

# THE PILOT



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## Editorial

In June I attended a Nautical Institute Seminar in Bristol entitled the Master/Pilot Relationship: A training need? Organised by Bristol pilot Avald Wymark it brought together a full spectrum of maritime experts to explore various problem areas of the Master pilot relationship. The seminar confirmed what most of us are aware of in that the law covering pilotage is far from clear cut. The seminar explored typical scenarios where the Master/Pilot relationship may become strained and the outcome from the legal and P&I clubs was very informative. The most interesting fact to emerge was that in the case when damage is done whilst manoeuvring with a pilot embarked. Both the legal and P&I Club representatives present confirmed that when it came to apportioning blame there was no real interest in who was responsible for the damage since the P&I Club picked up the bill regardless of who caused it. This has long been of concern to pilotage organisations since when the Master submits a report following damage in pilotage waters, human nature dictates that he will naturally blame the pilot and this obviously distorts the statistics! P&I Clubs are publishing statistics revealing that "pilot error" is responsible for 30% of port damage claims and expressing deep concern at the escalating costs of each claim and statistics are being used by the anti-pilot lobby to depict us as an unnecessary and expensive (even dangerous!) accessory to the bridge team. IMPA has calculated that a more accurate figure is 7%-10% which is a vast difference. However, care is needed in challenging the status quo since one of the reasons that the P&I Clubs don't feel the need to delve too deeply into apportioning blame is a result of the limitation of liability covering pilots. This historical limitation is also starting to be questioned and indeed challenged and there is an increasing lobby to get the legalities covering pilots "modernised". The Master/Pilot relationship is therefore a debate that pilots need to be fully involved with.

My report on the seminar is on the website at [www.pilotmag.co.uk](http://www.pilotmag.co.uk)

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## PILOTAGE HISTORY

Harry Hignett

*The majority of serving UK pilots have joined the service since the implementation of the 1987 Pilotage Act and many are probably largely unaware of the origins of the UKMPA. June marked the 120th anniversary of the UKMPA (originally the UKPA) and for the 1984 centenary Manchester pilot Harry Hignett (now retired) wrote a book detailing the history of the UKPA. Long since out of print this book is now unknown to the majority of pilots but it contains much interesting research. Harry has recently updated this original work but having failed to find a publisher for the book he has permitted me to place it on my website for all to access. As an introduction Harry has kindly agreed to provide an edited version for inclusion in the magazine which I will be running over two issues.*

### PART 1: ANTIQUITY TO 1900

Although pilotage will have been undertaken since vessels first started trading and ancient texts such as Homer's Iliad from the 7th century BC make vague references to pilots one of the most precise early written descriptions of a pilot's work was around 64 AD.

*"The passage is difficult because of the shoals at the mouth of the river. Because of*

*this, the native fishermen in the King's service go up the coast to Syrastrone (Surat) to meet the ships. And they steer them straight and true from the mouth of the bay between the shoals with their crews and they tow them to fixed stations going up with the flood and lying through the ebb at anchorages and in basins. These basins are deeper places in the river as far as the port, which lies about 10 stadia up from the mouth."*



Finchale Priory: last resting place of St. Godric (the Patron Saint of pilots?)

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In this extract we can recognise the work of an estuary or river pilot from the earliest times until the steamship arrived onto the maritime scene.

In the UK one of the earliest records is from the 12th Century. Godric was born in Norfolk in 1069 and became a Chapman (travelling salesman carrying his own wares). He turned to carrying them not only using the inland waterways but also on coasting vessels along the coast and across the North Sea to Denmark. He made the trip so often that he eventually became a ship owner at one time owning four ships. A "colourful" character he was actually referred to by some as a pirate before he turned his energies to religious fervour and sub-sequently gave all his considerable wealth to charity! Such was his skill of navigation that he was asked to pilot vessels and he became famous not only for his pilotage skills but also for his ability to forecast the weather. Giving up his pilotage career around 1110 he became a hermit and was later canonised becoming St. Godric of Finchale (near Durham). He died in 1170 at the amazing age of 101, and his hermitage became Finchale Priory where his tomb (despite being pillaged many centuries ago) can still be visited.

Later references to pilots are for London and include a 1387 reference to a "Pilot of the Black Deeps" (Thames Estuary). Other London records from a log-book reveal that pilotage charges on the Thames in the 1400's were as follows:

*to the losmanne who  
sailed me into the Temse . . . 10s 6d*  
*to the man who led the  
shippe through the bridge . . . . . 8d*  
*to the man who led the  
shippe into the dock . . . . . 6d*

The first organisation of UK pilotage was established by Trinity House and in 1457 the Trinity House of Hull was an exclusive maritime organization which in 1512 passed an ordinance restricting pilotage between Hull and the mouth of the Humber to members of Hull Trinity House. The founding of the Corporation of Trinity House on the Thames was in 1514. There were initially, 40 members (mostly pilots), 8 assistants, four wardens and the master. For the first fifty years the Corporation was, to all intents and purposes, exclusively concerned with pilotage, and most of the senior members were important naval officials, shipmasters or both.

The Cinque Ports pilotage was formally inaugurated in 1527 in Dover and before the end of the sixteenth century there was strife between the Dover pilots and their Trinity House counterparts because, when they disembarked off the Cinque Ports, the

Corporation pilots attempted to pilot inward bound ships. However, the boating services were provided by relatives and friends of the Dover pilots and they were naturally reluctant to offend the Cinque Ports pilots. The Corporation pilots therefore had to travel home by land, a journey of at least two days via Canterbury to Gravesend and thence by boat to Deptford. Naturally the Cinque Ports pilots found similar difficulty in obtaining vessels to pilot from the Thames outwards. One may criticise one-way pilotage as being wasteful and inefficient, but ships in the days of sail arrived in great numbers according to the winds and travelling in company against pirates and enemy ships. Pilots near a pilot station remained at home on stand-by. So began the Thames pilotage system; Trinity House outwards, Cinque Ports inwards.

The Cinque Ports Pilotage Act of 1717 was the first parliamentary legislation covering pilotage. The Dover pilots now had something that Trinity House had not and the Elder Brethren applied for their own legislation. The next Pilotage Act, passed in 1732, confirmed the provisions of the 1717 Act and, gave exemption to the Trinity Houses of Hull, and Newcastle wherever their respective jurisdictions overlapped.

In the mid 1700's establishing longitude at sea was difficult and many shipmasters feared to approach the Isles of Scilly, with rocks that made the area a noted graveyard for ships. The fishermen of the Scillies began to take up pilotage, meeting the vessels well out of sight of land and guiding them past the Isles up the channel and by 1800 they conducted ships to all parts of the British Isles and the coasts of France and Belgium. The successful application of parliamentary legislation led to several local Pilotage Acts, including those for Boston, Lincs, in 1774 and Hull in 1800 which were older established ports. In the late 18th century new industrial ports such as Swansea appeared receiving its first pilotage regulations in 1791.

The first comprehensive Pilotage Act was placed on the statute book in 1808, "*An Act for the better regulation of Pilots and of the Pilotage of Ships and vessels navigating the British seas*". Its most important provisions were the establishment of compulsory pilotage in all districts where licensed pilots were available and the authority was given to the Deptford Trinity House to form pilotage districts where it was deemed necessary to control pilots and regulate pilotage. Almost immediately 35 Trinity House "outports" appeared around the coast of Britain. The 1808 Act was replaced in 1812 but re-enacted most of the provisions of its predecessor and gave

the Trinity Houses of Hull and Newcastle the powers they had exercised previously and also in "*any ports or harbours or places within the limits of their respective jurisdictions*". All licensed pilots were required, in an entirely new section, to execute a bond for their good behaviour in the sum of £100. This requirement has been carried through to the present day with the amount unchanged.

An important section of the Act attempted to define the responsibility and rights of the ship owner, master, and owner or consignee of the cargo, with regard to any damage to ship, goods or persons occurring through "*neglect, default, incompetency or incapacity of any pilot taken under the provisions of the Act.*" Another Pilotage Act was passed in 1825 and prolonged the existing situation, without easing the litigation then giving the industry extra worries.

In 1835 a Royal Commission was instituted to look into the "*existing laws, regulations, and practises under which pilots are appointed, governed and paid in the British Channel and the several approaches to the Port of London, and also in the navigation connected with the other principal ports in the United Kingdom.*" It was the first major inquiry into pilotage and one of the main items in the findings and report of the Commission was the recommendation that there should be a central body to control all pilotage affairs. Alas the ensuing Pilotage Act of 1836 did not include this far-reaching proposal. The Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 included and consolidated most of the existing legislation on pilotage, as did the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894.

Further inquiries arose in 1860, 1870 and 1880: that of 1870 being particularly significant being specifically instituted to study compulsory pilotage since it developed into a major study of all aspects of pilotage lasting three months. However, its findings were ignored by Parliament. At the end of the 19th century it was again obvious that the existing legislation was outdated and inadequate and, after a searching inquiry in 1910/11, the Pilotage Act of 1913 came into being.

## The Nineteenth Century: The Coming of Steam

The years from 1800 to 1914 were the most difficult any pilots have had to face. Iron ships and screw propulsion appeared mid-century, improving standards and speeds but pilots had to handle ships up to eight times larger, with single screw propulsion. When shipowners realised that ships were no longer dependent on wind and tides they suggested that pilots were no longer as important and proposed reductions in pilotage tariffs. The 19th

Century opened peacefully but by 1803 Britain and France were once again at war which continued until the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. There followed a period of peace in Britain for nearly the next 100 years but it was anything but peace and contentment for pilots. The Pilotage Act of 1808 promoted a wider regulation of pilotage than previously, but the 1812 Act included an extra paragraph:

*“No owner or master of any ship shall be answerable for any loss or damage for, or by reason of, any neglect, default or incompetence of any pilot taken on board of any such ship under or in pursuance of the provisions of this Act.”*

A somewhat simple idea, but the interpretation of this clause by the courts brought chaos for shipowners and pilots alike and fortunes for the lawyers in the Admiralty Courts. The clause granted absolute freedom from claims for any damage done to other vessels or property to ships under compulsory pilotage. i.e. if ship ‘A’ under compulsory pilotage collided with ship ‘B’, a barge or any other vessel not subject to compulsory pilotage, ship ‘A’ was free from liability even when, under normal circumstances she would be at fault. Under this clause ship ‘A’ was also free from liability for damages after striking a shore installation.

In 1824 another Pilotage Act replaced the 1812 Act, a section of which made it possible for a non-British vessel to enter or leave British ports without pilots.

## Modern administration

During the early part of the 19th century British vessel entering and leaving the Tyne enjoyed preferential rates of pilotage. The advantage over foreign vessels was ended by the 1824 Act that gave equal treatment to foreign vessel wherever their governments gave similar treatment to British vessels. To compensate the Tyne pilots for the loss they would have sustained they were to be paid, by the Treasury, “Reciprocity Money”, viz. the difference between the old and the new tariffs for foreign vessels. Newcastle Trinity House claimed the full difference for all vessels entering the Tyne although many never went above the entrance, but the pilots were paid only on the ships they piloted. The unclaimed pilotage was then allocated to the Superannuation Fund, although the pilots disputed the right of Newcastle Trinity House to retain the money and demanded a full distribution of the amounts involved. The Newcastle authority refused and was unwilling or unable to account for the money.

In 1861 the Treasury discontinued Reciprocity Money, but as compensation the pilots were to receive, for a ten-year period, a sum equal to the Reciprocity

Money paid in 1861 of which only 50% was handed to the pilots. The pilots commenced legal proceedings against the Elder Brethren who in turn sent for the pilots’ leaders, senior pilots, John Hutchinson and Robert Blair. The two pilots refused to attend and were threatened with dismissal. Newcastle Trinity House then began to examine and license local fishermen. The two pilots then went to London, to the Board of trade and Parliament. In 1863 an order by Parliament forced Trinity House to publish the accounts that showed a balance of more than £20,000 although further unclaimed pilotage of over £3,207 was not shown in the accounts. A long legal battle with Trinity House at Newcastle ensued from which the pilots emerged successful and a new body, the Tyne Pilotage Commissioners, was formed in 1865. It was proved that Trinity House had withheld over £24,000 from the pilots whose average wage at that time was about £180 per annum; the Elder Brethren claimed £3,500 for expenses incurred in opposing the Parliamentary Bills and other legal proceedings. Of the pilots, Hutchinson and Blair, they were to become founder members of the UKPA almost twenty years later.

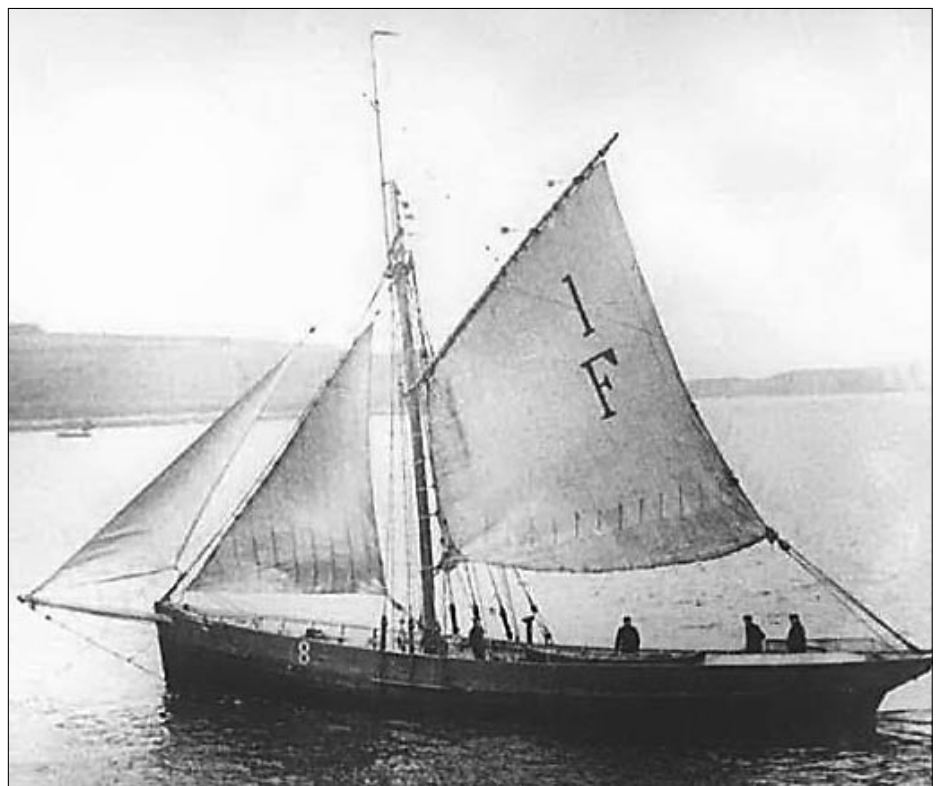
An inquiry into pilotage in 1835, was the first to open up the subject in depth, covering all major British ports and found that to make pilotage entirely optional would “*hold out a boon to the foolhardy*” recommending that certain exceptions to compulsory pilotage be made for vessel in the short sea trades. The Commissioners

suggestion that there was a need for a central body to control local authorities was ignored. About this time the pilots of the east coast ports were badly hit by Parliamentary legislation giving preferential taxes to the Canadian trades. Timber from the Baltic abruptly dropped to a minimum. Pilots of the west coasts such as Liverpool and Bristol found their incomes rising, just another example of the wild swings and variations of incomes due to political decisions.

A further Act in 1840 covered many aspects of pilotage and continued exemptions from compulsory pilotage to non-British vessels flying the flags of countries having so-called reciprocal treaties with Britain. Several decades later the Board of Trade was to use this provision against British pilots even to the extent of allowing complete falsehoods to be used about exemptions for British-flag vessels in continental ports.

In 1853 an Act of Parliament dissolved the Court of Loadmanage of the Cinque Ports and it effectively became a Trinity House Outport. One of the conditions was that the pilots could retain their licenses which were issued for the district from Dungeness to London Bridge and vice-versa. It was this condition that was to prove so disastrous for the Cinque Port pilots some thirty years later.

At the 1888 Inquiry into Pilotage, it was stated that on the Thames there was bribery and corruption and that a few pilots had obtained more “choice” work than they could handle and farmed it out making considerable income in additions



*A Falmouth Cutter of the 1890s*

to their ordinary fees. Trinity House seemed to meet the situation with complete inaction.

## The Parliamentary Select Committee of 1870

The Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 collected all the pilotage laws then in force and re-enacted them into part V. In 1860 ship owners, still affected by the freedom from liability of compulsory piloted vessels, again attacked the principle of compulsory pilotage at the meeting of the Parliamentary Select Committee into Shipping. The Committee recommended its abolition but Parliament took no action. In 1870 the Parliamentary Select Committee again examined pilotage with terms of reference that were much the same as the previous committees. But this was the most comprehensive Inquiry ever with witnesses from all sections of the shipping industry, port authorities and Government Departments. The Deputy Master of Trinity House and the Principal of the Marine Department of the BoT, each spent days explaining the vagaries of the several pilotage systems.

In the decade 1871-81 there was great unrest among pilots especially in the Bristol Channel since towards the end of the 1850's the ports of Cardiff, Newport and Gloucester had begun a campaign to remove the superiority claimed by Bristol Corporation in the matter of pilotage since the 16th century. Their efforts were rewarded in 1861 by the passing of an Act that gave them independence in their own pilotage affairs. This had the effect of disturbing the pilotage income of the Bristol pilots and caused a number of them to move across the Channel to take licenses at Cardiff.

In the last half of the 19th century the UK shipping industry was subject to severe cycles of economic booms and depressions of the British overseas trades. The improvement in steam propulsion bringing larger vessels tended to reduce incomes and bring disorder to working routines and rotas of pilots. But the underlying cause of the pilots' apprehension was still the clause in the 1812 Pilotage Act relating to the freedom of liability for vessels subject to compulsory pilotage and it was also the cause of about seven major Governmental inquiries into pilotage. This clause can be said to have led indirectly to the formation of the United Kingdom Pilots' Association.

## The Origins of the United Kingdom Pilots' Association

It was the situation in the Bristol Channel, particularly at Bristol that brought together all the parties most likely to

form a core of a national body since a series of events there as a result of the change in the nature of maritime traffic and trade, in particular a growth of the new South Wales industrial ports.

In the 1870's Samuel Plimsoll, campaigning for increased safety for British ships and seamen, called together a number of interested parties: MPs, shipowners and mariners. Known as the Plimsoll Committee, the secretary was Plimsoll's brother-in-law Roger Moore, a Bristol toilet-soap manufacturer. One of those consulted by Plimsoll's Committee was Captain George Cawley, an experienced shipmaster, and part owner of a steamship, who later left the sea to take a post ashore. A few months after being appointed pilot master at Cardiff he had been drawn into a serious dispute between the 84 pilots there and the port management.

A channel dredged through notorious banks, the Cefyn-y-wrack shoal, in the approaches to Cardiff docks, silted up. In March 1878 pilot John Howe, refused to take the *Royal Minstrel* to sea with a draft of 24 ft 8 inches. The dockmaster said that there was 25 ft of water over the shoal at the time. A month later, David Samuel also refused to pilot a ship to sea in similar circumstances. The charterer of both vessels complained that his ships had been neaped and thereby delayed three days. Both pilots were suspended. The Cardiff pilots wanted a strike. But Cawley resigning in disgust, advised the pilots to lobby for support from Plimsoll's Committee.

Within a month Plimsoll had visited Cardiff, and verified the pilots' complaints. A few weeks later, he raised the matter in Parliament causing the Board of Trade to ask the Cardiff authorities to explain their actions. There was enough of an outcry for a local inquiry to be set up in 1879 and two seats were subsequently allocated for the pilots on the new Pilotage Board.

Across the water the 37 pilots at Bristol were also unhappy about the actions or inactions of their pilotage authority. With 37 apprentices and 74 Westernmen (time-served apprentices), any fall in traffic affected the whole village of Pill – a village of watermen and pilots on the River Avon about a mile from its confluence with the Severn. The traditional working routine could mean a loss of income of disastrous proportions if "choice" (appropriate) pilotage appeared.

The pilots did not work a "turn" or "rota" system, but sailed in competition the first pilot to board an incoming vessel normally given the work and he would also claim the outward pilotage. In November 1880, however, a firm of Bristol shipowners, the Great Western Shipping Company, with a very successful line

across the North Atlantic, built several larger steam vessels to cope with the trade and resolved to have their own "choice" Bristol pilots. The masters were instructed to take only the pilots displaying the pre-arranged signal. Three pilots were covertly selected and informed of the date and time of arrival of the ships.

In December the same year one of these "choice" pilots, on the way to sail his cutter from Pill Creek, encountered some 50 women and boys and was tarred and feathered. A week later the Westernmen went on strike – licensed pilots could not. The "choice" pilots tried in vain to get boat-men at Ilfracombe, (some 30 miles down the coast) to take them to a couple of inward-bound ships. Returning to Pill they were blocked from taking their cutter to sea by a chain made fast to a bollard which had been organised by the owner of the local inn, Captain Henry Langdon (then current secretary of the Bristol Pilots' Association).

At the suggestion of Roger Moore, Tamlin, with Edward Edwards of Cardiff, met representatives of the Bristol Pilots' Association, Craddy (chairman), Langdon and Joseph Browne at the Waterloo Hotel, Pill. Initially a Bristol Channel Pilots' Association was envisaged, but those present encompassed pilots from other districts, and they suggested forming a British Association.

There were favourable responses from all the major pilot districts around the British Coasts. In October 1883 a meeting at Bristol, of representatives from the largest ports decided to form a national body using the services of the Bristol Pilots' Association. Plimsoll was approached to be chairman, but being heavily involved in Parliament refused and suggested Captain George Cawley.

## The Early Years

The Inaugural Conference opened on 11th June 1884 in the Athenæum Hall, Bristol. Supported by a few remarks from Bedford Pim, the 30 delegates from a total of 18 UK ports approved the selection of Captain George Cawley, Lt RNR, as president. Observers from Spain and Denmark also attended. Roger Moore represented the American Pilots' Association.

Henry Langdon, as Secretary, stated there were 3,168 pilots in the British Isles and in 1883 they piloted 168,418 vessels for an income of £427,532; the association hoped to redress wrongs, repeal bad laws and obtain proper representation.

The subscriptions were agreed at 12 shillings per year. Towards the end of the Conference, which lasted two days, Cawley reminded the delegates, to be careful to maintain a watch that no further attack on compulsory pilotage should be

made.

The Second Conference was held in London in 1885 with 50 delegates – 20 more than attended the previous year – and representing 28 ports. The Secretary's report gave the membership as being between 1,200 and 1,300 out of a possible 2,955 licensed pilots many of whom were earning less than £30 per annum.

Liverpool, the venue for the third Conference was in the throes of a severe depression, but its maritime system and connections were unsurpassed in efficiency but not economy. Cawley informed members that just before the Conference, he learned that two Poole pilots had been suspended for six months for attending the previous year's conference without permission even though their colleagues had carried out the work in their absence.

In the following year, 1887, at South Shields the Committee introduced two new officers, JT Board, solicitor and A Northmore Jones, barrister. In future the legal work would be separate from the day-to-day work of the Association.

In a debate, Bristol pilots explained that as the average age of their pilots was 54 their pension funds needed supplementing, they were promoting a Parliamentary Bill to amend the local Act. Robert Blair (Tyne) said that the main problem in the Tyne was that 30 of the 161 pilots took two thirds of the gross pilotage income. Again this was due to the effects of "choice" pilotage.

At the sixth Conference, in London the members looked back with satisfaction at the development of the UKPA which had been formed to protect the principle of compulsory pilotage, to ensure that pilots had proper representation on pilotage bodies and to maintain a watch on the funds which pilots were expected to contribute to.

The 1889 Pilotage Bill was about to pass through Parliament and each clause was debated with great thoroughness and enthusiasm. Alien pilotage and pilotage exemption certificates were again points of irritation. In another direction many pilots tried to have a clause inserted to make the towage of vessels without pilots illegal.

Thus the pattern of the work of the UKPA was set in the first six years. When the Merchant Shipping Act (Pilotage) 1889 came into force the members found that more than half of their wishes had been incorporated in its provisions. The moderate success provided a guide to their future actions. The new Act, however, was not without loopholes.

In the early 1890's Trinity House came in for strong criticism for its apathy in many respects of pilotage administration. It was said that their pilots were required to produce certificates from magistrates or clergymen that they were "well affected to the Sovereign and her Government", but a

foreign subject could be handed a pilotage certificate at his will.

## 1895 - 1900

In South Wales, Llanelli pilots were threatened with abolition of compulsory pilotage. Initially they had approached the Association for advice, but an offer of legal aid had not been taken up and, at the Cardiff Conference in 1895, there was a note of discord. Three times the Llanelli representatives were asked in open session to comment. They felt that Mr Northmore Jones could be placed under "social influence" and therefore they felt his services should not be used. Apparently Northmore Jones' services were taken up a couple of years later, for the Association had fought the challenge to compulsory pilotage at Llanelli and were preparing to ward off yet another attack.

In the years immediately before the end of the 19th century incomes were an ever present topic and the Executive Committee were at pains to search every corner to find arguments for the negotiations. In 1898 they suggested that as pilots were

also quarantine officers, they should receive an allowance from the State. This idea was to be taken up by their MPs. The passing of the 1894 Merchant Shipping Act, which incorporated the pilotage provisions of the 1889 Act, unfortunately did little for pilots and this was reflected in attendances at conferences which began to decrease even though incomes were declining.

Pilots' incomes at the turn of the Century pilotage incomes averaged about £300 per annum.

*to be continued*



*The Centenary UKPA postal cover*

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# PENSION NEWS

## PNPF AND THE SECRETARIAT

By the time you read this article we will have been at Sevenoaks for almost a year – I know they say time flies the older you get, but this is ridiculous. I am very pleased to say that a few of our pensioners have found us and dropped in. We run an open door policy so if you are in the area please pop in.

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2003

The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2003 were sent to all active members in July. If you have not received your copy and would like one please contact the Secretariat and we will get a copy off to you pronto.

## EARLY PAYMENT OF DEFERRED PENSIONS

At the meeting held on 11th May 2004 the Trustees amended Rule 22 to allow the early payment (i.e. before age 60 for existing members and age 65 for new joiners) of deferred pensions. In addition deferred pensions taken before normal retirement will receive a pro rata increase for the first year in payment.

## CERTIFICATES OF EXISTENCE

Following the annual audit of the 2003 accounts the auditors recommended that the Fund carry out a pensioner verification exercise and in April Certificates of Existence were sent out with the P60s.

I know that none of us (me included) like to complete what we consider superfluous forms, so a very big thank you for those of you who have returned your completed forms. When the exercise was carried out in 1997 we had a 100% return rate and your co-operation in maintaining this unblemished record is greatly appreciated.

## P60s FOR YEAR ENDING 5 APR 2004

The P60s for the 2003/04 tax year were sent out in April and if you have not received your copy please notify the

Secretariat. Under current legislation we are unable to issue duplicate copies, but we can confirm the year to date figures in a letter for Inland Revenue purposes.

## CHANGING THE RETIREMENT AGE

Having been away on holiday for the past few weeks I have come back to find that the current hot topic in pensions is the issue of the retirement age – should it be 65 or 70 and whether it should be compulsory.

In the media this issue has provoked headlines such as 'work till you drop' and 'millions have retirement plans ruined'. Yet Alan Pickering, a partner at Watson Wyatt believes it is a "win-win" situation and a positive step for everyone, as individuals need not be pensioned off in their prime and it takes some pressure off the pension system. As having a compulsory age of 70, but paying benefits at age 65 could help employees mix pension and paid income while they gradually work-down from full-time employment.

For those of us who do not want to work longer (most of us) the freedom to carry on working does not mean that we have to. The real issue is being able to afford to retire when we want to.

## COMPUTER UPGRADE

At the time of writing this article the Secretariat is having its computer equipment upgraded to drag us into the 21st century. I sincerely hope that by the time you read this all the glitches have been cleared and we are back to our usually efficient selves and that no-one has been inconvenienced by this upgrade.

## PENSIONS BILL

The Pensions Bill is currently making its way through Parliament and should receive Royal assent in November at the latest. During the course of its passage

through Parliament it has been subject to quite a few amendments particularly in respect to strengthening the security of pensions. Once the details are finalised I am sure the Bill will be the subject of future articles in this magazine, as its proposals will affect us all.

## MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Although membership and beneficiary statistics are published in the Pilots' National Pension Fund Annual report and Accounts, it might be of some interest if I were to include them from time to time in these articles.

The position at the end of January 2004, updated with the changes over the following three months are shown below.

Pilots	Emp'd	Self-E'd	Total
<b>At 31/01/04</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>254</b>
<i>Add</i>			
New members	–	3	3
<i>Deduct</i>			
Retirements	1	1	2
Resigned	1	1	2
<b>At 30/04/04</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>253</b>

Beneficiaries	Males	Females	Total
<b>At 31/01/04</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>1450</b>
<i>Add</i>			
New Pensioners	2	9	11
New Dependants	–	–	–
<i>Deduct</i>			
Deaths	14	8	22
<b>At 30/0/04</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>1439</b>

Enjoy the summer!

Debbie Marten  
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## Retirements

February 2004 - April 2004

CM Wilton	SE Wales January
IM Greig	Forth March



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# YOUR COMMITTEE AT WORK

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### Legal

The Small Port (self-employed pilots) retainer is in place for ports with 10 or less pilots at an annual rate of £2,500. I have negotiated a new Small Port (employed pilots) retainer for ports with 16 or less pilots for a similar annual rate of £2,500. The retainer allows two hours of work on contracts and other pilotage matters and any time contact from myself on day to day matters. The T&G central finance department has agreed to pay the retainers which have been arranged through Blake Laphorn Linnel the T&G approved UKMPA solicitors. The commercial contract legal work is the responsibility of Mark Foden and our employment law contact is Phillip Broom.

In the last 6 months the UKMPA has been dealing with renewal of contracts in the self-employed districts of Poole, Gloucester and Dundee and in the employed districts of the Tyne and SE Wales. We are assisting with various employment matters in Belfast that involved a ballot for industrial action over T&G recognition. Legal opinions have been sought on Incident reports, liability insurance and disciplinary control regarding active or passive escort towage. The feedback I am receiving from districts that have received the benefit of the efficient and comprehensive legal assistance that has been put in place is very encouraging. It is my intention to build on this and make it more all encompassing for all districts in the future.

### D f T

The regular quarterly meetings with the Ports Division are continuing with frequent contact by phone and e-mail. It is very likely that there will be a new Merchant Shipping Bill laid down before parliament next year with the possibility of amendments to the Pilotage Act attached.

### Europe

There is to be a second attempt at a Port Access Directive that will involve another three years of defending our position of opposition to competition. This is Layola de Palacio's parting shot before returning to Spanish politics. The make up of the EU is markedly different this time around especially in the UK. I will be lobbying and meeting with all parties as early as possible.

### IMPA

Attended seventeenth IMPA Congress 28th June to 2nd July.

### CHIRP

The quarterly Marine Advisory Board meetings continue and issues of PEC abuse have been on the agenda and the ports concerned have been notified. The replies have been one of arrogant indignation that any one should question the way a CHA conducts its affairs!

### EMPA

An extraordinary General meeting will be taking place in Paris on the 10th of September to agree the Internal Rules of the newly formed non-profit Association.

In addition to this EGM I will also be attending the EMPA Executive meeting on 1st and 2nd of Sept and the Council of Presidents' meeting on 8th and 9th Sept.

## SECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

As usual the Section Committee have been kept busy attending meetings and seminars in order to safeguard the interests of members. Whilst full details and the reports from SC members are on the main UKMPA website the following is a brief resume of their activities:

#### Joe Wilson, Vice Chairman (Tees Pilot)

- Trustee of PNPf - preparing for valuation.
- Involved with Dave Devey on the Humber case
- Assisting Port of Tyne Pilots with contract
- Setting up RISAP for UK (see page 9)
- Involved with maintaining UKMPA web site (along with Julian Lancaster [Tees Pilot])
- Attending a SeaVision meeting in London in July
- Involved with Honourable Company of Master Mariners
- Attend Sea and Water meetings.
- Attended EMPA AGM in Antwerp in February
- Attended IMPA Congress in Istanbul July

#### John Pretswell, Secretary & Treasurer (Forth Pilot)

- Association Accounts and Budget
- Scottish Pilots' representative

#### Don Cockrill (London)

- VTS Steering Group
- Attends and monitors Transport Select Committee Parliamentary Shipping debate.
- EMPA Monitoring progress on the MARNIS project
- IMO. Attended MSC 78 in May and NAV 50 in June

#### Paul Haysome (Great Yarmouth)

- Small Ports representative
- Insurances
- Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea: [www.acops.org](http://www.acops.org) – attended AGM
- Attended Parliamentary Transport Committee meeting taking Evidence from MCA 31/03/04
- [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmtran/500/4033102.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmtran/500/4033102.htm)
- Conducted UKMPA Membership Survey – with view to recruitment.
- Produces Minutes for Section Committee meetings and Interim Delegate's Meeting ( I sympathise. ed!!)

#### Geoff Taylor (Tees Pilot)

- IMPA (Senior Vice Chairman)
- Covers national and international areas of relevance to pilots in particular at present:
- Highlighting the dangers of rushing down a shore based pilotage.
- Promoting the public service role of the pilot to protect the shore and the SSI littered estuaries and rivers.
- Preparing a paper into IMO on mooring and towing lines, bits and mooring equipment.
- Pilot ladder safety

#### Kristian Pederson (Swansea)

- Represents interests of pilots in region 6. Recently assisted in successfully supporting the rights of an injured pilot
- Member of the Technical & Training Committee

#### David Devey (Liverpool)

- Representative of Northwest UK Pilots
- Attended UKHM Conference
- Ongoing support of HPL Members
- Attended Safety at Sea Conference at Greenwich

## TECHNICAL & TRAINING COMMITTEE

Chairman John Wright: Meets twice per year. The committee looks at all aspects covering pilots' safety and training. Currently the Committee is closely involved with the ECTS project in conjunction with EMPA.

**N.B. John Wright and Trevor Woods intend to stand down from the committee at the next conference. New recruits are needed. This committee has produced some excellent papers and should be supported.**

# TOTALTIDE *Review*

With the requirement for a pilot to produce a passage plan now more or less mandatory anything that can make the task easier is to be welcomed. For example in London we have four main approach channels and the majority of ships are restricted by their draft at some stage of their passage so a computer tidal program to save thumbing through printed hourly predictions and interpolating times and levels has obvious appeal! Some districts have set up specialist passage planning programs to run on a laptop or handheld unit (I'm hoping to review a couple of these in the future) but these "custom" units represent a major investment since they have to be specifically tailored to the pilotage district.

Having seen TotalTide program running on several ships I have obtained a review copy from the UKHO in order to establish whether or not it could be a useful, passage planning tool for pilots. The immediate answer is that in its present format with comprehensive tidal heights and streams it has potential but in my opinion is somewhat frustrating in that although all the information necessary to create a pilotage passage plan seems to be contained within the program it cannot easily be used for that purpose.

## The product

The program is provided on a single CD Rom which will only run on the MS Windows operating system although the UKHO inform me that it will run on later versions of the "MAC" fitted with Windows compatibility.

With the tidal data protected by Crown Copyright The UKHO are understandably paranoid about piracy and the (too long) access code provided with the program needs to be supplemented by a permanent key code obtained by registration either by email or post. Once the permanent key code is entered the use of the program is limited to two computers and each one requires its own permanent key, however, the UKHO are currently working on an edition which will be able to run on networked computers. Once the permanent key is obtained the program use is unlimited but updates for additional ports can be obtained annually for an extra charge.

## The display

Once the program is running the screen consists of a chart of the world along with two sub windows: List and Filter

The "List" provides a list of all the ports and streams purchased

The "Filter" provides configurable data for selected use from the list of ports and streams.

The whole display can be configured with open data panels to individual user requirements.

## The chart display

Upon opening, the display default is for tidal stream data using the current date / time from the computer's clock so in common with all time based programs if your computer clock is incorrectly set then the data displayed will be rubbish! Once the program is running the time zone required by the operator can easily be chosen and set. Scrolling the chart is the easiest way to navigate around the various areas / ports and there are various ways of panning and zooming around the display. If data is required for a port whose location is not known then typing in the port's name or part of it in the search box will highlight the port on the list if it is in the database. Right clicking on the port will provide an option for that port to be centred on the chart.

This basic display is suitable for most usage since upon zooming in on the chart, local "standard" and "Secondary" ports and other tidal data points are displayed and clicking on these brings up an additional data window. However in the interests of research (I do suffer for my readership!) I decided to customise a "Filter" for the Thames Estuary. One word sums up this exercise and that is: perverse!! Wishing just to produce a display for the Thames Estuary with a dozen or so tidal data

centres involved working through the whole list of areas and ports right clicking on hundreds to exclude the data points not required in order to select those that were!! Why on earth a simple select system of just clicking on the data points required is not used totally defies logic! There also doesn't appear to be any facility to edit this filter data once it has been saved without creating a new list.

## The tidal data

Zooming in on the chart display firstly brings up the standard ports then the secondary ports and tidal streams for an area. Further zooming brings up additional data for the ports providing information as to whether the tide is flooding or ebbing plus the time and height of the next high or low water. The tidal streams have a tag displaying the direction and rate of the tide.

The time / date for a tidal calculation can be changed by various means but I found them all rather fiddly. In my opinion, a simple request box for entering the required date and time would be more user friendly!

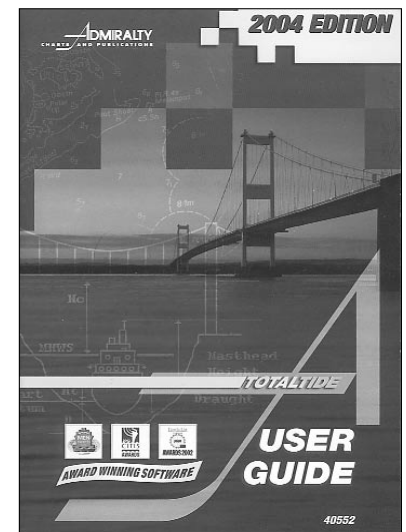
However, once the default or input time and date is selected additional information is easily acquired. Double clicking on either port or stream data brings up a window containing much useful supplementary data.

## Tidal streams

The additional data on the tidal stream "diamonds" is a table of direction and rate as found on a normal chart along with detailed tables of predicted future data which can be set for intervals between 5 minutes and 1 hour.

**Ports:** This is where this program is of value to pilots and includes standard and secondary ports along with data reference locations such as buoys and structures. Double clicking on one of these "ports" brings up a wealth of data but of particular interest to pilots are the tidal curve graph and vessel UKC features. The "graph" tab brings up tidal curves for an adjustable period around the date / time selected and a cursor can be run along the curve to either provide the time a certain level will be available / lost or the level predicted at a certain time.

The "local" tab permits the user to enter data critical data for that port such as a ruling depth and bridge height. Once this data has been set the "clearance" tab enables the user to enter a vessel's draught, under keel clearance and air draught and once these have been entered the graph function will produce a line across the graph showing the "minimum safe height" for navigating that vessel. It is then a simple matter to locate the cursor over the intersection of this line on the graph to obtain the tide available and lost times.





## Sounds good! - Where's the problem?

The "clearance" function is good as far as it goes but what I found frustrating is that there is a vast amount of information contained within this program and although I have no technical knowledge of how the program works I feel sure that with a fairly simple program upgrade the data could be used to provide a comprehensive passage planning programme, not just for pilots but for all users. How? My suggestions would be as follows:

**Tidal target points:** There is a facility for users to create a "custom" port in any location but this requires input of harmonic constants and such data is not readily available to the average user. Critical depth points often lie between two tidal data points on the chart and mariners currently interpolate between these points. The predictions in this program will be based on the co-tidal curves for an area and so surely it should be possible for a user to enter the Latitude and Longitude of a "target" spot and have the program undertake the interpolation between the nearest data reference points in the same manner as we do manually and the UKHO have confirmed that they are looking at this facility. If such a facility were added a simple table facility could possibly be added which would enable a user to enter several such target points along with the ETA at each one to provide UKC data for a passage. There should also be a facility to save plans with an edit facility should the critical depths change.

**Tidal surge compensation:** The program provides standard predictions but for planning it should be possible to manually enter anticipated tidal variations and thus amend the standard predictions prior to a passage being undertaken.

**Clearances:** The current clearances facility permits a vessel's draft and UKC parameters to be entered. Once this is done the data page displays the UKC for the time when the data is entered. This is pretty useless. Why not display the available and lost times on this page which would remove the necessity to switch to the graph page to read them off by means of the cursor?

## Conclusions

I am not a computer expert so am not sure how complex such additions to the program would be. However, many dedicated passage planning programs use the data provided by the UKHO for tidal calculations so it would seem logical to me that the UKHO should be able to utilise their own data in such a manner! I therefore get the impression that this program has comprehensively and successfully converted the data from their printed tide tables into a computer program but in limiting itself to that function it has, in my opinion, missed an opportunity to produce a really useful tool to bridge the gap between basic tidal data and a full electronic chart with tidal planning facilities. However, upon raising this point with the UKHO they have confirmed that they are currently working on a program that can be integrated into other navigational programs so watch this space! My verdict 7/10 (with great potential).

JCB

*TotalTide. Each area (e.g. NW Europe) costs £70. Annual updates cost £56. Available from chart agents and cannot be purchased directly from the UKHO. (Pilots purchasing this program may be able to offset the cost against tax.)*

**Weblink:** [http://www.ukho.gov.uk/total\\_tide.html](http://www.ukho.gov.uk/total_tide.html)

# REPORT INFORMATION SYSTEM AMONG PILOTS (RISAP)

*EMPA, following an initiative largely introduced by the French pilots has set up an inter-pilot reporting system whereby defects, not necessarily of sufficient importance to alert Port State Control, but which may affect the safety of a vessel in pilotage waters can be promulgated to other districts. Such reports could for example include an incident of a black-out, engine failure or even a high gyro error. Such incidents may be a "one off" but an awareness that a problem has occurred on a vessel may just result in a subsequent pilot being that little bit more vigilant and could thus serve to prevent a more serious incident. There are currently only a few UK pilot stations signed up to the RISAP initiative and so if your port is not amongst those you should elect a designated pilot to represent your port and thus ensure the effectiveness of RISAP which is already creating a growing valuable database.*

*The whole success of this initiative is dependent upon participation so to help you to understand the scheme I have selected the following FAQs from the EMPA website. ([www.empa-pilots.org](http://www.empa-pilots.org))*

## Why RISAP?

The WEB-RISAP system can be an important tool for consolidating the role of the European maritime pilots in the prevention of the accidents of navigation and for cooperating with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)

## Who can access RISAP?

At present the database is confidential and can only be accessed by European maritime pilots. There are 3 levels of confidentiality for access to the database, each level being protected by a different log-in and password.

**The first level** is accessible by all maritime pilots belonging to EMPA. This level allows the user to view information about each ship in the database and their defects. The log-in details can be obtained from the EMPA website private area.

**The second level** is accessible by a designated person in each Pilot Station. It allows him or her to create, modify or remove ships on behalf of the station. The password is allocated by the national RISAP officer.

**The third level** is accessible by the national RISAP officer. This person holds the national access rights. These rights allow the national Risap officer to allocate and modify the second level logins and passwords and to communicate this information to the designated person in the Pilot Station concerned.

## How does RISAP work

Every country manages its own database.

The national RISAP officer is responsible for ensuring that the list of Pilot Stations for his own country is complete. He allocates a login and a password to each Pilot Station, and communicates this information to the designated person in each Pilot Station.

The designated person (or his delegate) can then record any defects in the ships piloted by the pilots of his station in the database.

## How much does RISAP cost?

**Nothing.** The database has already been developed by FFPM. For more information contact: [joe.wilson@ntlworld.com](mailto:joe.wilson@ntlworld.com)

# LONDON PILOTS PILOT CONCORDE!

*World exclusive photo scoop for the PILOT magazine*

On 19th April the last commissioned British Airways Concorde made its final journey to the Museum of Flight in East Fortune, East Lothian, Scotland. Due to the fact that there was no runway near to the museum capable of accepting Concorde the decision was made to take the aircraft by barge from Isleworth near Heathrow to Scotland under tow. The barge chosen for the voyage was the recently launched *Terra Marique* owned by R Wynn which has been largely funded by the government to assist



*Concorde pilots: Peter Widd, John Freestone and John Reid*

the transport of abnormal loads by water, and to reduce congestion on the roads. The Concorde was to be its first major test and with the world's media watching it was essential that everything went smoothly. Three London "bridge" pilots and although they were all involved in the planning John Reid, being on duty at the time of the trials became the lead pilot and therefore very much the hidden hero behind the success of the operation. Isleworth is right at the uppermost reaches of the tidal Thames and being beyond the limit of the London pilotage district also required the use of a London Waterman for the upper two miles. Navigation this far up the Thames has two major problems for pilots to contend with, namely the lack of water and low bridges. There were several critical bridges on the passage where the barge would be experiencing a minimum under keel and air draft clearance and this involved careful tidal and air draft calculations and required the up river passage to be staged over three tides. Early trials with the *Terra Marique* revealed that

although the fitted with four thrusters these were ineffective in the strong tidal flow of the river and it was therefore decided to use two small river tugs: Bennett's *Steven B* and the Port of London Authority's *Impulse*. Further trials also revealed control problems when navigating with the tide so the decision was taken to undertake all under bridge towage against the flood tide for maximum control. The *Steven B* is a pusher tug and because the barge had a stern door it was necessary to lash it up to the bow and to push the barge stern first. In the month leading up to the passage John Reid worked closely with R Wynn, Bennett's, Chris Livett (Waterman) and the PLA and it is to the credit to all involved that the passage was finally executed without a hitch although not without a few raised heartbeats resulting from a 45 minute delay in departure which made the Albert Bridge transit extremely critical. Many observers and the media were disappointed that once loaded onto the barge Concorde was actually placed on a hydraulic platform which lowered the aircraft out of sight (her lowest ever altitude?) of the many spectators lining the banks of the Thames. However, in the

interests of permitting our politicians to have an excuse to visit the bar on the terrace the pilots had to plan for a one hour pause in the passage off the Houses of Parliament in order that Concorde could be raised up for a short period by way of a farewell salute. With no press permitted on either the barge or the tug, John Reid took conduct of the pilotage and John Freestone and Peter Widd provided essential back up by assisting in ensuring the critical alignment of the barge for

passing under the bridges. In common with most pilots they all understate their essential role but John Freestone did manage to find time to take some excellent and unique photographs during the passage. Once clear of the upper river the tow was berthed at the Littlebrook Power Station jetty just under the Dartford Bridge and handed over to the deep sea tug *Argus* on the 14th April with pilot Cerwyn Phillips who piloted the vessel to the outer port limits. Following a safe sea passage, Concorde was reassembled and rolled out for permanent display at the National Museum of Flight on 19th April.

Link: ([www.nms.ac.uk/concorde/](http://www.nms.ac.uk/concorde/))

*Although, as usual, the role of pilots was ignored by the media, the reputation of the port rested totally upon pilotage skills and this passage has proven to be a very positive PR exercise not just for the PLA but also for the concept of using UK's waterways rather than roads. The UKMPA are already members of the new Sea and Water group ([www.seaandwater.org](http://www.seaandwater.org)) which is driving forward this European initiative in the UK.*

JCB



*Minimum under keel and air draft clearances!*



*Political posturing*

*Photos: John Freestone*

# Pilotage in Liverpool during the Second World War

*A summary by R.F. Youde Licensed Liverpool pilot 1936-1975*

On the outbreak of war it was ordered that all leave for pilots was cancelled and no pilot would be granted leave of absence to join the fighting services. Pilotage in Liverpool was declared a reserved occupation by order of the War Cabinet, however, there was an instance of an apprentice-pilot who joined the Royal Air Force, was commissioned with "wings" and served as an instructor in flight-navigation.

The Pilot-boat on the Western Station at Point Lynas was ordered to proceed to a position near the North West Light-Float and to keep her station there, about seven miles to the west of the Bar Lightship. In that position she continued to serve ships approaching Liverpool from the south and around the Welsh coast, while the Bar Pilot-boat maintained her usual station near to the entrance to Queens Channel, the main channel which leads into the Mersey.

Navigation in the Mersey was suspended during the hours of darkness due to the restrictions which were placed on lighting until well after the severe blitz of May 1940.

An Examination Service was set-up on the Bar pilot-boat, comprising Royal Naval commissioned ranks, NCOs and other ranks. Accommodation was cramped and there were instances of Royal Naval officers taking exception to being obliged to live and eat with other ranks. After the fall of France, the Royal Navy managed to produce a pilot-boat from Holland for the Examination Service. This made life much easier for the pilots and crew of the Bar pilot-boat.

At the outbreak of war there were 145 licensed pilots. This number was considered to be insufficient to meet the unforeseeable problems which were known would lie ahead. Twenty men were recruited from outside the Liverpool Pilot Service. They had either served as pilots in other ports, including London, Southampton, and Preston, or else were Masters or Mates who had held Pilotage Exemption Certificates for the Mersey. The Pilotage Authority also invited Second Class Liverpool Pilots (then limited to 2,000 tons net) to apply to be examined for a 4,000 ton-limit licence, to be held until completion of the normal qualifying period for a First-Class licence, which was then an unrestricted licence.

It was ordered by the Marine Surveyor and Water Bailiff for the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board that the Mersey should be partitioned into anchorages which were effectively designated as specific parking



*A wartime convoy assembles*

lots. Circles were printed in red ink on the chart from the Rock Lighthouse as far south as water would permit any anchorage at low water. Each parking lot was numbered and was useful for tugs and river-launches in ascertaining where particular ships were anchored.

A principle difficulty was in the matter of communication. In most circumstances the only possible means was by morse lamp or by hailing through a megaphone. In many cases, ships were routed to Liverpool for orders but had not been given specific docking instructions. Very often this would lead to a ship missing the tide which she could otherwise have made if only the necessary arrangements had been known and, in consequence, space would be taken up in the anchorages.

When a convoy was preparing to sail it was usual for some of the ships to undock and anchor in the river and then wait for the rest of the fleet to join them by undocking on the following tide, as there might well have been too many ships to undock all at once on the same tide. This would add to the congestion in the anchorages and, if a convoy was due in on the next day and perhaps did not catch the tide, there would be further addition to the congestion.

When the air-raids became heavier and more frequent after the fall of France, the enemy began to drop magnetic mines which lay on the sea-bed and could not be seen from the surface by ships navigating the river and channels. To combat this, a fleet

of HM minesweepers were detailed to be first to sail from the Mersey to sweep the Main Channels and Western Approaches. On one occasion the Pilot-boat was ordered to proceed to sea before the minesweepers, which gave rise to much concern aboard the cutter. The order was questioned and rectified.

As far as I can recall, three ships were mined and sunk in the river, with one in the Main Channel and one just outside it.

The property on both sides of the river took a very heavy pounding, but the Port itself was never closed due to enemy action. The Princes Landing Stage and the Ferry Stages remained usable. The lock-gates and river entrances were never put out of action, with the exception of Hornby-lock, the use of which could be avoided by alternative routes within the dock system.

As to the Royal Navy, there was no change in the law which provides that HM ships are exempt from compulsory pilotage; and no change in the custom and practice of the Royal Navy to engage the service of Liverpool pilots in most circumstances. Relations between the Royal Navy and the Pilot Service were conducted properly and professionally by all concerned and it is probably fair to say that mutual respect and regard between the two organisations was probably never higher than at that time. Duty was the watchword: and every man knew that England expected nothing less.

*R. F. Youde*

## OBITUARIES

### Gerard Witheridge Couch

1927-2004



Gerard Witheridge Couch, possibly better known to this world, quite simply as "Sam", was born, 1.08.27. He passed away in peace, after a long illness, bravely countered, on the 2.04.04, at the age of seventy-eight. Born and christened Gerard Witheridge, he first met his father, then chief officer with Cunard White Star, who returning from sea, upon sighting the babe and hearing the name he bore, quite simply stated, "To Hell with that, it's Sam!" And Sam it was for all of us, save for his wife, Audrey, for whom he was always fondly, Gerard.

Three factors were always paramount to Sam during his lifetime, his dear wife and partner, Audrey, friends and colleagues, the Liverpool Pilot Service and the sea.

It is no exaggeration to say that the sea was in Sam's blood. On the paternal side of the family, he came from a long line of seafarers. Sam's great-grandfather, for example was Master with Booth Line, sailing out of Liverpool, although the family name is of Devonian origin. Sam was educated at Wallasey Grammar School, but we are told that he had little interest in Latin and other academic pursuits, preferring those of a nautical persuasion, such as sailing in boats and tying knots. He looked for any excuse to miss lessons and school. One of these, is in fact nothing short of heroic, for, as a wartime teenager, he signed on with the Fire Brigade. When the air-raid sirens sounded, heralding the arrival of the Luftwaffe's bombers, instead of dashing off to the shelters with his fellow pupils, Sam would don a helmet and dash off on his bicycle to the fire station to carry despatches between units fighting the fires during the bombing.

Sam's personal burning desire, however, was to go to sea. This was realised when, at the age of sixteen he was accepted as a Boathand into the Liverpool Pilot Service and placed with Booth Line as cadet officer and he sailed for South America on the *Benedict*. Following his deep-sea time he was called into the Service and, as everywhere Sam went, he became an immediately acceptable companion, extremely popular, with whom it was always a pleasure and fun to be with. This period in Sam's life was one of the happiest, and led to him becoming a fully-fledged pilot, a profession, which, was a source of enormous pleasure for him throughout his career. Sam enjoyed all aspects of being a pilot, the 'ship-handling', the travel and that special brand of camaraderie exclusive to the service he loved. He piloted his full quota of ships and became appropriated to British Steel, which appropriation included the long hours of the levelling tide and the haul up to Bidston Dock with the deep-drafted ore-carriers.

Sam retired from the pilot service he loved, along with so many others in 1988, but remained in touch with his friends and colleagues. Sam's ashes were scattered by a colleague, with due reverence, from the decks of the large Chinese bulk-carrier *Yang Hai*, outward bound from Liverpool to Port Kelang. We may now consider Sam, (as he would have wanted) to be inexorably mixed with the winds, the sky and the sea.

*John Curry*

*Liverpool Pilot, May 2004*

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### Leslie Finch

Born in 1923, Leslie's seamanship began early. His Father, Commander EA Finch RD, RNR knew his son would follow in his footsteps, when at eight years old he, with his younger girl cousin, was found rowing across the Solent heading for Portsmouth.

After attending school at St Dunstan's College, he was apprenticed to Andrew Weir Co., Bank Line in 1939, later serving as 2nd Mate. He survived the war safely, crossing the Equator the day war broke out and was on the last ship to leave Singapore before the Japanese took over. He continued his training at Sir John Cass, School of Navigation and achieved his Master's Certificate.

After the war he married Constance, whom he first met in the Christian Science Sunday School at Blackheath. They

shared a wonderfully happy and loving partnership for nearly 58 years, working and laughing together through hazardous and still waters.

In 1948 Leslie joined the Orient Steam Navigation Co Ltd on the *Orcades*. His career with the line was a happy and successful one, including serving on the maiden voyage of the *Oronsay* in 1952. He finally left the Company as Chief Officer in 1957, to be able to spend more time with his twin son and daughter then aged five.

Leslie's love for the challenges of the sea continued as he was licensed by Trinity House as a Pilot for the London Sea Pilot, West District. He greatly enjoyed the variety of jobs and comradeship of fellow pilots until his retirement in 1988.

Leslie was always busy. He was an Honourable member of the Guild of Master Mariners and Freeman of the City of London for over thirty years and worked tirelessly for his church and a number of charities. The annual garden parties at the family home, "Leylands" in Kent raised substantial sums for the RNLI and were supported by old colleagues and new friends.

In recent years Leslie and Constance moved close to the river at Greenwich, and enjoyed their grandchildren growing up. Leslie took particular pleasure in seeing his grand-daughter Elisabeth, aged 11, dance with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden and loved nothing more than spending time with his grandson Ben in Greenwich Park, where he had played as a child himself.

Death did not disturb Leslie. He passed without warning and most peacefully at his home in Greenwich in February 2004 and was cremated at Falconwood at a simple family service. His pilot's cap and an anchor of red, white and blue flowers adorned the coffin; whilst those wishing him "Bon Voyage" were left with a sense of deep gratitude for the life of a most loving, energetic and gentle man.

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### Captain Peter Holbrook

Peter was Born on 2nd December 1926 at the family home in Colombo, Ceylon.

In the 1930's the family returned to UK and Peter won a Scholarship to Bedford Modern School and obtained the School Leaving certificate 1942.

Lying about his age (he was too young) he joined the Home Guard where he was mainly engaged in erecting telegraph poles and on 4th May 1943 he signed indenture as Corporation of Trinity House Lights

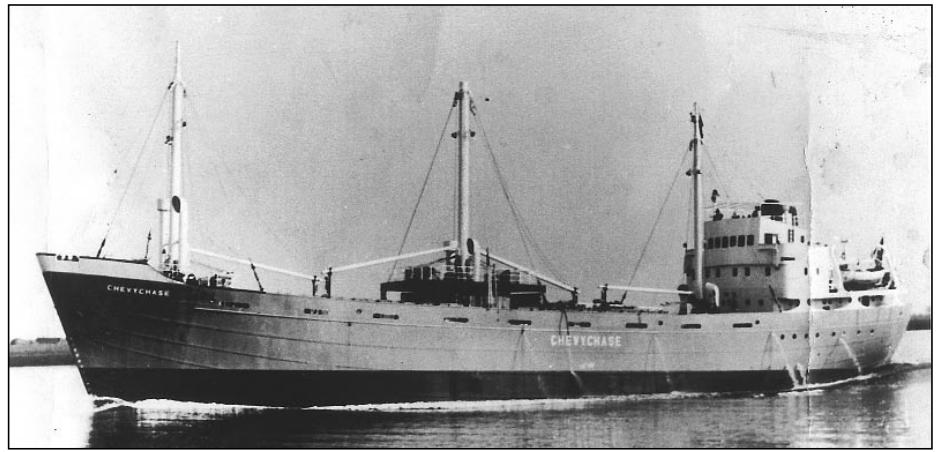
Division as apprentice. The four year indenture was for the apprentice "to serve his masters and not frequent Taverns, or Ale Houses, unless on the duties of his masters. Not play dice or cards or any other unlawful game, and shall not be guilty of profane swearing or drunkenness". There was also compulsory attendance at church when the ship was in port, having to confirm the text of the sermon to the captain on their return. Peter being fed up with being questioned so many times replied once that it was from St Paul's Testament and when asked about it Peter replied "All ye of little faith why do you doubt". The Captain never asked again for conformation.

Peter was one of the last Trinity House apprentices (The Trinity House apprenticeship was formulated by a scheme to improve the skills of seafarers by Samuel Pepys who was secretary of Trinity House at the time) with the Trinity House Lights department on board many different Trinity House vessels. In 1944 the vessel MV *Alert* was used to mark the channel for the D-Day landings through the minefields off Omaha Beach after a minesweeper had cleared the mines. During this particular exercise the minesweeper and the *Alert* were shelled by German guns. Since the national service age was 18 years this would have made Peter one of the youngest official participants in the war at 17½.

As the invasion and war developed he was seconded to a Royal Navy Destroyer in the North Sea as a Liaison Officer (still under 18 yrs of age) following which he was decorated with the War Medal, Victory Medal, and the Atlantic Star

This wartime service was rewarded with a war risk bonus of £10.00 per month, however those under 18 years were only awarded £5.00 per month. This low income was supplemented by Peter singing in the Bars of East London Pubs!

Leaving Trinity House after completing his apprenticeship he sailed as 3rd, 2nd, and 1st Officer in a variety of foreign going



MV Chey Chase on trials 1956

cargo liner, bulk cargo, and tanker types including: *Alddington Court* (1947-9) 3rd Officer and *Esso Tioga* (1949) 2nd Officer.

Whilst serving on board the MV *Rampart* in 1953 Peter was 2nd Officer (Mate) when the vessel made the first direct service from Great Britain to Asuncion in Paraguay, a river journey of approx 900 miles from the River Plate Delta and during this voyage he was promoted to 1st Mate

Peter obtained his Master's Certificate 10th January 1955, following which he was appointed Master of the MV *Chevy Chase* (a general cargo ship sailing between the Mediterranean and the UK) which was being built in Emden in Germany. Following delivery in 1956 Peter sailed on board as Master until becoming authorised as a Trinity House North Channel Pilot on 10th December 1957 where he served until retirement until 30th September 1988. This period of service saw five years involvement in the administration of pilotage in the London District and he also served as an independent borough councillor for Harwich for ten years two of which were served as Mayor. During this Mayoral term, Peter piloted the *Konnigan Juliana* on her maiden voyage to Parkeston Quay wearing both the chain of office and his Trinity House uniform! This period also saw Peter serve eight years as a member of the Harwich Conservancy Board during the time of intense development of the Orwell and Harwich haven ports and ten years service as Justice of Peace, Harwich Bench. In addition to all this additional service Peter also undertook some short tours of duty as a relief pilot in Jeddah and Gizan and, following his retirement as a Trinity House pilot, Peter returned to Jeddah and again served as pilot/relief pilot at Jeddah until 1990.

Peter also held positions within the Rugby Club, Cricket Club, and the Homing Society and also played Golf up until about 10 years ago and being a good after dinner speaker meant that many clubs wanted him in honorary roles.

Whilst an apprentice at Trinity House

Peter met Betty Gardner and they were married at St Nicholas Church on 26th September 1953. Peter leaves behind Betty, their daughter Sally, son Mark and four grandchildren.

Peter will always be remembered by family, friends, and acquaintances for his quantity of quality conversation, songs, verse, and jokes, particularly Kipling verses such as 'Gunga Din' and 'If'.

Mark Holbrook

## Pensioners Deceased

### November 2003 - January 2004

<b>MJ Bell</b>	<i>London North</i>
<b>WH Benjamin</b>	<i>Fowey</i>
<b>WL Bevan</b>	<i>Swansea</i>
<b>JS Burgess</b>	<i>London West</i>
<b>W Craig</b>	<i>Lowestoft</i>
<b>PB Johnson</b>	<i>Tees</i>
<b>E Jones</b>	<i>Manchester</i>
<b>H Renshaw</b>	<i>Humber</i>

### February 2004 - April 2004

<b>B Austin</b>	<i>Kings Lynn</i>
<b>W Batchelor</b>	<i>Harwich</i>
<b>RJ Clark</b>	<i>Ipswich</i>
<b>GW Crouch</b>	<i>Liverpool</i>
<b>LA Finch</b>	<i>Harwich</i>
<b>P Holbrook</b>	<i>Harwich</i>
<b>DO Jones</b>	<i>Harwich</i>
<b>H Patience</b>	<i>Inverness</i>
<b>TY Purvis</b>	<i>Tyne</i>
<b>FA Tapping</b>	<i>London-West</i>
<b>HF Thomas</b>	<i>London-West</i>
<b>P Tippet</b>	<i>Gloucester</i>
<b>RJ Williams</b>	<i>Harwich</i>
<b>GW Wotton</b>	<i>Southampton</i>

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- Bodywarmer Style
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