIES

There is a wealth of activities within easy reach of the hotel. **Blists Hill Victorian Town** in Ironbridge Gorge where you can step back in time to the year 1900 and explore a working-class town in the East Shropshire Coalfield. Be immersed in the sights, sounds and smells of Victorian life and get a glimpse of a new world shaped by industry. Visit Victorian shops and cottages, meet craftspeople demonstrating their trades and taste authentic food in the recreated town.

### **The Severn Valley Steam Railway**

Simon Douglas Lane is organising this. The train leaves Bridgnorth at 10.45 and may run under steam or diesel. The return trip from Kidderminster will definitely be under steam. The cost of the trip will be £22.50 for the train. If there are

sufficient people going, the coach will be shared with those going to Blists Hill, and for those going to Bridgnorth the cost will be £12.50. If numbers are insufficient to share the coach, we will car share. There will be sufficient time for lunch in the beautifully restored railway station at Kidderminster before the return trip at 14.15. Further details and booking, please contact Simon directly [simonsdl14@gmail.com](mailto:simonsdl14@gmail.com)

**To book, please contact/confirm with Simon by email before 22nd August, even if you have already booked with him.**

### **Visits to the Museums**

Please note that we are providing transport to Blists Hill Victorian Town and to the venue for the steam train. It is estimated that the coach will leave the hotel at 09.15 and return in time for the AGM. If you wish to visit any of the other museums, you will need to make your own arrangements. Please book your place on the coach for Blists Hill in the space provided on the booking form. There will be a charge for this at £10 per person. The coach for the steam train can now be booked with Mim using the booking form.



**The AGM will be held in the hotel at 16.15 hrs on Saturday 17th October 2026 in the Pritchard Suite.**

### **PARKING**

There is ample free parking at the hotel for residents and for those attending the dinners.

**Bookings for Saturday night's dinner must be made through the Dinner Secretary as usual. The cost for the 4-course meal will be £40. See booking form below.**

### **DRESS CODE**

As before, the dress code for the gentlemen has been relaxed. The Dress code is now black tie or lounge suit/blazers. We hope that this will encourage more members to attend.

### **DIETARY REQUESTS**

Please remember to fill these in at the time of booking. If you are bringing guests, please check with them. Dietary requests are given to the hotel along with the seating plan at least a week before the dinner. It can be difficult if this is left to the last minute.

## **THURSDAY 15th OCTOBER + SUNDAY 18th OCTOBER**

Want to stay an extra night? For Thursday and Sunday, the prices are the same as for Friday and Saturday. All include breakfast. Please book this when you make your booking.

Latest bookings for the Saturday night dinner must be made before 11th September 2026, cheques made out to 'The Conway Club'. BACS details are at the end of this notice.

Contact for queries only to Mim Smith Dinner Secretary: [edensmithmim@gmail.com](mailto:edensmithmim@gmail.com) telephone: 07886 462234. Email contact is preferred as I am frequently away.

**Please include a stamped addressed envelope suitable for holding tickets**

**FAILURE TO DO THIS WILL RESULT IN A DELAY IN SENDING OUT TICKETS.**

**Please note that the hotel has changed ownership from the Holiday Inn to the Ramada and now Voco. Some of you will have these former names on your tickets.**

# 2026 Booking Form

Please copy and use for your booking - **PLEASE READ AND FILL IN CAREFULLY.**  
This information is used for name badges and lists in the Menu and Welcome Book.

| YOUR NAME<br>Forename + Surname | YOUR TITLE | YOUR DATES<br>AT CONWAY | DECORATIONS |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                                 |            |                         |             |

Your Guests' names:

.....  
.

ADDRESS:

.....  
.....  
.....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....

|                                                            | No of<br>People | Cost                | Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------|
| Saturday Night Dinner                                      |                 | £40 pp              |       |
| Coach to Blists Hill Victorian Town<br>Coach to Bridgnorth |                 | £10 pp<br>£12.50 pp |       |
| PAYMENT MADE BY BACS - TICK                                |                 |                     |       |
| PAYMENT BY CHEQUE - TICK                                   |                 |                     |       |
| FULL TOTAL TO BE PAID                                      |                 |                     |       |

Dietary requirements **including those of your guests** please specify who the request(s) are for:

.....  
.....

Seating requests for Saturday night dinner **in addition to term seating**

.....  
**PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE MADE YOUR HOTEL AND FRIDAY DINNER BOOKING IF REQUIRED.**

**BACS PAYMENT PREFERRED. Please state AGM and your surname for reference.**

The Conway Club

HSBC

Sort Code: 40-34-12

Account: 71537946

IBAN: GB92 MIDL 4034 1271 5379 46

SWIFT: MIDLGB22

Applications to the Dinner Secretary: Mrs M Smith, Poppy Cottage, Vache Lane, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4SB

Telephone 07886 462234.

Email: edensmithmim@gmail.com

# Cadet Goes Bananas *from Chris Hanily (69-70)*

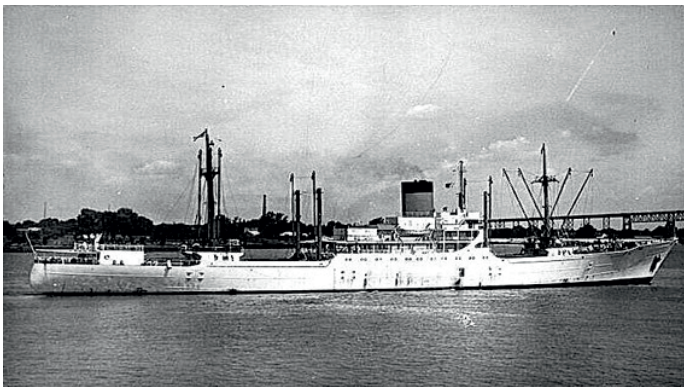
Having read some of the stories from the past published in *The Cadet*, I love most those which bring you to chuckle over well-remembered scenarios and similar experiences.

I have used names when remembered as they are all dead by now and references good or bad should have no effect or reflection.

I have just finished writing my life's memoirs solely for my grandchildren and perhaps theirs, to know what life was like in 'Poppa's' times before computers, cell phones, Tik Tok and the like, a time when companionship and camaraderie were the socialising medium ashore in the pubs and most especially at sea where the ship's crew worked and lived, laughed and cried together. Starting with Conway, and subsequent voyages on ships, one came to realise that, be they good or bad, experiences in a voyage were shared by all aboard.

I joined Fyffes Group Ltd, now a division of the United Fruit Company, then a huge US conglomerate which ruled by the purse strings many Central American countries (banana growers). It had been originally been the old Elders and Fyffes.

Fyffes was a tight-knit company when I joined it, with a fleet of 4 T-boats, 2 P-boats, 4 R-boats 4 C-boats, 1 passenger ship (8 Motor ships M-boats in the works building in Japan), operating at that time 15 ships, all steam turbine, of which only the Ts were air conditioned, a luxury mostly eschewed in the British merchant fleets unless they had passengers, as unnecessary expense even in refrigerated vessels.



I was put aboard SS *Telde*, (above in E&F colours) a single screw steam turbine with four holds and 14 decks for refrigerated cargo. Built in Germany, she specialised oddly enough in carrying bananas. The Master, a Yorkshireman called Les Tate, was extremely affable, unlike my nemesis, the Chief Officer, who was Scots, Alan Boyack!! Perhaps Boyack might not have been so bad if he had not had his chapel-going wife Esmee with him, I think she used to pray openly for my soul in their afternoon private prayer sessions, but this did not go well for me when it came to possible shoreside diversion in the banana ports where I always seemed to have the watch.

Luckily Les Tate saw what was going on and 'ordered' me to go ashore one night when we were loading in Golfito, on the west coast of Costa Rica, on the border with Panama. He said if not, I might turn homosexual on him, due to my lack of knowledge of women. I spent that night learning a great deal.

Anyway, back to my tale. As first trip cadets from my era, we all remember the 'Cadet's work book' (MMSA) wherein were listed tasks to be completed for the ONC course work. Even the first trip Engineer Cadet 'Minty Mick', a Liverpudlian whose father 'Weary Willy' and brother 'Monica' forgotten were also in Fyffes, had one.

My normal daily life was usually with the Bosun, chipping, painting, hatch cleaning, splicing wires and ropes, making side guy pennants, overhauling cargo gear and greasing round, relaying the ropes on the Vang winch drums (they became overlaid when working the derricks in ports), cleaning the bridge brightwork, and all the other daily jobs in shipboard life as well as, for the Deck Cadet, flags and lights morning and evening and maneuvering bell book when entering, leaving or transits. Occasionally for a 'treat' I would work with Chippy repairing hatch gratings, or with the 3rd Mate cleaning and inventorying the lifeboats.

Likewise, the Engineer Cadet was usually bilge diving for tools, or indeed drying and cleaning them out, cleaning filters, and generally swinging a wrench and hammer with the Donkeyman's dayworkers.

Anyway, one of the items in the workbook was for the Engine Room Cadet to spend three weeks doing my job and me to spend the same three weeks doing his. The Mate and the Chief Engineer, a nutty Welshman called Mick Mallam, decided to swap us out in Cristobal, just before canal transit. Minty Mick put on his best whites and proceeded to the bridge where he promptly sat in the Captain's chair, as he put it 'awaiting Instructions'. By this time, Les had left and we had Norman Williamson, 'Norman the Foreman', as he was known and a lot less affable than Les Tate. Naturally he did not take well to a cadet sitting in his chair or for that matter any chair whilst on watch, to wit he let Minty know in no uncertain terms! Apparently the bellows could be heard all round the decks. Minty had a tough three weeks thereafter but came through the ordeal.

I proceeded to see Mick Mallam, who was under a blower having a mug of tea on the maneuvering platform - steam ships did not have comfortable little control rooms - with Terry, the 2nd Engineer and the Donkeyman, a big Arab from Cardiff called George who never failed to let cadets, deck-boys or the galley boy forget that he preferred 'smalley' boys as they were tighter. Mick suggested I should take the maneuvering job so I could learn what a pain in the arse we were, constantly changing our minds and ringing the bloody telegraph every few minutes. This consisted of answering the overhead telegraph to match the bridge and adjusting either the ahead steam wheel (green paint) or the astern steam wheel (red paint) to give the required revs in the correct direction, and note it in the bell book. (Luckily, she was single screw). I got so proficient by the time we had entered the first loch that Mick went up for a potty break and Terry left me to do some adjustments in the boiler flat. Well, as many may recall, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) leaving a loch was to give the ship a quick burst of speed to gain steerage before backing down to Slow for manoeuvring.

I was ready. I got the order Full Ahead out of Gatun Loch so I manfully swung the ahead steam wheel and spun it all the way to the stop, the ship shuddered as the raw power came on, the rev counter zoomed up towards 125RPM, then alarm bells started going off and all hell broke loose as the boiler dropped below working pressure. Terry was running around adjusting valves like a wild man. It was perhaps lucky that the bridge rang Slow Ahead and I dropped the ahead wheel back to stop 2. Terry immediately came and dropped it to stop 1 and rang the bridge to tell them he hoped he could maintain dead slow until he got the boiler fully back on line. Needless to say, I was not popular, but I felt it very unjust to blame me when nobody mentioned putting the way on slowly to prevent the boiler overload and loss of pressure.

I was now given to the 3rd Engineer for the 12-4 watch. He felt that I should be given easier jobs so he took me to the

# Cadet Goes Bananas *from Chris Hanily (69-70)*

main fuel oil filters and explained the swap over system so that each filter could be removed and cleaned. These were large dirty filters as we burned FFO which was just shy of tarmac and had to be heated to 140 degrees to flow. I remembered my instructions exactly ... remove the off line filter, take it to the work shop, clean with diesel and blow it off with air. Once completed and cleaned, replace it, bolt it down and open the lines so that you can do the other one!!

Right, I had this, I was sure. I took the offending item which is composed of 100s of very thin plates of varying shapes, triangular and square, with washers in between which trapped particles from the flowing oil. They were all mounted on a central rod with a large nut at the bottom. So, I commenced from the bottom, taking it apart and cleaning each plate and washer and putting them in neat piles once cleaned and dry. About an hour later, I was halfway through when the 3rd came in looking for me. He was horrified! I remember his exact words: 'What the F...K are you doing you F.....K...g moron? I give you a simple job and you balls it up....' Followed by 'I hope you F....K...g know how to put that back together because I have never tried to take one apart, and wouldn't know how.' He then explained the correct method which was to take the entire unit, drop it into a bucket of diesel, blow through the fins with an air hose and remount in the valve chest once clean. From these engineering experiences, I learned Engineers never give clear or complete instructions, they must always be questioned extensively to get to the bottom of what they want, and what they say should never be taken at face value unless it's in the context of offering or asking for a cold beer, even they cannot F....K that up!

Late in my six months on *Telde*, the Chief Officer was replaced by Brian Williamson, ex-Cunard and a period ashore in between. I remember that, being ex-Cunard, he tried to teach the Panamanian wire handlers in the canal to slowly back the mule wire out of the fairlead when letting go so as not to scale the deck in way of the free running wire. Unfortunately no amount of sign language gesticulation and poking them with his pipe stem seemed to get the message across.

Perhaps for those unaware of the banana trade, I ought to clarify a few points. In times past, bananas were shipped in stems and wrapped in plastic or burlap, and stacked in bins in the holds. In my time (before containers), the banana was cut into 'hands' and stacked green, in either 30# (Jamaica) or 40# (Central America Chiquita) boxes up to about nine high in the 'tween decks. Carriage temps for boxed bananas were 58°F, sometimes with plantains down to 54°F. Any colder and the pulp would 'freeze' and instead of ripening they would turn black and rot. The larger banana cultivated in Central America is the Cavendish or Grand Nain Hi yellow, disease resistant and hardy. The Jamaica banana was typically the smaller sweeter Gros Michel, a West African variety.

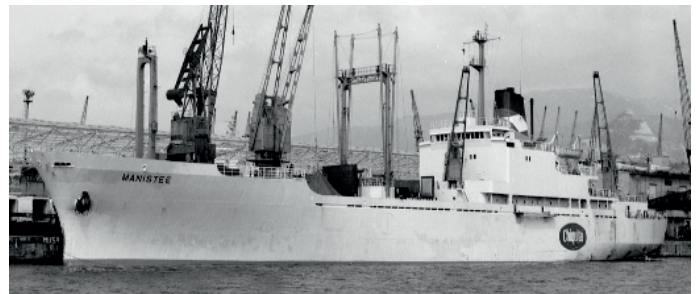
The only Harry Belafonte-type port left was Bowden in Jamaica where the women still carried the boxes to the ship's side door via ramps and, in passing, rang the tally-man's bell. He in turn would drop a tin tally in her apron pouch and, at the end of the shift, she would be paid by how many tallies she had. The men sat inside the holds at the plug hatches and passed the boxes down to the loading deck where they then stowed them. All other ports had overhead elevators with pouches which dropped into the hatch top and down to the loading deck for stowage. Most ports had a reverse system for discharge.

Bananas, like most fruits, cannot be stopped from ripening, only slowed through temperature and gas control, so the cargo is picked and prepared according to time to market, when typically, it should be just turning so as to give the best sales



*Left: Box loading Pt Barrios Right: Stem/Loading/Unloading and shelf time for the customer.*

Needless to say, if ever we had a hatch or, God forbid, a ship load of 'ripes', it was all hands to the pumps to dump 140,000 boxes overboard. We never actually ate bananas on any ship in the Fyffes fleet; the Chief Steward would have been lynched.



My next vessel was the MV *Manistee*, (above) under Capt Brian Hodges. Here I had two junior cadets to look after and help whilst also continuing my cadet's work record book and preparing for Part 1 ONC. Capt Hodges was a big-headed blow hard who considered himself Fyffes' Senior Master. He was known as the Wedge for his huge nose, so shaped. His seniority was disputed by at least one of the other Masters in the fleet and this was attested to by an episode in the Channel where we received a curt message from one of the other ships as to why we had not dipped the house flag to him, upon which Capt Hodges got into a heated argument on the VHF regarding why indeed his vessel had not dipped to us. ('Pricks with ears' is a description which comes to mind.)

Hodges always liked to do his own noon sight, a constant problem to the 2nd Mate who preferred that he did not. The 2nd one day noted that Hodges had left his sextant on the chart table and gone below for something and as the ship was rolling he took the opportunity to remove one of the set screws in the sighting mirror and place the instrument on the deck in time for Hodges to see him picking it back up after it had 'fallen' off the table. His annoyance at not being able to use his sextant was only surpassed in red-faced expletives some months later when the 2nd Mate in question was relieved and as he left the ship, he presented Hodges with an envelope containing the missing screw.

The Chief Officer was an Irish man Paddy Pinkerton who was later Master when I was 2nd in the *Darien*.

We had several misadventures in the *Manistee*. The Bosun left me half way down the topping lifts of #4 crane one afternoon during smoko, as I had wrongly lashed the bosun's chair on two wires which became wider apart the further one went down the topping lift, thus trapping the chair in mid-flight. The bosun had of course seen it but decided to let me learn my own lesson. Needless to say, I learnt that lesson well.

Our Chief Steward was named Ivor Conway, and he began bleeding rectally half way across the Atlantic from the Mediterranean to the USA. Luckily our 3rd Mate who had been in the wartime navy had done two years of medical school prior to joining the MN and was detached to nurse him. I took over the 3rd Mate's watches as I was Senior Cadet, AMVER was contacted and they sent out a US Airforce

# Cadet Goes Bananas *from Chris Hanily (69-70)*



Hercules C-130 with a doctor and Special Forces paramedics aboard and we diverted towards Bermuda. The medics arrived during the afternoon and we circled the ship to reduce wave action

and form a lee, and then lowered the lifeboat to pick them up after they parachuted from the aircraft. I truly wish I had taken some photos but as they say, hindsight is 20/20.

The aircraft continued to circle all day and most of the night whilst the paramedics in contact with the doctor aboard the plane stabilised the Chief Steward's condition, as we continued towards Bermuda, still two days' steaming away. Once stabilised, the plane returned to the US, and the medics continued to Bermuda with us to care for the Chief Steward.

They were really interesting chaps and were the same group that used to jump into the ocean to fit collars on the Apollo capsules at splashdown. Their most recent mission had been to rescue the remnants of Skylab from the North Atlantic. They loved our ship as we had a bar, an item sadly lacking on any US vessel, and we treated them well, for which they left us souvenir parachutes aboard.

I always preferred the steam ships though, as the thunder and lightning machines shook and rattled so much you couldn't leave a beer on the table without it walking across.

Next came four months of ONC - one in Hull. Needless to say, a good time was had by all. I remember one of the Houlder cadets fell for a dustman's daughter, Josie. Let me tell you that a career as a dustman has a lot going for it. Old Fred used to trade out refrigerators and couches and the like which he picked up off the heaps and he always required payment in crates of brown ale so we always had free beer at Fred's council house.



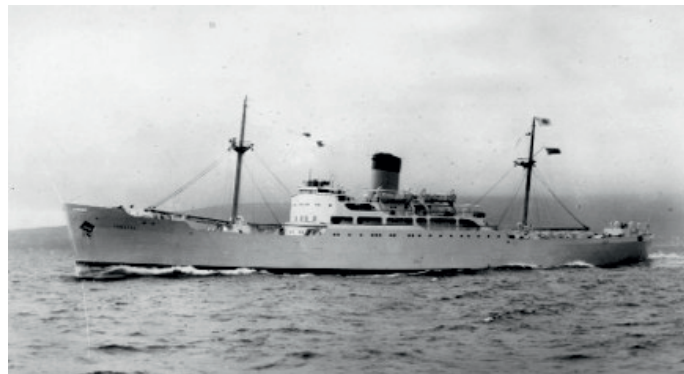
After Hull, I was posted to SS *Camito*, (above), our remaining passenger ship plying between Southampton, Jamaica and Bermuda. She was a good ship and I was Senior Cadet with one other under me. The captain was a Welshman by the name of Morrison (naturally Dai the Miner) and the Chief Officer an ex-Army man from their small boat arm. As Senior Cadet I kept the watch with the Chief Officer and it was a pleasure because, as a passenger ship, there were night stewards and we had sandwiches, coffee and fresh milk delivered whenever required to the bridge.

In Southampton, as I now had a car, I could go home at night provided I was back in the morning at daybreak to put the flags up and turn off the lighting.

As a cadet at sea, it was my job to make the Captain's announcement every day for the day's run sweepstake, and give a talk on our present position and sights we might expect

that day. It was also my job to shepherd the passengers on the Sunday Bridge visits, and stop nasty little boys from pulling corrector magnets from the standard compass as well as explaining what all of the Bridge equipment was (not that we had that much in those days). I remember getting a rocket from the old man about telling some old duffer (apparently the ex-Commodore of Fyffes), who had been given a free trip for his 70th birthday or some such occasion, that the only use for the DF was listening to Radio 1 when in port working in the chartroom.

I had a great time on her but Capt Whitehead, our marine superintendent, decided I couldn't stay on a vessel where my bar bill regularly exceeded my monthly pay! It was thus that I missed her run to Taiwan and the breakers.



After *Camito* was paid off and sent to the breakers, I was placed on the *Chuscal*, (above), an old Glasgow-built steamer (single screw steam turbine service. Speed 19 kts) with 12 passenger accommodation, one of three vessels placed on the Jamaica run to replace the liners *Camito* and *Golfito*, now scrapped. Like many of the older vessels, they were not air conditioned. Even though the cargo was cooled, we were not!! The Captain was Pablo Skelton, famous for playing the trumpet.

In Southampton the HM Customs guys were so thorough they would always find our extra booze so the Mate came up with the idea of hiding several bottles and cartons of cigarettes in my bunk next to me, then telling me to pretend I was asleep. I heard him telling the Customs guys to try to not wake me when they searched my cabin as I had been up all night on the bridge with fog in the Channel!! It worked!!

The *Chuscal* had lost the Chief Officer, two cadets and two crew overboard in bad weather some years earlier, and I remember it being very spooky on the bridge at night on watch. I swear I felt or saw something or someone next to the steering platform and immediately I retreated to the wing for the company of the AB on watch.

Unlike modern ships all the vessels I went to sea on had open bridge wings with a gyro repeater and pelorus on each for bearings and setting up star sites. Most ships had a radar and depth recorder, a gyro, and a radio direction finder, and little else. Some had Loran. All ships were equipped with sextants, chronometers and full sets of navigational tables, lists of Lights, tide tables, and Admiralty guides. Most of the Fyffes ships carried a full world catalogue of Admiralty charts which was the bane of the 2nd Mate's life to keep them corrected, but I suppose you never know who or where they want bananas next.

*To be continued*



## Some We Have Heard From

### Gavin Keyzar (50-52) and Morris Davies (50-52)

From Gavin's daughter Gabrielle

I thought you might be interested to see these photos of a recent meet up between my dear father, Gavin Keyzar, and Morris Davies (both Conway 50-52), at the Hurlingham Club in Fulham, South West London. They had not seen each other in approximately 40 years and we were able to all meet up to celebrate their respective 92nd birthdays! It was Dad's on 18th January and Morris's on the 10th February so it was lovely to celebrate. They had some fantastic stories about their time on HMS Conway. It meant so much to Dad and I could see it meant the same to Morris too. It was a very happy occasion and they were able to reminisce about their days on the Ship.

Unbelievably, the meeting came about as I was having lunch there a few weeks prior to this and recognised Morris, also dining there, from photos Dad had shown me. I went up, introduced myself and exchanged email addresses with Morris's wife. We then arranged to meet, which was an extremely happy occasion for both families.



### Chris Hanily (69-70)

Re-reading my Bio, I must say I had the most interesting career at sea I think of anyone I know. I never had a ship without an incident or at the least some funny stories. Naturally it all ended in the early 80s. I went with the demise of the real cargo ships, I never wanted to sail on the single deckers, tankers, container ships or indeed passengers which are the only options left deep sea. I stopped sailing when the derricks, canvas hatches, wood decks and the like went to the scrappers and when STCW 76 took its toll and finally wrecked completely the industry.

### Mike Foster (56-57)

It has been a long time since I have been in touch with *The Cadet* - your recent features 'OC's Out of Africa' prompted me and has been of particular interest as I was also one of those boys in the mid '50s when I joined Conway.

Reg Holder's (56-58) piece in the January edition was of particular interest and many thanks to him for his reference to me. I was last in touch with him about 12 years ago. I knew him well in the early '50s when we both lived in Mbale, Uganda, meeting up with him (and his two brothers Ian and Keith) during school holidays. He boarded at Duke of York's and myself at Prince of Wales in Nairobi, Kenya, about 400 miles away. Reg followed me to Conway about two terms later after I started the two-year course in January 1956.

I had lived in Kenya from the age of six when my parents emigrated in 1947 and became interested in a career at sea when we got talking to a ship's crew about Conway whilst on holiday at a beach hotel at Mombasa.

On leaving Conway (with the 'Extra' Certificate, Langton prize for Maths - still have the slide rule, Cricket 2nd XI, and winner of the athletics 2-mile walk in my last summer term!!) I joined



Ellerman Hall (City boats!) and served a three-year apprenticeship. Having spent many years in East Africa, ironically, my first short sea trip on the *City of Madras* was back out there to Mombasa and other ports. I recall, when on cargo watch, the native dockers were gob smacked at my grasp of Swahili! At the end of my apprenticeship, I decided a career



at sea was not for me and, with my father's genes pulling, was given the opportunity to spend a week on a large construction site to find out about quantity surveying. The start of a successful 46 years in the construction industry! A pretty tough few years followed to get qualified the hard way, learning my trade at night school and correspondence courses as it was in those days, eventually achieving my goal as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor FRICS, with the final 15 years running my own practice. I worked on a wide variety of projects, a lot in the public sector and probably the most notable (notorious!) being Belmarsh Prison in South London.

After retirement, when living in Suffolk, I met and played a lot of golf with an OC (and author) John Perry of 1953 vintage - sadly no longer with us.

Now in my eighties, my wife Lynda and I live in Lindfield, West Sussex, and are fortunate to be near our families - daughter, son and grandchildren.

### Gordon Wood (62-64)

Due to my folks opting for the expatriate lifestyle in East Africa in 1954, at the tender age of six I enjoyed my first indoctrination of life at sea - the first of many trips with Union Castle as we travelled to/from the UK on long leave every two years and, in between, a number of local leave short coastal voyages with the likes of Lloyd Triestino.

In late 1961 we embarked on a RTW holiday: BI's *Kampala*, Mombasa to Bombay, P&O *Strathnaver* Bombay to Sydney, *Canberra* on her second voyage across the ditch to Auckland, and *Rangitata* Auckland to Southampton, with 2 to 3 week stays in India, Australia and NZ. My folks were very strict and my younger brother and I were tasked with school work every sea-day for 3 to 4 hours. We were both less than keen to begin with but it obviously paid off in the end! As the folks both worked for the E African Railways, much of our travel ashore was by train, on discounted fares, with supplementary car hire Down Under.

Having dropped me off at Conway in January 1962, the folks and my brother completed their RTW trip by Union Castle to Mombasa via the Cape.

By now, I had quite a bit of accumulated sea-time, albeit as a punter. There was also a voyage in Hotel Class on *Transvaal Castle* from Capetown to Southampton during April 1964, having flown out to join the rest of the family at Victoria Falls.

## Some We Have Heard From

Meantime my decision to serve my apprenticeship with BI had been made, with no pressure at all from the old folks.

Finally when I had accrued enough sea-time for sitting Masters, I arranged for my first wife and myself to sail from Auckland to Southampton on *Oriana* (as punters on a 'mates rates fare') which was a five-week voyage. Initially I was disappointed that First Class cabins had sold out, but in retrospect we had a far better time in Tourist. We were the only passengers in Tourist permitted to sign for our drinks, and I received the normal crew discount. I do recall keeping a very low profile insofar as the Deck Officers were concerned, only visiting the bridge once on an organised tour, and not revealing my background, which enabled wifey and I to let our hair down together with some new-found friends!

Those, indeed, were the days and I have many great memories. I also thoroughly enjoyed eight years at sea with BI.

By the way, thanks to my three years at Conway I went directly into their main fleet, thereby avoiding time on the two cadet ships.



### Paul Warren (64-67)

A follow up to my previous articles on the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem.

Although I now have a different role in the Order, I was invited to return to Kibao in April to see how things are progressing with our dental clinic. I was met at Iringa Airstrip by Sr Franciscar who oversaw the project, and has become a good friend. We drove down to Kibao in the hospital's Land Cruiser ambulance, much of the trip being on dirt roads, as the Centre is in a fairly remote part of the country. The clinic is being well used, especially with the only other hospital in the area being privatised and more expensive. It is also open 24/7 which is not the case with the other one.



*Above and second right: Improvements to the Dental Clinic  
Right top photo: Paul Warren with Sr Franciscar and the new dental technician.*

## 'Flu, Anyone?

In the Mersey, every Easter Term, we had an influenza epidemic on board, with as many as seventy cadets down at a time. At Bangor, during the eight years we were there, we did not have one.

*An interesting observation from John Masefield's book The Conway*

## Baltimore Bridge Collapse



ACE American Insurance Company has reached a \$350 million settlement with the owner and operator of the container ship *Dali*, Grace Ocean and Synergy Marine Group, following the 2024 collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge.

The agreement, matching the insurer's payout to Maryland, is one of the first ahead of a major civil trial set for June, though broader litigation continues with total damages expected to exceed \$5 billion. A key issue at trial will be whether the ship interests can limit their liability to about \$44 million under maritime law.

Watch the full PBS Documentary at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aE7i201jc\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aE7i201jc_A)

# Visit to Kenya 1955 *from Patrick Quinn-Young (55-57)*

*(Much of this is taken from essays I wrote in my Cadet's Journal as an apprentice with P&O)*

In the summer of 1955 after my first two terms at Conway, I took the train from Bangor to London and then on to Heathrow. I was 14 years old and off on a huge adventure. I was born in India and after partitioning, my family moved back to Southern Ireland. I had never been to Africa although my grandparents had lived in Kenya where in 1935 they had built a house, near Nanyuki, at the foot of Mount Kenya. The equator ran through the centre of the town and my older sister was born there. It was quite close to Treetops Hotel where Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip were staying when she received word that her father, King George VI, had died.

At Heathrow I boarded a BOAC Argonaut – 4-prop aircraft, bound for Nairobi. It was an exceptionally long flight, with stops at Rome, Wadi Haifa and Khartoum, and very bumpy over the Sahara Desert. The first sight I had of Uganda was etched into my memory. From my window seat on the starboard side of the plane, I had the most wonderful view of Lake Victoria as we approached Entebbe. The runway stretched out into the lake and on either side all sorts of animals were on the banks or in the lake: elephants, buffalo, giraffe, gazelle, zebras and others, as magnificent a sight as I had ever seen.



Three hours later we landed at Nairobi and as we were taxiing to the terminal, I saw my father walking out with others to meet the aircraft. In those days, airport terminals were quite rudimentary, and friends and family meeting

planes could walk out to the aircraft to greet passengers and accompany them to immigration and customs. Before he retired, my father had been superintendent of police in Nairobi, but this didn't speed me through the arrival formalities even though I had my Conway RNR cadet's uniform on. He made sure I didn't get any special treatment.

He'd driven into Nairobi the previous day with two Maasai tribesmen from the farm who had overnighted with their relatives in Nairobi. However, they wanted to see the plane



land, a sight they had not seen before. My father spoke Swahili and introduced them. Laughing, they replied in a few words of broken English. I was impressed by their tall, stately manner and red dyed hair, but I was a little shocked by their earlobes which

practically hung down to their shoulders. They had bare feet and wore very white shirts and new khaki shorts. My father told me he had given them these clothes to visit Nairobi, because on the farm they were not used to wearing any clothes.

He dropped the men off on our way to his cousin and said he'd pick them up early the next morning. Over dinner that night, the chatter was mostly about Mau Mau gangs terrorising towns and villages in Kenya's northwest, how they had killed far more African tribesmen than whites and how the police were managing to round up many around Nairobi. The British Army had been concentrating their efforts in the Mount Kenya region

with some success, but small groups were still causing havoc amongst farmers and tribal villages. I was told to be careful, and because of my age I was advised not to carry a gun. The Mau Mau had spears and machetes but they needed guns and would target anyone to get their gun. My father's cousin, whom I called my aunt, then presented me with a sheath knife and told me to wear it whenever I was outside on the ranch. It was a lovely knife, with about a 5" blade in an antelope skin sheath. It would give me some protection, she said. Until then, I had not been particularly afraid, but listening to all this talk made me uneasy. The newspapers we read at Conway carried some news of the Mau Mau and their brutal activities but I felt sure my father would keep me safe. I had a great admiration for him with his record in the colonial police.



That evening around the dinner table, I learned more about his life and his job. We knew he'd spent his life in the colonial police service. Recently retired, he took a job as manager of a large cattle ranch owned by Hugh Collinson, an old school friend of his, who had offered it to him. After leaving school, Hugh had moved to Kenya, where he'd started a farm from scratch and, after buying more land, grew it to 35,000 acres. And that was where we were heading the next day. My aunt told my father that she'd heard about his bravery in Malaya, when he had been awarded the Police Medal.

He had never told us what happened in Malaya, other than it was regular police work. In Ireland in 1953, my father had returned home on leave before his new assignment to Kenya. One day over breakfast, I remember he'd opened a letter from the Foreign Office which caused him to leave the table. Fifteen minutes later, he returned and sat in silence. Then he announced to our mother and the family, that the Foreign Office had told him he had been invited to Buckingham Palace to receive an award, the Police Medal for Bravery, for an action in Malaya which he had just left after three years fighting in the jungles. Then he told us the story. One day on a road in thick jungle, he was with an army and police convoy when they were ambushed by Communist forces with mortar and heavy artillery fire. The soldiers and police were outnumbered, more than 50 were killed and he was the sole survivor. He told us that many others fought fiercely and deserved the medal more than he did, even posthumously.

Next morning we were up before dawn and, after a quick breakfast, were on our way. With the two Maasai in the back, we reached the northern outskirts of Nairobi as dawn was breaking. But soon the road ran out of tarmac and became packed Murrum clay. Our destination was Rumuruti – 140 miles north of Nairobi, and as the sun rose in the east, the road hugged the hillside as we traversed the Kikuyu escarpment above the Rift Valley. I was sure only goats took this rugged road, but the Land Rover held it well. The escarpment ran for 40 miles looking over the valley about 1,000' or more below us, and every ten miles or so, the road widened enough for us to stop and take in the view. I had never seen anything so stunning. The whole valley floor was completely filled with

# Visit to Kenya 1955 *from Patrick Quinn-Young (55-57)*



countless thousands of every type of African animal. Herds of zebra, buffalo, gazelle of all types, elephant, giraffe and more. The valley stretched endlessly all the way to the

horizon. Driving, we had to be on the lookout for elephants, rhinos or any of the big cats, lions and leopards.

We drove over the heavily pitted and potholed road (*above*) for several hours and stopped for lunch at Thomson's Falls. The Land Rover was open except for the windshield and we were covered in fine red dust. My father knew the town quite well and took us to a restaurant with tables out on a covered veranda. Buckets of water had been placed nearby where all of us, including the two tribesmen, washed our faces and hands and sat at a table. I noticed passers by giving us strange looks, but Dad told us not to care.

After a few more hours, we stopped in Rumuruti (*below*), the nearest village to the ranch. The village was made up of four or five African shops, a few Indian and Arab shops and at the end



of a street the District Commissioner's office next to the police station. My father dropped into both offices, while the Maasai picked up several boxes of supplies at an Indian shop, and then we were on our way again.

'Useful information from the police and the District Commissioner,' my father said. 'We'll be at the ranch in 30 minutes.'

About a mile or so outside the village, some very high fences lined the road for a few miles, and there was some excited chatter between the Maasai and my dad in Swahili. On the far side of the fence, we could see giraffes and zebras. He told me we were passing the big game farm belonging to Carr Hartley (*below: he was well-known for taming rhinos so they were safe to use in films*) – 'Not a very pleasant man,' he said. 'Some very big film studios like J Arthur Rank shoot parts of their films here, because of the wildlife. Rumuruti is 18 miles from the equator, and you will find a notice pinned on the farmhouse stating the equator runs right through our dining room.'

The road ran alongside a narrow canal and a little further on, it joined a wider river. 'The canal was made by Italian prisoners of war. They did an excellent job and the ranch gets its water pumped up from the river. And here we are,' he said, as he slowed and turned to the left, onto what was obviously a well-kept drive. 'Only about a mile up here and we'll be at the farmhouses.'



The two tribesmen in the back became very excited, home from their adventure to a big city and reunited with their families. We slowed down as we approached the houses and they leapt out of the back and disappeared past a grove of

banana trees. 'Here we are,' my dad said, as he pulled to a stop in front of what looked like a huge haystack. Just looking at it, my heart sank. A couple of windows showed that people lived here, and then a door opened and a man came out, two dogs rushing past him to greet my father.

We walked over and I was introduced to Hugh Collinson who said tea would be served in the sitting room as we would be hot and tired. He and my father spoke about Nairobi and what he had just learned from his visit to the District Commissioner and the police. While they chatted, I was intrigued by the house's interior. I don't know what I was expecting but the inside was totally different. Polished hardwood floors with coloured rugs, and wood panelled walls. High ceilings with oil lamps in all the rooms. Several framed paintings and photographs lined the walls. I was shown to my room across the back courtyard attached to my father's thatched cottage. A bathroom adjoined our rooms. I was told dinner would be served at 6, and I should have a bath beforehand.

Dad told me not to be discouraged if the bathwater was a little murky, because it meant the hippos were splashing around close to the pumphouse intake by the river. He suggested I change into my pyjamas for dinner as this was the custom on most farms in Kenya. He gave me a big torch to see in my room after dark, because there were no oil lamps. He showed me where the toilet was – a small, thatched hut about 30 yards from our cottage, and I was to be careful to look out for scorpions and snakes before using it. If I wanted to pee, I should just go behind a bush somewhere – and again watch out for snakes and scorpions. The bathwater was a little cloudy and dinner was really good with a beef roast. I remember it well, because Hugh said, 'We have 2,500 head of cattle on the ranch, so there's no shortage of beef.'



What upset me the most around the table were the huge moths (*left: an oleander hawk moth*) and long brown bug-like creatures flying around the oil lamp above the table. It didn't seem to bother my father or his friend who would just push them off their plates if they fell in. And later, trying to sleep was difficult because of the activity in the walls, which were just thatch. Any large noise and I

would shine the torch on the spot, and a small pair of eyes would look back at me. Then shining the light around the walls, many pairs of eyes would be caught in the glare. Mostly small lizards or geckos, I was told – and all harmless. I imagined that snakes had little eyes also.

Next morning, my father told me he finds it comforting hearing the little noises and sleeps soundly. The houses are made from elephant grass 6-8' long and very tough and durable. A couple of months ago he'd been woken up by heavy grunting and breathing from the wall behind his bed, and as he lay there, a cow's head had stuck its way through. He'd smacked it on the nose and went back to sleep.

At breakfast Hugh told me why there were no telephones in most of Kenya. He said that most of the country is rural and stretching phone lines was too expensive and impractical. The government tried but found that giraffes got their heads caught in the wires, and elephants tended to push the poles over. Most farms and African villages have small radios that bring them entertainment and news, but only a few people have short wave radios for communication. He has one in his office on which he communicated with the District Commissioner most mornings, necessary now with the Mau Mau active in the Nanyuki area.

# Visit to Kenya 1955 *from Patrick Quinn-Young (55-57)*

My father demanded to see my school report. There was a note attached stating I should learn some International Rules of the Road in the school holidays. In true police fashion, Dad interrogated me and I said it was only a few collision rules I need to learn. He won, telling me I had to spend one or two hours each day learning them all. 'Only 32 rules,' he said. 'Learn them in your room in mid-afternoon, in the heat of the day.'

The ranch hands were mostly Maasai and a few Samburu and Turkana tribesmen; each tribe had their own particular identity. The most prominent difference between the Turkana and the others was the large blue mud or clay pack moulded on the top of the Turkanas' heads. For the most part the Maasai were practically naked with long stretched ear lobes, with the odd one wearing some sort of loincloth. The other tribes had some sort of garment over their shoulders, or covering their midriffs. The tractor or Land Rover drivers normally wore shorts. Some of the Maasai had a short sword in a sheath hanging from their shoulders, and most tribesmen carried a spear.

One tall stately Maasai stood apart from the others, with a red robe hanging across his chest from one shoulder and he carried a long ornate spear. I was introduced to Rharndaii. He spoke good English and I was told he was the son of the paramount Maasai chief. He was considered the foreman of the ranch and all the tribesmen looked up to him; he and Hugh Collinson had known each other for a great many years.

I was shown a large flat rock and two shorter flat rocks on either side of it, with the centre rock painted like a checkerboard. It was close to an open space near the banana grove. I was told that this was for the game of drafts that had been taught to the tribesmen. Originally Hugh Collinson had it painted to try and prevent disputes between the tribesmen. It was very popular and as we passed, a couple of tribesmen were playing. Sometimes, I was told, it could get very noisy when each player had supporters watching, and one of them objected



to being huffed. Then the bull whips could be drawn out and a little blood spilt.

There were four Land Rovers on the ranch and Dad drove me around showing me over the 35,000 acres. He said there were about 150 miles of rough roads criss-crossing the ranch which was mostly undulating savannah with wide African flat-topped thorn trees growing all over. The 2,500 cattle were divided into 18 separate herds over the whole acreage, with herdsmen and their families in separate villages, called Bomas, looking after each herd. And because of the Mau Mau activity, each village and herd is protected at night inside a separate Boma (*above*).

Every day we rose early, had breakfast shortly after dawn and then Dad drove me around the various herds and villages. African wildlife was scattered everywhere we looked, many zebras, giraffe and antelope of various kinds, birds of different types including weaver birds and the bustard – the largest flying bird in Africa, of which Dad pointed out a couple of smaller species. There were always a few vultures flying around or on the ground, which required close scrutiny, mostly

antelope or smaller animals killed by lions or leopards, which we saw occasionally. Because each herd was protected by Maasai herdsmen armed with spears, the larger cats usually stayed away from the cattle and concentrated on antelope or zebra. As well as their long spears used as walking sticks, most herdsmen had long whips of hippo hides coiled over their



shoulders to drive the cattle, which needed herding close to each Boma for the night.

I was able to walk around each Boma we visited and was amazed at their structure. Each was a very wide circle of

thorn trees (*above*); from a distance they looked like wooden log stockades. On the outside, the circle of wide thorn tree branches protected the huts of the Maasai families clustered in the middle. The thorns on the trees were long and menacingly protective for the inhabitants inside. All the tree trunks faced inwards, so children playing inside weren't hurt. And each had a deep well for a fresh water supply, with piping leading to a large pond outside for the cattle.

I became friendly with the Maasai boys my age and one in particular had a catapult we would use. Hugh Collinson gave me one of my own and I was impressed that the leather pouch was made of lion's hide. I spoke to the tribal boys in the few broken words of Swahili I was learning and they replied in the few words of English they knew, and we all got along quite well. They practised spear throwing each



evening before sunset and were eager for me to join them so I was lent a spear. The spears were long with heavy steel spearheads and belonged to their fathers. Each was individually made and no spear was identical. They used spears to hunt, which they had to do if they wanted to eat. At first, they nearly fell over laughing at my efforts to run up and throw the spear. They showed me their method of throwing straight from the shoulder – no run up, and no lobbing it into the air. They had a couple of bicycle hoops without the spokes, which one of them would start rolling across the ground, and we would throw our spears and try to pin the moving hoop with the spear.

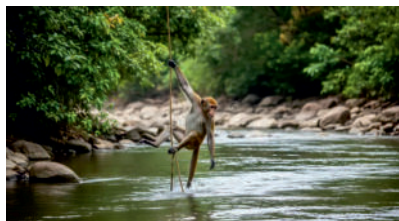
I really enjoyed life on the farm and sometimes in the morning we would walk over the plains visiting the closest Bomas, or down to the pumphouse on the river. Each time we covered several miles. I would always wear my sheath knife and carry a heavy walking stick. The stick was necessary because the ground was undulating and rocky and the spear could be used against snakes. I learned about the different snakes we spotted, the puff adders, black mambas and boomslangs being the most common. I became particularly interested in the rocks we stepped on, because a lot of the time when my stick struck a large rock, it sounded like I had hit a metal pipe from the metallic sound it gave. There was a lot of iron in the rocks.

Checking the pumphouse on the river was always interesting, because that section was shaded by trees with long creepers hanging off them; also it was quite wide and often a troop of

# Visit to Kenya 1955 *from Patrick Quinn-Young (55-57)*

baboons were climbing or sitting on the banks. Usually the hippos were further up because the baboons would torment them. On one occasion, we were about a quarter of a mile from the river when we heard enormous yelps and screams, possibly human, we thought. So we ran down and were shocked to see hippos in the river with one hippo with a baboon in its mouth – swinging it around trying to drown it. The rest of the troop was making a frightful noise on the banks and in the trees above.

The baboons' habit of swinging across the river on creepers and tormenting the hippos was obviously too much, and one had leapt up with its mouth open and caught one. That night the bath water was quite murky and pinkish!



An area covering about 4,000 acres not far from the river was set aside for

the 85 bulls that serviced the 18 herds. They tended to be cantankerous towards one another and several herdsmen managed the bulls. The breed of cattle was Brahman (*below*) and each had a large hump. The bulls were enormous, weighing up to one ton each. The cows and steers making up the herds weighed about 200 to 300 pounds less.

Close to the bull paddock was a large, long cattle dip and once a month, the bulls and all the herds had to be driven through the cattle dip. I was told the large herds were easier to drive through the dip, but it was dangerous getting the bulls to jump in. This is where their

long hippo whips were used effectively. The cattle were prone to tick-related diseases, so regular dipping was needed.



The two border collies came with us whenever we walked over the ranch or out in the Land Rover, and we

had to check them for ticks before they went inside the house. This was my job and not one I liked, because on most occasions I discovered one, two or more. The ticks would bury their heads in the flesh and suck blood. Most of the time they were easy to extract by pulling them out backwards, making sure the heads came with them. On the odd occasion, I would discover one I'd missed from a previous day, and it was like pulling out something as big as a large marble full of blood. On the whole, the dogs were good about being checked.

About two weeks after I arrived at the ranch, Hugh Collinson, the owner, told me his 13-year-old nephew Ben was coming to stay for a week, and he would drive one of the Land Rovers. He suggested I learn to drive one, and when he arrived, we could both drive together over the ranch. So he arranged for one of the tribal drivers to give me driving lessons. He also told me he would be taking Ben home to Nairobi after a week and then he'd be flying to Canada for a month to see his family.

The next day, one of the drivers, Lemuyu, whom I had met a couple of times, appeared at my door wearing shorts and carrying his spear. He had car keys in his hand and motioned I should follow him. His English was very limited and my Swahili wasn't that good. With his spear lying between us, he drove the Land Rover a little way onto an open farm road, stopped and pointed to the steering wheel, gear lever, brake and clutch pedals, naming each one. All the names he gave me ended in 'A': Wheel-A, Gear-A, Brake-A, Clutch-A and Key-

A. This part was the easiest. But then he instructed me in Swahili how to start, pointing to the key, wheel, clutch and brake. And we moved on slowly. He then stopped, got out and motioned for me to take over. I pressed the starter button, put my foot down and we shot forward with a jerk. He put his hand on his spear, mouthed something, then laughed. We tried again several times, with him pointing to the gears, accelerator and speed. There was nothing on the road, only a few Thompson gazelles, giraffe and zebra grazing not far away, so we couldn't hit anything. After about an hour he decided to drive home. We were met by my father who spoke to him and the two were laughing. Dad told me I would require a couple more driving lessons and said I should be ready to go the following two mornings.

I did a little better on the second day, and by the end of the third day's lesson, I was driving well enough for Lemuyu to smile and say things in Swahili I presumed were complimentary. He told my father I could now drive on my own.

On most afternoons I studied the Rule of the Road for an hour or so in my room, with my dad testing me every few days. It wasn't the most uppermost in my mind, with the African Savannah all around me.



*To be continued*



**Did you know that this cruise ship has an ice skating rink on board?**

# From The Archives

## 60 Years Ago - April 1966

Julian Holt (*right*) became Chairman of Conway's MMSA Management Committee, replacing Sir John Nicholson Bt CIE who had been Chairman since 1959. Julian's father Leslie Holt had been Chairman from 1934 to 53. Julian served in Blue Funnel, rising to 2nd Mate, before leaving the sea to complete his education at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was also Marine Manager of Elder Dempster, President of Kirkby & North Liverpool Sea Cadets unit, an Executive of Liverpool Boys' Association and a Director of Outward Bound, Aberdovey. He had served on Conway's Management Committee for the previous 12 years.



## 70 Years Ago - Tuesday 30th October 1956 - The Ship Burns

Nearer home, it has been an eventful term. As a photograph in this edition shows, the old Ship is no more. On 30th October, while being dismantled, sparks from an acetylene cutter set fire to the timbers in the vicinity of the old lamp room and despite efforts to extinguish the fire, aided by a high wind it soon spread from bow to stern, and the Ship with all her valuable timber burned to the water line. Only at low water can anything be seen of the once proud hull. Dismantling operations are still in progress and many old souvenirs of her past have come to light, including a beam with the words "Nile, 1835" cut into it, and round shot that must have lain in her ballast for nearly a century. Applications for souvenir timber should be forwarded to the ship breakers, The Underwater Welding Co., Ceris, Menai Bridge, but owing to her multiplicity of fastenings such timbers as can be salvaged are not of much value other than as mementoes.

The old Ship died a Viking's death and we are not sorry to see her go. She was no picture as she lay there broken and twisted and the pity is that if she had to go like this she did not do so soon after she ran ashore, but having seen how she burned we can all be thankful she did not catch fire seriously when in commission.

## 90 Years Ago - Summer 1936 - Flying Boats

At last the powers that be are recognising the fact that the sailor is the man most suited to pilot the new passenger flying boats, and Imperial Airways Ltd will place on their waiting list the names of Conway Cadets who possess the Extra and Air Certificates. The additional qualifications required are 2nd Mate's Certificate, 2nd Class Navigator's Licence, PMG's W/T Certificate, 500 hours flying in the RAF, and a medical certificate of fitness. It is a step in the right direction and it is foreseen that the Board of Trade will recognise service as a Short Service Commissioned Officer as equivalent to, say, one year at sea, also that the examinations for Air Navigators will be conducted by the same examiners as for Masters and Mates. It is the sailor's privilege to command passenger flying boats.



*In April 1939 Old Conway, Captain Kelly-Rogers (19-21), a pilot with Imperial Airways, landed his flying boat Connemara on the Mersey and moored next to the Ship. He had reported a "slight engine default" off Holyhead and diverted to the safety of Liverpool where he was able to effect running repairs: a pint of oil from Conway.*

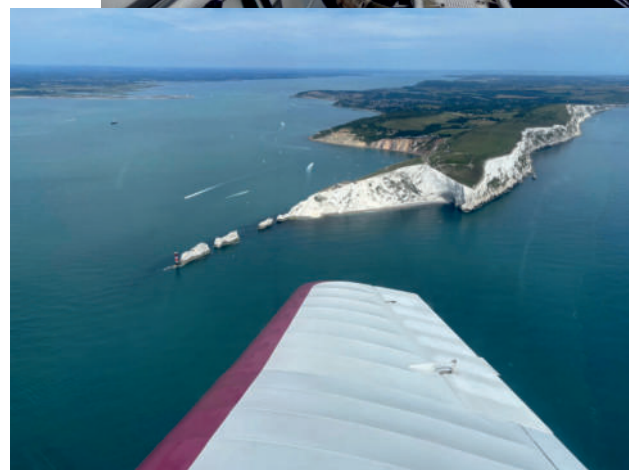
## Recognise This Bridge?



Recognise this bridge? The Menai Bridge featured in last year's *Journey Through Britain* calendar, on the cover and for the month of May.

# Mount Kelly

This year 10 pupils have been sponsored by the CMNT for Tall Ships Youth Trust voyages (TSYT) linked to the D of E Gold award. Two pupils who sailed with the TSYT in 2025, Bailee and Ryelee, recently attended Buckingham Palace to receive their Gold awards. Photos of the other students on this year's voyages are below.



The CMNT will be present at the Careers Fayre at Kelly on 25th September, advertising careers at sea in the Merchant Navy,

*The photo on the right shows the Needles IoW (western point) up to Cowes. This is the transit route of the TSYT ships from and returning to their Portsmouth base. It was taken by Conway Club President Paul Heaver from his light plane. Paul was a senior BA Captain, now retired, and owns with friends a light aircraft on the South Coast.*

# Colour Perception? *from David Parry (61-65)*

## Is It Time To Change Our Views On Colour Perception?

Some years ago, having been made aware that technology could now correct colour perception (colour blindness as we used to erroneously call the issue) through the use of lenses, I had cause to investigate the issue of colour perception and its implications to mariners. What follows is what I found out. On a basis of no-names-no-pack-drill, I can say that I was given advice and expert opinion by a long list of notables embracing academia, the ophthalmic profession, mariners, associations of various descriptions and, of course these days, the internet.

I started, unsurprisingly, with the MCA. It appeared that the recommendations for eyesight standards to the MCA were based on the work, study and advice of City University's London's Visual Sciences Department, notably a study conducted for the DoT in 1998 which does not yet appear to be in the public domain. The two reasons given to me by the MCA for not allowing colour perception corrective lenses were that the efficacy of lenses diminishes with diminishing ambient light. In other words, with dusk, twilight and darkness, a watchkeeper could not see so clearly through tinted/Chromogen contact lenses or spectacles.

The second reason was based on an interpretation of human nature: watchkeepers (let's call them the Officer of the Watch or OOW) could not be relied upon to wear their contact lens or spectacles at the appropriate time.

Dealing with the second reason first, it is based on the very real aspects of human nature and behaviour. In this case it supposedly reflects the practice of OOWs. That reason, in its present form as a supposition, is insupportable. It makes a judgement of action (or non-action) well before any event and, I suspect, even any empirical evidence. Let us put it to one side for the moment.

The first reason, however, is a firmer statement that has the resonance of science about it. Whether reduction in efficacy of a lens is a scientific exactitude is for others to explore and debate. Rather, let us accept the incontestable that it would be more difficult to find one's way around at night if you had to look continuously through a pair of tinted lens. It is rather like wearing sunglasses at night; not conducive to good watchkeeping at all. Indeed, the manufacturer of Chromogen lenses, Cantor-Nissel, advise against wearing their lenses at night for these very same safety reasons. But let us also return later to when and how you should use a lens to correct colour deficiency.

In the meantime, a City University expert averred a different



reason for not allowing lenses to correct colour vision deficiency. The reason, (and here I paraphrase but none the less I believe I have the right interpretation), is that a lens will not 'correct' colour deficiency in the same way that a lens for long or short sight will correct a deficient eye up to the 6/6 standard. It is difficult to contest the issue of 'correction' and, indeed, this advocacy was repeated by all the optometrists I consulted. They all seek perfect correction. In the same breath, however, they talk about colour perception while acknowledging that perception is subjective. In other words, that I can see a tree is a matter of acuity, but the green colour of the tree may not be the same colour green as you see it, and that difference in colour perception cannot be quantified in the same way as, say, the height of a letter on a wall chart from six metres.

What is important is that we both agree the tree is green. And that means we can make the differentiation from other colours. And that surely is only what is required of an OOW: he/she needs to determine that a light or mark is green as opposed to red or some other colour. The hue, intensity or other description of the colour is immaterial. Think of paint colour charts. The colours may all be green but the hues, intensity and names differ on the colour card and in the viewer's eyes. How easy it is to differ with your partner's perception of a colour!

So, when watchkeeping at sea, we do not need to correct colour deficiency to the same degree as visual acuity problems. If the differentiation can be made, that is all that is really required.



# Colour Perception? *from David Parry (61-651)*

Yet we remain with this fixation of achieving the colour equivalent of '6/6 perfection'. Other organisations and countries have taken a different view. The US FAA and the Australians, for example, allow pilots with colour deficiencies to fly large jets.

If we consider how we are to achieve this colour differentiation/perception in an unequivocal and safe manner, then I think we have to look at two aspects: the technology available and the practice of mariners. This brings us back to the MCA's reasons for the prohibition of lenses.

Interestingly, all the optometrists consulted had a firmly embedded idea that someone wearing colour vision correction contact lenses or spectacles would do so all the time. The second MCA reason reflects directly this same idea.

Of course, it is easy to see why this idea has materialised: because of the long/short sighted spectacle and ubiquitous habit of sufferers to wear their contact lens or spectacles all the time and as a matter of course.

But optometrists are not mariners. Mariners and maritime associations consulted took another view: it is vitally important to have a high level of visual acuity all the time whilst watchkeeping, and spectacles should be used if necessary to achieve this acuity. The occasions for colour recognition, however, are far less frequent.

So, how does a mariner conduct themselves when on watch? Well, I doubt that few experienced mariners will contest much this typical scenario, relevant to the bridge of a VLCC or the cockpit of a small yacht. Nor, as one optometrist endeavoured to argue, does the weather or sea state play much of an interfering part. As the RYA said, 'We (seafarers/yachtsmen) do bad weather.'

On watch, the OOW will typically detect another ship by visual lookout by himself or be alerted to it by a lookout watchkeeper or by radar. Every experienced OOW will then pick up a pair of binoculars and look down the line of bearing. This action ventures into the 'unconscious competency' realm of the brain; it is both habit and good practice. It is worthy of note, having personally observed many such actions, that OOWs who wear spectacles, will often remove them to look through binoculars – substituting the lens of the binoculars for their spectacles to maintain their compliance with the MCA standards.

At this point, the OOW needs to check the other vessel's masthead lights to determine the activity of the vessel eg underway and making way, minesweeper, not under command, sailing vessel et al, and thereby what avoiding action, if any, he should be contemplating. The other most important need for the OOW is to determine the other ship's bearing movement and her heading or his own angle on the bow to that vessel. For bearing movement, the OOW uses the pelorus. For heading/angle on the bow, the OOW looks at the angular relationship between the two white masthead lights if the vessel is carrying them (and in which case the differentiation between red and green side lights is less material) or which sidelight or sidelights the other vessel is showing, in which case colour differentiation is essential.

How could the colour deficient OOW achieve this colour recognition? Well, he could use contact lenses but as we have already identified, this is not a good practice at night. He could use spectacles fitted with special lenses. Of course if the OOW had 6/6 visual acuity, he would only have to put the spectacles on to identify the coloured lights and would not have to wear them all the time. But that gives a problem for those OOW who need to also correct their visual acuity and it also gives the OOW a problem of having to look through binoculars

wearing spectacles. As we have seen, it is often the habit of spectacle wearers to take them off to look through binoculars.

Alternatively, the colour deficient OOW could use the lenses of the binoculars in both the same way as any other OOW and to identify the coloured light if the binoculars were so fitted.

Ah, say the naysayers, what about seamarks? Well, it is a fortunate mariner indeed who gets to see his seamarks in colour all the time, especially when he is initially searching for them usually from some distance. Fortunately the likes of Trinity House are wise to these problems and so seamarks have shapes, topmarks and light characteristics (odd flashes to starboard, even to port!) that differentiate them and allow them to be seen and identified in hostile environments. For example, when the sun is behind them.



But the real message here, the key tool to identifying the lights of a ship and seamarks, is binoculars. Without binoculars, an OOW will feel naked, possibly threatened. Binoculars are an OOW's most dependable, indispensable and well-used instrument. What if binoculars could be modified to correct for colour deficiency?

Well, they can, quite easily. One initiative is from a German physicist based in Grottingen. This physicist has approached the subject of colour vision deficiency from a physicist's angle rather than that of an optometrist. He can define a lens that responds exactly to an individual's colour deficiency (other lenses tend to be generic). This lens can be made into a contact lens, spectacles or more interestingly, be incorporated in a pair of OOW's binoculars. So, with some modern science and a little bit of instrument-making engineering, an old tool can be adapted to take a lens, or lenses if it is deemed better to incorporate red, green and blue lens, enabling an OOW today to identify coloured lights and seamarks.

Of course, it is at this stage that the howls of dismissal from the seafaring establishment can be heard. What an Australian authority calls the 'Protectors of the Standard' so let's have a look at another aspect of colour deficient mariners - Risk.

Neither the MAIB nor CHIRPS can recall any incident or accident at sea occurring as a result of colour deficiency. (CHIRPS recall one incident as a result of misidentification of a light. I am sure history could produce many such examples but they are a result of human error rather than human deficiency).

## Colour Perception? *from David Parry (61-651)*

The protestors will now, and with some authority, argue that the reason there have been no such accidents is an endorsement of the colour vision standards. But if they believe that there are no colour deficient seafarers sailing the world's sea lanes, they delude themselves.

The RYA has, over the years, certified some hundreds of thousands of leisure sailors to command both yachts and power craft. They have certified some 2,000 Ocean Yachtmasters with the authority to command vessels up to 25m in length. That is just an indication of the possible number of people at sea within the UK; there will be many more, for certification is not compulsory. Multiply that by all the leisure sailors from the other European countries, the USA, Australasia etc. and you have a potentially huge number.

The RYA guesstimate that, of the 25,000 Yachtmasters, some 10-20% are female. Taking the highest proportion, that leaves 20,000 male Yachtmasters. Statistically some 10% of that 20,000 – 2,000 Yachtmasters - will have colour deficiency. (Only 0.4% of females are colour deficient). Yet to achieve the Yachtmaster certification, they have not had to go through any vision testing process. But they will have to have proven night time experience and they will have undergone what is by any standards an exacting examination. They will have had to prove to the examiner their ability to handle a vessel safely at sea, at night and in varying conditions. It is no surprise that the RYA has won international respect as the de facto standard.

Moreover, these colour deficient Yachtmasters will most probably have taken that exam, in part at least, in shipping-dense and coloured light-rich environments: the Channel area, for example.

They qualify and off they go through the Dover Strait, the Gibraltar Straits and the Malacca Straits. Yet still we get no reports of accidents generated by colour deficiency. The risk probability must be extremely low.

So how do these colour deficient Yachtmasters do it? Simple. It's a combination of training, knowledge, understanding, situation appreciation, use of charts, plotters, radars, commonsensical seamanship – and, possibly, correction lenses, who knows? But one thing is for sure, they have all the physical and mental capabilities we expect of a competent OOW and Navigator.

As I stare at the photograph of my grandfather on the bridge of his ship on my office wall, I am instantly reminded of how long it was before it was accepted that spectacles could be



worn for bridge watchkeeping. In his day, before wheelhouses, you were not allowed to wear glasses at all, I believe. Indeed, from my own experience when I first went to sea, one could not initially wear glasses although, as eyes deteriorated with age, they were allowed. Now the wearing of glasses is common - commonsense has finally won – the ancient technology of a glass lens is accepted. We can even apparently have one-eyed Mates with 6/6 vision in their remaining eye, happily practising their profession as long as they can use a lens to correct their eye. But do we have to wait an equivalent length of time as the introduction of the use of spectacles at sea before we accept the difference the capability of a little modern science and instrument engineering can make, to enable colour-deficient seafarers to also practise their profession?

## U-2540

U-2540 (*right*) was a late-war German Type XXI U-boat scuttled by her own crew in May 1945 near Flensburg. She lay submerged in the Baltic for twelve years until the West German Navy raised her in 1957. After the lift, she was towed to Kiel and completely refitted at Howaldtswerke, then recommissioned in 1960 as Wilhelm Bauer, a research and test submarine. For the next two decades she served in trials for sonar, propulsion, and later submarine design, finally ending naval service around 1980.

In 1983 she was turned over to the German Maritime Museum and opened to the public in Bremerhaven the following year. The raising was impressive because she had been underwater for over a decade, yet the hull was stable enough to restore. Today she remains the only surviving and floating Type XXI submarine, preserved almost in her wartime form, showing the leap in underwater design that came too late to change the war but shaped every modern submarine that followed.

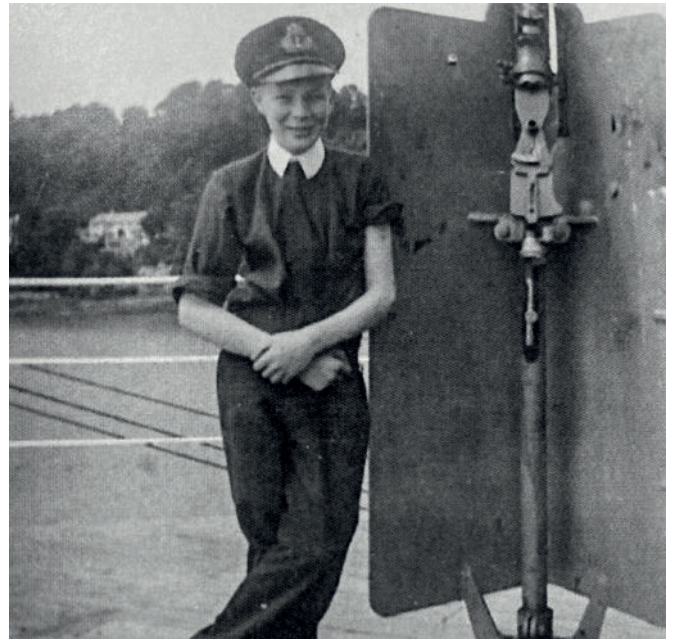


# Obituaries

## David Fletcher-Rogers (43-45)

David Geoffrey Fletcher Rogers (43-45) Crossed the Bar peaceably at his home on 17th December 2025 aged 98. He was born on 20th May 1927 in London but he always made out he was a Scouser; even his Facebook page lists his home town as Liverpool.

His father was a barrister who joined the Colonial Service as a magistrate (later a judge) so David was soon packed off to St Edward's boarding school in Oxford. David's great uncle was an OC and, influenced by him, David joined HMS Conway, in the Menai Strait, in September 1943. The photo on the right shows him on the Fore Deck in 1943, next to one of the two machine guns that had been installed for the Ship's defence. He completed a two year course, leaving in July 1945. He did not excel but his conduct was always rated as Very Good and his ability as Above Average. He earned an Extra Passing Out Certificate, proving he had special academic ability. He joined Alfred Holt & Co but it is unclear if he actually went to sea. He did join the RNVF and was engaged in decommissioning ships after the war. The sea was not his calling so instead, like his father, he became a barrister, specialising in trademark, patent and copyright law, and was Called to the Bar in 1954. He was an 'employed barrister', meaning he worked for businesses rather than in court. He found that 'employed barristers' were not considered to be 'real barristers' and were barred from being an advocate in the senior courts. David showed his mettle by taking on the Bar Council to seek reforms. In 1965 the Attorney General accepted his arguments and the Bar Association for Commerce, Finance & Industry was formed, 2000 'employed barristers' were granted equal practising rights with the barristers in the Inns of Court and given fourteen seats on the Bar Council. This changed hundreds of years of tradition and so was an incredible achievement for a relatively junior barrister. David also helped many OCs with legal issues. To give just one example, he helped an OC fighting a disputed injury at sea and won him a lump sum payment and pension. David was a true friend who stood by people through thick and thin.



seemed supportive, but plans were scuppered when Cheshire Council did a backroom deal with the British Shipping Federation to obtain Conway's buildings and facilities and create the Conway Centre. Without premises, the Club's plans foundered but only David had been audacious enough to try.

Cheshire also announced that all Conway's assets would be sold at a closing down sale, meaning many important artefacts would be lost. David fired up the Club President, Capt David Smith RN, and together they approached Conway's Headmaster, Basil Lord, and insisted that the Club should find long-term homes for key items like the figurehead, ship's wheel, bell, anchor and silver cups. Lord agreed and all of those artefacts remain safe today, keeping HMS Conway's name in the public eye. Indeed, our HMS Conway Memorial Cups Award Scheme is only possible because David acquired all the cups for the Club in 1974.

Nothing sums up David's indefatigable spirit better than the next story. Just before Paying Off Day in July 1974, David received a call from a member of Conway's admin staff (naturally he had spies in the camp!). She had just been instructed to throw out all of Conway's official records, including over 100 years of Cadet Registers. They were literally going into a skip the next morning. David immediately arranged for a large truck to go to Conway and collect everything which was then delivered to his home near Dunstable for safekeeping. Without those records, we would know nothing about Conway's 11K Cadets.

Closure threatened the Club's future as the only effective way it could communicate with Members was through *The Cadet* magazine whose publication would end with Conway. While other Committee members worried, David acted. By the end of 1974, he was single-handedly producing a Club Newsletter, going to over 2,000 OCs around the world. A single A4 sheet at first, it quickly grew into the 20 page Club Newsletter that is still going strong today as *The Cadet* magazine.

Closure also meant the Conway ensign could no longer be worn on OCs' vessels, a great blow to many. David solved the problem. He helped launch the Conway Cruising Association, approached the Admiralty and got them to agree the Association would be empowered to authorise use of the Conway ensign. A privilege enjoyed to this day on boats and at funerals that otherwise would have been lost.

As Secretary of Conway's Centenary Appeal Fund, he was the prime mover in realising the Conway Chapel at Plas Newydd that opened in 1971 and which is still in use today. His fundraising was so successful, there were funds left over but



His time in the Ship forged a deep love of Conway that remained with him for the rest of his life. His achievements for Conway are simply unparalleled. But for David's determination, at the time of closure in 1974 the name of HMS Conway could have disappeared and we would not have the Club Cruising Association or The Friends.

Closure meant the end of Conway

training but David, the Club's long-serving Secretary, could think big and he quickly convinced the Committee that the Club could take over the Ship and make a better job of providing Conway training than Cheshire Education Authority. He obtained legal advice on how to take control, created a detailed financial plan showing how things could be turned around, produced a syllabus, marketing campaign and much more. Sceptics became believers - this could work - even Cheshire

David had a plan; a Conway charity to preserve Conway's good name. In due course, and with the help of many others, the Centenary Appeal Fund morphed into the Friends of HMS Conway. A charity that has done, and continues to do, so much to keep the memory of HMS Conway alive. That in turn led to the creation of Conway House at Mount Kelly College which is prospering to this day.

In his spare time he produced two pamphlets about Conway: *Conway & The Falklands* and *For Valour*, produced in collaboration with the Hon Sec of the Association of Old Worcesters and describing Conway's and Worcester's VCs.

No matter what our relationship with him, we all experienced that same irrepressible personality, that charming manner, steely determination and infectious smile. In person, and in every photo of him, he was either smiling or had that infectious, mischievous, yet slightly intimidating look on his face that was always about to break into a smile. He could be the best of company, a deeply caring man and was always on a mission. He was a 'doer' who wanted the world to be better and so could be frustratingly single minded to the point of distraction but his heart was always in the right place. He was the most helpful friend and understanding confidante.

For OCs, David's fingerprints are absolutely everywhere. He did more than the rest of us put together to keep the name, memory and spirit of Conway alive. That was acknowledged in 2014 when he was made a lifetime Honorary Vice President of the Conway Club. We are all forever in his debt.

## Anthony D Braithwaite (47-49)

Dad was the youngest of three brothers, and was predeceased by Peter and Michael, both of whom he was always very close to. They grew up in Catford, though they were separated for several war years. Subsequently Peter and Michael ran the family company Braithwaite and Dean, a Thames lighterage firm which had been started by their father in the 1920s,

It was during a summer holiday in his teenage Conway years that Dad made his first sea voyage, as a supernumerary on a small ship carrying relief supplies from London to Hamburg soon after the end of WWII. The destruction and desperation he saw in Hamburg that summer affected him deeply and made him question many of the ideas he had developed during the war years. He particularly mentioned seeing a man stamp on a young girl's hand when she tried to pick up a discarded cigarette butt and his disgust at that casual cruelty. I think this experience contributed to the development of his clear understanding of how we in society can support and help one another, and his deep commitment to both charities and institutions.

Dad started his career with Port Line, serving first as a cadet on *Port Victor* in 1949 on a voyage to New Zealand, and finishing up as Captain of *Port Montreal* in the mid 1960s with a voyage to Canada and USA. He made many friends on board the various ships he served on, and developed a great affection for Australia and New Zealand, finding many new friends there also. The seagoing Port Line phase of his life was very important to him, and he remained a keen supporter of Vintage Port which has continued to hold regular gatherings for previous Port Line staff over many years.

It was while he was docked in New Zealand that he met and married our mother Jane; they were happily married for 35 years, until she sadly died in 1994. Amanda, Rosemary and I were born while the family were living in Ewell, next door to my mother's sister Veronica and our cousins, with whom we spent a lot of time, as we also did with our uncles, aunts and cousins from Scotland and the New Forest. When Dad came ashore we moved to Blackheath, where he lived until his final move to The Royal Alfred Home For Seafarers in 2024.



CAPTAIN A. D. BRAITHWAITE, R.D., R.N.R.  
MASTER 1993-1994

After coming ashore, Dad continued to work in the shipping industry. He didn't resign from companies, they changed around him in a series of mergers and breakups, and his workplace shifted from the London docks to various London offices, to which he was often commuting by car with his close friend Pradeep, who was always a great help and valued support.

In parallel with his career at sea, Dad was also an officer in the Royal Naval Reserve which introduced him to the Royal Naval College, where he attended Convoy Commodore courses, and for a long time, was a member of Mess which had the Painted Hall as its Mess Hall, meaning the dining room was invariably far more impressive than the food! He became a Captain in the RNR and, while he never saw shots fired in anger, he did receive a wound certificate after his finger was accidentally run over by a British truck during the Cod Wars between UK and Iceland. While in the RNR, he also served as ADC to the Queen, a role that gave him a very impressive uniform and, as an ardent monarchist, was a great source of pride.

Dad retired in about 1991, but he was busier after retirement than he had been before it. Charity work was always important to him, and he became more involved with the King George V Fund for Sailors, the Royal Alfred Home For Seafarers, and Trinity House. He was also a committed supporter of the Sea Cadets based in the old Royal Naval College. He spent time working with the Samaritans and invited their founder Chad Varah to a dinner on board *Wellington*, when he was Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners which, along with the Company of Watermen and Lightermen, was an important part of his life. He was later awarded the OBE for his charity work.

In the late 1990s Dad married again, to Ann, and they had many happy years together, living in London and travelling abroad, spending time mostly in New Zealand and Australia, but also in

Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Ann died in 2017, after which Dad's health started to decline and he needed help to live at home.

Dad was a charming man, empathetic, caring, and also stubborn when it suited him or was needed. Working together with many wonderful and dedicated people gave him a sense of pride and purpose, and a wide circle of friends.

Dad always had a fund of great stories to tell about the amusing and extraordinary events that occurred throughout his life. When he eventually became head of personnel at a division of Cunard, which had by then absorbed Port Line, he dug out his own original file from when he was hired as a cadet, and he found a note from one of the company's directors which said: 'Please give young Braithwaite a chance. If he's no good, you can throw him out. I just hope that he doesn't drink as much as his father.' And he probably didn't, as that would have been quite a challenge, although Dad was indeed an enthusiastic drinker for most of his life.

Dad's passing, in the care of the wonderfully kind staff of The Royal Alfred Home for Seafarers, which had been so important to him for so long, and where he spent the last 19 months of his life, was peaceful, and we know that he was ready to move on. And finally, now that Dad has Crossed the Bar, we all hope that he has found peace.

### Joseph Sassoon (43-44)

Born in 1927 in Kirkcudbright in the south west of Scotland, Joseph left school aged 16 and enrolled at Conway which at that time was moored off Bangor in the Menai Strait in North Wales.

He was a Cadet there between 1943-1944, living and studying on board, qualifying in boat handling in which he excelled and which became useful in later life. Whilst at Conway, he also attended the recently set up Outward Bound Sea School at Aberdovey where he completed a month-long course and was awarded a County Badge certificate.

At the tail end of the war, he joined the merchant shipping line, New Zealand Shipping Co, by then part of P&O, out of Liverpool and London, as a junior officer on the MV *Essex* with trips to Australia and New Zealand.

Post navy, he returned home and joined the RNLI and for many years, was second coxswain and laterally coxswain on the lifeboat in Kirkcudbright.

He attended university and qualified as a teacher in Geography. Back in Kirkcudbright, he also taught evening classes in Navigation. For many years, he maintained contact with colleagues from his Conway days including the Conway Scotland branch where he attended many get togethers.

His passion was always sailing and whilst owning a dinghy moored on the River Dee in Kirkcudbright, he also enjoyed many years of cruise sailing on the *Solway Maid*, a much admired Fyfe-built sloop moored on the Clyde.

Cruises which he skippered involved weekends down the Clyde and longer excursions to the east coast of Ireland, North Wales, the Isle of Man and the Outer Hebrides.

He enjoyed retirement, reading and holidays, and was fit and independent up until the end of last year when he entered a



*Joseph is on the top left of this photo*

private home locally. He died peacefully surrounded by his family in Dumfries hospital in April this year aged 98, two months short of his 99th birthday.

## Roger Henry (56-58)

Roger Henry was born in Rangoon, Burma, on 13th November 1940. He and his mother had to leave Rangoon when the Japanese invaded in 1941 and they spent the duration of the war in India. His father remained in Burma to fight the Japanese.

After the war, the family returned to Scotland and, when his parents returned to Burma, Roger remained in Glasgow with his grandmother. In 1956, Roger enrolled at Conway and left in 1958 to join Blue Funnel Line as a midshipman. He remained in Blue Funnel until the company sold off its ships. In 1967, he married Linda and they had three children together.

After Blue Funnel, he became a Berthing Master at the Flotta Oil Terminal in the Orkney Islands, where he and his family enjoyed 18 happy years before he retired. The family returned to West Kilbride in Ayrshire, and Roger enthusiastically took up golf, curling and fishing.

For the last few years of his life Roger suffered from increasingly poor health, but carried on bravely. He died on 8th April with his family in attendance.

## We have also heard of the passing of:

Paul T Burkey (62-64)                      Nicholas Galitzine (58-61)  
Geoffrey K Whittaker BEM (58-60)   Peter JM Wilson (64-66)

## Did You Know . . . ?

**Pipe down:** A boatswain or 'bosun' was a ship's officer who was, amongst other duties, in charge of the crew. He would issue different orders to crew members by changing the sound patterns blown on his 'call'. 'Pipe down' was the last order of the day for off-duty crew to stop talking, settle down or go to bed. Today the phrase 'pipe down' is still used to tell someone to be quiet.

**Flake out:** This phrase comes from when a crew would 'flake out' an anchor chain (lay it out flat) on the deck to check the chain link for signs of wear. Today, to 'flake out' is to be completely worn out or fall asleep.

**Hitched:** At sea, when a sailor joined two ropes together they were said to be 'hitched'. Now, this phrase colloquially means to get married.

# Branch News

## Australia - Queensland

The lowering of the OW ensign in Brisbane took place on 21st May at the Jack Tar Memorial at Queensland Maritime Museum. OC Charles Lunn (60-62) attended, as did Geoff Rae (OP) Hon Sec CWPB Association.



## Australia - Western Australia

A sea school reunion was held at the Albion Cottesloe on 10th June. Attending were OC Danny Ravn (61-62), three OC widows, Margaret Wichman, Hilary Worthington and Noray Jones, and three OWs, plus 1 OP with wives. Lunches are held at the Albion 2nd Wednesday March, June and September.

## Australia - New South Wales

No meetings or lunches held since Christmas 2025 due to falling numbers. An effort is being made to combine lunches with the 'League of Ancient Mariners NSW'. They have an interesting website - [ancientmariner.co.au](http://ancientmariner.co.au) - well worth a look.

## Branch Contact Details

### UK

**N West** Peter O'Donnell (66-68)

[p.m.odonnell@btinternet.com](mailto:p.m.odonnell@btinternet.com)

**East Midlands** Tom Mason (56-59)

[tom.mason41@ntlworld.com](mailto:tom.mason41@ntlworld.com)

**Scotland** Tom Astbury (69-72) [tom\\_astbury@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tom_astbury@yahoo.co.uk)

### OVERSEAS

**New South Wales** Malcolm Burgess (56-58)

[malntinaburgess@gmail.com](mailto:malntinaburgess@gmail.com)

**Western Australia** Mike Sargeant (OW)

[marmike@inet.net.au](mailto:marmike@inet.net.au)

**Queensland** Geoff Rae (OP) [bengairn\\_rae39@gmail.com](mailto:bengairn_rae39@gmail.com)

**Vancouver** David Whitaker (52-54) [whitknit@telus.net](mailto:whitknit@telus.net)

## Canada - Vancouver



We continue to have monthly lunches with colleagues who attended other schools. However, the average number participating has fallen slightly. Mostly this has been because of age or health.

There was a planned 'Conway Only' get together for April. It looked like there would be a party of eight for lunch but on the day, only Ian Hopkinson and I were able to attend with our wives.

But, on 3rd June, we had an impromptu gathering at Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver. Seated around the table at the King Taps restaurant on Lonsdale Quay are, from the left, Ian Hopkinson (54-56) and Dianne, Ann Tranter, Joan and David Whitaker (52-54) and Don Tranter (52-53).

If anyone wishes to be involved in our gatherings and needs further information, they should contact me at 604 536-6160 or at [whitknit@telus.net](mailto:whitknit@telus.net)

## UK - East Midlands

On 6th May the East Midlands Branch held their Spring Lunch at St Elphins Park Orangery, Darley Dale, Derbyshire.

Members were delighted to welcome as their guests, the Conway Club President, Paul Heaver and his wife Kim. Lt Cdr John Heath RNR (44-45) was the Senior Hand attending.



# Branch News

## UK - Scotland

In May, Scottish OCs gathered for the annual Spring Lunch, at the Malmaison, Edinburgh in the historic Port of Leith. The hotel building is the converted C19th Seamen's Mission and Sailors Home.

A group of 18 OCs and partners enjoyed good food and great company. We were once again delighted to be joined by President Paul Heaver and his wife Kim. Also in attendance were Tom Astbury (69-72) and Ruth, Steve Barnet (65-68) and Rowena, Sandy Dennison (57-59) and Marion, Ron Forsyth (56-58), Martin Fraser (63-66) and Kathy, Graham MacLeod (67-69) and Una, Robin Sneed (63-64) and Mary, Neil Smith (63-65), Emlyn Williams (66-69) and Patricia.

The annual Scottish Autumn Dinner and overnight stay will take place sometime during the week beginning 16th November, details will be circulated. Visitors from elsewhere are always welcome.



*The photo on the left came from President Paul Heaver at the Scottish Branch Lunch. L-R Jock MacLeod, Emlyn Williams and Paul Heaver. Paul says, 'I sent this one as Jock, Emlyn and I started on Conway in the same term, September '66.'*

## UK - North West

NW Branch holds lunches every month except August at The Refreshment Rooms in Rock Ferry. If you are not a current regular and wish to join us, please contact Peter O'Donnell (66-68).



# What a Load of Balls! *by Michael Howorth (64-67)*

*Michael Howorth explores cannon balls, brass monkeys and the colourful language of the sea*

If you thought the language of the sea was all salt and seriousness, think again. In the grand tradition of yesteryear, let's set sail on a voyage through the colourful world of nautical expressions and the remarkable stories behind them. From cannon balls to brass monkeys and beyond, the heritage of maritime life is woven into everyday speech - sometimes in ways you'd never expect.

## Wooden Ships, Iron Cannons, and Powder Monkeys



Picture the age of sail, when mighty warships and busy freighters ruled the waves - wooden hulls braving the high seas, crewed by men (and boys) of steel. Piratical threats loomed large, so ships bristled with iron cannons, their muzzles jutting through the gun ports, ready to hurl round, iron cannon balls at would-be attackers. Keeping these guns supplied was no small feat; enter the powder monkeys (*left*), often lads as young as ten, scurrying up from below decks with cannon balls and gunpowder for the gun crews.

### Stacking the Balls: The Birth of the Brass Monkey

With the ship rolling and pitching, simply leaving cannon balls loose was a recipe for chaos. The solution? Stack them in a square-based pyramid—one on top, resting on four, then nine, then sixteen. Thirty balls neatly arranged and ready for action. But what kept the bottom layer from slipping? A metal plate, known as a 'monkey', with sixteen round indentations to cradle the balls. Iron was the material of choice, but the salty sea air soon had iron balls rusted fast to the monkey.

Necessity being the mother of invention, brass monkeys made their entrance. Brass, less susceptible to rust, seemed ideal - until cold weather struck. Brass contracts much more than iron so, in freezing conditions, the indentations shrank and the balls rolled away. Thus was born the phrase: 'Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.' Next time you hear it, spare a thought for the chilly cannon decks of yore, rather than any risqué double entendre.



## Broadside Banter and Hotshots

Cannon balls didn't just shape the arsenal, they infiltrated our language. Delivering a 'broadside' of criticism harks back to the dramatic tactic of firing all the guns on one side of a warship simultaneously, a manoeuvre immortalised in sea shanties like the *Ballad of Nelson's Death and Victorious Glory* following Trafalgar:

*Broadside and broadside our cannon balls did fly,  
and small shot like hailstones on deck did lie.  
The masts and the rigging were all shot away,  
beside some thousand men that day,  
were killed or wounded in the fray.*

And what of the 'hotshot'? Today the term is reserved for those with a flair for showmanship and a touch of recklessness, echoing the days when a sailor would heat a cannon ball in the galley fire and use it for warmth on cold watches. The bold, brash approach to docking, full throttle and total faith in the engineer's stopping power, finds its roots in these fiery traditions, rather than any marksman's prowess.

## Other Salty Sayings

To be '**had over a barrel**' is to be helpless, a phrase with two possible nautical origins. In rescue, a near-drowned sailor was draped over a cannon barrel and rocked back and forth to drain his lungs, survival at the mercy of the rescuer.



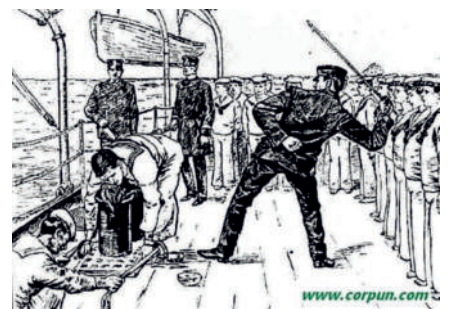
More grimly, it could refer to the practice of flogging, with the unfortunate deckhand tied over the barrel, at the mercy of the boatswain and his whip, or the infamous 'gunner's daughter'. When the punishment was over, salt was rubbed into the wounds, not just to cure, but to sting. Salt preserved meat for long voyages, but as an antiseptic, it added insult to injury, giving us the saying still used today.

### Sons of Guns and Maritime Mysteries

The cannon deck held secrets of life as well as war. Before the days of female deckhands and lady Captains, the only private place aboard for a woman to give birth was a makeshift canvas shelter near the guns. A child born in such conditions earned the moniker 'son of a gun', a phrase that lives on long after the Royal Navy ended the practice of wives at sea in 1840.

### A Grain of Truth in Every Ballad

So, next time you let fly a broadside, call someone a hotshot, or claim it's cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey, remember: these everyday sayings are steeped in sea spray and stories from the gun decks of history. There's a grain of truth in every ballad, and perhaps, just a little bit of balls as well.



## THE SEVEN AGES OF "CONWAY"

*"You can tell which Term they're in by their clothes."*

*—Anonymous Wardroom quote.*



**FIRST OF ALL** there is the **CANDIDATE**. His hands are permanently sewn into his pockets. He makes extravagant claims about his prowess at **RUGBY**, and almost invariably wants to be **CAPTAIN** of the "**QUEEN ELIZABETH**". He dreams about **SHIPS**.

The **NEW CHUM** always seems much **SMALLER** than he was when a candidate—except for his **CAP**. His uniform has been made for **HIS GROWTH** and he has not discovered that cap canes **COME OUT**. He dreams of **MUMMY**.

In his **SECOND TERM** he jumps on his hat, throws away the cane and calls the result a "**BEATTY ROLL**." He becomes **HUNGRY** and slavers down his **S.B. blouse**. The flesh shrivels away from inside his legs so that he becomes **HOLLOW-LEGGED**. He dreams about **FOOD**.

The **THIRD TERMER** is strong enough to work but does not over-indulge in it. Sometimes he has to carry buckets of **YAK** which he spills on his trousers. His cap is **SHOCKING** and everyone looks forward to his next term when he will get a new one from the **SAILORS' HOME**. He dreams of **BEDS** and **SLEEPING** in them.

"**SENIORITY WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY**" is the hunting cry of the **FOURTH TERMER**. He is issued with a new cap but prefers to wear his old one and calls it his **COALING CAP**. In fact he always appears to be coaling or about to coal and he wears a **Rugger shirt** perpetually. He becomes **INTELLECTUAL** and reads **PETER CHEYNEY** or **ETHEL M. DELL** according to taste. He dreams of **BLONDES**.

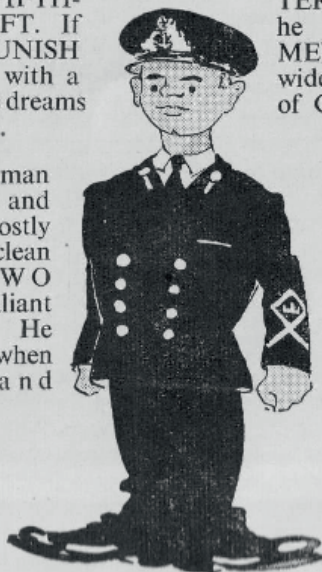
The cap of a **FIFTH-TRIMMED WELL AFT**. If carries a **HUGE PUNISH** practises assiduously with a **TEASERS**. He dreams **BOTH ARMS**.

The **SENIOR** man the cap-cane and wears one—mostly frequently he has a clean carries **FORTY-TWO** with him in a valiant "**CONWAY**" **EXTRA**. He respectable as he did when **NEW CHUM** and **ABOUT SHIPS**.

**TERM** man is always he has a **RATE** he **MENT BOOK** and wide selection of **GOLD BRAID** on

has re-discovered sometimes even on **SUNDAYS**. **COLLAR** too. He **BOOKS** around attempt at a looks almost as he was a **VERY** **HE DREAMS**

G.A.B.K.



# Friends of Conway



This has been a mixed year for the Friends.

At the end of December, our Treasurer retired, and the work was initially taken over by our Secretary. We are looking for a volunteer to take over the post of Treasurer. It is not an onerous task but it involves attending the two meetings we have each year in Rock Ferry and preparing the accounts (with help). Should anyone feel able to consider this task, they could contact the Secretary.

Several Trustees have had their terms expire and they have retired from duty. We are therefore short of Trustees and would welcome interest from anyone who believes they can help.

A big thank you to Alfie Windsor, who is one of those who has retired. He has been at the forefront of all matters concerning The Friends, including the *Way Ahead* documents on finding homes for our artefacts and, of course, arranging our new windows. We wish him well.

The dedication of the new Conway window was on Saturday 18th April and about 80 people packed out the little church for the service. The local BBC TV news was there and filmed the event. I can't find the

broadcast but a summary of the service is at [www.bbc.co.uk/cymrufyw/erthyglau/cm29dy3yvmdo](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cymrufyw/erthyglau/cm29dy3yvmdo) If you paste that address into Google Translate (website option), you get the report in English. Three Welsh-speaking OCs were interviewed but only one made it into the report. The window looks absolutely splendid. We laid up a Conway ensign which will stand next to the window. They also have a model of the Ship. The church authorities are absolutely thrilled with it. There will be a designated information sheet about Conway and the window for visitors. The church is much visited as it is on the Anglesey coastal path.

The window was funded and arranged by the Friends of HMS Conway and supported by many donations from OCs. Lots of OCs attended just for the day and about 20 others had a residential weekend in the Conway Centre. The Club and the Friends held a joint reception after the ceremony. The Friends' Chairman and the Club President both took an active

part in the service, which was led by our own Simon Douglas Lane.

We thank all who contributed to the window appeal.

The Priory is open as usual. We look forward to a good summer.

For any further information contact the Secretary. Details inside the front cover.

## Father's Day at the Chapel



# A Message From Your Shopkeeper - David Pye (62-64)

Are there any 'Old Conways' out there?? If there are, I haven't heard from you!!! The shop is still going with most things still in stock.

Although the Club is now in the twilight years, you still remain 'Old Conways' and should be proud to show off the Conway Crest or the Castle on our ties.

I was on a plane recently going to Alicante and the chap two seats along by the window, on waiting to get off, noticed my jumper with the Conway Crest. For the next five minute or so, we talked about the school as his father had been in the Ship. Similarly when visiting my sister in the middle of Devon, a neighbour approached me and said his brother had been on Conway. It is very enlightening to be recognised with a feeling of pride. Both of these men showed a certain amount of respect, knowing I was an 'Old Conway'.

So what I am trying to say is we are still known, so show off the crest which is on every piece of clothing sold, and be proud of it.

## Accessories

|                       |                                           |             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Conway Tie</b>     | OCs only                                  | £23         |
| <b>Cummerbund</b>     | Black with Conway Crest<br>(only 1 left)  | £30         |
| <b>Blazer Badge</b>   | Gold and silver                           | £13         |
| <b>Blazer Buttons</b> | Old Conway Club design - large<br>- small | £2<br>£1.50 |



|                             |                                  |     |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Cuff Links</b>           | Enamel Conway Crest              | £10 |
| <b>Lapel/Tie Pin</b>        | Gilt with Castle design          | £6  |
|                             | Gold plated with Conway Crest    | £8  |
| <b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b> |                                  |     |
| <b>Coasters</b>             | Polished Welsh Slate 4" diameter | £5  |
| <b>Wall Shield</b>          | Wooden, hand painted             | £50 |
| <b>Umbrella</b>             | Vented Golf. Black and White     | £24 |

## How To Order and Pay

Contact David email (Preferred) david\_pye22@hotmail.com

## Reference Codes and Descriptions of Shop Lines (revised October 2024)

- 265M Russell Hooded Sweatshirt. XS-XXL £34 3XL-4XL £38**  
**Material:** 80% combed ring spun cotton/ 20% Polyester.  
**Colours:** Black, White, French Navy, Bright Royal, Bottle Green, Light Oxford, Convoy Grey, Classic Red, Burgundy, Mineral Blue, Indigo Blue, Olive Green, Urban Grey, Sport Heather, Mocha, Fuchia.
- 430M Russell Cross Padded Jacket. S-4XL £90** **Material:** Polyester outer and lining. **Colours:** Black, French Navy.
- 762M Russell Raglan Sweatshirt. XS-XXL £21 3XL-4XL £24** **Material:** 50% Polyester/50% combed ring spun.  
**Colours:** Bottle, Bright Royal, French Navy, Black, Burgundy, Classic Red, Light Oxford, Bright Red.
- 870M Russell Outdoor Fleece Jacket. XS-XXL £35 3XL £37** **Material:** 100% Polyester.  
**Colours:** Black, Bottle, Burgundy, Classic Red, Convoy Grey, French Navy, Royal Blue.
- Russell Chest Sizes: S(36/38) M(38/40) L(40/42) XL(42/44) XXL(44/46) 3XL(46/48) 4XL(48/50)**
- RG027 Regatta Vertex 111 Waterproof Jacket. S-3XL £97** **Material:** Isotex 5000 coated polyester twill microfibre.  
**Colours:** Black, Navy, Dark Olive.
- RG187 Regatta Tyla Diamond Quilted Bodywarmer. S-3XL £48** **Material:** Quilted micro poplin polyester.  
**Colours:** Black, Navy.
- RG631 Regatta Ablaze Three Layer Soft Shell Jacket. S-3XL £46** **Material:** Warm backed woven three layer soft shell XPT.  
**Colours:** Black/Black, Navy/Navy, Seal Grey/Black.
- RG672 Regatta Erasmus 4-in-1 Soft Shell Jacket. S-3XL £90** **Material:** Warm backed woven soft shell XPT three layer fabric. **Colours:** Black/Black, Navy/Navy, Seal Grey/Seal Grey.
- Regatta Chest Sizes: S(37/38) M(39/40) L(41/42) XL(43/44) XXL(46/48) 3XL(49/51)**
- H400 Henbury Heavy Poly/Cotton Pique Polo Shirt. XS-XL £19 XXL-3XL £20 4XL-5XL £23.50**  
**Material:** 65% Polyester/35% Cotton **Colours:** Too many to list. Email for total colour chart.
- H724 Henbury Lightweight Sleeveless Cotton Acrylic V Neck Sweater. S – XL £29 XXL – 4XL £32**  
**Material:** 50% Cotton/50% Acrylic. **Colours:** Black, Navy.
- Henbury Chest Sizes: XS(34/36) S(36/38) M(38/40) L(42) XL(44/46) XXL(48) 3XL(50/52) 4XL(54) 5XL(56/58)**
- FR1 Front Row Original Rugby Shirt. S–3XL £39** **Material:** 100% ring spun combed cotton single jersey.  
**Colours:** Black, White, Navy, Bottle Green.
- FR100 Front Row Classic Rugby Shirt. S-XL £29 XXL- 5XL £31** **Material:** 100% ring spun cotton single jersey.  
**Colours:** Black/White, Navy/White, Red/White, Bright Green/White, Navy/Navy, Royal Blue/White, Surf Blue/White, White/White, Deep Burgundy/White.
- Front Row Sizes: XS(34/36) S(36/38) M(38/40) L(42) XL(44/46) XXL(48) 3XL(50/52) 4XL(52/54) 5XL(54/56)**

## Reference Codes and Descriptions cont'd

**K352 Kustom Kit Arundal Cotton Acrylic V Neck Sweater. XXS-3XL £33**

**Material:** 50% Cotton/50% Acrylic

**Colours:** Black, Navy, Graphite Grey.

**Sizes:** XS(32/34) S(36/38) M(40) L(42) XL(44) XXL(46/48) 3XL(50/52)

**SS620 Fruit of the Loom Iconic 195 T-Shirt. S-XXL £10 3XL-5XL £12**

**Material:** 100% ringspun combed cotton.

**Colours:** Too many to list. Email for total colour chart

**Sizes:** S(35/37) M(38/40) L(42/43) XL(44/46) XXL(47/49) 3XL(50/52) 4XL(53/55) 5XL(56/58)

**RC010P Result Heavy Cotton Drill Pro Style Cap £8**

**Material:** 100% heavy brushed cotton drill

**Colours:** Black, Navy, Putty, Red

**Size:** One size

## STOCK CLEARANCE SALE

| ITEM No. | DESCRIPTION                                      |                      | WAS        | NOW   |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------|
| SSS620   | Fruit of the Loom T-Shirt                        | White XL             | £10        | £7    |
|          |                                                  | Black 2XL            |            |       |
|          |                                                  | Deep Navy XL         |            |       |
| 539M     | Russell Polo Shirt                               | Red XL               | £19        | £13   |
| H400     | Henbury Polo Shirt                               | Bottle Green 2XL     | £19        | £13   |
|          |                                                  | Royal Blue XL        |            |       |
|          |                                                  | Sapphire Blue Medium |            |       |
|          |                                                  | Burgundy XL          |            |       |
| K352     | Kustom Kit V Neck sweater                        | Black XL             | £33        | £22   |
| 762M     | Russell Sweatshirt                               | Royal Blue Large     | £22        | £15   |
|          |                                                  | Bottle Green 2XL     |            |       |
| FR001    | Front Row Rugby Shirt                            | Black/White Large    | £39        | £25   |
| FR1      | Front Row Rugby Shirt                            | Navy/Slate 2XL       | £31        | £20   |
|          |                                                  | Purple/White XL      |            |       |
|          | Waistcoats (Same material as ties)               | 48" 46" 44"          | £35 (Sale) | £20   |
| 430M     | Russell X Padded Jacket                          | Black XL             | £95        | £60   |
| RG187    | Regatta Quilted Bodywarmer                       | Navy 2XL             | £48        | £33   |
| FR903    | Gilet Diamond Quilted                            | Black 2XL            | £49        | £33   |
| 265M     | Russell Hooded Sweatshirt                        | Light Oxford Large   | £34        | £22   |
|          |                                                  | Black XL             |            |       |
|          |                                                  | Burgundy XL          |            |       |
|          |                                                  | Convoy Grey 3XL      |            |       |
| 870M     | Russell Outdoor Fleece                           | Convoy Grey Large    | £35        | £24   |
| RG027    | Regatta Waterproof Jacket                        | Olive 2XL            | £93        | £60   |
|          |                                                  | Navy L               |            |       |
| RG631    | Regatta 3 Layer Soft Shell Jacket                | Seal Grey/Black XL   | £42        | £28   |
| RG672    | Regatta Erasmus 4-in-1 Jacket                    | Navy/Navy 2XL        | £95        | £60   |
|          | Car Sticker                                      |                      | £1.50      | 75p   |
|          | CD Conway Bugle Calls and Hymns                  |                      | £7         | £5    |
|          | Yalding Jute Bag with Conway Crest 15"x 13" x 6" |                      |            |       |
|          | Natural Hessian Colour with Blue Gusset          |                      | £7         | £5    |
|          | Mug White with Conway Crest                      |                      | £8         | £6    |
|          | HMS Conway & Plas Newydd Booklet A. Windsor      |                      | £10        | £5    |
|          | Pens with Conway Name and Motto. Assorted        |                      | £5         | £2.50 |

Note. Pictures of most of the sale items are shown on the website. However, if further pictures or information is required, just contact your 'Friendly Shopkeeper - David'



# HMS CONWAY TRUST

## HERE TO HELP

The Trust helps Old Conways who have fallen on hard times or who have become ill. We can help to make your life better such as the examples below:

Emergency short term funding

Purchase of equipment to make your life easier

Assistance with transport

Carer relief

\*\*\*\*\*

ALL CORRESPONDANCE, APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE SHOULD IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BE SENT

TO: Felicity Smith

HMS Conway Trust Secretary

tel: 07912 879898

8a Bicester Park Homes

Bicester, OX25 2NY

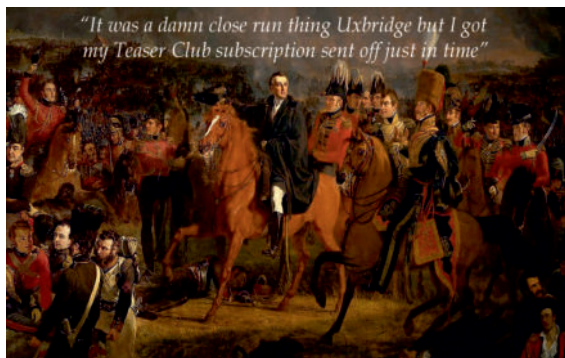
email [felicity1.smith@btinternet.com](mailto:felicity1.smith@btinternet.com)

You can help **us** by becoming a **subscriber** in order that the Trust can continue its work

Further information contact the Secretary at the address above.

(registered Charity number 275366)

## Teaser Club



The Club still urgently needs funds to support *The Cadet*. Our main source of income is the **TEASER CLUB**. This gives subscribers two chances during the year to win a prize:

**The Teaser Club Draw takes place twice a year and each draw comprises a top prize of £250 and 5 prizes of £150.**

An annual subscription costs £50. Full details are available at [www.theconwayclub.org/wp/shop](http://www.theconwayclub.org/wp/shop).

### HOW TO PAY:

**Standing Order:** set up a standing order from your bank to the Conway Club. This can be for the full amount or for £5 per month.

Bank Details: Bank: HSBC;  
Sort Code: 40-34-12;  
Acct No: 71537946;  
SWIFT: MIDLGB2108H;  
IBAN: GB92MIDL40341271537946

Or visit [theconwayclub.org/wp/shop](http://theconwayclub.org/wp/shop) where you will be able to pay using any debit/credit card in any currency.

**Please include the reference 'Teaser Club' in all transactions.**

## THE CONWAY CLUB TEASER SUBSCRIPTION

### STANDING ORDER AUTHORITY

**Please complete the Standing Order form below and send it to your own bank.**

To: Bank

Bank Address:

Account No:

Sort Code:

Account name:

Please pay the sum of £ on the day of 202... and on the same date each year / month until further notice to HSBC Account for the credit of THE CONWAY CLUB

Account Name: The Conway Club

Account No: 71537946

Sort Code: 40-34-12

Subscriber's Name:

Signature

Address:

Date: