



BOLLARD...PULL

*United Towing & Salvage Society's Magazine
Now incorporating "Galley Radio"*



No. 5, June 2017

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Our thanks go to the following members for articles published in Edition 5 of Bollard Pull.

Pete Bass for *All in a Year’s Work*, *Bustler*, *Jacaranda*, & *Rights of Passage*.

Brian Pinkney for the Loss of *Castledore* article.

Pete Elsom for his diary.

Eddie Barker for the SMS story and HDM Flashback..

David Proud for Shipwreck in Falmouth.

Mike Murphy for his excellent memorial to the *Englishman*.

Galley Radio

As members will remember the committee decided to discontinue the “Galley Radio” as a separate publication, instead incorporating it into a new format “Bollard Pull”. This is the first edition in the new format and we hope to publish the magazine every four months now, rather than six as before.

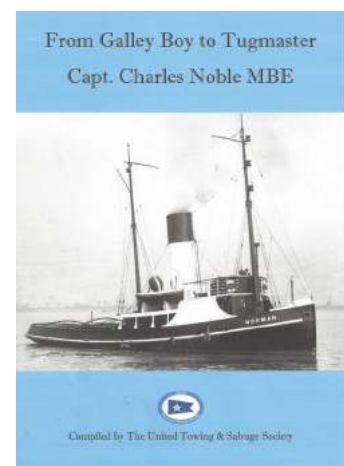
This is done to cut down on the administrative burden as well as reducing our costs. I hope that members will like the new format. As I’ve said many times, if you have any stories or want to contribute to the publication in any way please contact myself or one of the other committee members. Contact details can be found at the front of this publication.



1. “From Galley Boy to Tugmaster”

The long awaited book by Capt Charlie Noble is now in the hands of the printers and we hope to have copies for sale within the next couple of weeks. Price to the general public is £13.99 and to members only £10.

Copies will soon be available directly from the society or through the Hull at War shop, Whitefriargate, Hull. We are also in talks with other outlets in the Hull area, including a major high street chain of bookshops. More info on that when arrangements have been finalised.



2. Hull Daily Mail supplement



The Hull Daily Mail produced an eight page “Flashback” supplement on Monday 19th June featuring UTC. All in all it was a good piece, the only real errors were that a couple of wrong photos were attached to articles, particularly notable being the story about the *Englishman* (1938) lost with all hands during WW2. Unfortunately a picture of *Englishman* (1965) was displayed. I don’t imagine the general public would know any different but I’m sure our members and other tug enthusiasts will have spotted the mistake. For those members not in Hull the supplement is included in this edition of “Bollard Pull”.

3. Veteran’s weekend, East Park, Hull.

After the success of last year’s event we are once again participating in the East Park Veteran’s Weekend. Last year we put on a very good exhibition which created much interest amongst the general public, resulting in quite a few new members. We also had lots of enquiries made about relatives who had worked on the tugs in years gone by.

This year the weekend event is on 29th and 30th July at East Park, Holderness Road, Hull. If you think you can help out please get in touch with one of the committee members.



UTSS display at last year’s Veteran’s Weekend.

4. Frenchman & Yorkshireman exhibition 2018.

Next year the society will again be holding an exhibition in the Hull Maritime Museum, this time featuring the tugs Frenchman and Yorkshireman when they operated out of Bridlington as excursion steamers.

The museum has intimated that we can have exhibition space for about four months, but the exact timing of that has yet to be agreed. More info will be available in due course.



Frenchman (1899)



Yorkshireman (1928)

5. Viola Trust

Members will remember that back in February we made a collection on behalf of the Viola Trust. We were delighted to see that our member's generosity far exceeded our target of £500. We did in fact raise a total of £1200 exactly. That was presented to Paul Escreet at the offices of SMS in Hessle on 7th March 2017. Thanks go to all who so generously donated.

The trust is trying to raise about three million pounds to bring home the trawler. For more info please see the trust's website at - www.viola-dias.org – Full details of the trust follows over the page.



Viola Trust - UTSS cheque presentation 7th March 2017

Viola Trust

Charity Number 1168950

Date Registered 2016-08-30

Contact Name MR PAUL ESCREET

Telephone 01482 350999

Address

OCEAN HOUSE, WATERSIDE PARK, LIVINGSTONE ROAD, HESSLE, ENGLAND,
HU13 0EG

Website <http://www.viola-dias.org>

Email pescreeet@smstowage.com

Trustees

MR DOMINIC JOHN WARD, MR NICHOLAS RICHARD LAMBERT, MR PAUL ESCREET,
DR ROBB ROBINSON

Governing Document

CIO - Foundation Registered 30 Aug 2016

BACK UP COAST TO WAR-TORN VIETNAM, OUT AT SEA IN CYCLONE FROM A 32,000 MILE TOWING TRIP - BUT IT'S ALL IN A YEARS WORK!

The telephone in the radio room buzzed. The radio officer took the message, deciphered it and handed it to the skipper. It had come from Hull and read quite simply: "Take your tug to Hong Kong, refuel, pick up a dredger and tow it to Vietnam through the South China Sea."

For Capt. Alf Varley the instructions were perfectly straightforward. They just meant another day's work and another hop for him and Britain's most powerful tug, the *Englishman*, on their 32,000-mile, 12-month towing trip.

Sixty-year-old Capt. Varley, who lives at 98, Rustenburg Street, has been master of the Hull tug since it was built and launched from Selby in 1965. He has been with the tug's owners, the United Towing Co., for 45 years.

When the tug dropped anchor in the Humber on October 25 and the 13-man crew stepped ashore, they had just notched up 32,790 miles and had not seen the familiar Humber skyline for a year.

The trip is the equivalent of circumnavigating the world one and a half times.



POWERFUL

As larger and more powerful tankers are being built, the demand for more towing power has to be met.

When Capt. Varley puts to sea in the *Englishman* he takes with him 5,000 horses. The 5,000 horse-power tug is 145ft. long with a 33ft. beam and carries 305 tons of fuel. The *Englishman* is crewed by a towing master, navigation master, first mate, three engineer officers, four deck hands, a cook steward and a radio officer.

During her year away from Hull, Capt. Varley and the tug keep in touch with the nerve centre of the company's operations, its office building overlooking the Humber Estuary in Nelson Street.

There Capt. B. W. Garrod, The Marine Superintendent, keeps mile by mile track of her position and can issue instructions, sailing orders and advice as each particular job crops up.

"As we complete one job we get inquiries for another and send the tug off".



Englishman (1965)

NOT LONGEST

"The trip which the *Englishman* has just completed was a long one but not the longest one of our tugs has ever undertaken.

"In 1957 the *Tradesman* was caught on the wrong side of the Suez Canal when it was closed and was away from Hull for 18 months." said Capt. Garrod.



Tradesman (1946)

Capt. Garrod's company has 29 tugs at the moment and all are based in Hull. Of those, 12 are sea-going vessels and the remainder look after the port of Hull, the Humber and Goole.

The work the tugs are involved in is varied. When the ill-fated oil rig *Sea Gem* keeled over and collapsed in the North Sea, the *Englishman* and three other tugs stood by in the Humber on Boxing night to assist.

THE FOURTH

In the 45 years Capt. Varley has worked with the United Towing Co., there have been four tugs named *Englishman*. The present tug is something of a home from home as far as the crew is concerned. It has to be. Hot and cold running water, showers and shaving points are just some of the pleasures of 1968 tug life.

At the moment the *Englishman* is in dry dock re-fitting and Capt. Varley is resting with a few bottles of beer. His leave ends in January and then, in the words of Varley the wanderer, "Who knows where."

Capt. Varley, the adventurer, talks modestly about the faraway places with strange sounding names he and the *Englishman* looked in during "just another year's work."

We sailed first for Rotterdam to pick up a pipe-laying barge and made for Dakar on the West African coast for fuel. "Then we went south to Cape Town to refuel again and wandered up in the Indian Ocean, on to Mombasa and into the Persian Gulf."

NOT WORRIED

"We picked up a tanker in Bahrain and brought it down to Singapore. Then went back up to Hong Kong, picked up a dredger and towed it off to Hue in Vietnam.

On the way back through Sumatra, Cape Town and Durban we re-floated one ship, picked up a loaded tanker and towed it back to Rotterdam and then back to Hull," said Capt. Varley. As he said, all in a year's work.

According to the *Englishman's* skipper, the only really eventful period during the whole year was when the tug came to grips with a cyclone in the Indian Ocean, and the vessel was lashed around in mountainous seas by 100mph plus gales. "That was a little unpleasant, but the *Englishman* was built to take any kind of weather you might meet and we were not really worried." he said.

The gales did, however, delay work a little, as the ship the *Englishman* was towing was damaged during the 48 hours they were up against the cyclone and had to be tugged into port for repairs.

CHANGED

Capt. Varley and his crew were not really aware of the fierce fighting which was raging in Vietnam when they were around. "We docked at daybreak and set sail again before lunch. There was a bit of activity from inland aircraft, but they never bothered us," he added.

Capt. Varley has worked on the tugs for 45 years and laughs when he is asked how many sea miles he might have covered. "Goodness knows, but I'd be all right if I were paid mileage," he laughed. "One thing I will say, though, is that since the days when I started as a boy the whole tugging business has changed vastly. On the old steam tugs, you used to sleep on top of an old boiler and it really was grim. "Now we have air-conditioning, fridges and fresh food all the time.

Before the war we used to set sail with barrels of salted meat," he recalled.

Hull Daily Mail November 15th 1968

An article from the Deep Sea Rescue Tug Association's Newsletter "Towrope"

By Fred Radford, with added photographs from U.T.S.S. Member Mike Murphy

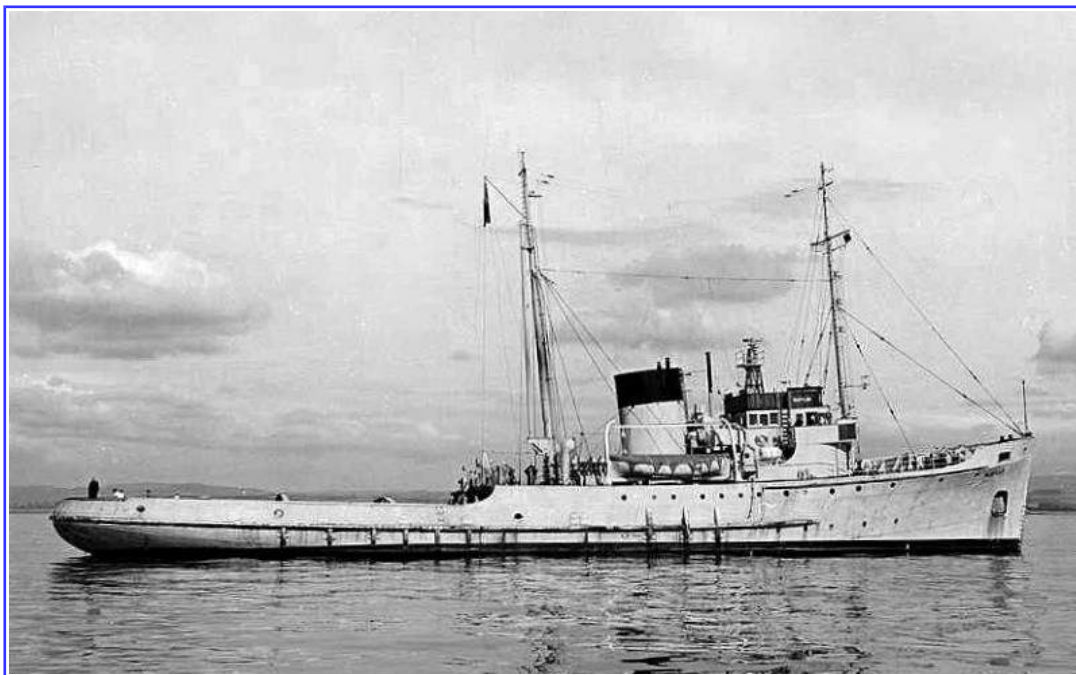
One terrible night sticks in my mind, the 9th of January 1943. I was serving aboard *H.M.R.T. Bustler*. We had salvaged a Liberty ship which we towed into the Clyde and were returning to our station at Campbeltown. On reaching the harbour we were ordered to a buoy in the harbour entrance. I believe it was No 9.

The weather was atrocious, somewhere in the region of a Force 9. Our work boat was lowered manned by George Parker, Quartermaster, 'Flyer' Hatfield A.B., Bob Fairless O.D., Les Crowther O.D., and Bob Nolan, Donkeyman. Bob Nolan was to work the engine. However, the engine would not start so the boat was secured with a bow rope and a stern rope while the ship was edged up to the buoy. I don't know whether the ship was going too fast, or whether the ropes were too tight to let the boat ride. However, the outcome was that the boat was swamped and its crew thrown into the sea.

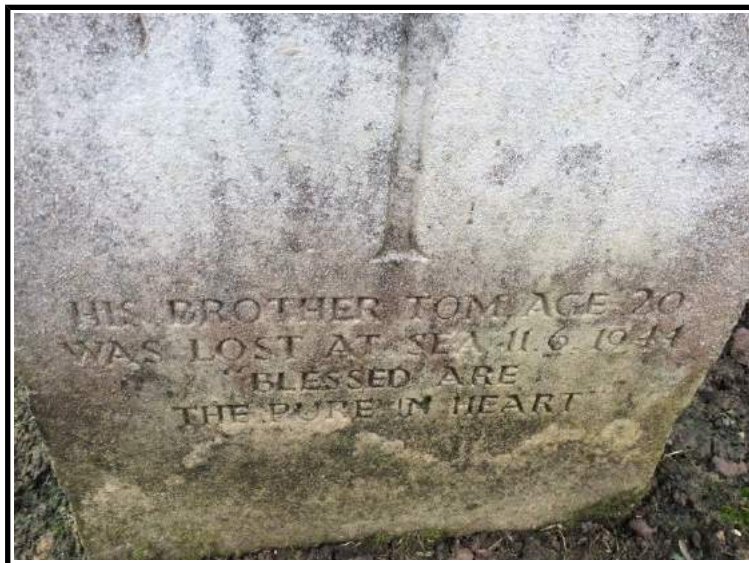
The shout went up "Men overboard" and all hands came running out on deck. We managed to drag George Parker aboard also Les Crowther. Bob Fairless had to be dragged free from the stern rope which was trapping him. Bob Nolan was found drowned in the harbour. "Flyer" Hatfield, an ex lighterman, swam ashore. George Parker made a full recovery. After about 2 hours of attempted resuscitation, in which I and others took part, Bobby Fairless was pronounced dead. He was a 19 year old Hull lad and a good shipmate. I think Bob Nolan came from South Shields, also a good shipmate.

I hope they will be remembered. I have not met anyone who shared that night since the war.

Fred.



Bustler (1942)



Headstone for Bobby Fairless and his brother who was also lost at sea.
Discovered by Mike Murphy in Eastern Cemetery, Hull in 2016.

SS Castledore (ex Samalness)

During WW2 the Ministry of War Transport chartered over 180 U.S. built “Liberty” ships, the majority of which were given names prefixed with ‘Sam’ - often thought as a reference to “Uncle Sam”.

Another school of thought favours the acronym from the British classification **S**uperstructure **A**ft of **M**id-ships.

Using an all-welded method of construction, Liberty ships were laid-down and usually completed within three months. *Samalness* was built in the Brunswick, Georgia yard of J.A.Jones Construction Inc.

Laid-down: 15th January 1944. Launched: 24th February 1944 Delivered: 11th March 1944

Specification: War Standard Vessel

Length: 441 .5ft - Beam: 57ft - Draught: 27.75ft. Tonnage: 7,500 (gross). Speed: 11 knots

Cargo Capacity: 9,000 tons stowed in 5 holds.

U.S shipyards prefabricated 2,710 hulls in less than four years; by the end of 1943 the output averaged 3 ships per day. A simple philosophy prevailed at the time - build ships faster than the enemy could destroy them!

Approximately 200 ‘Liberty’s’ were lost as a result of enemy action.



SS Castledore [Samalness 1944]

Loss of SS Castledore

The following sequence of signals have been copied, as written, from “Lloyd's Weekly Casualty Reports” (February 1951)

Land's End Radio - 27th January 1951 - 7.02am

From *SS Castledore* (Hull for Torrevieja).

Lost propeller, position approximately latitude 44.40N longitude 8.22W. Require immediate assistance.

Land's End Radio - 27th January 1951 - 7.31am

From tug *Turmoil*.

We are now proceeding to your position, estimated to *Castledore* time of arrival 8am tomorrow.

Land's End Radio - 27th January 1951 - 7.33am

From *Castledore*.

We are in ballast and drifting north-east, strong wind to *Turmoil* from south-west"

Gibraltar Radio Station - 21st January 1951 (No time recorded)

GRS reports. Steamer *Castledore* has accepted services of tug *Turmoil* on basis of Lloyd's Open Form.

Land's End Radio - 27th January 1951 - 7.57am

From *MV Delius*.

Position latitude 44.20N, longitude 10.42W, am going to stand by steamer *Castledore*.

Land's End Radio - 27th January 1951 - 8.18am

From *Castledore*

Distress traffic ended with caution, *MV Delius* is coming to stand by me until tug *Turmoil* arrives; estimated time of arrival of *Delius* 5pm.

London - 21st January 1951 (No time recorded)

From *Castledore*.

MV Saxon Star coming to stand by. Nearest port Corunna or Vigo.

Land's End Radio - 28th January 1951 - 5.02am

From *Castledore*.

S O S *Castledore* now 18 miles 29 degrees off Estaca Light, drifting towards shore. Please alert coast. Urgent.

Land's End Radio - 28st January 1951 - 9.15am

From *Castledore*.

MV Saxon Star standing by us now.

Portishead Radio - January 1951 - 10.22am

From *SS Chitral*.

Following received at 10.01am from *Castledore*: Broken from anchor, now abandoning ship, going into boats, come quick.

London - 27st January 1951 (No time recorded)

From *Turmoil*.

Last known position of steamer *Castledore* at 7.45am., Estaca Light bearing 270 degrees, distance one mile. Ship abandoned. Expect to arrive position 12.30pm.

Land's End Radio - 28th January 1951 - 10.14am

From *Turmoil* to *Saxon Star*.

Are you taking off crew of steamer *Castledore*?

Land's End Radio - 28th January 1951 - 10.15am

From *Saxon Star* to *Turmoil*

We are still about a mile away, there is a trawler on the scene.

Portishead Radio - January 1951 – 12.45pm

From *Saxon Star*:

Steamer *Castledore* was abandoned at 10.01am to-day, and now aground near Estaca Light. All crew saved and on board French trawler *Picorre*.

Land's End Radio - 29th January 1951 – 12.19pm

From *Turmoil*:

Following received from *MV Saxon Star*. Steamer *Castledore* has broken her back, gone ashore, all crew safe on trawler *Picone*, and the radio officer is now working trawlers radio gear.

St Nazaire - 28th January 1951 (No time recorded)

The fishing vessel *Picorre*, of La Rochelle, has radioed that she has taken on board 38 men from the steamer *Castledore*. - British United Press.

Ferrol - 28th January 1951 (No time recorded)

British steamer *Castledore* stranded off Punta Roncadeiro, in position latitude 43.44.10N., longitude 7.31.25W. vessel broken in two pieces, submerged but bows and bridge visible at low tide, depth of water about 10 metres, distance from shore 50 metres. Understood crew picked up by French trawler.

La Rochelle - 29th January (No time recorded)

Thirty-eight survivors, the entire crew of the steamer *Castledore*, were brought here by the French trawler *Picorre* this evening. The *Picorre* was on a fishing expedition when she rescued the men. When she hove in sight here this evening a pilot boat put out and took the survivors on board. Then the *Picorre* left immediately for the fishing grounds. - Reuters.

La Rochelle - 30th January (No time recorded)

Thirty-eight survivors of steamer *Castladore* being repatriated via Dieppe, leaving La Rochelle to-night.

Nb

1...All times are shown in Greenwich Mean Time

2...Ship's signal letters have been omitted from the text for the sake of clarity

3...The reference to Lloyd's Open form indicates that *Turmoil* was prepared to work a "no cure - no pay" contract.

The tug *Turmoil* went on to gain a modicum of fame going to the assistance of the ill-fated *Flying Enterprise* after the American cargo ship was severely damaged during a Force 10 storm 360 miles from Land's End in January 1952. When *Turmoil* arrived on the scene, *Flying Enterprise* had developed a 60 degree list. Although a tow-line was passed to the stricken vessel and a course set towards the safety of the Cornish coast, the sea was the eventual winner; *Flying Enterprise* sinking 62 miles from Falmouth. (Read more in Capt. Charlie Noble's book "From Galley Boy to Tugmaster").

Vessels steaming to the aid of Castledore

MV Saxon Star: (1942) Freighter 7,355 tons (gross) Blue Star Line. (Built as *Empire Strength* for the Ministry of War Transport) At the time of the *Castledore* incident, *Saxon Star* was managed by Lamport & Holt.



MV Delius: (1937) Freighter 7,783 tons (gross) Lamport & Holt.



SS Chitral: (1925) Passenger 15,248 tons (gross) P & O Liner.



MV Turmoil: (1945) Admiralty 1,136 tons (gross) Managed by Overseas Towing & Salvage Co Ltd



Picorre: (1947) French 463 tons (gross) Soc. Anon Steam Trawler Chalutiers de La Rochelle



“The Times” Press Reports

29th January 1951 - Page 4.

“British Ship Sinks off Spanish Coast.
Crew of 38 Rescued”

“From our own Correspondent — Paris Jan.28”

“The British ship *CASTLEDORE* sank today off the coast of Spain. The crew of 38 were picked up by a French trawler, which is expected to arrive in La Rochelle tomorrow. Signals from the *Castledore* this morning indicated that the cargo had shifted and that the crew were preparing to abandon ship. The French trawler that took them on board tried to tow the vessel, but had to give up the attempt as the *Castledore* was too badly damaged”

6th February 1951 - Page 11 (City Notes).

Part of the paragraph “Costly Shipping Casualties” reads:-

“The British steamer *Castledore* of 7,300 tons, which stranded near Corunna while bound from Hull for Torreveja on January 28 was insured for £180,000 subject to a provision that £140,000 would be payable in the event of total loss. Presumably other interests on the ship were also covered.



PICTURE TODAY, 3am, of the Hull survivors of the s.s. *Castledore*, which broke its back and sank off the north coast of Spain, arriving at Paragon Station, Hull. Report in Page Five.

SHIPWRECK DRAMA ON THE WILD COAST

‘IT’S GOING ON TO THE ROCKS!’



The salvage tug *Statesman* tried vainly to rocket lines on to the grounded *Jacaranda*.
Two days later she had to return to Durban thwarted by rocks and heavy seas.

The onshore wind tugged viciously at George Brandford's raincoat and hurled stinging slaps of beach sand against his unprotected face. The fair-haired South African Police sergeant didn't feel them. He was too busy peering through the night at the thing he and his brother Les had just spotted in the storm-stung surf off the wild Transket coast.

It didn't seem possible. But there it was: the tail light of a car glowing deep red in the pounding breakers of the Indian Ocean. Bradford was amazed. As station commander at Kentani village some 29km inland, he knew this stretch of coastline well. He was positive there was no way for a car to get down to the beach, much less into the sea.

The brothers had been fishing. But now it was dark - it was just after 7pm on September 18 - and the poor light and foul seas had decided them to pack in and go home.

Now thoughts of home were swept from the Brandfords' minds. They knew that whatever it was down there in the breakers, they'd better investigate fast. It was at that precise moment that the "car" in the surf turned into a ship. Or so it seemed to the flabbergasted pair. For where, moments before, there had been only that single red gleam, now a bewildering profusion of brightly lit portholes, running lights and the glow of a ship's bridge flickered through the sea spray and mist. What the two men had mistaken for a car's tail light was, in fact, the ship's port navigation light. Poor visibility and the angle of the vessel to the shore had hidden the rest from them.

Now only one thought occupied both minds. "My God!" yelled George. "It's going to go on to the rocks!" He knew there was no time to lose. With his powerful fishing torch clutched in one hand, he raced to the water's edge and leapt out onto one of the rocky promontories that jutted like shark's teeth in to the seething ocean. He knew he must warn the ship off. If she came on to those rocks they would tear half her keel away.

Realising that shouting would be useless over the howl of the wind and sea, the 38-year-old policeman frantically waved his torch beam back and forth across the rocks, hoping to warn the vessel of her impending danger. He might as well have tried to stop the waves themselves. For the next few seconds, time seemed to stand still. George's torch picked out the ship's name - *Jacaranda* - and then he heard screaming and shouting from on board. His probing light beam picked out the figure of a woman waving on deck while behind her milled - what seemed to George - to be a band of hysterical women. "Lord," he exclaimed to himself. "It's a passenger liner".

And then the *Jacaranda* hit. But not with the terrifying screech of tortured metal tearing apart on rugged boulders the brothers had expected. By an incredible stroke of good fortune, the ship missed the rocks altogether and came juddering and creaking right between two jutting outcrops to grind ashore on soft, yielding sand. It was a chance in a million.

The Brandfords didn't have time to hail the *Jacaranda's* remarkable escape, however, because just at that moment a figure detached itself from the crowd on deck, vaulted over the rail and plunged into the sea.

It was, as the brothers were soon to learn, the ship's Greek cook, who had decided that the safest place to be was ashore - even if it did mean swimming through boiling seas to get there. Fortunately the man was swept right to where the two men stood and, using a raincoat as a lifeline, they managed to haul him to safety. It was his second brush with death at sea. The last time he was the only survivor - and this time he preferred to take his chances with the surf.

Leaving the exhausted bedraggled seaman in the care of his brother, George set off to get help. He drove to the nearest telephone and got through to the East London Port Authority 56km away, telling them that what he thought to be an ocean liner had gone aground near the Kobonqaba River. He was told his distress call had already been received and that help was on the way.

But George, worried for the safety of the passengers, especially the women, decided to round up a little local help as well. He telephoned the tiny Royal Hotel at Kentani to spread the word. It was a Saturday night and the bar at the Royal was crowded. Minutes after George's call the place was empty, beers and brandies abandoned as the townsfolk of Kentani rose to the occasion.

Later, at the scene of the disaster, George told me how hotel proprietor Jack Reynolds dispatched his two-ton truck to the scene, loaded down with blankets and brandy. Stephen Young, owner of the local trading store chipped in with a 90-seater bus, while a motley assortment of trucks, cars and people made for the scene. One fellow was so eager to get there that he crashed his wife's car on the way.

Meanwhile, the hospital at nearby Butterworth had been notified, and within a very short time it had organised more than 100 beds. All available doctors were called in ready to cope with the expected flow of casualties.

The police were there too, of course, and some of them had come from as far afield as Umtata, 160km away.



19th Sept. 1971 *Statesman* & Greek freighter *Jacaranda*.
Salvage attempts failed as means of connecting a towline were unsuccessful.
Photo Fred Fletcher collection.

All in all it was quite an effort. Within an hour of receiving George Brandford's message, half the town was out, blankets, bandages and brandy at the ready as they shone their car lights over the edge of the hill and down on to the stricken vessel.

At 3 o'clock the next morning, the captain of the *Jacaranda* decided to try to back his ship off the beach as the tide was now reaching its peak. The engines were rammmed to full astern and for several minutes the onlookers could hear the *Jacaranda* creaking and groaning with the effort. No good. The ship refused to budge an inch. She was stuck tight.



Jacaranda aground. Crew escaped by ladders to the beach.

Somewhat to George Brandford's embarrassment, it was soon all too evident that what he had taken to be a passenger liner was in fact a small 1,591-ton Greek freighter. And - as he was later to discover, the only woman on board was the captain's wife. The "women" George had seen milling about the previous night were actually the *Jacaranda's* long-haired crewmen.

At dawn, the *Jacaranda's* crew threw ladders over the side and, as the bows were now high and dry in the low tide, they managed to scramble ashore almost without getting wet. The crew - a Greek captain, his French-Mauritian wife, four Moroccans, five Greeks, an Iraqi and four Portuguese - were fed and later taken to East London.

At about the time the *Jacaranda* found herself in trouble, Anthony Collingwood, an 18-year-old schoolboy and "ham" radio operator from Westville, Natal, intercepted "mayday" calls while listening in on the shipping radio frequency. He reported what he had heard to the authorities. At the same time wireless operators on the tugs *Baltic* and *Statesman* picked up the SOS.

This is what the two Durban based salvage tugs had been waiting for. Twenty-four hours every day their radios are primed for distress calls from the high seas. And when the call comes, its "action stations" with a vengeance.

The *Baltic*, a 662-tons gross tug that has been in Durban since February this year, left port at exactly one minute to 10 on Saturday night. As well as receiving the general distress call, her radio operator, R. Humbach, had picked up the official message relayed from the coaster *Tugela* giving the exact position of the *Jacaranda*.



R. Humbach, *Baltic's* R.O.



Keith Appleyard *Statesman's* R.O.



Radio operators, *Baltic* & *Statesman*.

Messages from both *Statesman* and *Baltic* and their agents flashed out throughout Durban - to the Smuggler's Inn, the Pussycat Club, the Merchant Navy Club and to the Seamen's Mission where a movie was showing. Managers knew exactly who to call. As it was a Saturday night the crews were allowed more time ashore than usual. A messenger was sent to collect one crew member and, on arriving at the stated address, was confronted at the door by a tousled-haired blonde whose state of dress (or undress) was unknown as all he could see was her face and bare shoulders peeking round the door. Was so-and-so in the embarrassed messenger inquired. He was, and within minutes was on his way to his ship. We won't say which one.

The *Baltic* was away in good time although *Statesman*, at 1,169 tons gross and the fourth most powerful tug in the world, had beaten her to it by 10 minutes.

As the tugs raced southwards through the night, top-level negotiations between the tug owners and the owners of the *Jacaranda* were already underway. In this sort of work there are two kinds of contract: The "no-cure-no-pay" type and the Lloyds "open" contract. The first, as its name implies, means that if the salvage attempt is unsuccessful then the tug owners get nothing for their troubles. The second is on a fixed rate basis.

Naturally, the former costs the ship's owners more as it involves the tug people in greater financial risk.



Statesman and *Baltic* towing tanker *Anita Monti* later the same year.
This was another salvage job in which these two tugs were in competition.
Photo Fred Fletcher

The *Baltic* arrived at the scene of the *Jacaranda*'s grounding at 2 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, but the *Statesman* was already there trying to get salvage operations underway. We had heard over the radio that the contract - a no-cure-no-pay - had been awarded to the *Statesman*, but *Baltic* stayed on (she was there already anyway) in case two tugs were needed.

As things turned out, 10 tugs wouldn't have been enough. *Statesman* lost no time in closing with the shore and firing rockets to attach lines to the beached vessel. But it didn't work. She couldn't get close enough because of the heavy swell and rocky coastline and her lines kept falling short.

I spoke to Captain Charles Noble, 40-year-old Towage Master of the *Statesman* over the radio. "Our rockets won't reach" he said, "and it is too dangerous to stand in any closer, even at high water. The ship is in ballast (empty) and she's sitting up on the beach like a big balloon. Frankly, I believe she is there for keeps."

It looked as though he was right. There was nothing either tug could do and so both returned to Durban, with the *Statesman* somewhat out-of-pocket for the journey. And there *Jacaranda* remains until the sea smashes her up.

The next Tuesday (September 21) I was once again aboard *Baltic* - this time charging southwards into a full gale, the little tug punching into the oncoming seas that sent great white cascades of water over the bows and flying bridge. We were off in a response to a distress call from the Greek tanker *Eugenie Livanos*, which had struck the notorious Aliwal Shoal, a pinnacle of submarine rock some 43km south of Durban, off Green Point. This time *Baltic's* crew had moved the faster and it was the *Statesman* that remained behind.

The Aliwal Shoal is a well-charted rock, 2.5 miles off the coast, over which water sometimes breaks at low tide and which has a depth of only 1.3 fathoms at low water. The *Eugenie Livanos*, a 29,402 gross tonner, went into this, hammering a 60m groove down its port side, and ripping several deep gashes out of the keel.

Captain Willibald Benthin, 47, skipper of the *Baltic* had phoned me and invited me along (at four minutes notice). Also aboard were Mr. John Pepedimitriou, Chief Marine Superintendent for the tanker owners, and Mr. Harry Millard, chief surveyor for the American Bureau of Shipping, the US counterpart of Lloyds. Mr Millard was along to assess the damage and advise the owners of a course of action.

I dread - we all did - to think what would have happened if the tanker had been laden with oil. She would have ploughed straight on to the ocean to befoul our beaches.

Out of the murk the tanker loomed and we now had to stand by in case of any emergencies. As it was, there were none. And *Baltic* was on a daily contract which meant that they got R2,000 for a few hours work.

Climbing under the *Eugene Livanos* two days later, as it rested on blocks in Durban's dry dock, gave one the feeling of being an ant under a Giant's heel. From below you could look through the gashes into the empty oil hold and see daylight filtering through hatches way up at deck level. A team of welders working day and night strove to put the damage right. Within days tons of steel sheets were welded into place. The tanker was floated and moved over to a repair wharf where work continued inside the vessel to make her ready to continue her voyage to the Persian Gulf, there to take on a cargo of crude oil for Western Europe.

I have the highest admiration for the men of these salvage tugs. They are top-notch, highly efficient sailors. They have to have a thorough knowledge of a vast variety of ships (you can't save a ship if you don't know anything about it), they have to know fire-fighting techniques, ballasting, towage, human rescue work, as well as all the other aspects of the salvage man's exacting trade. The ship's compliment of the *Baltic* is 16 men and that of the *Statesman* 20.

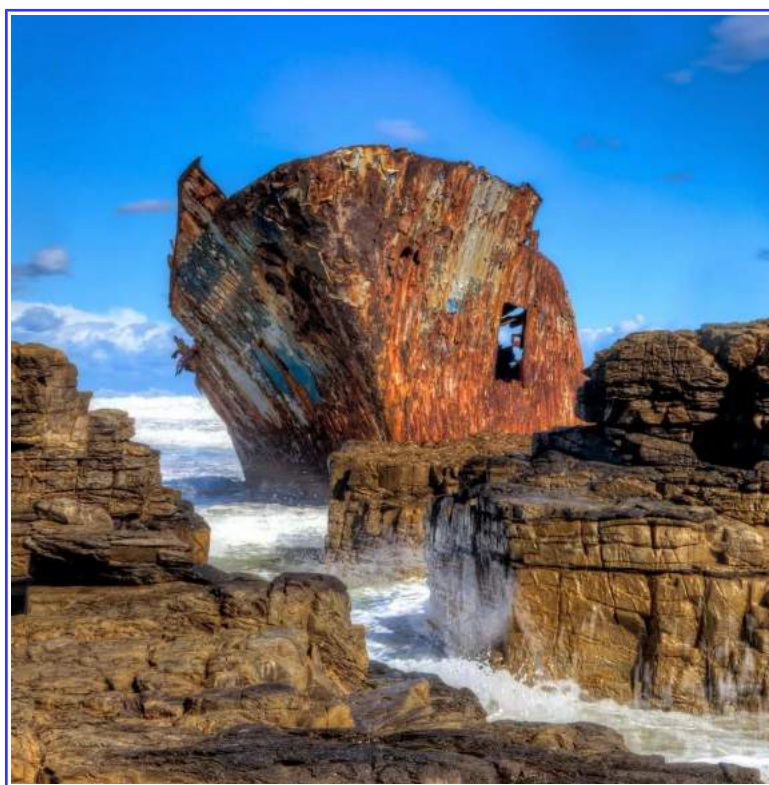
The crewmen themselves are a hand-picked band, cheerful, but as tough as nails. They have to be. All have had years of experience at sea. Willibald Benthin, for instance, was on a sub-chaser during World War II and after the war he ran his own coaster.

Contrary to popular belief, seamen - certainly not the men of the *Baltic* and *Statesman* - don't just have one thing on their minds when they hit port. Many of the salvage men collect stamps, and one of them on the *Baltic* stitches rugs and makes small carpets. Photography too is a keen hobby, as demonstrated by Second Mate Wolf Meyer, some of whose pictures accompany this article.

On the *Statesman* card games are popular and cribbage a favourite. There is also a well stocked library.

When the salvage operators from land are through with her, *Jacaranda's* hulk will be all that remains - a stark reminder to shipping of the dangers of this deadly coast.

Article taken from Scope magazine, October 1971 by David Alexander with added photos from the U.T.S.S. archive.



Jacaranda today. Photo from Google Maps.

MAY, 1959 - SHIPWRECK IN FALMOUTH

By David Barnicoat

As a young schoolboy I cycled to Pendennis Point to watch the badly-damaged cargo ship *Mitera Marigo* limp into port aided by local tugs. Watching from the headland I had no idea that I was one of the few people in Falmouth witnessing the final death throes of a new ship and that within hours the *Mitera Marigo* would sink in the harbour thus becoming the largest shipwreck in the port's long history.

The drama began just after 02:00 hours on May 29, 1959 in dense fog 15 miles north of Ushant when the *Mitera Marigo*, fully laden with 12,100 tons of iron ore and proceeding from Mormugao to Rotterdam, was in collision with the German freighter *Fritz Thyssen*, Amsterdam to Liberia in ballast.

Both ships were badly damaged in the collision although no casualties were reported. *Mitera Marigo*'s Greek master Captain George Lemos initially decided to steam at full speed towards Rotterdam but later altered course for Falmouth.

The United Towing Company's salvage tug *Englishman* under the command of Captain Bill Hopper left Falmouth with a bone in her teeth to intercept *Mitera Marigo* in mid Channel. On sighting the ship Hopper later said that he was shocked as to the extent of the bow damage.

Hopper offered any services the master wanted to take under a Lloyds salvage agreement or escort the ship to Rotterdam. Captain Lemos refused all help - a decision that would later be used as crucial evidence in a lengthy court case. Scant news of the collision and information sent by the tug *Englishman* was passed on to Falmouth harbour master Captain Frank Edwards by local shipping agent GC Fox.

Englishman radioed in that the ship was steaming at 8.5 knots for Falmouth. Captain Edwards later told Admiralty judges he received a message saying there is a crack in number one hold above the waterline and the ship was making some water. The harbour master said he assumed from the information received that it was just another casualty coming to Falmouth for repairs.

Steaming at full ahead on an exposed collision bulkhead exerts enormous pressure on the plating often resulting in the bulkhead being breached. Just after 19:00 hours that day with Falmouth Trinity House pilot Captain William Perrett aboard, the badly damaged *Mitera Marigo* 8,961 tons passed St. Anthony's lighthouse bound for the Cross Roads mooring buoy. Watching from the headland I saw the tangled mass of steelwork forward as the ship slowly steamed into the harbour. The vessel looked as if it had struck a mine.

Englishman followed the ship into port with Hopper still offering assistance in the form of powerful salvage pumps. Two hours later *Mitera Marigo*'s condition gave cause for alarm. In a desperate attempt to save his ship Lemos shouted across to the tug which by now was alongside "Pump, pump, pump. Lloyd's Open Form salvage."

The harbour master went aboard with pilot Captain MacArthur to assess the situation first hand. He advised Captain Lemos that his ship was sinking and she should be beached near to the Northbank buoy. Captain Edwards told the Admiralty Court that he heard several loud bangs as the ship's collision bulkhead collapsed. The order to Abandon Ship was given by Lemos at 23:45 hours when

the ship started to sink by the bows. She finally sank at 01:15 hours with just her masts showing above the water. The Trinity House buoy tender *Satellite* later laid a wreck marking buoy. Falmouth Quay Punt man Mr Alfred Tonkin said: “When we arrived in the Cross Roads we could see the ship gradually going down and it was not long before she smoothly disappeared from sight.”

In November 1966 at the Admiralty Division of the High Court Mr Justice Karminski assisted by two Elder Brethren of Trinity House acting as nautical assessors heard the case between the owners of both ships in order to apportion blame. Although the liability for the collision was settled on a 50-50 basis the main thrust of the hearing centred around the cause of the *Mitera Marigo* sinking.

Making his judgement Mr Justice Karminski said: “The sinking of the *Mitera Marigo* was not a direct result of the collision with the *Fritz Thyssen*.” *Mitera Marigo*’s owners immediately lodged an appeal. At the Court of Appeal in June 1967 Lord Justice Willmer sitting with Lord Justice Russell and Lord Justice Salmon heard the Appeal. His Lordship said: “My view is that this was a ship which was throughout in a situation of the utmost peril. It really does seem almost incredible that a competent master would not have availed himself of the assistance which was available.” Here the stakes were too high to justify a gamble. The property at risk was something like £800,000. A first class salvage instrument ready and willing to give immediate assistance was at hand. “This master took a wholly unjustified and therefore negligent risk when he refused the *Englishman*’s offer of assistance,” said his Lordship. “It is to that act of negligence that the loss of the ship and her cargo must be attributed.”

Falmouth Harbour Commissioners awarded Risdon Beazley, of Southampton the £320,000 contract to remove the wreck which was completed in October 1962.



Englishman standing-by *MV Mitera Marigo* just before she sank in Falmouth Harbour.

Photo David Barnicoat collection.



Photo David Barnicoat collection.

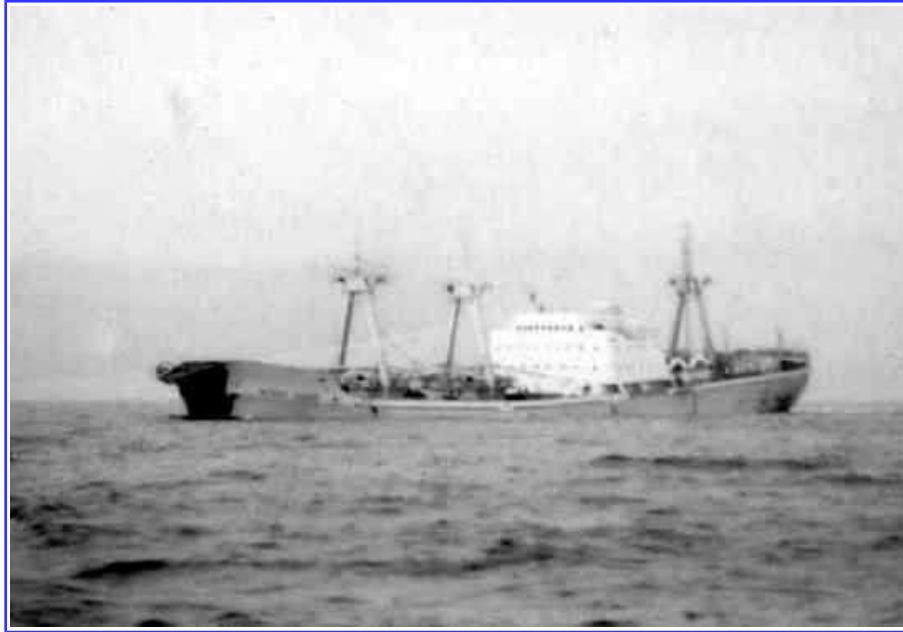
Capt. Hopper.

The story of the *Mitera Marigo* is not fully correct, when I eventually found the *Mitera Marigo* the Captain asked me if I would escort him to Rotterdam. I told him he would not make Rotterdam (see court case at which I was the main witness for *Fritz Thyssen!*).

Landsend Radio was dealing with a casualty and would not accept commercial calls. I offered Captain Lemos to put his calls through us – refused. He accepted our assistance just before he sank, I told our Radio Operator to call out the Falmouth lifeboat, I also told Captain Lemos and Captain Edwards to let go buoy moorings and let me beach her - agreed, as soon as the stern moorings were released her bow went under and she sank.

I put Captain Lemos in my cabin, he was very distraught. Her crew were all saved and accounted for, I had her First Mate over to look after him whilst I was very busy on the bridge.

Captain W.V. Hopper.



M/V Mitera Marigo showing severe bow damage. Photo Capt. W.V. Hopper.

A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF A TUGMAN

EXTRACTS FROM A 1969 DIARY. BY PETE ELSOM. Continued from B.P. No.4.

Monday 27th January 1969

00:01 on watch, on deck. Rig has let us go and we are recovering the towing gear and coiling it down so that it is ready for later, just in case they need to move again. Dropped anchor about 02:00. Had a pot of tea and got cleaned up then went up to the wheelhouse at 03:00. Will stay on watch until 06:00 so that Terry can have a couple of hours extra sleep.

06:00 came off watch, had a shower and wrote diary.

11:00 called out for watch.

12:30 in the wheelhouse. We are still at anchor.

13:00 released from "*Orion*" Weighed anchor and proceeding to Hull. Most of the watch spent cleaning the ship ready for docking.

16:00 off watch, cleaning complete. Packed some things ready for home. "*Serviceman*" has been in contact with us and told us we are ordered back on board at 09:00 on Wednesday! Another couple of nights off.

21:00 coming up to Spurn Light Vessel.

23:30 in Alexandra Dock, tied up and waiting for taxi.

Tuesday 28th January 1969

On Leave.

Wednesday 29th January 1969

09:00 Arrived at "*Englishman*" working by, re-stowing the tow ropes and wires and oiling the winch wire.

12:00 cleared off until 13:00 tomorrow, more time at home!

Thursday 30th January 1969

13:00 on board.

14:00 left Alexandra dock for Salt End the oil terminal, to get bunkers. Then back to Alexandra dock jetty to pick up Capt. Hopper who will be the Towing Master for our next job, moving the rig "*Maersk Explorer*".

20:00 left Alexandra dock jetty bound for the rigs location. Turned in for an hour before watch.

Friday 31st January 1969

00:01 on watch, on passage to "*Maersk Explorer*" off the Danish coast. Heavy swell, but running before it.

04:00 came off watch and turned in.

11:45 called out for watch. Dinner went out the port hole! Hope that this new cook improves.

On watch 12:30, eating cream crackers and cheese.

16:00 came off watch.

17:30 arrived at "*Maersk Explorer*" gave tea a miss, read for a while then turned in.

Saturday 1st February 1969

00:01 on watch dodging on location. Too much swell to anchor. Cooked my own breakfast (got to eat sometime)

04:00 came off watch and turned in.

11:45 called out for watch. Had potato and turnip for dinner!

12:30 on watch, still dodging. Had cream crackers toast and jelly, while the cook was turned in! so did the rest of the crew! Still a heavy swell and no sign of a move today.

16:00 came off watch. Terry didn't want relieving for tea and the cook thinks nobody eats much on this ship! Read some more of my book then turned in.

Sunday 2nd February 1969

00:01 on watch. Still dodging in a heavy swell. Cooked steak, chips and beans for the three of us at 03:00.

Came off watch at 04:00 and turned in.

11:45 called out for watch, and dinner? (no one in the messroom, so gave dinner a miss) Still dodging, forecast is 8 to storm 10! Why are we here? "*Unifor 1*" has had a blowout and been abandoned. Nothing happened all watch.

16:00 came off watch. Everyone is wedged in their bunks, seems to be the best place to be in this weather, so I jumped into mine!

Monday 3rd February 1969

00:01 on watch dodging on location, in a force 10. "*Masterman*" has smashed two portholes in, at deck level. Quiet, but uncomfortable.

04:00 came off watch and cooked chips!

05:00 turned in.

11:45 called out for watch. Had some soup, which tasted slightly burnt.

12:30 on watch. Still a big swell, but the wind has moderated quite a lot since early morning. Had sandwiches at 14:00. Nothing much going on at the moment.

16:00 came off watch, had a shower, which was a full time job in this weather. Read for a while before turning in.

Tuesday 4th February 1969

00:01 on watch, guess what? Still dodging, but the swell is dropping away all the time now and the forecast is better. Maybe we will get some action today. We got fish out of the freezer at midnight, ready to fry when we come off watch. You have to eat sometime! I expect the cook wonders where his stores are going, when no-one eats!

04:00 came off watch, had a shower and listened to some music (while breakfast settled) Turned in at 05:30.

11 :45 called out for watch. Dinner was edible for a change. The swell has virtually gone now so maybe we will get a move soon. Working on deck rigging towing gear, ready for the action, if it ever comes.

14:00 dropped anchor.

16:00 came off watch. Talk of a move tonight, so I turned in early, but not early enough.

Called out at 19:00 to connect up towing gear. All finished on deck at 20:30. Just the towing sleeve to fit when we stream the winch wire out. Turned in again, but couldn't get back off.

Wednesday 5th February 1969

00:01 on watch towing the “*Maersk Explorer*” to new location. Speed approx. 3 knts. This move is 21.5 miles. Weather is good, calm sea and good visibility.

02:00 9 miles from location. All being well we should be finished for dinner time and even be back home for breakfast on Thursday. Dinner, Breakfast! I’m feeling hungry now.

04:00 off watch and turning in until it’s time to shorten in and let go.

10:00 called out to shorten in, which we did up to the nylon rope. Just that and the 30 fathom wire pennant to recover when we let go. We have orders to return to Hull on completion of the move.

11:30 towing gear slipped from the rig and recovering gear, and re-stowing it.

13:00 Capt. Hopper dropped onto our after deck, in a crew basket. On watch on the bridge. We’re dodging off the “*Maersk Explorer*”, waiting to be released.

14:00 released from the rig and on passage to Hull. Asked Capt. Hopper if there was any chance of me going mate on a harbour tug for a while. I need a change of scenery and some time nearer home. He said he will think about it and I should ring him at the office when we get home. Shortly after this I found out that the “*Englishman’s*” 2nd Officer is going out to the “*Tradesman*” on Friday. “*Tradesman*” is working in Cabinda Bay, Angola. They need a navigator to take her up to Luanda for repairs. Our skipper has asked Capt. Hopper if I can replace the 2nd Officer! And I have asked if I can get off!! Wrong move Peter.

Thursday 6th February

00:01 on watch, on passage to Hull. ETA 08:00 weather good, nothing much happening now. Came of watch at 04:00 and turned in for a couple of hours. Called out for entering the dock at 08:00.

I was working by the “*Englishman*”, in dock, until Saturday 8th February. On Monday 10th I went down to the ship and signed off, before going down to the office to find out when they wanted me. 19th February I was told. From then on I was mate on the “*Serviceman*” and the “*Bargeman*” until 24th August. Then I flew out to the “*Tradesman*” to be 2nd Officer. She was in the final 6 months of a two year contract, working offshore, Cabinda Bay, Angola, West Africa.

Peter Elsom.

RITES OF PASSAGE

A true story.... by John Griffiths.

If I look in my Seaman's Discharge book I can give you a date for this story. 16th October 1977. The location? Smerwick Harbour in Southern Ireland. My age? I was 20. If you know that coast with its place names like Dingle, Valentia, The Blasket Islands, Tralee, Loop Head - they sound magical and attractive - yet, for me, they bring back a ghost from the past.

The tug I was on, the *Afon Goch* had been at sea on salvage station when we were radioed to go and pick up a Panamanian flag coaster, the *Skyhope*, which had run hard aground at the village jetty whilst attempting to get fresh water. We arrived early the next morning after having bounced through the deep running Atlantic swells until we anchored off in the wide bay at Smerwick Harbour.

Whilst VHF messages were made between the ship and ourselves, the duty crew took the tug's workboat and went to have a look at the casualty. She was a typical East German built short sea trader, a tired looking old hooker that had seen her fair share of the commercial world. She was around 1,200 tons deadweight, had goal post masts and two hatches, and looked typically hard worked. Our tug, by comparison, was a sleek, purposeful ex Dutch salvage tug that looked the business. She had good sea kindly lines, and was, in my estimation at least, a beauty.

We surveyed the casualty carefully. Hard aground? Very much so! The skipper had tried to bring her in alongside a low concrete pier that served as a jetty and as he had swung his stem in, the rudder had collided with rocks and broken off. All that remained of the rudder was the stub of the post sticking out from under the stern. The ship was, to put it mildly, going nowhere, at least not without tug assistance.

The plan was for us to tow her into deeper water, set the towing gear up for a coastal tow and, once the weather was good enough, tow her to Verolme Dockyard in Cork for dry docking. By the end of the afternoon we had done exactly that, and settled to our anchor with the coaster on a short nip, that is attached to our tow line and anchored to us. Now all we needed was a good forecast.

Unbeknown to us, the coaster's polyglot crew decided to go ashore for one last drink at the small pub in the harbour. They used one of their lifeboats as a go ashore and when they came back that night they had decided between them, as drunken men's logic often does, to give us the slip. The first I knew about it was when I was summoned from my bunk in the wee small hours to see the *Skyhope* under way - and turning, circling under power. They had thrown the tow off and decided to try and sail away, how drunk were they? Believe me worse was to come!

She dropped her anchor when they realised they were going nowhere and after we recovered our towing gear, we went aboard and this time, once we had hooked up, we made sure the weight was on the towing bridle at all times, to stop the coaster's crew from trying to get it off. With it being slacked away previously, they had unshackled the bridle ends and thrown them overboard, this time there was no way they were going to do that.

As we waited for the weather to calm down to insurance levels, ie, the Lloyd's surveyor passing the tow as seaworthy had put a Force 5 limit on it, we also took a trip ashore for a couple of beers and a 'phone call where we met the crew of the coaster - and believe me, they were not a pretty sight. There was an Egyptian, a Greek, two Arabs, a Nigerian, two Brits and three Filipinos. As the coaster skipper got progressively more drunk he revealed that he had been an ex fisherman and had no

tickets (certificates of competency). He had been made Master of the coaster a month previously. He even tried to recruit some of us as crew, promising command if we showed any promise. As for her reason for being where she was, the ship had been en route from Hamburg to Galway but had run out of fresh water, hence the call in at Smerwick.

He admitted not looking at the possibility there was not enough water available under his stern. His attitude was that if he could just hold her there long enough to take water on, then that was fine.

By midnight we had had enough. Whilst the tug's crew were not exactly sober, they were off watch and I, as duty seaman, was in charge of running them back across the dark waters to the tug and their beds. We left the coaster's crew drinking heavily and arguing loudly amongst themselves.

It was shortly after that it took a real turn for the worse. This is the bit I shall never forget. Ever! At 3am. I was woken by the on watch AB having got to bed just after 1 am after stowing the inflatable and fuelling her up. I was therefore less than pleased with being disturbed. As I dressed and made my way to the galley for a mug of tea the story began to unfold. Firstly the coaster's VHF radio had been used to broadcast music and then, shortly afterwards, to scream that someone was being murdered aboard her. As I drank my tea and grimaced at the likelihood of that, distress flares began being shot off by the coaster.

Our mate (Chief Officer) ordered us to ready the workboat and I was tasked with this with a younger seaman. The boat's crew was then formed and consisted of the Chief Officer (who was in charge), the Second Engineer (whose job it was to man the engine), the Ship's Electrician (as First Aider) and two seamen, myself and the younger man. It was blowing a bit and as we started to swing the boat out, I was handed a parka coat by the donkey man off the tug. I had been the only one aboard not dressed for the cold of the evening, in my rush to get the boat ready I had forgotten to put a coat on. I was glad he gave me that coat.

We were then ordered NOT to go to the aid of the coaster by our Master who was convinced they were fooling about and obviously drunk. Both he and the Mate argued over this, with the Mate saying that at least we should go over to check as if there were casualties it was our responsibility. The Skipper reluctantly agreed and we made our way over.

The weather conditions, it being October, were frigid. There was a light cold wind blowing in from the North and the sea was running quite briskly, with occasional white caps. It was 03:40 by the time we secured alongside the *Skyhope's* pilot ladder under which a half submerged ship's lifeboat lay forlornly. The Mate asked me to go aboard with him and the Electrician and as we made the main deck, we were greeted by a confused, drunken mob. None of them spoke English and we were hurried into the accommodation, and to a horror I shall never forget. It looked like a butcher's shop, with blood splattered all over the bulkheads and tables. Beer bottles littered the deck and a bloodied fire axe lay across a table. The coaster Skipper began to tell us what happened but he was slurring badly and there was a lot of shouting and confusion. Two men were sitting down, one with his jaw broken and bleeding badly and the other holding a towel, red with blood across his head. The horror story began to unfold.

The man with the towel over his head, let us call him Nicos, was the ship's Chief Officer and was sober. He had remained aboard whilst the crew went ashore to get drunk. When they had returned, the man with the broken jaw, let's call him Yasser, had decided he did not like Nicos and had come up behind him and hit him over the head with the ship's fire axe. He would have done so again but someone got a crowbar from somewhere and smashed it into Yasser's face, in fact, puncturing the

mouth and breaking the jaw. The blood they had both shed was everywhere, it was, as I said earlier, like a butcher's shop.

The Mate attended to his counterpart first and removed the towel carefully. The Electrician, our First Aider, threw up. There was a deep cut to the centre of the skull that was easily an inch and a half deep, but Nicos was talking quietly, complaining of no more than a severe headache. We had to act. The Mate requested, by VHF, that the tug call for immediate assistance and that we were going to go into the harbour with the two men. Both Ambulance and Police were needed. He stressed how urgent it was and how quickly assistance was required.

We then assisted Nicos and Yasser out of the mess room and out to the deck where we carefully guided both down by tying a line to them as they negotiated the pilot ladder. There was no other way to do it. Then myself, the Mate and Electrician went to the boat, and then the trouble started. Yasser again went for Nicos and this time we struggled with him. The Mate shouted for a stretcher to be thrown down and, after a huge scrum, we managed to get Yasser secured into it. More crew from the coaster began to come aboard despite our protestations, wailing and moaning and generally behaving like fools. I think that at least half of them came, still drunk and still obviously irritated. The rest would have joined had we not started the engine and cast off.

The Mate warned our extra passengers to be calm. Rounding the coaster's stem, we hit the swell and the boat was lively, making lots of spray over the bows as we motored along. The shore was lit by the outside lights of the pub, no more, and it was this the Mate made for as the workboat rolled and bucked her way towards the land. Then, with no warning, two of the coaster crew began fighting. A third joined in and then a fourth. I heard the Mate scream at them to sit still, be calm, I also became aware that water was rising up my legs. I shouted at the Engineer and we checked the plugs - both in. As I sat up and prepared to bail, the boat began to capsize, turning over to port as she did so and depositing everyone in the water.

It was so slow! She seemed to take ages to go over, unstoppable, to her port side but just kept going. I was thrown into a very cold Atlantic Ocean but was soon scrambling onto the upturned keel, helping others aboard. The Mate made a headcount, the Engineer was missing. I was 20. I still don't know why I did what I did but I went back over the side and under the boat, and found him shivering, shaking with fear and cold, in an air pocket. It took me a good few minutes to persuade him to come out and I had to hold on to him as we went under and then surfaced, but we made it. As I settled back on the keel, starting to feel the bitter cold seep in, the Mate scolded me then grinned and said simply 'good man!'

The Engineer huddled into himself shivering. I was asked by the Mate to attend to Nicos, who was at this stage, shivering violently and unable to keep his grip. I held him in my arms and we sat on the upturned keel like that, with me asking him questions about where he came from, I only ever discerned Thessaloniki, the rest of the time he was unable to speak clearly. He was in a very bad way, what with his wound and the shock of cold water immersion.

We took stock. No flares, no radio, both lost when she capsized. We did have a hand torch. That was the situation we were in. The Mate tried to contact the tug by using Morse on the torch, but it appeared as if no-one could see us. Yasser was cut free of the stretcher as he kept sliding under the water and he scrambled right forward, staying as far as he could from us all. The Mate said we should try and turn the boat back over, no-one wanted that. I don't know how long we drifted. It felt like hours. I could see the sea breaking white in the darkness at the base of the headland, a high and seemingly impossible cliff face that, from where we were sat, seemed to scrape the sky itself. A big

sky, a rich deep velvet black studded with stars like so many diamonds. It seemed surreal, distant from our situation yet a part of the reality of it.

In my arms, Nicos struggled less and less and I took to shaking and prodding him. I was getting ever decreasing results. When he became still I called the Mate. He looked at him and mumbled something through chattering teeth. Then he looked at me and shook his head.

Nicos died in my arms shortly afterwards. I felt the life go from him in a shudder and that was it. I think I sat with him for ages until the Mate gently told me that he was gone and that we had to push the body over to make more room for the living. I was appalled and said so but he told me he would use the tiller rope to attach to the body for recovery later on. We did this sombre task, the Chief Officer and the 20 year old boy sailor, and I shall always recall the way the body bumped and floated just astern of us, separated from us in death but still with us like an accusation. I envied him his peace. At least he did not have the agony of waiting.

So we drifted and the dark looming cliffs came nearer and nearer. It began to dawn on us that no-one had worked out we were lost, and on the shore road we saw blue flashing lights as they made their way to the harbour, but no sign of anyone coming for us. Back in those days, the only communication between ship and shore was via the coastal radio stations. That meant delay as the messages were transferred between the tug, the coast radio station, the telephone to the Police HQ and them relaying by radio, and back again. Precious time.

As dawn broke, grey and moody, we saw our inflatable boat from the tug breasting the swell in the far distance. We shouted ourselves hoarse and she eventually turned and closed with us. I saw that the Towing Master was on the tiller with one of the AB's. We were told he could not take us all, but only four at a time. However, he didn't get the chance. Yasser leapt from our boat to the inflatable, struggling like the crazy man he was, and flooding their engine. The last we saw of them was as they struggled with Yasser, and drifted away.

God knows how much longer we drifted. The mood was now resigned, seeing the base of the cliffs gloomy in the dawn with the heavy seas breaking white at the base. I knew that if we got in among that lot we were all doomed. Someone started to cry. I huddled in the borrowed Parka coat and thought about my Mum and Dad at home, my sister and brothers. How would they take it? I hoped that they would be fine knowing I had died doing what I loved. I thought about girls that I had known and saw their faces again. I apologised to those people that I had hurt and I thought about those I loved. I wasn't scared, believe me. I only wondered whether it would hurt or take long to die....

I also think that deep down I knew that I was not going to die. That it was not my time. I stared out at the grey green breaking Atlantic dawn, at the black-blue tinged with pink dying night and at the way the sky was colouring to a pale dawn. I can't explain it but I knew then that I was not for the taking this time. I had mumbled some half forgotten prayers and I had taken stock, but I never gave up any hope. I can't explain that, it was just a strength in me that said, "You're not for the taking this day". It was right.

We were rescued by an Irish Schoolteacher and a local fisherman who had used his boat to search for us, having seen the police and ambulance on the shore. The local man's knowledge saved us, and we were unceremoniously hauled aboard the boat where we laughed and cried and bummed cigarettes. The last job we had was recovering Nicos, which I assisted with. He lay on the deck of the bucking boat as she powered for the harbour, covered in a blanket, his body moving to his last dance of the sea beneath him.

What happened next? Hospital, hot and cold baths, a good meal paid for by the Irish Police and a bed in a police cell as the local inns in Dingle were full. A trip back to the tug, a ticket home.

Headlines in the local paper 'Six Hour Sea Rescue Drama for local Tug Crew'. My three minutes of fame.

Eventually, Yasser was imprisoned. It transpired he was an Ex Egyptian soldier who had fought in the Six Day War and been shell shocked. He had come to sea hoping to escape his demons but the madness had simply remained dormant. He was later tried and found guilty of murder, extradited to Egypt and, I believe, sentenced to death.

Nicos's body was never taken back to Greece. The postmortem found that he had suffered extreme trauma to the brain and all that had kept him going was his 'fight or flight' responses. The Pathologist said later that he would have died anyway. He lies in a simple grave in Ireland far away from his home in Thessaloniki.

The *Skyhope* Master was never seen once the ship got to Cork. He did a runner, along with a few of the crew. Those who stayed were surplus to requirements as she was put up for sale once she had arrived at Cork.

Our tug Master was severely reprimanded for not alerting the rescue services in time. However, Valentia lifeboat and the Irish Air Force did not have night search capability, this was the late '70's we are talking about, and all they could do was start a search at dawn. If it would not have been for that fisherman and the schoolteacher.

The Second Engineer and his wife and child came to see me and to say thank you. He said, he still says, that I saved his life. I don't recall that. I recall going under the boat for a shipmate, not for kudos.

And me? I was 20. I witnessed carnage that night, the result of no discipline and drink. I stayed with a man I did not know and I held him in my arms as he died. I went beneath an upturned lifeboat and I talked a man into coming out. I showed no courage because I did what I thought was right. I did not ask God for help because I have never believed in him. I still don't, but whatever it was that spoke to me that night, almost thirty years ago, made me trust my own intuitive 'gut' feeling. I always have done since. It is almost always right.

Did it put me off going to sea? No. The sea remains my one enduring love although nowadays I am no longer at sea for medical reasons. Have I been back there to Smerwick Harbour to recall old ghosts? No, but one day I will.

If any of them read this, anyone of them involved in that night, then I remember and say thanks to each of you for all that you did. My ex-shipmates, the Garda and the nuns who took us in to warm us up and offer sympathy and support. Their kindness and concern pulled a lot of us through what was an horrific experience.

It was also, I know, my rite of passage.

John Griffiths.



1976 Afon Goch [Schelde 1958]

Date of incident 6th June 2017

TUGS SAVE CRIPPLED CONTAINER SHIP OFF LAVERNOCK POINT



A 5,278 ton container ship **F.Arslan V** broke down off Lavernock Point tonight and two tugs were called out to try to bring her back into port. The ship had sailed from Cardiff bound for Avonmouth earlier today but had lost engine power shortly after leaving

Cardiff and had tried to anchor off Lavernock Point in high winds and heavy seas. In anchoring, she somehow managed to tangle her two anchors together – making them both useless. Two local tugs **Trueman** and **Tradesman** were called in to tow the vessel back to port – but first had the task of attempting to free the fouled anchors. It then became clear that one of the container ship's anchors had become wrapped around the chain of a second anchor – rendering both anchors incapable of holding the ship and presenting an underwater “knot” that could not be undone without the use of divers. The Bristol Channel pilot on board **F.Aslan V** and the tug skippers advised the ship's captain to sacrifice the anchors and cut them free, but valuable time was lost whilst the captain radioed the shipowners. By 18:15 the tugs had managed to tow the container ship away from the rocky outcrop near Lavernock and out towards Flatholm Island with her anchors still knotted together beneath her keel. Eventually it was agreed both anchor chains would have to be cut, released into the sea and abandoned, in order to enable the ship to be towed back into port. The tugs then had to attempt to turn the ship towards Cardiff against the tide and the strong north westerly wind. So much effort was used by the tugs to move the ship that at 17:45 one of the tow lines snapped . There were then problems in getting another line passed from the ship to the tugs – an operation not helped by the non-English-speaking crew. Eventually the two tugs managed to get the ship into a safer position off Penarth – in the area of channel called Cardiff Roads – but, without any anchors, they were committed to hold her in place all night using their engines. A third tug – Irishman – was called in from Newport. Barry Dock lifeboat remained on standby as night fell ...just in case. Update: **F.Arslan V** finally docked in Cardiff safely at 04:00 June 7 2017 after being held in position all night off Penarth by tugs. Considerable credit must go to the local Bristol Channel pilot who was aboard **F.Arslan V** and in charge on the bridge of the ship – and to the skippers of the tugboats . They all worked as an effective team pooling their resources and experience to resolve a very difficult problem which, without their skill and determination, could have resulted in the grounding of the vessel. *(Source: Penarth Daily News)*

HULL DAILY MAIL

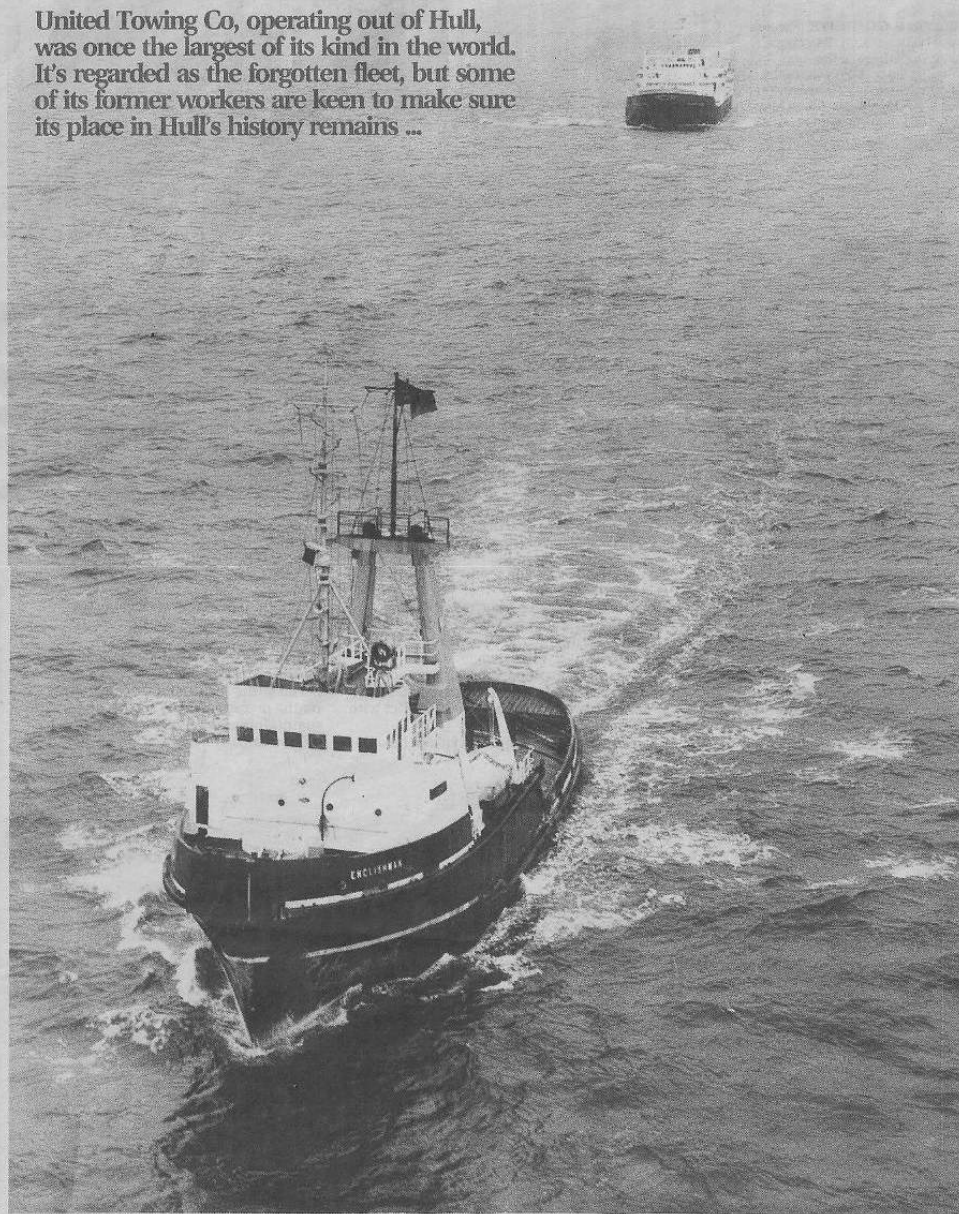
More Flashback pictures @ hulldailymail.co.uk/nostalgia

Flashback WEEKLY

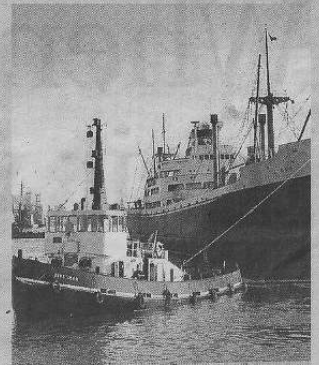
Monday, June 19, 2017

Gone, but not forgotten

United Towing Co, operating out of Hull, was once the largest of its kind in the world. It's regarded as the forgotten fleet, but some of its former workers are keen to make sure its place in Hull's history remains ...

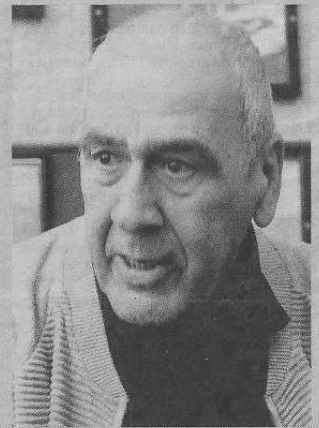


Inside this week



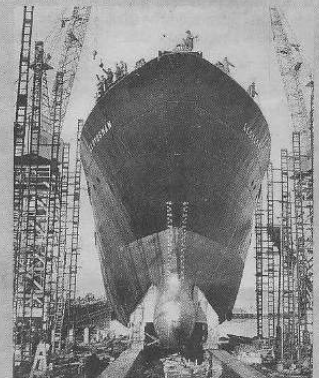
Answering the call ... in all weathers!

Pages 2-3



'We miss it a lot, it was a good life'

Pages 4-5



Working hard to keep memory alive

Page 8

ES:LOU-14

When Hull tugs pulled their weight in the most dangerous of conditions

It was once the world's largest towing and salvage company, keeping ports moving and even playing key roles in conflicts. And it started life in Hull in 1921, when seven firms merged – Thomas Gray & Co, City Steam Towing Co, Humber Steam Towing Co, Premier Tug Co Ltd, Troy Steam Towing Ltd, S Harrison and TC Spink.

The newly formed company gave its new vessels the "man" suffix – a nod to the tradition first employed by Thomas Gray & Co.

In its post-war heyday, United Towing Company employed about 500 people and boasted a fleet of around 30 docking and river tugs, and 12 ocean-going salvage tugs.

Initially, the company confined itself to port, river and coastal towage, but in 1925 it ticked off its first major milestone – a challenging ocean tow.

The tug, *Seaman*, left Boston, Lincolnshire, with two ex-minesweepers, *Stepdance* and *Quadrille*, in tow, for Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Until then, such work was largely the domain of Dutch sea-going tugs.

As reported in the *Mall* at the time, the tow was going to plan until the vessels reached the Bay of Biscay.

Storms were encountered, and in one spell of atrocious weather, the towline connecting the tug and the two hulks broke.

Stepdance remained attached to *Quadrille* and was in imminent danger of being dragged down.

Three members of *Seaman's* crew volunteered for the risky job of venturing on to the heavy seas in a small boat to cut the connecting line.

They succeeded, and the suspended ship was allowed to sink to the seabed.

Seaman continued the 6,500-mile tow – the longest ever undertaken by a Hull tug –

WAVING GOODBYE: Parents and friends watch the school ship *Dunera* leave the King George Dock, being towed by the tug *Seaman*. It was leaving for a 13-day cruise, taken May 27, 1961.



to Argentina. The voyage was undertaken for the princely sum of £3,600, resulting in a £104 profit.

United Towing Company had shown the Dutch companies its intent.

Its tugs quickly became a familiar sight all over the world, towing ships, barges, dredgers, dry docks, and in later years drilling rigs for the offshore oil industry.

United Towing Company played a pivotal role during the Second World War, its vessels taking on the role of Admiralty Rescue tugs, towing back stricken merchant and Royal Navy ships.

The company also towed the floating Mulberry Harbour across the English Channel, allowing the D-Day landings to take place on the morning of June 6, 1944.

In 1973 and 1976, the tugs were again called into service, protecting British trawlers from attacks by Icelandic gunboats during the Cod Wars.

And in 1982, the *Salvageman*, *Yorkshireman* and *Irishman* were among the first vessels to be requisitioned for service during the Falklands conflict with Argentina.

Sadly, owing to increased competition

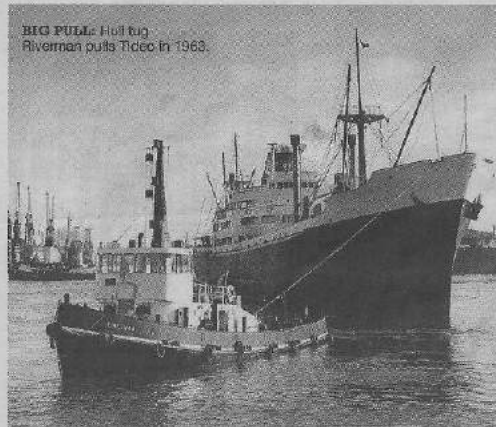
from offshore support vessels and a decline in general towing business, the fleet was reduced to just three vessels.

In 1987, a substantial part of United Towing Company's parent company, North British Maritime Group, was acquired by Howard Smith Ltd of Australia.

Soon after, the decision was made to withdraw from the ownership of large ocean-going tugs and instead concentrate on the management of such vessels, while maintaining its salvage expertise.

The company ceased in 1992.

BIG PULL: Hull tug *Riveman* puts *Tidec* in 1963.



BIG CHALLENGE: HMS *Quadrille* was one of two ex-minesweepers which left Boston in Lincolnshire with the tug *Seaman* for the company's first ocean tow.



Flashback
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TRAGEDY AT SEA

The SS Englishman was a Hull tug requisitioned by the Admiralty at the start of the Second World War. She was based at Campbeltown, on the west coast of Scotland, and her primary task was to go to the aid of damaged merchant ships making the hazardous voyage from Canada and North America. German U-boats were very active in the area. On January 21, 1941 she sailed from Campbeltown with another so-called "rescue tug", Restive. Englishman was sunk the following day, with the loss of all hands on board, after being attacked by enemy aircraft west of Tory Island, Donegal, Ireland. The experienced tug master, George Spence, then aged 57, had captained the Seaman on its epic tow from Boston, Lincolnshire, to Buenos Aires in Argentina 16 years earlier.

ROLL OF HONOUR

The 17 men lost in the sinking of the SS Englishman are commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial in London, on Panel 48.

ANDERSON, James. Second Officer. Aged 29. Son of James and Louisa Anderson; husband of Lily Anderson, of Hull.

COX, John Thomas. Cook. Aged 29. Husband of G Cox, of Billingham, Lincolnshire.

DODD, Urwin Hunter. Chief Engineer Officer. Aged 54. Son of William and Emma Dodd, Sunderland, and husband of Lucie Crosby Dodd, of Hull.

FOSTER, Dennis John. Fireman and Trimmer. Aged 29.

HARDCASTLE, Gilbert John. Second Engineer Officer. Aged 38. Son of John and Mary Hardcastle and husband of Agnes Hardcastle, of Hull.

MARTIN, James. Boy. Aged 20.

PEARSON, George Albert. Second Radio Officer. Aged 29. Son of George William and Annie Pearson, of Grimsby, Lincolnshire.

PERRY, Robert Henry. Able Seaman. Aged 30. Son of Robert and Ethel Perry, of Hull, and husband of Mary Perry, of Campbeltown, Argyllshire.

PLEWES, George Edwin. Third Engineer Officer. Aged 30. Son of James Frederick and Annie Plewes, of Becksides, Beverley.

SMITH, Edwin Hollingsworth. Chief Officer. Aged 32. Son of William Herbert and Ethel Smith, of Hull.

SPENCE (OBE), George Henry. Master. Aged 57.

STEPHENSON, Johnson Atkinson. First Radio Officer.

WHALE, Stanley Freeman. Able Seaman. Aged 23. Son of George and Annie Whale, and husband of Dorothy Whale, of Colne, Lancashire.

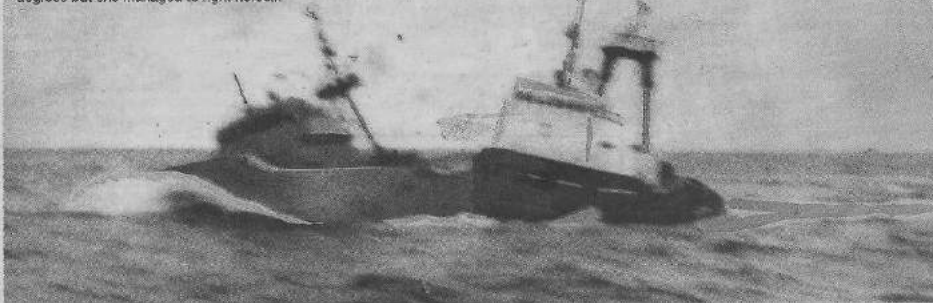
WILKINSON, Sydney. Fireman and Trimmer. Aged 35. Husband of Edith Wilkinson, of Cowling, Yorkshire.

WILCOX, Alfred John. Able Seaman. Aged 47.

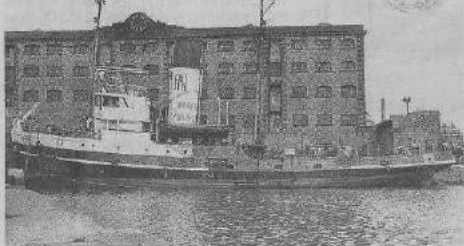
WILSON, Ernest. Fireman and Trimmer. Aged 21.

WOLLASTON, Frank Wright. Third Radio Officer. Aged 20. Son of Frank Wright and Ada Wollaston, of Hull.

TUG OF WAR: The tug Irishman and the gunboat Ardvakar in Iceland's 50-mile limit, were involved in a collision during the God War with Iceland on July 5, 1973. The gunboat then rammed the Vivaria and then the Belgaum (both from Grimsby). The Irishman moved in to protect the two vessels and helped reduce the Ardvakar's impact with them. The impact was so great that the Ardvakar's keel listed over to 45 degrees but she managed to right herself.



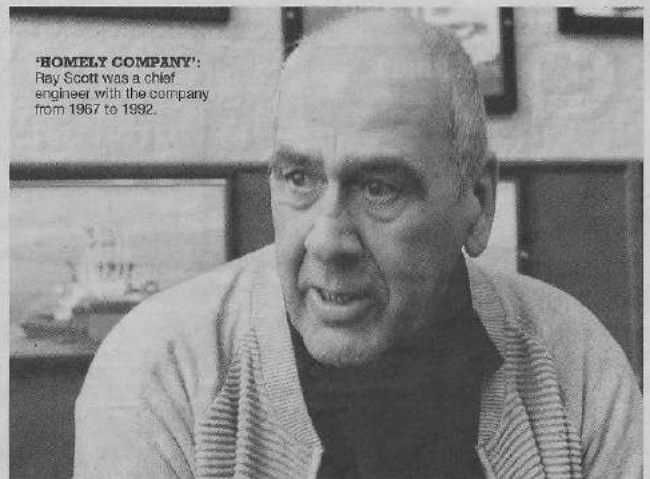
RESTING: The tug Merchantman in Humber Dock (Now Hull Marina) on July 18, 1962. It was later renamed Terantum.



COD WARS: Peter Rimmer, master of the tug Yorkshireman during its Falklands tour of duty on July 25, 1983, pictured alongside crew members at the presentation of the commemorative plaque from the Board of Admiralty.



PRIDE: Nev Gray was a former employee and was 'made up' when the society formed.



'HOMELY COMPANY': Ray Scott was a chief engineer with the company from 1967 to 1992.

'It was a very good life, we all knew each other'

A BACKROOM of Kingston Hotel, in the shadow of the recently renamed Hull Minster, is now a shrine to their industry.

On the walls are photographs and memorabilia harking back to United Towing Company's glory days - of which there were many.

A group of former workers, now members of the United Towing and Salvage Society, are nursing pints of ale and reminiscing.

There's a real sense of sadness at the demise of the company but it's tempered by pride and fond memories shared at each get-together.

"This was the largest salvage company in the world," says Nev Gray, a former employee. "I was made up when this society was formed about two years ago."

Ray Scott was a chief engineer with the

company from 1967 to 1992.

"It was a very good life," he says. "It was a homely company. Everybody knew each other. If you changed tugs, you knew you were going to see someone you knew, and that made going away on long trips, better for you."

"On leave, you'd go out and meet up with your mates. Your wife would know other wives. I really missed that side of the company when I finished."

Ray, like the others in this room, speaks with passion about his days at sea.

"You never knew where you were going in the world," says Ray. "That's what I liked about the job."

"One tour we did, on Euroman, was from Nigeria to Port Arthur to Texas."

That job involved towing an oil rig. The

voyage lasted almost four months.

"You tended to do four hours on, eight hours off," he says. "You had about 22 men on the big tugs."

Ray introduces the late, great Captain Billy Hopper into the conversation - a key figure in United Towing Company.

"Before we got hold of his rig, Billy Hopper, he was Captain, came down and said 'You'll probably be away for a fortnight, lads.'"

Everyone in the room laughs.

In 1983, Ray found himself in the Falklands. "We arrived just after the Argentines surrendered," he says. "We were there five years, on and off."

"We did the Antelope."

The Type 21 frigate was sunk by Argentine aircraft on May 24, 1982.

"We got charts and ammunition off it," says

Ray. Ed Barker began his United Towing Company career in 1967, on the Yorkshirreman, and he admits it took him a while to find his sea legs.

"I had my head down the bog even before we left Spurn," he says, laughing.

"I enjoyed my time with United Towing Company. I only left because the wife wasn't happy with the amount of time I was spending away."

Ed only retired from the salvage industry five years ago. An old hand, he struggles to understand today's generation of tugmen.

"Kids nowadays don't want to go away," he says. "They don't like the idea of being away from their families for even short periods of time."

Between sips of ale, Ed recalls a conversation he had with a crewmate.

"He was telling me about the last tug he'd been on," says Ed.

"He told me, 'We had wifi in every cabin'. 'Is that all you can tell me?' I asked. 'Never mind the wifi, what was the engine room like?'"

"I come from the generation where you sent a letter home now and again and it might reach your family. Nowadays, people can't live without being in constant communication with each other."

"I used to ring home twice in seven months, because that's all I could afford."

Talk turns to food.

"I did three days as cook on one trip," says Nev. "Never again."

"You always knew you had a good cook on board if you never saw him doing anything in the kitchen."

"The good ones would be playing cards or reading a book - he'd have got everything organised hours before you wandered into the galley."

"It was all in the organisation."


Pete Bass reflects on one such character, Captain Charles Noble MBE, in his soon-to-be published book, *From Galley Boy To Tug Master*.

"Quite a few of the really well-known characters, like Captain Noble, worked their way up," he says.



COD WARS: Ray Scott was a chief engineer and one of the tugs he served on was Euroman, pictured here in action during the third Cod War.

From Galley Boy to Tugmaster
Capt. Charles Noble MBE



Copyright by the Captain, London in 1982 by the author

Copies of the book, priced £13.99, are available from United Towing and Salvage Society and the Hull People's Memorial shop, in Whitefriargate. It can also be bought at Veterans' Weekend, on July 29-30, at East Park.



SETTING SAIL: The Hull tug Euroman sailing to join the buffer ships off Iceland, in December, 1975.

TEAM: Yorkshireman crew in 1982.



ESCORT: Guardsman was towing Christos Bhas to its final destination, escorted by Yorkshireman and with both Irish and British naval ships in attendance.

CAPTAIN BILLY WAS AN 'ABSOLUTE GENT'

CAPTAIN William "Billy" Hopper is a name synonymous with United Towing Company.

The tug master's career spanned 50 years, 30 of which were spent with the company, and his skills were respected the world over.

He was educated at Hull Trinity House Navigation School until 1928, when he joined his first ship, the SS Scoresby, of Whitby taking coal from Barry Dock to the Cape Verde islands.

He met his wife, Madge, in Montreal in 1933, when he was second mate on a ship and she was a passenger travelling from the US to the UK.

Captain Hopper gained his master's ticket and joined the SS Larpool at the outbreak of the Second World

War. In September 1940, the ship suffered engine failure when 300 miles off the coast of Ireland and came under enemy bomber attack, but escaped without a hit.

In November 1941, her luck ran out when she was torpedoed and sunk 250 miles off Canada.

Captain Hopper and five others spent eight days rowing in a lifeboat before reaching safety on the Newfoundland shore.

His prestigious career in towing and salvage started in May 1946, when he landed a job with United Towing Company.

His longest journey was 56,000 miles, the equivalent to travelling twice around the world, when he helped refloat a Norwegian tanker stranded on Mlincovy Island, and

rescued the German cargo ship Max Arit, which was caught on a reef in the Maldives.

Captain Hopper worked his way up to become Operations Superintendent.

He began to specialise in the offshore oil and gas exploration industry from 1965, working as tow master on rigs such as Ocean Prince, Sednoth II and the Orient Explorer.

Speaking soon after Captain Hopper's death, at the age of 96 in 2010, his old colleague Paul Escreet described him as "an absolute gentleman and a very knowledgeable man" - a sentiment shared by many.

He added: "I was very privileged to work with him and I learnt an enormous amount from him."

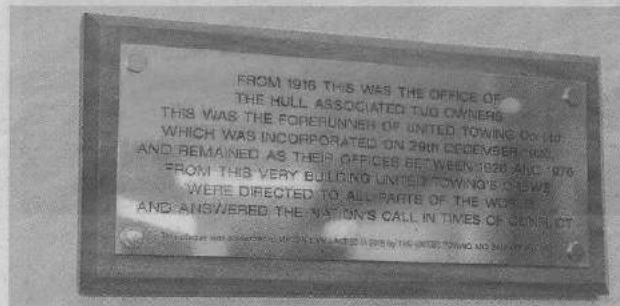
WELL-LIKED: Captain Hopper met his wife, Madge, in Montreal in 1933.



United Towing Co's



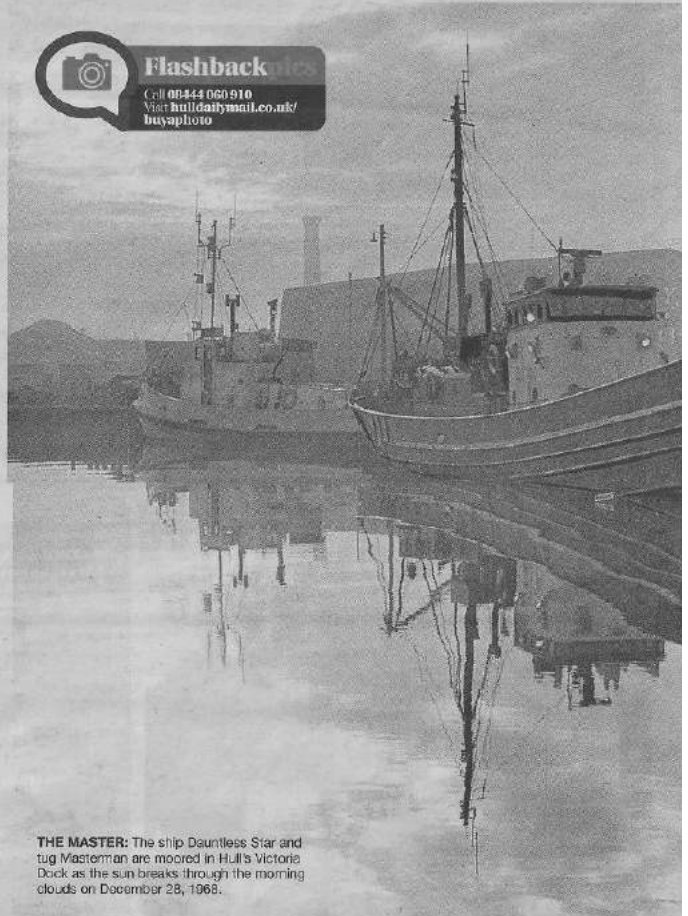
EXHIBITION: The United Towing Co Ltd exhibition at the Hull History Museum last year. From left, Edilie Barker, New Gray, Marlene Whittam, Pete Bass, Martin Taylor and Mike Hussey. Below, a model of the Yorkshireman tug



PERMANENT REMINDER: A plaque was installed at Riverside House to act as a permanent reminder of the many years United Towing Co operated from this office. Below, the unveiling of the plaque.



Flashback
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THE MASTER: The ship Dauntless Star and tug Masterman are moored in Hull's Victoria Dock as the sun breaks through the morning clouds on December 28, 1968.



ALMOST HOME: The tug Englishman nears the end of a 4,000-mile journey, bringing the Athel Crown from Cuba on August 30, 1965.

years of great service



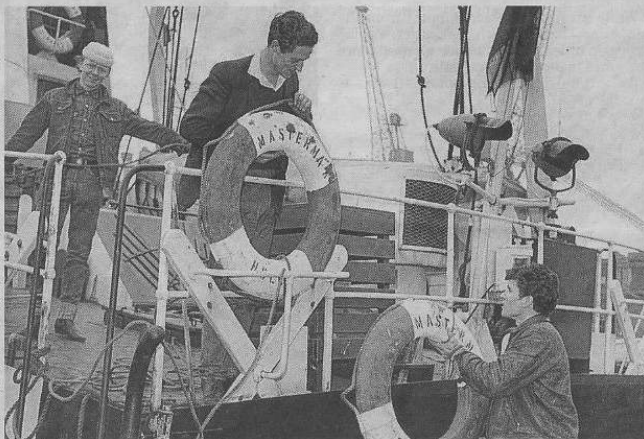
UPGRADE: The upgraded tug Masterman in 1982.



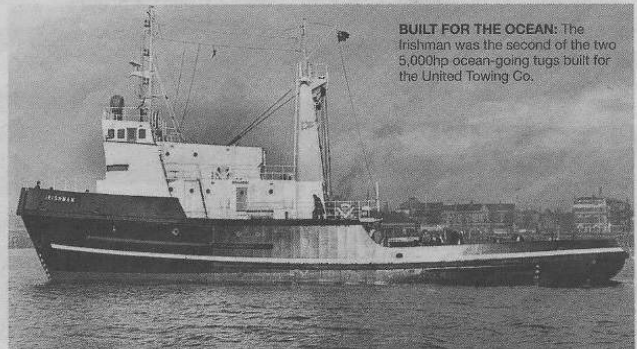
ON GUARD: The Guardsman tug in 1952.



PAINT JOB: The Hull tug Foreman had her paint scraped by ice while she was towing the MV Audacity from Brunsbittel to the Thames in 1963. The tug was alongside the old horsewash at Hull Corporation Pier for examination.



COLLISION: Masterman relief crew members John Rossington and Kenneth Broadhead tidy up the tug after she was in a collision just off King George Dock in February 1966, caught between a oil rig lifting ship and piles on the river bed.



BUILT FOR THE OCEAN: The Irishman was the second of the two 5,000hp ocean-going tugs built for the United Towing Co.



COLLISION: The tug Masterman is surrounded by tugs after she was in a collision just off King George Dock caught between an oil rig lifting spar and pier on the river bar in February 1986.

It's time we remembered the city's 'forgotten fleet'



MIKE HUSSEY

By Mike Hussey, chairman of the United Towing and Salvage Society "The Forgotten Fleet" could well be the title of a book about the United Towing Company.

For as far as the city of Hull is concerned, it is as though it never existed even though, at one time, it was the world's largest towing and salvage company.

We have a totally one-sided approach from the city and its museums promoting the history of the fishing industry.

Clearly, more fishermen than tug men perished at sea but that does not make the latter's loss any less important.

We should be proud of our fishing heritage, but we should also celebrate other significant contributions to our maritime history by companies such as the United Towing Company of Hull. Despite its major contributions to Hull's maritime history, the port's commercial development and indeed the UK, many are unaware it ever existed.

It goes unnoticed. I feel Hull is really missing out by not portraying the full story and giving the United Towing Company proper promotion. It is a very interesting story.

The United Towing and Salvage Society has a magnificent collection of models, memorabilia and artefacts for the public to enjoy, while trying to keep the name alive.

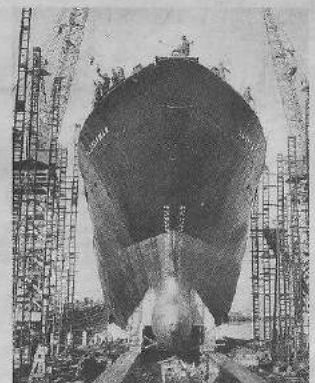
The United Towing Company also played a major role in many of this country's conflicts.

This history should be celebrated, especially in this year as UK City of Culture. We should be shouting about every asset we have.

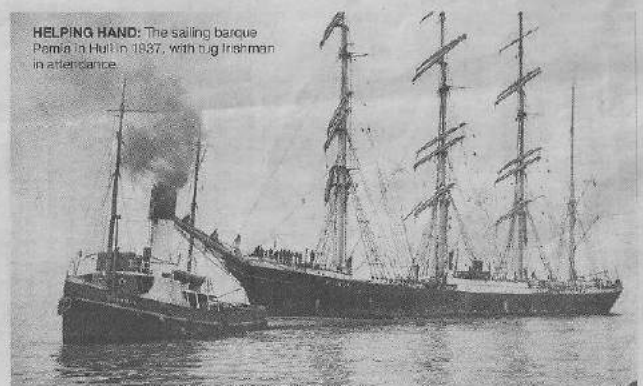
Tugs continue to play a vital role in port operations around the globe.

While we have received support from the Maritime Museum with temporary display space, in order to do it justice we need more exposure in a permanent facility.

It's time this forgotten fleet is remembered.

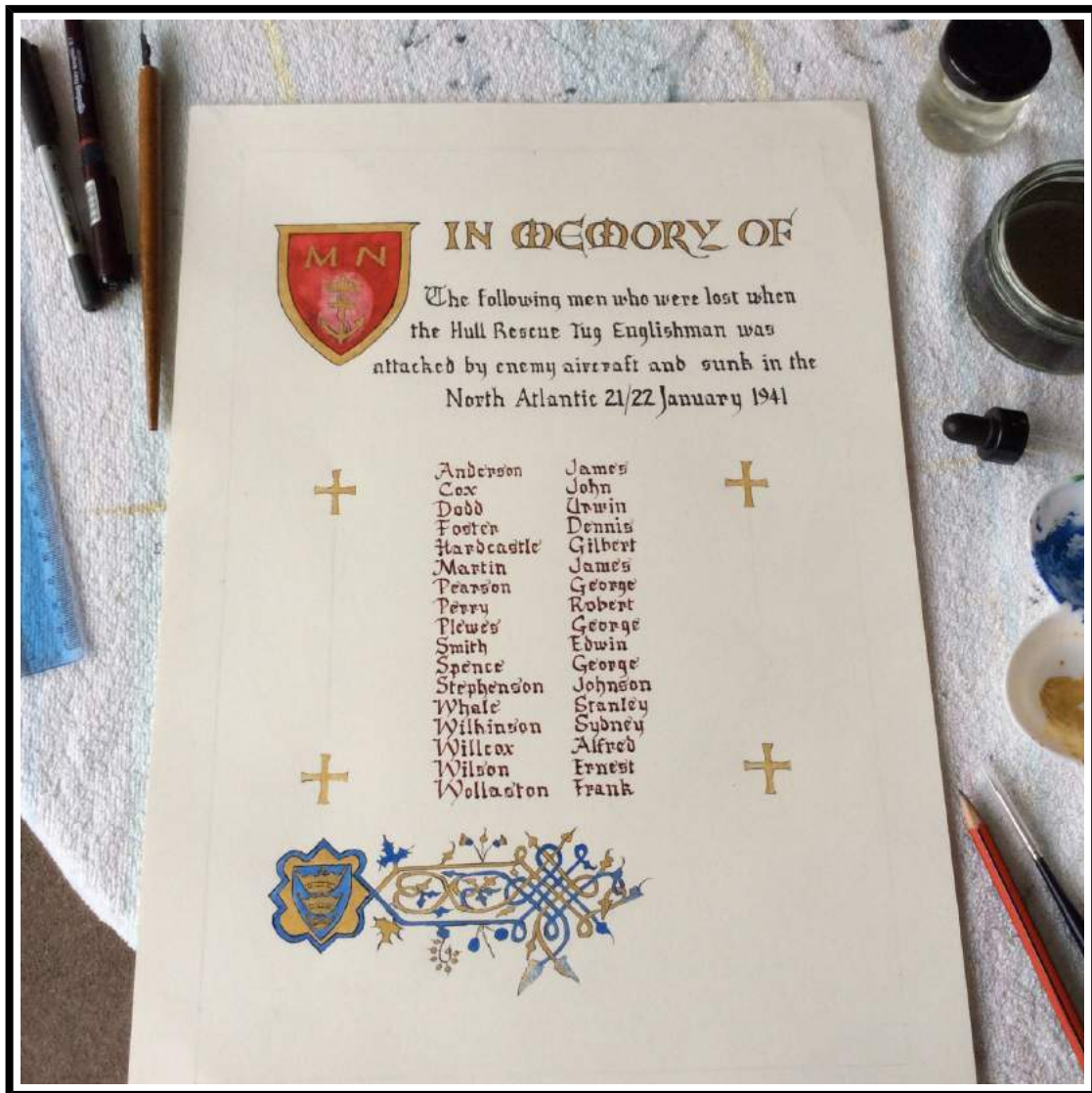


FLYING THE COUNTY FLAG: The Yorkshireman tug.



HELPING HAND: The sailing barque Pania in Hull in 1887, with tug fishermen in attendance.

Memorial to *Englishman* (1938)



Memorial Roll of Honour dedicated to the crew of the rescue tug *ENGLISHMAN*.

U.T.S.S. member Mike Murphy made the memorial for his first project after taking up calligraphy for a hobby. After framing it is hoped we can hang the memorial in Holy Trinity Church along with a photograph of *ENGLISHMAN*.