

SOUTH WEST SOUNDINGS 103

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Edited by Ray Fordham

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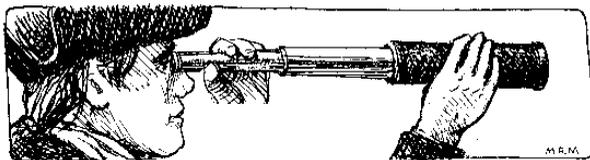
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A reminder/invoice is included with the April edition.

If you pay by SO please ignore, but ensure your SO setup includes a reference that identifies who you are, and send to membership secretary (see back page).

FUTURE MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS



(Italics indicate an event of interest but not organised directly by the Society)

Friday 10th February 2017. 7 00 pm Roland Levinsky Lecture Theatre No 2, Plymouth University.
The SWMHS ANNUAL LECTURE AT PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY.
Dr Innes McCartney “Jutland 1916- the archaeology of a naval battlefield” (**notice enclosed**)

3-16 April 2017. The Devon Newfoundland Story. A number of events to celebrate nearly 600 years of contact and interaction between Devon and Newfoundland including special exhibitions and talks at museums including North Devon Maritime Museum at Appledore, Topsham Museum and Dartmouth Maritime Museum etc etc. For a full programme and, where applicable, registration forms go to www.devonassoc.org.uk or contact The Registrar, Dr Bridget Gillard on 01392 860456.

April 22nd 2017. Portishead . SW Ship Show

10 June 2017. AGM . The Globe, Topsham

Confirmation of events will be published either in the next edition or in calling notices for bookings, which will be sent to members at the appropriate time.

Next copy date: March 20th 2017

EDITORIAL

In 2014 I agreed to assist Jonathan Seagrave in editing South West Soundings, a task I have found interesting and which has helped keep me in touch with the wider aspects of maritime history. During his seven years as editor, Jonathan set and maintained standards which will be hard to follow. As he stated in his last editorial in SWS102, I will continue to hold the fort (*maintain the pumps?*) until the future of the magazine has been decided. Judging by the growth in online social media it appears inevitable that the form of SWS will change if it is to survive.

In the meantime our recent survey showed that we have an interested readership and continue to receive submissions from members. I am particularly grateful to those who contributed to the present edition of SWS and apologise for any changes resulting from my attempts to reformat items to fit within the size and page limit. A number of photographs have been omitted although it may be possible to reproduce these later on facebook or on the website once it is up and running again.

It is rewarding to see the spin off from previous articles such as Jonathan's account of the Chugg Family (*SWS*. 102, 15-24). Michael Guegan's contribution on the *Dido C* and Jonathan's enquiry about ketch cargoes are examples likely to prompt further discussion. Members are invited to submit short notes on research in progress which may well lead to other untapped sources.

Ray Fordham

ARTICLES

The U-boat that sank Liberty Ship *James Eagan Layne*

Readers of this Newsletter may recall mention of the research project finalised in 2015 called “Liberty 70” which recorded the story of the Liberty Ship named the *James Eagan Layne* sunk off Plymouth in 1945, and now a well-known and easily dived wreck. Some material was published on-line during the seventieth anniversary year and may be viewed on www.promare.co.uk/liberty70. My contribution was to research the story of the submarine which sank the ship, drawing principally on a number of archives. Since this is not readily accessible via the website, it may interest members of the Society to have a short summary of this aspect of the story. In order to make this more easily digestible, I have omitted much of the technical detail. Distance and speed are expressed in nautical miles and knots, whilst other measurements are metric. The convention is observed of calling the German submarines Uboats.

The UBoat that sank the *James Eagan Layne* was the U399. It was built in Kiel and commissioned in January 1944. It was a Type VIIC which became a standard submarine for the German navy and its principal weapon in the Battle of the Atlantic. It was indeed the most numerous type of submarine in history. Whilst this was a practical and efficient weapon at the start of the war, by 1944 it was proving obsolescent and easy prey for the increasingly sophisticated and numerous anti-submarine vessels and aircraft. It was 67 metres long and 871 tons submerged. Its two diesel engines could propel it at nearly 18 knots on the surface and the two electric motors could propel it at nearly 8 knots submerged. Its maximum range was nearly 9000 miles. In December 1944 U399 was equipped with the snorkel device which allowed running with the diesel engines whilst submerged just below the surface, avoiding the very limited submerged range of its electric motors. Indeed U399's mission into the jaws of the English Channel could only have been achieved by remaining submerged yet running on its diesels for extended periods because there was otherwise no possibility of escaping radar detection on surfacing to move or recharge batteries, even at night. The submarine could dive 165 metres in only 30 seconds, far faster than

Allied submarines, and reach a design maximum depth of 280 metres - yet submarines of this class were reported to have survived dives much deeper than that. This was significantly deeper than any Allied submarine, and at the start of the war it had led to a general setting of depth-charges to explode too shallowly. Only later in the war were Allied depth-charges correctly fused, as U399 would discover.

It was armed with fourteen torpedoes in five tubes, a deck gun and an anti-aircraft gun. The torpedo that sank the Liberty ship was 7 metres long and weighed about 1700 kg. It was electrically powered and thus gave no tell-tale bubble wake. It had a speed of 30 knots and a range of about 4 miles. The warhead had a weight of 280 kg and the magnetic fuse was detonated by the proximity of the target's own magnetic field, and set so that it would explode under the target's keel to break its back; only one torpedo being needed to destroy a ship. The torpedo was probably equipped with a new guidance system which unlike the traditional straight-running gyroscope would give the torpedo zig-zagging or circular courses designed to create mayhem in a convoy. Moreover the sophisticated attack computer aboard the submarine could programme each torpedo with up-to-the-second target-finding information and allow the submarine to launch a torpedo when pointing 90 degrees away from the target and turning.

On this first war patrol, U399 had a crew of 4 officers and 43 other ranks. It was commanded by *Oberleutnant zur See* Heinz Buhse, aged 28.

The UBoat's orders and log were lost and from 15th January 1945 all records held by the German UBoat command (Befehlshaber der Unterseeboote or BdU) were destroyed by them. There are no relevant de-classified Enigma descriptions of orders to or messages from U399, not surprising because of a general order issued to all UBoats at that time which required that no passage reports should be made by submarines unless ordered – a policy of radio silence. The following notes on the attack upon the *James Eagan Layne* are based upon an interpretation of other available evidence.

U399 was operating alone against coastal shipping in an assigned area between Land's End and Portland Bill corresponding with squares BF 21 to 29 on the BdU sector chart number 3401. U399 belonged to 11 Flottille, an entirely combat unit based in Bergen and Horten in Norway, and she departed on the 6th February 1945. It is likely that the journey

from there to the patrol area avoided the dangers of the North Sea and the narrow eastern entrance to the Channel by taking the long but safer voyage from Horten along the southwestern coast of Norway to Bergen, westwards to the north of Shetland, west of the Outer Hebrides and Ireland, and then well south of the Scillies before taking up patrol between Land's End and Portland Bill. On the assumption that the submarine stayed on the edge of the Continental Shelf for most of the journey this would have meant a trip of about 1900 nautical miles. This wide detour was needed to avoid anti-submarine patrols concentrated on areas of high Allied shipping activity. Declassified Enigma description 2030 of 20th February 1945 (being a report from another U-Boat but at exactly the time when U-399 was at sea) reported being untroubled when charging batteries at 49.33 degrees north and 12.45 degrees west – ie about only 7 degrees of longitude or 400 miles west of U-399's final patrol area. Indeed, very many Enigma descriptions reveal undisturbed UBoat activity west of Ireland in late 1944 to Spring 1945. But the final leg of the journey south of the Scillies and then into the English Channel to the area of deployment would have been heavily patrolled and extremely hazardous, and much if not all of the distance would have been travelled submerged using the snorkel. Other declassified Enigma descriptions of German signals indicates a growing acknowledgement that UBoats were vulnerable to air attack even when submerged and using the snorkel – however it was still preferable to surface running, not least because of the increased speed of a crash dive. In ideal peacetime circumstances and travelling on the surface at the most economic cruising speed, this trip would have taken seven days. As was inevitably the case with U399, however, an untried and inexperienced crew operating in conditions that were hostile and required frequent evasive manoeuvres, much of the trip would have been spent dived and would have taken much longer.

The patrol's objective would have been to find targets of opportunity within the allocated sector, preferably merchant vessels destined to supply the Allied forces which were by then fighting their way into the heart of Germany. By that stage of the war this would have been regarded as a mission of desperation – pitching an out-dated and untested submarine with a novice crew against an experienced, technically advanced and numerous defensive force in a narrow and shallow seaway. The crew of the U399 would have been aware of the massive losses of fellow UBoats at that stage of the war and it is

inevitable that many of them would have regarded this as a suicide mission.

U399 sank two vessels. The first target was the Liberty Ship *James Eagan Layne*. She had been launched in the United States as recently as the 2nd December 1944 and having been loaded in Barry South Wales with US Army equipment such as tank parts, jeeps, and lorries destined for Ghent and Patton's 3rd Army, she joined the eastbound English Channel convey BTC-103. She was proceeding as the lead ship of the more southerly of two parallel columns when she was struck by a single torpedo at 1335hrs on 21st March 1945 in the position 50.13N 004.05W - about seven miles south of the Plymouth breakwater. The explosion caused massive damage to the aft holds, propeller shaft and steering, and indeed cracked the hull, and the crew had only fifteen minutes to abandon ship before she slipped beneath the waves.

The second target was the Diesel Motorship *Pacific*, a Dutch vessel built in 1938 and registered in Groningen. It was of 362 tons and was part of Convoy BTC-108 and was sunk at 0530 hrs on the 26th March 1945 about 5 miles southwest of the Lizard.

But the hunter became the hunted. Immediately after the sinking of the *Pacific* the convoy anti-submarine escort vessels raced into action and the frigate *HMS Duckworth* depth-charged U399 and sank her in the position 49.56N 005.22W – about 6 miles southwest of Lizard Head where the seabed is about 200 feet deep..

Oberbootsmannsmaat (Boatswain's Mate Second Class). Gerhard Pflock was the only known survivor. It is not known how seriously injured he was, and if he did manage to survive his injuries, indeed it is not known what happened to him.

David Bowen

A Hero Still Unsung

Date: February 20th 1944: Location: At sea, 14 nm N of Trevoise Head:
Time 11.55am

Vic Crisp was busy doing what he had done all his life, boy and man, fishing, a Lowestoft trawler man, in his boat the *Lady Luck* with his ageing crew of hardened sailors. The routine was the same as always, but it was now more complicated by the presence of German U-Boats who had a nasty habit of popping up in the middle of any fishing fleet, ordering the crew to take to their jolly boat and then sinking the vessel by gunfire or scuttling charge. Trawlers were not worth an expensive torpedo.

Britain was at war.

The U boats, in this case U413 under the command of Capt Pohl, were always lurking around. Lying deep off Trevoise, where ASDIC signals were distorted, they waited for larger prey, a coaster or a naval vessel. They would remain submerged during the day and surface at night to recharge their batteries. U19 had picked up information that two destroyers *HMS Warwick* and *HMS Scimitar* had been dispatched from Devonport and so Capt Pohl waited for his kill. Vic Crisp had finished his trawl and with the catch loaded was ready to sail to Milford Haven to unload. He watched as *HMS Warwick* went past and then suddenly a puff of smoke, a flash and the Warwick split in two with the rear portion travelling past the forward section. He could see men falling into the water and heard their cries and, instinctively, went into rescue mode.

In short, Vic and his crew pulled 45 sailors out of the water, many burned, all covered in oil and freezing cold. Some that he rescued appeared dead but revived in the warmth of the *Lady Luck's* hold. Others were so badly injured that Vic realised that unless they got them to Padstow quickly, the death toll would be greater. Here he encountered the first, but by no means the last, example of bureaucratic idiocy. As *Lady Luck* raced to Padstow, knowing that because of the tidal swells and the Doom Bar's sand, he would have to step on it, Vic was met by an Air Sea Rescue Launch and was ordered by loud hailer to stop and transfer his survivors to them. Assessing the state of his passengers, he consulted with Capt Rayner (*Warwick*, also rescued) as to what he should do. 'Ignore them!' said Rayner. Sensibly Vic followed this advice

and delivered his human cargo to Padstow.

Because of the action off Trevose, the Navy put an embargo on all sailings out of Padstow until a future date. That date was Feb 24th and dutifully Vic then sailed for Milford Haven. His reception there was cold to say the least. He was told by some 'jobsworth' that he had broken company regulations in not delivering his catch on time and he was invited to 'sign off' ie resign. Vic is reported to have said, "Just give me the pen" (but I'm sure that an expletive would have got in there somewhere.) He caught the train back to Padstow. This type of behaviour of 'bosses' to 'hired hands' was typical of the management system of the time. It is little wonder that at the next General Election ('The Khaki Election') the country voted to begin to dismantle this rule from the top.

So what of Vic Crisp. In Padstow, he was the hero of the hour and a plaque commemorating his action was and still is displayed on the harbour wall. In St Merryn, where the dead from the *Warwick* are buried, a service to the memory of the event is held every year nearest to 20th Feb. Vic was assured that he would be called to the *HMS Warwick* enquiry (he wasn't) and an award was promised by the Fishery Officer in Plymouth (didn't happen), neither did he get any mention in dispatches from the C.O. Plymouth. Vic and his exploits were just written out of history.

The campaign for recognition begins

Vic Crisp retired from the sea in 1963 and passed away aged 75 in October 1976.

In 1994 Vic's family decided to push for specific recognition of their father's heroism. Their cause was taken up by John W Homes, a Lowestoft historian, who began to look into the procedure for getting a posthumous decoration. As he said, "I could not see any obstacle to getting an award as we had so much first hand evidence provided on all sides to support our claim" He added," I must have been naïve!"

A posthumous award is considered by the Cabinet Office and states that *compelling evidence* must be presented.

That evidence is as follows:-

- 1.Crisp's own account
2. testimony of Capt Rayner, *HMS Warwick*. "I owe my life solely to

skipper Vic Crisp of the trawler Lady Luck. He acted in the highest tradition of the brotherhood of the sea in coming to the rescue of survivors after the sinking of HMS Warwick by a U boat”

3. letter to Roy Crisp from David Harries, Navigating Officer, *HMS Warwick* “*I thank God that your father was able to extend a rescuing hand. I am more than grateful to him and his crew. My only regret is that I did not meet your father again to thank him for rescuing me and many others on that fateful day”*

4 Commemorative plaque at Padstow

5 Painting of *Lady Luck* going in to rescue the crew of the *Warwick*.

6 Newspaper articles recording the sinking and the rescue

In spite of all the above, the Cabinet Office replied on 20 November 2013, “For Mr Crisp, now, to receive recognition posthumously would require strong evidence to be presented justifying such a course of action.” We are now entering the Kafkaesque world of the civil service where having presented your strong evidence, you are then told you need to present strong evidence. Of course you are not told what that strong evidence could look like. (I was once told by a Civil Servant, that if Head Office decides that 'black is white' then that is what you must believe.)

John Holmes, who has somehow managed to keep his sanity, wrote again to the Cabinet Office asking them to provide *their* details of the sinking of the *Warwick*.

The reply, “You asked if there was any official record of the sinking of the *Warwick*. We have searched our files and our archive, but regrettably we have nothing on record about this incident.” (So if they don't have a file then it did not happen?)

Holmes wrote again with the evidence, and got this reply (30 Jan 2014) which is a masterpiece of Sir Humphrey proportions, “The thinking behind our policy is that because of the difficulty of assessing the candidates, when the activities in question happened some time ago, those at the time were best placed to consider the case. Those experts will have had better access to relevant data and the criteria used at the time in assessing cases.” (But those experts are now dead and we have no records = case closed)

Never giving up (and worthy of a perseverance medal himself) Holmes wrote again and got this reply (1 July 2014) “Given the circumstances of the case it is fair to assume that there **were** witnesses and that there **was**

evidence of Skipper Crisp's action at the time of the incident” (*oh good, we're getting somewhere*) You referred to the Cabinet Office having no records of the incident, but we would not expect to have records of such a case dating back some 70 years” (*oh bugger*). This is all classic obfuscation. If the Cabinet Office hasn't got the records, then surely they could contact people who have – try Padstow Museum for starters which has a porthole from *HMS Warwick* on display

To further his support of the Crisp family, Holmes instigated the presentation of a gallantry award to Vic Crisp which was received by his family in the presence of the mayor of Lowestoft and the MP Peter Aldous. Finally he wrote to the Prime Minister himself, our late prime minister that is, and received this prime ministerial brush off. “ I have the highest regard for all who over the years have risked their lives for our country, and I am pleased that Skipper Crisp's actions have been recognised through the plaque in Padstow and the gallantry certificate you presented to Roy Crisp and his family (*yes and*) I am sorry to send what I know will be a disappointing reply, but I hope you will be reassured that this case has been carefully reviewed and understand the reasons for the decision that has been made” Beautifully composed cobblers. (Further evidence was provided in a letter from U boat captain Pohl to Vic Crisp after the War, and Holmes has received a book written by Gross Admiral Doenitz with this inscription in English '*For Captain Victor Crisp, in remembrance of February 24th 1944 signed Gustav Pohl Kommandant U 413*. So even the enemy acknowledge the event.)

At the present time, when the men of the Arctic Convoys have belatedly received their medal, there is still no award for Vic Crisp. So the question must be put, does it really matter? In one sense 'No'. Vic Crisp was recognised in life by the Padstow plaque and in death by the Lowestoft award. He did his duty as he saw fit and to hell with the consequences. As Thomas More once said, “ You will be judged by your conscience, your fellows and God, Not a bad audience that.' What does matter is the government's refusal to take the final step and admit that all the evidence gathered does indicate without any doubt that Vic Crisp put his life on the line for his country and has been cast aside. John Holmes has made a breakthrough in getting the government to admit to the possibility that what took place was not a myth. But it needs something special now to push this matter to a successful conclusion. If any of you crusading mariners can come up with any strategies to

break this deadlock, then please send your ideas to John at jwholmes@hotmail.com.

References

Brian French 2011 *Lost off Trevoise* Ch 4 The sinking of the Warwick History Press

Vic Crisp 1974 *Trawler Boy to Trawler Man* Heritage Workshop book available from www.lowestoftheritage.org at £10 per copy

John W Holmes 2016 *From Cabin Boy to Skipper* Suffolk CDC

Figures

1. *HMS Warwick* Crest
2. *Lady Luck* steaming to the rescue



Brian French

Morgan Giles

Francis Charles Saxton Giles, was born in 1882 in Surbiton. He was later christened as Francis Charles Morgan Giles by the church, as the original choice of middle name Saxton was questioned by the reverend gentleman at his baptism. This is how he became Morgan Giles in his later life, although he was known as Giles until the forming of a partnership with Harry May in 1910. Formal adoption of the name Morgan Giles did not legally happen until 1945. His father Harry Giles was a civil engineer who worked on railway design and infrastructure and probably worked on the greatest work of the time the change from broad gauge to narrow gauge railway between Bristol to Plymouth in one weekend. With 4000 engineers and navvies the work was done over the weekend of the 21st May and 22nd May 1892. These men were notoriously tough and lived life to the full, for good reason as several of them died while working on the railway lines, and there is no doubt that Harry Giles BSc was no exception to this rule.

Frank's mother Cornelia had her hands full with Frank and his siblings while her husband was travelling the country working on the railways. By 1893 Frank was sent to Blundell's School in Tiverton until 1896. While Frank was at Blundell's some of his holidays were spent in Shaldon and Ringmore where he learnt to row and sail on the river Teign with the help of the local boatmen and boat builders.

By 1896, the Giles family had moved to Shaldon and Frank started work at one of the best boatbuilders and entrepreneurs of the time Abraham Pengelly. Pengelly was in partnership with Harry Gann building small craft on the banks of the Teign. Pengelly and Gore were in a small boatyard below the bridge over the Teign on the Shaldon side of it. At the age of 14, Frank became a fee paying pupil of Pengelly and Gore, Frank's mathematical skills were honed by a local mathematician William Pridham. His father and mother made sure he was armed with the skills to design boats and yachts, not just as a manual worker but a man with design flair and technology behind him.

Pengelly was not just a boatbuilder but also an engineer, he had patented his own pattern rowlock which could not jump out of its seating, Abraham had several other patents lodged but only the rowlocks seemed to be sold by other yards on the Teign. Abraham was a good role model for the young Frank Giles. Pengelly taught Frank some important skills

one of those was the use of the drawknife and spokeshave to fashion an oar or paddle in quick time and with little need to finish with sandpaper as we rely on now. Something Frank noted in his obituary to Pengelly in 1929.

While at Pengelly and Gore's yard Giles met someone who would work alongside him throughout his life Tom Finsen, Pengelly's foreman and later to be a Morgan Giles key worker. During Pengelly's time at Shaldon, he was involved in building some top dinghies one of these was *Mabel* an 18 foot WEC Jollyboat which became the template for the class. Pengelly also built some of the early dinghies that formed the Teign Restricted class a forerunner of the West of England 14 foot dinghy class. These restricted class dinghies varied in length and sail area. These were raced by Shaldon Sailing Club and Teign Corinthian Sailing Club where the clubs had to use the linear rating rule based on the formula for 0.3 raters. The two clubs used various ways of handicapping the dinghies one of the most unusual ones was to pull the handicap numbers out of envelopes after the race? Other handicaps varied based on the time it took to race around Salty a large sand bank in the estuary of the Teign.

Pengelly raced his boats at both clubs, or at least his boats were entered under his ownership for both the Class B yachts not exceeding 1.25 rating and 0.3 rating dinghy class (nominally between 12 foot and 16 foot long). The 1890's was a time of expansion for small boat racing on the Teign and a young Frank Giles became involved with the Teign Corinthian Sailing Club in 1900, and before that probably with Shaldon Sailing Club, although the Shaldon Club does not have formal records of its racing or members. Being a working man's sailing club Shaldon is a nomadic club with no real clubhouse or racing records. A real problem when researching one of the older sailing clubs in the country.

Probably Frank first raced in either a working man's boat such as a port of Teignmouth boat or one of the Teign Restricted class converted to meet the new rules for the WEC 14 foot dinghy. In some of the photographs of the time the older 14 foot dinghies have a short bowsprit to bring them into class as they were previously Teign Restricted dinghies could be as short as 12ft. This bowsprit allowed them to carry the small jib or an overlapping genoa type. The smaller spitfire jib was useful in a strong wind as it made beating into the wind easier.

After Frank's time with Pengelly and Gore, he continued to work on the river Teign with another business in Teignmouth, Gann and Palmer. Frank also ran his own brokerage from 1902 as a side line. Pengelly left

Shaldon and Abraham went to Plymouth where he produced more racing winning Jollyboats for the sailors of the Plymouth sound. The river Teign was home to some amazing designers and builders of yachts and dinghies from the 1880's until the start of the Great War in 1914. This made Giles the designer he was, as his skills were forged in a hot bed of completion with designers like George Flemmich, formally of Cowes. Flemmich had designed various linear raters and he was involved in the formation of the linear rating rules in 1896 and the second revision in 1901. He was a member of the Yacht Racing Association rules committee along with Edmund Froude at leading naval architect formerly of Dartington, near Totnes. Flemmich went into business with Henry Schank to form Teignmouth Ship and Yacht Company at the Strand Shipyard, a yard that Frank would later own. Some of the other characters on the river Teign that Frank would have known were from families that had long connections with the sea and the area. Bulley, Matthews were two such boatbuilding and boat owning families, which had been on the Teign for decades. Others such as Harry Gann, Harry May were people that were drawn into the completion that the dinghies and small boats created.

It seems as though Frank Giles had been born at the right time for the sailing of small boats and other developments in transport such as the early aeroplanes and the change of power from steam to the internal combustion engine. This made the turn of the century a most interesting time with the use of the more compact power plants, motorboats were being designed and raced at yacht clubs around Europe and of course Teignmouth did not miss out on this. Giles witnessed all this and some of the round Britain racers in seaplanes for the Gordon Bennett trophy. These seaplanes called into some of the top sailing venues around the shores of England and Wales, including Hythe and Teignmouth in 1911. The cross over between the early aeroplanes, motorboats and automobiles at the time related to the new compact design of the internal combustion engine. The development of this type of engine relied on the processing of crude oil which took place around 1860. Before that steam power was the main means of powering an engine. This link between the different forms of transport, meant that the motor industry created an exhibition in London to show case the new technologies. This exhibition was at Olympia, where Morgan Giles and May exhibited their products. For the exhibition drew attention from a wide range of potential clients. One of these was King Edward VII who was very interested in the new flying machines on show. The partnership generated a large amount of

sales for their boats reported at £20,000. Frank and Harry May meant Sir John Thornycroft a man who had designed some fast steam ships that were used as torpedo boats, Thornycroft also had facilities to build engines, both steam and later kerosene or petrol fuelled ones.

In Frank's early years as a designer he design a wide range of craft, from a small hydroplane to metre yachts to small sailing dinghies and rowing boats, with conventional steam or internal combustion engined motorboats. Examples of these are shown in the magazines of the time, *Yachting Monthly* and *Yachting World*, for example.

One of Frank's early award winning craft was *Hebe* a 12 foot dinghy similar in design to the International 12 foot dinghy of the 1920's that George Cockshott designed. But the *Hebe* design was entered into one of *Yachting Monthly's* design competitions in 1906. Giles designed several variants of the 12 foot *Hebe* dinghy and other 12 foot clinker built dinghy classes during his career as a top dinghy designer. So much so that Frank helped to write the rules for the National 12 foot dinghy class in the 1935 with the Royal Yachting Association.

The other dinghy class he promoted throughout his early racing career was the 14 foot West of England Yacht and Boat Sailing Conference dinghy, which became the National 14 foot class in 1923, which later became the International 14 foot dinghy class. These dinghies are the forerunners of the modern dinghies we race now.

Frank Giles was one of the originators of the modern sailing dinghy and he was involved in spreading the racing dinghy ethos from the heartland of the movement in the south west of England to London and then linking up with the Norfolk dinghies in 1911. This ensured that small boat racing had a permanent footing across the south of England before the start of the Great War. Giles was aided by his connections with Francis B Cooke of *Yachting Monthly* magazine and other like mind racers of the time.

Frank was also involved in racing dinghies that planed during his time racing 14 foot WEC dinghies, several years before Uffa Fox declared that he had developed planning hulls. They were being raced on the Teign and the other clubs across Devon, Cornwall and Dorset. *Chip* designed by Harry Gann was one of these planning dinghies as was *Myosotis* a Giles design, which Ivy Carus Wilson raced before her marriage to Giles. This dinghy was part of the arms race that happened on the Teign where there were several boat builders and designers trying to beat each other with their own designs and it was not unknown for the

hulls or rigs to be altered several times over the sailing season. This included modifying the hull shape by adding a new transom or removing the copper nails and reshaping the planking. Ivy mentions this in her journal when Gann modifies his dinghy *Chip* to match one of Giles designs *Myosotis*.

In 1906, the metre rating rule was adopted for one design yacht racing and Frank was involved in its adoption and became a top designer for some of the smaller classes in particular the 6 metres. They raced at various regattas on the south coast and at Teignmouth and also Torbay and Dartmouth. Franks 6 metre designs were race winning yachts sailed by the best sailors in the UK and on the continent. *Jonquil* was one of those as was *Chaero* a lesser known 6 metre.

Frank entered several design competitions in the yachting press, one of these winning designs was a hydroplane *Knotzpox* a 12 foot hull in 1907, a year after the French had designed one. Frank did not specify the type or size of power plant for this small motor boat. But after some calculations I surmise that it would have been a 1000cc motorcycle engine with a hull displacement to allow for a small driver (10 stone or less) to drive this craft at speed. *Knotzpox* was a one off for Giles, although he did design other motorised boats, *Shush* in Maritime Museum in Falmouth, Cornwall is a good example of his design. Also built by the Morgan Giles and May yard under licence was a larger 22 foot motorboat *Jazz* in Cowes. *Jazz* is an interesting craft in that she is a Thornycroft development of a fast motorboat, something that Thornycroft specialized in, and Frank went to war in a larger version of *Jazz*. A 40 foot Coastal Motor Boat which was design by Thornycroft and used various engine types some of which were intended for aircraft. The engines of the time used kerosene rather than petrol, which was later synthesized and became popular after the First World War.

With a successful partnership working with Harry May, Frank and Harry worked out of London and Hammersmith for three or four years before relocating to the old Popham yard, Hythe on Southampton water in 1911. By 1914, they broke up the partnership with Harry May joining up with Harden for a short time during the war making boats and seaplane hulls for the war effort. Until Harry May formed a new company with his brother Frank and wealth family member George May, this was Berthon Boats after the war.

Frank Morgan Giles married in 1914 to Ivy Carus Wilson, and then later

that year signed up to the RNVR, and was initially posted into the Coastal Motor Boat service, based in Swansea before moving on to Ireland. The CMB's were temperamental craft due to their large kerosene powered engines housed in a tightly fitting space. The CMB's had space for three to five crew, but generally only three. So the officers and crew had to look after the engines themselves as there was no facility for a mechanic. Frank was one of the practical types and he looked after the engines on the CMB he served on and as a consequence he suffered when the engines gassed him with kerosene and he was sent on leave to recover in 1916 after this incident.

Frank later re-joined the CMB service and was put in charge of the motorboat's maintenance teams until he volunteered to go to Ireland. Where he was involved in anti-gun running duty to prevent the Germans supplying arms, into the politically unstable Ireland in the middle of the unrest. Which ultimately led to the Republic of Ireland being formed in 1922. Frank did have a memento of this in the form of a captured Sinn Fein flag which is now at the Imperial War Museum.

During the war Frank continued to trade through his yacht brokerage service and design craft when off duty. He was even selling yachts in Ireland, and he continued to be tied to Shaldon for his home. Even though he travelled around the UK, south Devon continued to be Frank and Ivy's home. For Ivy her mother was in Shaldon, and when Frank was recuperating from kerosene poisoning he came back to Shaldon and Teignmouth to convalesce.

After the First World War, people were recovering from the shock of the largest war of all time and the major pandemic of flu which killed more people than the war. This meant that there was little sailing between 1918 and 1920 at a lot of sailing clubs. Thankfully Frank, Ivy and their young family were safe from this epidemic and Frank looked for a new yard to start up his boatbuilding business. By 1920, Frank had settled on taking over the derelict Strand Shipyard in Teignmouth, which was once owned by his rivals Gann and Palmer, who went bankrupt in 1912. With the building laying empty for so long there was a lot to do before it became fully functional. The Morgan Giles yard required a skilled workforce and of course machinery to convert the timber in to boats. One of Frank's purchases was there from the start to the end and that was a big Wadkin bandsaw from 1926, something the author used when he was an apprentice in 1974.

In the early years of the Teignmouth yard Frank design and built a wide

range of craft. From pram dinghies, racing dinghies for different sailing clubs across the globe, to yachts and local pleasure motorboats for the working men to run, visitors along the coast. In 1927 Frank and Ivy took a 6 metre yacht *English Rose* to America with four 14 foot National dinghies, a derivative of the WEC14 foot dinghies he had raced in 1906. The dinghies were used to pay the fare to America where there was a market for the growing sport of dinghy racing. The 6 metre was raced in the Seawanhaka Cup the oldest, active yachting trophy America. Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club is based in Oyster Bay, New York. This is the first part of the Morgan Giles story. Some of this story is covered in Ivy's Journal, which will be available later this year.

Charlie Tolcher

Figure 1. Francis Charles Morgan Giles 1919. Courtesy Yachting World

Figure 2. 14 Foot WEC Dinghies racing at Shaldon, River Teign Estuary. Courtesy Jane Shaddick Collection.

It has not been possible to include other figures submitted with this article but it is hoped that they will be included on the website at a later date.



Floating about Watchet (2)

Back in Watchet for a few days' holiday with my good lady. And although Watchet is rather far east, one can use the Bristol Channel tides to one's advantage. So I left Fishguard at 0930 to carefully get through Ramsey Sound at slack, and with little wind, could transit Jack Sound and then with the east going tide off Milford, get to Tenby. A few hours' sleep during the west-going flow, off at 0200 and I had done 61 NM and entering Watchet at midday.

Various thoughts:

1. **Maritime sculptures.** Jonathan Seagrave mused on this in a recent *Soundings*, so here are a few more. Certainly, no-one should miss the donkey that is made out of bottle tops or some such, that graces Portishead Marina housing. Many, pre-PC times, moons ago, I entered Swansea Marina from Lundy and, directed to the inner harbour, my crew, my lamented friend, Paul Hands, said: 'What's with the dwarf?', pointing to a statue of a very small man on the starboard hand. On investigation, this turned out to be Dylan Thomas, with whom the citizens of Swansea, despite the hype, have a very ambivalent relationship. The last time I visited the house, some years ago, where he grew up it was empty. You can't tell me you can't get hold of pre-war furniture. If you go to Nether Stowey, not a stick of furniture exists from Coleridge's time – it was even a pub in Victorian times. But the National Trust have imported artefacts and furniture from the period. Secondly, there is a Dylan Thomas theatre, but it is invariably closed and when open, an amateur dramatics company performs 'light' plays. I think Swansea is ashamed of its English-speaking, beer-swilling, unhappily and adulterously married poet, and his equally unacceptable wife. Hence the size of the statue.
2. But I get even more annoyed by the full-size sculpture of Captain Cat ringing the chapel bell. He is at an angle, i.e off balance. No experienced mariner would do this. To survive, it was 'one hand for the ship and one for yourself' and balance was a key factor in staying alive.
3. I wonder if the Watchet statues are a job lot by the Swansea

sculptor. Again, we have a titchy local hero, this time Yankee Jack and a full size fictional character, the Ancient Mariner. I don't know how tall Yankee Jack actually was, but I doubt he was that small if he worked on blue water sailing craft.

Changing the subject, the continual thump of the dredger rather ruins one's idyll. It is a Heath Robinson affair with pipes, which lead over the harbour wall. It seems likely that a fair proportion ends straight back in on the next tide. Whether it does or not, the lack of lock gates to stop the silt flooding in and dropping in the slack water of the marina is so basic, and yet the mistake of only creating a sill was carried out here and the even more silted up Burry Port marina on the welsh side.

WATCHET MARINA



I don't know – There comes a time when you get tired of floating around
and just want to settle

Cartoon by Kay Harding. Is this the first cartoon in *Soundings*?

Now, I have a thought. Perhaps like me, you are a bit irritated by the Scots. The English bailed them out when Scotland was stony broke from its their losses on the Darien project. In 2008, the Bank of England stopped them going completely broke when the RBS failed; for which they thanked us by nearly voting for independence. Besides, I don't know what it is about the Edinburgh or received Scottish accent of its politicians, but it sounds so unbelievably smug.

Anyway, as a mild gesture, I think we should correct people who use the phrase ‘painting the Forth Bridge’ and say ‘or, as we prefer to say in the SWMHS, dredging Watchet marina’. This would lead naturally to 1) where is Watchet?, 2) and tiresomely, ‘what is it watching?, and 3) what is the SWMHS?

This would allow you to explain the merits and benefits of membership. And, according to Malcolm Gladwin in *Tipping Point*, it doesn’t take many influence-makers for a trend to take off, which could only be to the good of the SWMHS.

So is there any future in the marina? Now the idea I outline below came from watching a goose cadging a ride on one of the dredger pipe floats to its favourite mudhole. This goose is a resident of some five years, and is known as Derek, although it laid an egg two years ago, but this did not result in a name change.

But why stop at one goose, a few ducks and some of those dull little worm-seeking birds of which there seem to be a dozen varieties, such as ‘dunlin’? I don’t want to get into too much detail, as I run a consultancy business, *Yachtbroker?.com*, but welcome to ***Watchet Marina Bird Sanctuary***. I am sure there are ways of attracting birds to a location – think of Slimbridge, perhaps it could help; a few hides on the hammerheads would not cost much; the cockpits of some of the more decrepit yachts could become nesting sites. A couple of video cameras, one on the mast and one on the transom, could be streamed to a suitably rural-looking hut on the quay etc.

Now, it may be that once of year a boat has to enter the marina for it to keep its status, like the church on the golf course across the river from Padstow. It was buried in sand, so, to get his stipend, the vicar had to dig his way down to a window in the roof... So similarly, on the well-publicised *Blessing of the Marina* day, the Bishop of Taunton, in a wet suit, would be brought in by catamaran on the top of the tide to give the blessing and hold a short service. He could bless the Minehead lifeboat at the same time...

Footnote (or rather head-note): Some of you may have harboured uncharitable thoughts about the committee and its lack of progress and compared it perhaps to a headless chicken. Go on, own up. Now can I offer a more charitable view? The local saint is St Decuman.

Unfortunately, Watchet was a bit of a border town between the Saxons who controlled the Severn and the Celts further west. And one Saxon chopped off the saint’s head. Unperturbed, Decuman picked his head up

and was floated back to Wales, where he was buried. So, next time you are feeling aggrieved by the Committee's decisions, or more likely lack of, don't think 'chicken', think warm, peaceful, uplifting 'saintly'.

Mike Bender

Editorial comment. I don't know whether Mike visited the Watchet Boat Museum but I can strongly recommend it. I was there during November 2016 and was impressed by its recent reorganisation. It contains a wealth of exhibits and related information on the local flatners including play areas for children. Entrance is free and I understand that the organisers plan to remain open during the winter although I suggest that you check before travelling.

Life Preservers for Seamen

An experiment of great importance to seamen in general, was made at Falmouth on Monday last. A mattress so contrived as to answer the double purpose of a seaman's bed and a life preserver, was exhibited before a great number of spectators, who were fully satisfied that the inventor has obtained the desirable object which he proposed. The buoyance of this life preserver and its capability of supporting a human body for any length of time were made evident. A hole in the centre, into which a cushion falls, admits the head, and the cushion is so contrived as to answer the purpose of a cap which preserves the head from injury. It is recommended to the Packet service and is likely to come into general use.

From the *West Briton Newspaper* 2 April 1813.

Thanks to **Peter Lacey** for forwarding this extract found along with other items of maritime interest in *Life in Cornwall in the early nineteenth century* edited by R M Barton and published by D Bradford Barton Ltd, Truro in 1970

RE-----the Dido C

Coincidences seem to happen more often than they should and the recent South West Soundings SWS102 pp 15-24 regarding the *Dido C* is an excellent example of this. Now, I am not particularly interested in the *Dido C*, it being just another, bought in sailing ship to north Devon in the early years of the 20th Century.

However just before the magazine arrived, I was given an excellent photo of the *Dido C* in the Newquay dry-dock undergoing repairs, and when I received the latest Soundings (issue 102) I decided to look through an original P.K. Harris account book that I possess dating from about 1918 up to November 1932. All the photos in the collection that I looked at (The Robert Dennis Collection of over 1000 negatives) were taken during the early 1930's and this one proved to be no exception. The account for the *Dido C* was spread over one and a half Foolscap pages (now A4) and is a detailed account of every item of material supplied to her for the repair. The total bill came to £166-1s-4d, a huge amount if Jonathan's alleged running cost and profits figures are to be believed. At the end of his article he mentions the late Michael Bouquet's figures for the S.V. *Yeo* in 1896 as giving £10 a trip profit per trip with about seven trips every six months giving a total profit of £70 per half year; this of course does not account for any running cost of repairs. A bad voyage could easily wipe out the profits for the previous six months of hard work.

To use a nautical phrase P.K. Harris ran a tight ship, materials were all itemised and costed, these included 18, 1½ inch brass screws costing 1s-4d up to various multiple lengths of timber such as a 65 foot length of 12 inch x 10 inch piece of timber for the keel at £12-7-6d (however on the same line of cost as the keel is 10 feet of 12 inch x 6 inch and 65 feet of 12 inch x 3 inch Elm for the garboard planks, which may or may not be included in the £12-7-6d). The work done was not stated, but it obviously included a new keel and renewal of a fair bit of planking. Wood identified is Elm, Oak and Pine. The final costing included 2 NUC lights (Not Under Command and used when a vessel was at anchor); dock dues, Board of Trade expenses and of course labour charges. This included 144 work days for an unknown number of carpenters at 9s-6d per day plus 6 days for a named employee J. White at 6s-6d per day and 16¼ days for J. Yeo at 3s-6d. The final comment is 'bill sent July 1932'.

Looking at the photo of the *Dido C* show the following can be deduced-----She has just gone into the dry dock, the planking near her

keel still looks wet with no sign of any work having been started, also the bottom of the dock still has a large amount of water in it, usually this is drained and washed down before work begins in order to give the workmen a small degree of comfort. The building in the background on the left was at this time the power house where the generator was installed, the tall building in the centre was at this time the riggers and carpenters workshops, these burnt down in the late 1940's. The buildings on the left were mainly situated in the Iron yard which was owned at this time by the Cock brothers although one of the small buildings in front of the larger ones was and I believe still is the toilet block. The large bucket shown on the dock floor was still in use during the 1970's/1980's; I stood in it several times when there was work to be done on a mast, being hoisted into position suspended from the jib of the crane.



Michael Guegan

Fair Stood the Wind

Some years ago a friend and I decided to sail my Mirror Offshore Cruiser from her moorings off Aveton Gifford on the Avon, to Newton Ferrers on the Yealm. The south easterly wind was right on our port quarter, a real "soldier's wind", and we scarcely had any need to adjust the tiller until we reached the mouth of the Yealm and turned to starboard keeping the buoy, marking the extent of the bar, to port. The crews of yachts sailing in the opposite direction were well wrapped up as they clawed against the wind compared to our summery clothing in the benign temperatures in which we found ourselves. These conditions were reversed a few days later on our return trip, as the prevailing wind was unchanged and we were glad of our sturdy inboard Diesel engine to aid motor-sailing back.

These two short voyages illustrated the significance of wind force and direction when sailing and this was very much to the fore when the wind was the only source of power for ships in the days of sail. So important was it to the Navy Board who were dispatching ships around the world that they had a weather vane installed on the roof of the Admiralty building connected mechanically to a large wind indicator on the end wall. This is very obvious in a picture by Thomas Rowlandson in 1808. A westerly was ideal for ships sailing down the Thames from Chatham and headed for the North Sea or the Baltic; but those going West sometimes had to hang around the Goodwin Sands with the merchant ships to avoid having to beat up the English Channel against it.

The other important factor was wind strength. For many years there was no standard way of recording it in ships' logs and one officer's "soft breeze" could be another's "moderate wind". It wasn't until an Irish Royal Naval Officer Francis Beaufort devised the scale in 1805, now known by his name. It ranged from zero to twelve and was based on the effect a wind had on a frigate, from flat calm through "just sufficient to give steerage way" and on to "the strength that no canvas sails could withstand". It took some years and modifications before it was officially adopted by the Royal Navy and one of the first to use it was Captain Robert Fitzroy during the voyages of the Beagle which began in December 1831. The scale is now well known and is used in the shipping forecasts having been adopted commercially in the 1850s. The meteorological Office has in recent years added a further three levels to

cope with exceptional conditions, such as typhoons.

In the days of sail wind strength decide the speed at which ships could sail and this was measured in knots, a knot being one nautical mile per hour. In the nineteenth century this derived from the means of measuring it. A device called a chip log was cast over the stern attached to a line which was divided by "knots" every eight fathoms of length. It was designed to resist travel and sit at right angles to the surface of the water. The line was paid out and thirty seconds was measured on a sand glass after which the line was checked and the number of knots which had passed gave the speed of the ship.

When you consider the equipment that the modern sailor has at his or her command, it is astonishing to consider the difficulties faced by their predecessors. The round the world yachtsman has instant contact with his shore base, receives regular weather updates, reads his speed on a dial and knows exactly where he is by his GPS. It's a far cry from the days when sextants had to be used and the appearance of a reliable marine chronometer invented by John Harrison improved an already complex way of measuring a ship's longitudinal location.

Despite all this he still cannot control the weather, for as the Bible says "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (John chapter 3 verse 8)

Ken Doughty

Editorial note:

An image of Thomas Rowlandson's 1808 engraving showing the wind indicator can be found on:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weather_vane#/media/File:%3ABoard_Room_of_Admiralty_Microcosm_edited.jpg

A more recent example, fully restored and working, can be seen at the National Trust property of Coletton Fishacre in Devon.

Maritime Media Awards 2016

Naval leaders and British peers gathered in London (October 25) for the Maritime Media Awards organised by the Maritime Foundation which honours the best of maritime literature, journalism and filmmaking in 2016.

More than 170 guests attended the event, held at the Institute of Directors, for the 21st anniversary of the awards which were presented by Vice Admiral Ben Key.

Among the Awards presented was the Mountbatten Award for best Literary contribution, sometimes referred to as the Man Booker Prize for maritime. It was awarded to Peter Hennessy and James Jinks for their book **‘The Silent Deep – The Royal Navy Submarine Service since 1945’**. The ‘Silent Deep’ is a book which the judges singled out as an outstandingly authoritative work with unrivalled insight into the geo-political context of naval warfare.

Certificates of Merit for literary contribution and of historical interest were awarded to authors Peter Grindal, Jo Stanley and Sam Willis. Peter Grindal’s book **‘Opposing the Slavers’** covers the sustained campaign against slaving conducted by the Royal Navy after the passing of the Slave Trade Abolition Act of 1807.

‘From Cabin ‘Boys’ to Captains’ by Jo Stanley reveals the history of women at sea, from women pirates and daring cabin ‘boys’ under sail to today’s rear-admirals and weapons experts on nuclear submarines.

‘The Struggle for Sea Power’ by Sam Willis, visiting Fellow in Maritime and Naval History at the *University of Plymouth* describes key military events from a naval perspective in the path to American independence.

Other prizes presented included the Desmond Wettern Media Award for best journalistic contribution to Ian Urbina, Reporter of the New York Times; the Donald Gosling Award for best Television Contribution presented to WAG TV, for their documentary **‘Devonport - Inside the Royal Navy’**; and the First Sea Lord’s Digital Media Award presented to **The Marine Conservation Society**.

The Maritime Foundation’s Maritime Fellowship Award was presented to Crispin Sadler for his production of complex and innovative maritime films especially those focussing on wrecks which have provided new

insights into maritime commerce and warfare through the ages.

Maritime Foundation and judging panel chairman Julian Parker OBE said the event celebrated excellence in the maritime media and arts sectors. “The Maritime Media Awards has become an event of national significance, acknowledging remarkable maritime related work which deepens understanding of Britain’s dependence on the sea. Further details of the Maritime Media Awards can be found on the Maritime Foundation Website www.bmcf.org.uk

Paul Wright

REVIEWS

Edited by Jonathan Seagrave

Polar Mariner-Beyond the Limit in Antarctica by Captain Tom Woodfield. Published by Whittles Publishing at £18.99 ISBN 978-1-84995=166-1

Whilst undertaking a course at Brunel Technical College 40 years ago I met a fellow student who had just completed a voyage on the British Antarctic Research ship *John Biscoe*. His enthusiasm for the work in which the ship was engaged was infectious. I resolved to make an application to the British Antarctic Survey (BAS). Disappointed at receiving a negative reply I thought by joining the Natural Environmental Research Centre (NERC) I might find a passage to Antarctica on the *RRS Shackleton*. However my seagoing experience with NERC included three unsuccessful attempts to reach Rockall during the winter months of 1974 and the hoped for passage South to Antarctica was elusive. I returned to commercial shipping.

It was therefore with great interest that I was introduced to the book ‘**Polar Mariner – Beyond the Limits in Antarctica**’. Written by Captain Tom Woodfield it tells of his 20 years experience between 1955 and 1974 on three ships operated by BAS, each of which provided the vital link between the UK and the British Antarctic Research bases.

The book, divided into twelve chapters, cover 20 voyages made by the author in the *RRS Shackleton*, *RRS John Biscoe* and the *RRS*

Bransfield. The structure of the book allows the narrative to develop in an informal manner. The history, geography and environmental challenges of the Southern Ocean and Antarctica are skilfully interwoven with the responsibilities of the seafarer and in particular the ship's master.

Well illustrated with both colour and black and white photographs, many from the author's personal collection, the narrative provides an insight into an exclusive world which few have experienced. Even without a narrative the illustrations provide a dramatic impression of the challenging, inhospitable and exciting ice scape of Antarctica and of the work undertaken by the Royal research ships.

The challenge of operating in the Southern Oceans is highlighted in chapter subsections titled 'Night of terror in a Polar Low' and the 'Grand Finale'. In both the reader shares the tension and fears of the author as he describes the dangers met when winds strong enough to stop radar aerials turning, heavy snowfall and ice accretion, waves exceeding more than seventy feet in height add to the hazard of unseen ice. The description of ship handling in extreme conditions is compelling. The apparently simple decision whether to heave to or run before the wind combined with the threat of broaching provide interesting lessons in seamanship and ship master's responsibilities.

Working a ship in loose and pack ice are covered in different parts of the book, but highlighted in the subsection titled 'Ordeal by Ice' where the author reveals the philosophy adopted by ships of the BAS of '*never fighting the elements too hard*'.

The historic value of the book is the recognition that all three ships in which Tom Woodfield served have been scrapped and that the maritime world, even in the polar regions has been influenced by technological advancement. The author laments the intrusion of satellite navigation and how in revolutionising the art of navigation it has removed the '*enormous satisfaction gained from finding one's own way through the waters of the world*'. Cargo handling techniques which once depended on '*back achingly landing boxes on ice-strewn shores and up ice ramps have been replaced by container loads of cargo being landed on a quay*'. He claims that the romance of the pioneering days have gone!

However despite technical changes the role of the ship's master in caring for those on board, both crew and scientists and the ship has not diminished.

In the Epilogue the author questions the wisdom of replacing the present two BAS ships, the RRS *James Clarke Ross* and the RRS *Ernest Shackleton*, with a larger but single replacement the RRS *Sir David Attenborough*. He claims that larger size will have operational limitations and that problems may occur if the ship becomes beset or disabled and there is no second ship to give support.

The author also expresses concern about operating 'expedition' cruise ships in Antarctic waters and with reference to the sinking of the expedition ship *Explorer* claims that recent '*catastrophic performance underlines the threat of larger vessels to the environment and the safety of enormous numbers on board*'.

The book makes fascinating reading. Captain Tom Woodfield's distinctive twenty years of experience involved with the British Antarctic Survey provides a unique insight into an area of shipping which is rarely considered. The book is a testament to all who work with the ships of the British Antarctic Survey in support of scientists in the Southern polar regions.

Whilst perhaps a little biased due to my former ambitions, I have no problem in fully recommending the book to all who have interests in ships, the Southern Oceans and polar expeditions.

Paul G Wright MNM FNI Master Mariner

A review by **Martin Hazell** of

Enigma – the Untold Story by David Balme, edited by Peter Hore.

Published by Whittles Pub. Ltd, Caithness, Scotland. 2016. Price

£16.99. 166 pages with black & white photos.

ISBN 978-184995-226-2

will appear in the next edition of South West Soundings.

LETTERS NOTES AND NEWS

Request for information re ketch cargoes

I am following up the history of the Rosetta featured in the Chugg history in SWS102 pp 15-24. Thanks to member Gary Hicks, I am now fairly certain she was a "tied" ship to some degree, as she was built with a loan from Charles Norrington, owner of the Devon and Cornwall Manure (superphosphate) works at Cattedown, and in 1901 Steve Chugg was living with Ruth in the Norrington offices, along with John Rice, who had Rosetta built and was a senior employee at the works, running the sulphuric acid plant. Ruth inherited Rosetta from Rice, her grandfather, when he died in 1906.

Have any members come across data suggesting a traffic to Plymouth of bones and phosphate rock or slag for the works, and "manure" or fertiliser out? There might also have been traffic in sulphur sources, pyrites etc, and possibly outwards, sulphuric acid in flasks

The sources I have seen for ketch cargoes do mention these but only rarely. Any information or suggestions would be much appreciated.

Jonathan Seagrave 10 Woodlands Rise Downend Bristol BS16 2RX

News from Plymouth and district

At the end of October 2016 a replica of *Shtandart*, an early 1700's Russian frigate, berthed at Sutton Harbour, after taking part in the North Sea Tall Ships Regatta. She had also visited French waters. The project to build, and to sail the vessel, has been privately funded in Russia. The builder and captain, and many of the crew are Russian but there is an international presence including one Englishman. The vessel, based upon Peter the Great's early 'modern' Russian naval vessels, is beautifully designed with fine carving. The masts are not made out of one piece, but you would not know without looking hard. Modern items such as the engine, and tenders are either hidden or covered up when the vessel is opened to visitors for a small fee.

There are plans afoot to build a replica *Cutty Sark*. The project director is Vladimir Martus builder, and master, of *Shtandart*. This foundation has 'branches' in Russia, Hungary and the UK. UK trustees include

Chris Blake, captain of the tall ship *Pelican*; David Morgan, a trustee of the Maritime Heritage Trust; and John Robinson, treasurer of the European Maritime Heritage organisation. The project timetable is that fundraising should be done by the end of 2016, the required sum up to £M24, and construction would then take place, hopefully in the UK. The aim is for sea trials and commissioning of the vessel to take place in 2020. The aim is for the vessel to be used for maritime education, sail training and cargo transport. The foundation's website is www.cutty-sark.org

What a pity that there is not the drive in the UK and South West to produce, build and sail such a vessel thus also keeping alive maritime crafts in traditional wooden shipbuilding. The *Garlandstone* is quietly rotting away at Morwellham Quay, but at least *Kathleen & May* has found a home next to the Merseyside Maritime Museum and has been seen in south west waters this year. The quay at East the Water, Bideford, where *Kathleen & May* was berthed for a number of years is now very derelict and an eyesore which spoils the views of the old long bridge. This year a group of steam enthusiasts have obtained *Freshspring* the last of the 'water carrier' vessels which serviced the navy, and they wish to re-build her at Bideford – better luck this time! They do claim to have some local backing however.

In April 2017 Devon will celebrate 600 years of links with Newfoundland with events spreading out from Exeter, to include the ports of Bideford, Dartmouth, Topsham and Totnes. (It is now over 40 years since singers from north Devon, plus yours truly, produced a tape of song and readings relating to North Devon's maritime heritage.)

This year I have, with Jon Stevens from Plymouth & long time singer of shanties and sea songs, given two presentations on 'The Oggy Man' – Cyril Tawney & RN poetry & folksong of the 20th. century'. The recent event at the RN Heritage Centre, South Yard, Devonport, even produced applause before we had finished! (We are free & available to provide entertainment to yacht clubs, marinas etc. in the South West! As Jon has said he wishes to keep alive the work and memory of a unique onetime naval person who wrote and collected songs of the lower deck in a navy which is now as far removed from modern times as Nelson's.) The Devonport Heritage Centre's collection is now 'owned' or 'protected' by the Portsmouth RN Museum thus securing it's future – in some form.

Plans are afoot, under the Plymouth History Centre project which will combine the listed main museum and main library to house, or hang (literally!) some warship figureheads from the South Yard collection. Space, however, at the South Yard has been lost due to land and buildings being cleared for a 'maritime business park'. We shall see! The new £M20 plus project should open in time for the 'Mayflower 400' celebrations in 2020.

Martin Hazell

SS Freshspring arrived at her new moorings alongside the Bideford Quay adjacent to the Victoria Gardens. Volunteers are currently carrying out health and safety preparations before opening to the public hopefully by Easter 2017. Details are available on www.ssfreshspring.co.uk

OBITUARY

Martin Heighton, Director of National Historic Ships UK died on 6 November 2016. Although not a member of SWMHS he was helpful and supportive of our activities. In addition to his role in NHS-UK, he was former CEO of the Mary Rose Trust, Trustee and Executive of SS Great Britain and Director of Leisure for Bristol's Historic Harbour, the Matthew project and numerous other maritime projects. His experience in maritime heritage was second to none and he will be sadly missed. An obituary to Martin giving more details of his life and contribution to our maritime heritage can be found on the National Historic Ships UK website.

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