



GALLEY RADIO

Welcome to our new newsletter. We hope that this will complement our magazine Bollard Pull and keep you up to date with what is happening and how you can join in.

MEET YOUR COMMITTEE

TONY PORTER, Chair.

I started out on big boats in 1974 with Blue Funnel. As the Company, and industry, was dying on its feet my last trip was at the Falklands Conflict where I met with United's tugs working down there. I joined UT in 1982 as Mate and left in 1986 as I wanted to try for my Master's 'ticket. Following that I joined Swire Pacific Offshore having a go at just about everything offshore. I got a Master's job in 1991 but left to work as a Pilot on the Humber.



1985
In South Georgia

After banging and crashing around there whilst my kids were growing up we became surplus to requirements and I returned to sea with Swire's. My last job with them was on a submarine rescue ship for the Singapore Navy. I packed in the life at sea in 2013 to spend half of every year on a narrowboat around England with my wife Helen.

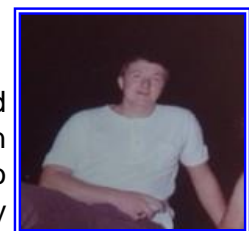


2015
The best I could do.

Contact me on 01482 898717, utandss@gmail.com.
I'm looking forward to putting United Towing on the map again.

MIKE HUSSEY, Secretary.

I started with United Towing Company in mid 1972 having been attracted to the idea by Barry Rhodes and a few other guys who had been working in the civil engineering piling game and at that time had made the move to United. My first task was working chipping and red leading a tug in dry dock, not the most popular job to do.



Durban, 1972

We then got the call to join the Euroman in South Africa for an expected 3 month trip. Having only recently been married I managed to convince my wife Jackie it wasn't that long and off I went. I joined the Euroman in Durban as a greaser in the engine room, having made arrangements before going to join the Tug for practically all my wages to be paid to Jackie whilst I was away.

I had to get a bit creative and started to operate an on-board laundering service, were I would wash the guys gear and iron their shirts, which was well used and gave me some beer money. I also did extra watches when alongside to get a bit more cash and even started freshening up the cabins on board painting them a nice magnolia. This was also popular with the lads, however not with Arthur King who expressed some displeasure as I was covering a finish designed to be washed to clean. That ended that revenue stream! We had quite an eventful trip with spells of repainting the whole engine room.

We were called out to the Edwin Cook, a whaler that had been holed when the harpoon which it had just shot into a whale was pushed through the ship plates when the whale collided with the ship in heavy seas.

We shadowed her back to port in case she went down at sea, this made it impossible to get pumps aboard, fortunately the whaler got their pump working. We also went to the aid of the Greek Tanker the Gallant Colocotronis which had run aground, we were in a race against the Zwartzee Zee.



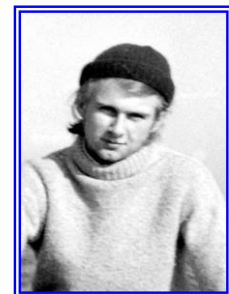
2015
On HMS Warrior

We were assisted in this job by the Royal Navy who airlifted a running crew on board the tanker and following an eventful tow with the parting 3 times we arrived at Capetown for some shore. Our final job was picking up a damaged tanker the Horta Barbosa in Dubai and towing her on her way to Germany, a tow which at times almost stood still when one engine had to be shut down for repairs, however we continued until relieved at Durban for our flights home, almost 7 months later, needless to say I was in some bother when I got home.

That was my only trip but I have been hooked ever since and still miss the sea environment.

EDDIE BARKER, Treasurer.

I started with United Towing after leaving school in July 1967. After about five years I finally attained the dizzy height of Mate. I left the company in January 1974 and joined Westminster Gravels as AB for a couple of months. Soon after I regained my senses and once more joined a tug company, Nolt J Theriot of Golden Meadow, Louisiana, working mainly in the oil industry in the North Sea and Gulf of Mexico.



1968
With UTC

Being all US flag ships I couldn't progress further than Mate and after attaining my Master's certificate in 1981 I left that company a year later to take my first Master's job with Gray Mackenzie Marine, Bahrain. After five years there the company sold out to IMS Dubai but the contract offered to me then didn't suit so I left and went to a company in Kuwait for one trip before circumstances led to me working ashore for four years.



2015
After a hard life!

1991 saw me back at sea with a Japanese company, ADOC, working in the Persian Gulf. I left them in 1996 and joined Semco, Singapore, towing mostly FPSOs etc. worldwide. I left them in 2005 for the Dutch company Fairmount Marine BV where I worked worldwide until I finally retired in October 2013.

RAY SCOTT, Membership Secretary.

Occupation:- Retired

I joined the Merchant Navy in 1962, working as a Junior and 4th Engineer.

I left the Merch and started working for United Towing Company in 1968, employed as 2nd and Chief Engineer, working on the docking and deep-sea tugs.



Before



After

The last vessel that I sailed in was the AH tug "Boa Eskil" and the "Jon Viking" (same tug). This tug was chartered by United from the late 80's to 1991, so I think I can say that I was the last Chief Engineer to be employed by UTC.

I worked for a company called Inter Marine Incorporated in the Middle East for three years, then joined Boston Putfords in Lowestoft. They became Seacor Marine, the most boring job that I have ever had, but I stuck it for about 14 years until retirement.

PETE BASS, Archivist.

D.O.B 05/02/1947

After serving my time as a shipwright I joined the Merchant Navy and sailed with several shipping companies as a chippy, finishing up with the Royal Fleet Auxilliary.

My interest in tugs and marine salvage began while researching my late father and uncles seafaring careers who both served with U.T.Co. as engineers aboard United's ex Empire tugs.



Before



After a very hard life!



So far our membership has reached over 50 but of course we want to increase this as much as we can. If you know anybody that used to work for United Towing or Humber Tugs, in the office or at sea, please let them know. Also if you know the family of those that were once employees and may like to get to know the history of the company they worked for please tell them about us and spread the word. We have had a small interview on Radio Humberside, also appeared in the Hull Daily Mail Flashback, and have announced our Society on the Ships Nostalgia Forum website and have recruited from all these sources. It goes to show that advertising pays. Please mention the Society when you are out and about.



At our reunion held at the Kingston Hotel on Thursday 24th September we were able to welcome some new faces to the gathering (and sign them up too). As usual it was great to see some of the usual suspects also, and plenty of partners along as well. It would have been good to see greater numbers there though. With Christmas coming (sorry to bring that up!) let us know if there is any desire for another 'do'. How about a quiz night, or having a music night? What about the venue? Any other suggestions. Would folk near Hull be interested in visiting Trinity House, Blaydes House etc? How about talks given about maritime subjects? Or a Christmas Party? Let the committee know if you have any ideas or if any of the above would interest you.



We have been very lucky with funds so far. We were very kindly given a grant by The James Reckitt Fund to get us started. This was added to the money that had been earned by Dennis Shakesby and others, and the money made from the sale of our Calendars. Due to the failings of Lloyds Bank to set up our Society Bank account in a timely manner we also received a handy compensation from them. We are actively seeking sponsorship and have been very lucky to have received a cheque from Towne Lifting and Testing and Wilberforce Insurance and others are in the pipeline. We are always interested in talking to potential sponsors so if you know anybody that may be interested in promoting our cause and getting some publicity please let the committee know.



One project that we wish to carry out as soon as possible is to refurbish the flag pole outside the Kingston Pub. This would enable us to fly the flag for United Towing in a very well-trodden part of the town, and set to get more so with the coming changes to the square. We have our ace 'Chippy' Pete Bass that would do the work but we would need a scaffolding tower to enable us to take it down and re-erect it. This would make great publicity for the society and the pub.

Does anybody know where we could borrow a scaffolding tower from? Hiring would be about £70 a day! If borrowed from a business they would obviously be featured in the article. Does anybody have any ideas about anybody that would like to sponsor this project as we will need to have some flags specially made.



There was nothing better than coming off watch and having a couple of beers and a few games of crib. Our Society was started largely to record and preserve the history of United Towing. The facts and figures of ships are easily looked up but the real history of a company is the exploits of the crews and the work of those in the office. We would love to start the ball rolling by printing short little pieces, about 250 words long, that we could keep for the future as well as print in the 'Bollard Pull' or 'Galley Radio'. Don't worry if you think that you aren't an Ian Fleming or a Wilbur Smith as we just want it in your words. If you want us to I'm sure we can knock it about until you are happy with it. It can be about anything at all.

A couple of things I remember about when I worked for United was the change in food! I had worked 'deep sea' up until then and we had white jacketed steward service in the Officer's Saloon with china and silver service. There were usually four or five courses to dinner but even going 'right round the buoy' we were still hungry due to the small portions. On joining United there was no white jackets, just a mucky tea towel but there were mountains of good homely food, and I never left the mess room wanting more as long as I worked for them. The other thing I remember was that I got very good at crib.



You may have noticed how amateurish this publication looks. I confess to not being very good at this sort of thing. I'm sure out there there is somebody that would be able to knock out something much better with their eyes closed. If you are that person, or persons, we are desperately looking for folk to take on producing this newsletter. You won't have to write all the copy yourself as that can be delegated around to others, although if you do have authorial aspirations please feel free. Just have a word with one of the committee or phone or email us and we can talk it over with you.

**PLEASE LET THE COMMITTEE KNOW IF YOU HAVE NOT
RECEIVED COPIES OF BOLLARD PULL BY EITHER EMAIL OR POST.
One edition only so far, the next is due in December.**



There will also be opportunities for volunteers in the future. It was a RN saying that 'one volunteer is better than ten pressed men'. Next year we are hoping to have a stand at various events. This will hold a small exhibition of ships models, photographs, flags and artefacts of the company.

We will be looking for help in transporting it, erecting it and manning it so that tug men can be represented alongside the fishermen and others of the MN and RN. As we have plans for the next few years, with the City of Culture coming up full speed, we are also looking for others to join the committee. Have you a bit of time to spare and enjoy a pint? Come along and see what is involved with no commitment. Give us a ring.

UTSS featured in Hull Daily Mail Flashback Focus
 Monday 21st September 2015

MFB-E01-S3 hulldailymail.co.uk/nostalgia



KNOW ANYONE?: Above left and right, these are two of the pictures from the United Towing and Salvage Society archive and chairman Tony Porter hopes someone can provide more information about the people shown. The society welcomes pictures of the company, its employees and its vessels.

United by memory

In the long history of Hull's links with the sea and shipping, one name that reflects many of the great stories of seamanship in years past is that of United Towing Company.

Formed in 1921 by seven Humber tug companies with 36 vessels, United became a giant in the international towing and salvage business.

The glory days may now be over, but for many of the men who sailed United Towing tugs, the memories are still strong.

As a result the United Towing and Salvage Society was formed following regular meetings in the Kingston pub, Trinity House Lane, Hull, on alternate Wednesday lunchtimes to try to ensure that stories of towing and salvage with tugs from a bygone era and of their crews and practises are not entirely lost.

And on Thursday this week, September 24, a re-union aimed at bringing together everyone who worked for the company at sea or ashore is being held at the Kingston pub starting at 7.30pm. All are welcome.

Chairman Tony Porter says: "The Kingston is our 'home' as the back bar is

Flashback Focus

With
Stuart Russell



covered with pictures and mementos of tugs and crews. Every other Wednesday afternoon there is a 'get together' where yarns are swapped and news exchanged."

"We wish to create an archive of photographs and artefacts, along with personal oral histories, so that there is a permanent record that will be available for all to access. We are raising money to produce a website so that everything can be accessed online and we have big plans for projects in the future. We aim to heave United Towing back into the light."

The society's historian Pete Bass, says: "United Towing is a Hull company that was pre-eminent at one time but is now out of sight, out of mind."

He recalled one United vessel which was particularly well known. The Yorkshireman

was a major attraction at Bridlington with trips around the Bay in the summer, the tug being the public eye of a company whose vessels served Hull on most of the oceans of the world.

Besides its peace-time work, United Towing also supplied ship's and men at times of conflict including escort tugs in the Second World War and ensuring victory by handling the Mulberry Harbours used on the Normandy beaches as well as assisting in laying the PLUTO pipeline to the beaches.

When the fishing industry was involved in the Cod Wars, United Towing was again used to provide ships and men to protect the trawlers and during the Falklands campaign the company's vessels and crews directly participated in the retaking of Southern Thule and South Georgia managing to take the burning Atlantic Conveyor under tow before she sank.

● The society can be contacted at utandss@gmail.com and is found on Facebook by searching for United Towing and Salvage Society.

To contact the Chair, Tony Porter, phone 01482 898717, or other members of the committee please email;

utandss@gmail.com

Or just buy them a pint at the Wednesday socials - Oct 28th, Nov. 11th and 25th Dec 9th and 23rd.