

# CROSSED FLAGS



PUBLISHED BY THE NEW ZEALAND SHIPPING COMPANY ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No. 80

AUGUST 2005

PO BOX 4061 AUCKLAND

FOUNDED IN NEW ZEALAND 1975

**G**reetings... It seems appropriate to mark the Association's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary by adding the founding date into the newsletter header. Those members attending the AGM in Auckland recently were reminded of how it all started in a short trip down memory lane by Reg Vincent. It was fitting that three of the founder members were present.

The President in his address indicated that the Association was shipshape and the membership role was steady with new members being recruited all the time. Long may this continue.

## Committee Notes

\* Embroidered blue polo shirts have been sourced and an order placed. Details of price, sizes and availability will follow as information comes to hand.

\* The design for the Association Xmas card has been finalised and an order placed. These will be distributed to all financial members in time for the festive season.

\* The Annual Spring Dinner has been booked at Romfords on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2005, **so please note the date on your social calendar.** A reminder and booking form will be sent closer to the date.

*Editor*

## MUSEUM NOTES

The following items from the Association's collection were donated to the NZ National Maritime Museum on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004:-

**Mounted and Framed Pictures;** A matching pair of black and white photographs of RANGITATA and RUAHINE (3) (1950s/1960s).

Print no. 140/750 of the watercolour painting of the RANGITANE(2) by UK artist Andrew Dibben (1997).

Original sketch by Minhinnick of NZSCo's Captain Burton-Davies and his Chief Officer E.H. Hopkins in the Master's accommodation of the HERTFORD, dated 1930.

**Framed Print;** 'When Sail Beat Steam' sv TURAKINA overhauls ss RUAPEHU in 1895 - by Frank H. Mason. (This print is reproduced on the back of the dust wrapper of the "Crossed Flags" book.)

**Framed Prints** of paintings of RUAPEHU(1) and TURAKINA(2) in faded condition.

An article about the new masts for the Museum's scow, TED ASHBY, appeared in the November newsletter. Fully re-rigged, the scow has returned to service and looks better than ever as her new pole masts are slightly taller than the laminated originals.

*Barry Parsons*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Shipping Company Association held at Romfords, Tamaki Drive, Auckland on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2005 at 6.15 p.m.

### Those present were: -

Ron Baker, Eion Bishop, Roger Blake, Chris Botes, Gerry Breen, George Brigenshaw, Peter Callender, Albert Collins, Peter Cranwell, Mike Davis, Bob Devlin, Mike Draper, Arthur Faulkner, Rick Gosling, Brian Gulson, Don Handley, Mike Hartson, Alan Henley, Ron Hood, Mike Jackson, Godfrey King, James Laird, Norris Mawdsley, Marshall Miller, Peter Newman, Hugh Owen, Barry Parsons, Peter Petherbridge, Martin Sanders, Peter Taylor, Adrian Thomas, Reg Vincent, Geoff Ward.. The 33 members were accompanied by 22 guests.

### Apologies were received from: -

Fred Angus, Bryan Austen-Smith, Ron Bird, Trevor Castleton, Mick Dutton, George Gearing, Iain Green, Brian Lakin, Steve Lampard, John Matthews, Dave McGuire, Paul Phillips, Claude Raines, Merle Redfern, Rae Sadler, Jim Skirrow (seriously ill in the North Shore Hospital), Roy Smith, Bob Tillett, Dick Webster, Peter White.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2004, were taken as read, having been published in "Crossed Flags" Issue No.77 in July 2004.

There were no matters arising from these Minutes.

### **The President's Report.**

In welcoming members and their guests to this year's AGM, which marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association, Peter Callender commented that the number present

reflected a continuing interest in the Association and all it stands for. It was a special pleasure to greet the three "founding fathers", **Eion Bishop, Chris Botes and Reg Vincent**, who could not have foreseen how their idea would develop.

At the Spring Social on 8<sup>th</sup> October several of Dick Baker's paintings owned by our members were on display and much admired. The success of the drink coasters is a tribute to an outstanding artist. The paintings from which our coasters were derived must have been about Dick's last major undertaking. Marie Baker has accepted our invitation to join the Association and we welcome her here this evening.

The Water Born Jolly to Motuihe on 9<sup>th</sup> March was very successful. We may look for somewhere else for Abalone Cruises to take us next year, if the membership supports this idea. In thanking the outgoing committee Peter made special mention of the excellent newsletters produced by Chris Botes. "Without an informative and entertaining newsletter the Association would soon fall apart. Chris has indicated that he would be very pleased to hand over his editorial task, so if we have a budding editor among us, please don't be backward in coming forward. Every member must have at least one story worthy of a wider audience; don't keep yours to yourself!"

The transfer of the Association's archival material to the National Maritime Museum continues. Details of items donated to the museum have been, and will be, reported in "Crossed Flags".

The President congratulated Peter Cranwell on the fine radio-controlled model of the REMUERA which is on show for the first time this evening. It has taken three years to construct this 6ft. model which includes a wealth of detail and technicalities.

Turning to matters financial, the President remarked that the use of surplus funds in a manner seen to be fair to all members and in accordance with the rules continues to be a subject of discussion at committee meetings. The large percentage of our membership residing in the British Isles and Australia is not forgotten at these discussions. The idea of creating a Web Site for the Association has been raised and is worth further investigation.

Peter reminded us of five members who had died since the last AGM; Richard Baker, Dennis Candy, Bill Fraser, Brian Kerr and Syd Mundy. Nine new members are welcomed; Roger Blake, Gerry Breen, John Gibbs, Peter Petherbridge, Adrian Thomas, Norman Vasey, John Waugh, Bruce Wiig and Graham Webber.

In conclusion Peter reminded the membership that there was always room for new faces and fresh ideas at the committee meetings.

### **The Treasurer's Report**

Copies of the report were circulated. Peter Newman noted an increase in the total funds on hand of \$1070.91 compared with the end of the previous financial year. Almost half of this resulted from the sale of coasters, the costs of which had been met in the previous year. Subscription income increased by \$219.89 over the previous year, due mainly to the pursuit of overdue subs by the committee.

Membership remains stable as a result of new enrolments during the year. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 we had 193 members of whom 178 were fully financial, 8 were one year in arrears, and 7 were two years overdue. During the year 6 who owed for 3 years or more were removed from the membership list for failing to reply to correspondence. Cash on hand at the end of the Financial Year was \$7677.98 with Assets (lapel badges and coasters)

amounting to \$1157.52 to make a total of \$8835.50. Peter Newman recommended that subscriptions remain unchanged for the 2005/06 financial year at \$NZ12.50, \$A12.00 or Stg.6.00. Mike Davis proposed that the financial report be received, Barry Parsons seconded and the motion was approved without dissent.

### **Election of Officers**

The current committee members stood down but presented themselves for re-election. Barry Parsons took the chair for the election and called for any other nominations. None was forthcoming so the outgoing committee was declared reinstated *en bloc* for a further year. **The Committee Members are George Brigenshaw, Chris Botes, Peter Callender, Mike Davis, Arthur Faulkner, Godfrey King, Peter Newman, Barry Parsons and Martin Sanders.**

### **Notices of Motion**

No notices of motion had been received.

### **Social Events**

As always, the committee encourages suggestions from members.

### **Other Business**

Following members' requests, negotiations are in hand for a new supply of polo shirts and caps embroidered with the Crossed Flags emblem. Samples were on display. Anticipated prices are \$30-\$32, including postage, for a polo shirt and around \$12 including postage for a cap. The minimum order for polo shirts is 100 in assorted sizes. By a show of hands the meeting encouraged the new committee to continue negotiating. Godfrey King displayed a fleece coat on which the Crossed Flags emblem had been embroidered for \$17. He advised this could be done on any garment.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 6.45 p.m.

Reg Vincent was then invited to say a few words about the formation of the Association in 1975. Barry Parsons conveyed greetings to all members from Larry Robbins, CEO of the National Maritime Museum. Copies of the Museum newsletter "Hobson Horn" were distributed and the formal part of the evening was over.

### OVERHEARD

Recently the 'William C. Daldy' was chartered for a trip to Orapiu, Waiheke Island. Among the last to disembark on our return to Devonport was a starry-eyed elderly gentleman sporting a very English 'cheese-cutter' cap and accent to match. I did not recall seeing him during the trip and from the following exchange I guess he spent all his time in the engine room;

Elderly Gentleman to Purser: "The engines are lovely!"

Purser: "I hope you told the engineers"  
E.G.: "Oh, yes, I did, I did. They're lovely!"

Eavesdropping deck hand: "What!!  
The engineers... lovely??!!"

### THE MONSTER IN THE PORT BOX

Your revered Editor bailed me up and suggested more than a little ironically that I should help in the agglomeration of items for 'Crossed Flags' by bringing 'my undoubted literary talents and razor sharp wit' to bear upon composing an item for inclusion in the aforementioned respected organ. Instead, I will just have to use such meagre abilities as I do have. I gave much thought to the matter and being (like Pooh 'a bear of very small brain') it really made my head quite sore.

Nevertheless, here goes.....

As we all know, many are the uproarious yarns and experiences swapped among old 'shellbacks', usually over the odd hilarious libation or two. Usually?, in fact mostly!, bawdy, licentious, slanderous, bordering happily closer to mendacity than veracity, using strings of alliterative oft times highly 'coloured' expressions in language that would not be quite acceptable at the Vicar's Tea Party, never mind such an august journal as "Crossed Legs", oops! I mean "Crossed Flags". Bearing all of that in mind how was I to come up with a story that was, as Arthur Askey used to sing "Clean if not very clever", but as I was once told by a Vice President handing me a 'can of worms' in East Africa "There are no problems in life, George, only challenges!". So here it is. No salacious or vituperative language, no names (no pack drill!), no honour impugned, no feathers ruffled, no reputations ruined, golly! it stands a fair chance of being boring! I hope not, but do please forgive me if it is, considering the restrictions, albeit self imposed! the Editor did not preclude 'anything' I hasten to add!.

Soooo.....

Back in the dreary late 40's and 50's when Britain was still trying to recover during the drab grey post war 'utility' times, having served some years 'with the colours' and thereafter having tried a number of things, with single lack of success!, it was suggested to me by a friend at the Rugby Club (an ex Chief Officer of Blue Star) that maybe I ought to try employment in some job at Sea!. I had no technical talents really, my main abilities, being rather dubious talents learned as a 'hoplite' in the 2nd Para /16th Para Brigades, were physical/lethal rather than 'intellectual', as one might imagine! I wrote to a number of Shipping Companies and to my utter amazement was offered a job by all of them! They must have been pretty desperate.

Nevertheless, I went to sea as a Writer, a 'Listed Tradesman' no less, but just an archaic term for Purser's Clerk. I went off on the China Run in an elegant white ship, an ex Armed Merchant Cruiser which had steamed an enormous number of nautical miles during the Second World War. It was, in my opinion, a beautiful vessel, and I was delighted to be going off to the then mysterious Orient on such a ship. It was a wonderful new world to me and it seemed I had dropped gratuitously into the ambience of a novel by Somerset Maugham based around the era of the crumbling edges of the once great British Empire. The Passenger List was full of 'Burra' Sahibs, Empire Builders, Colonial Administrators and Civil Servants, Senior Serving Officers, Missionaries, Sisters of Mercy, Remittance Men, Merchant Adventurers, once even a Solomons Islands Crocodile Hunter (he professed! , though I still don't know if there were/ are an such saurians there, I must check on Google or something!). It was quite magical for me and I had comradeship/ companionship from shipmates such as I had enjoyed in the Army but without the strict discipline of the Army and the Parachute Brigade.

One morning I had been on early turn in the Bureau churning out the ship's daily "Newspaper" so that all of the Gurra Burra Sahibs and Memsahibs could learn, whilst ingesting their 'chota hazris', what was going on in the world. I walked back across the Well Deck to the Fo'cstle where, in the Leading Hands Accommodation, I shared a three man inboard cabin with the other Writer and the Printer. It was still quite early and my two cabin mates were still skulking in their charpoyas.

I ambled down the cabin alley to the Wash Basin by the Port Box to wash and shave. But I was stunned to see just below the porthole an amazing

'thing', it was about the size of a smallish pineapple, it appeared to be pulsing and glowing with spikes of crystalline blue, green and silver as the ship gently moved and the sun's rays from the port scanned the object back and forth. It appeared very beautiful but although quite beautiful, at the same time emanated an aura of menace and positively evil toxicity. I smartly stepped back to observe a prudent 'cordon sanitaire' uttering words like 'Jeepers' (or WTTE!) and called to my supine cabin mates to come and look.

Rubbing their eyes at first, their optics shot wide open when they saw the 'thing' in the port box. Their ejaculations were loud and expletive as they were as surprised, puzzled and as wary as I. Soon the denizens of the adjacent cabins were aroused by the hubbub and came in to look at this creature - not even the hoariest of the seafarers (most were under 26 years of age and at sea to avoid military service!) had seen the like before. There were many opinions, expostulations and quite colourful outbursts of course but the general consensus of opinion was not to go near or interfere with the 'adjectival' thing. It was intimated though, that I, having discovered it, ought to do something about it! By now I was sure that it was not a 'setup' to tease a 'poor pongo' and I thought that I should demonstrate that, as an ex 'Red Beret', I certainly had the intestinal fortitude and chutzpah to 'do' something.

I procured a dustpan and brush and, as all the kibitzers prudently but sharply shrank back, I made a quick shovelling darting sort of bayonet type thrust with the dustpan at the thing, scooped it up, plonked the brush on it to hold it there as I tossed the 'sea serpent' (well sort of!) out of the porthole. As it went out though I was just able to see what the monster really was... Phew!

Belay the immediate answer. Let me elucidate. It was Monsoon Season, the temperature and humidity were pretty stultifying. This was a time before the proliferation of air conditioning in ships. The bureau was situated midships on C Deck. There were gun ports on each side of the ship affording some ventilation but very little of the cooling zephyrs got to the bureau where we only had one fan. We worked in White No. 10 Uniforms, long trousers, jackets buttoned to the neck and 'hooked and eyed' up collar. It was hot man, but HOT! and we were soaked with perspiration which dripped from nose and forehead, papers stuck to hands et al, I think that the 'agwalas' down below must have been cooler! The upshot for me was that I got prickly heat badly around neck and shoulders. To deal with the problem I went along to the Ocean Trading Company Shop and bought myself some medicated prickly heat soap. I used this stuff in the shower that night and after use placed the soap in my soap box.

One didn't have many posh material possessions in those days, well I certainly didn't! but my soap box was an old friend which had soldiered for King George along with me throughout my army days. It was aluminium and though never excessively thick, had over the years become paper thin. But overnight the soggy, prickly heat soap had risen up and devoured its host. It's true! This fierce cake of fatty acids, soda/potash and medication had almost completely eaten my old comrade soap box. All one could see was the 'hedgehog' of multicoloured crystals which was the 'sea monster' which had appeared in the port box.

When I shovelled it out of the port box and the glistening, shimmering structure fell apart only the dark blue splotch of soap and the rim and hinge remaining of the soap box were visible.

That soap might have been most efficacious in dealing with prickly heat! it certainly had had no problem consuming my poor old soap box. The story was a 'cause celebre' for a day or two in our little enclave and obviously grew in the telling around the fo'cstle and Well Deck. The F&V Storekeeper, "Fruity Bob", not of the persuasion of being willing to spoil a good story for over attention to veracity, was even heard telling an incredulous Stewards' Boy that the fearsome entity had almost dragged the Printer out onto the Well Deck and he had been rescued only just in time before being ingested by the monstrous omnivorous Soap.

Well there you are, as graphic a story of nautical 'derring do' as you might come across in a dog watch, a story observing all of my self imposed 'rules' but, I do assure you, boring maybe, but TRUE, I swear it!  
George Brigenshaw... (aka "Soapbox" for the rest of the Voyage!) \*

### OTAKI SCHOLAR

The Otaki Scholar for 2005, Calum Harker, was a guest of the Durham Association at a lunch at the museum on Tuesday 26th July. Calum, from Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen and his host in Auckland, Morgan Wardrop, head boy of St.Kentigern's College, both play for their college's First XV. As Chris Cusiter, the Otaki Scholar for 2000 was a member of the Lions Rugby team it was not surprising to hear expert opinion that the Lions would have fared better with greater Scottish representation.

### NEW MEMBER

A warm welcome is extended to Mr. Bruce Wiig who lives on Rotoroa Island in the Hauraki Gulf.

**OBITUARY NOTICES – We regret to announce the following deaths :-**

DENNIS CANDY 1924 - 2004. Born in Westcliff on Sea, Essex, Dennis joined NZSCo at the age of 14 as a messenger between the Dock and City offices. Three years later he joined the deck department of his first ship, the Northumberland. By the time he returned to the Dock Office in 1947 Dennis had also served in the Cornwall, Hororata, Rangitiki, Glanton and Fort La Traite (both MOT vessels), Empire Flag, Gloucester and finally Paparoa. Years later he moved to the City Office and retired from P&O in 1984. Dennis was elected to the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge in 1982. He served twice as Deputy Mayor and was elected as Mayor in 1992 for the term of one year.

A member of our Association for many years, Dennis revisited New Zealand with the Maori Club cricket team in 1985 and with his wife he returned a few years later for a more leisurely holiday which included attending a memorable lunch with Warwick Dunsford in the Auckland Club, both Dennis and Ann being members of the "Durham" Association. Dennis is survived by his wife and his daughter and her family.

RON GRAVES was born in 1930 at East Ham and he joined the merchant navy via the T.S.Vindicatrix training ship from February to April 1948. His first ship was the old Tongariro where he served for 4 trips and stayed with the company until late 1955 having served on a total of 7 company ships. He went ashore in 1956 at Falmouth and worked on company vessels that were there for dry-docking and staying until 1961. He then decided to go to New Zealand having secured a job in Wellington as a foreman for NZSCo. He travelled out on the Southern Cross where he met his future wife who was returning home from her big OE and they got engaged, eventually Ron got a transfer to the Mount and married Jess in 1964 and worked on the wharf as a foreman stevedore till he retired in 1990.

Ron was a keen supporter of anything to do with ships and was an active member of the local Ship and Marine Society and for 7 years was the local secretary of the Bay of Plenty branch of the Vindicatrix Association.

Ron and Jess had 2 sons, Ian who lives in Hamilton and is married to Andréa, and Mark at present in the UK and a grandson Thomas.

The death is announced of RICK MELHUISE on 14th June 2005 at the age of 79. Rick served an apprenticeship with J.J.Niven in Napier and sailed with Trinder Anderson eventually rising to the rank of Chief Engineer. He came ashore as works manager with his old firm and eventually was appointed branch manager. He joined the Hawkes Bay Harbour Board as tug engineer. He frequently visited NZSCo ships in his role as Lloyd's surveyor. Members will remember him when surveying cargo spaces prior to the carriage of refrigerated cargo.

A keen model maker and lover of choral music, he was active in the Ahuriri Rotary Club, the Te Aute Trust Board, the Institute of Marine Engineers and the scouting movement. He received the Napier Citizen's Award in 2001 for four decades of service to the community.

He is survived by his wife Elizabeth, a son, two daughters and seven grandchildren.

## OVERDUE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Association's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April until 31st March, so annual subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year. This year – 2005/2006 began with a heartening flood of subscriptions, but the flow has virtually ceased, with 25% of members still owing subs.

If your copy of Crossed Flags arrived with an asterisk beside your address name, it means we have no record of receiving your subscription this year. Please send your subscription now or examine your cheque book stubs and bank statements to confirm your payment and our presentation of the cheque. Please advise cheque number and date presented. .

If you have any query about your subscription, it can be directed to the Treasurer, Peter Newman, on email at [lesleyn@ihug.co.nz](mailto:lesleyn@ihug.co.nz) or by mail to PO Box 4061, Auckland, NZ.

Subscriptions are currently: -  
NZ\$12.50, \$A12.00 and £6.00.

### TONY MILLATT - AUTHOR

Congratulations to Tony Millatt on the recent publication of "The 1935 steam tug WILLIAM C.DALDY". This 44 page A5 book records the first 69 years of the tug's career. Construction on the Clyde, the long delivery voyage via the Suez Canal (it must have been warm down below in the Red Sea!), service with the Auckland Harbour Board and subsequent preservation are all described and illustrated with black and white and colour photographs. A useful and interesting way to mark the 25th anniversary of the tug's current owner/operator, The Tug William C.Daldy Preservation Society Inc. Copies may be purchased on board the tug or from the Society, PO Box 2823, Auckland.

*Barry Parsons*

## MARITIME MUSEUM

There are two special exhibitions in the museum at present;

**TEN MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT** commemorates the 20th anniversary of the bombing of the "Rainbow Warrior" on July 10th 1985. This can be viewed until 25th September.

**INTREPID KIWIS** is sub-titled "Daring Kiwis challenged by the sea" and features the boat in which Rob Hamill and Phil Stubbs won the first trans-Atlantic Challenge in 1997 by rowing from the Canary Islands to Barbados in 41 days, arriving 6 days ahead of the next team. This can be viewed until 9<sup>th</sup> October. Also on display, among many other items, are kayaks used around the Antarctic and Alaskan coasts with video footage of these expeditions. Remember that entry to the museum is FREE to financial members of the Association and one accompanying person. Showing your Membership Card at the entrance will assist the receptionist.

### 'THERE WAS A YOUNG LADY OF GLOUCESTER' (New Version)

On 1st March 1958 the Gloucester was about to sail from Swansea. One hour before sailing the Second Steward's wife, having travelled down from London, marched on board plus a baby which she deposited in her husband's bunk. She then proceeded to the Chief Steward's quarters and announced, in effect, that "If the so-and-so would not stay home and look after his brat he could take it with him."

The Second Steward was duly paid off and is no doubt busy at home. Who says "the woman always pays"?

*Reprinted from "The Maori Club News" No.9 - June 1958.*