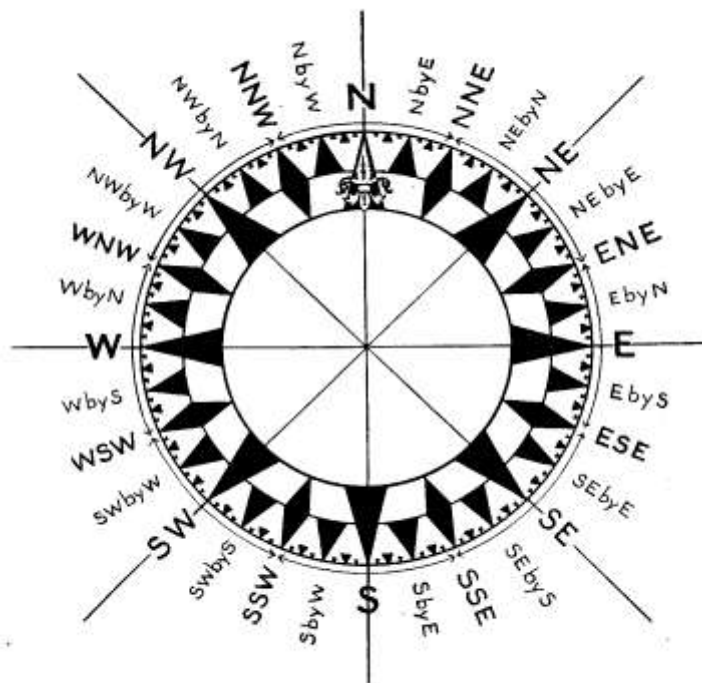




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Editor's Note

As the new editors of your Vindi newsletter we wish you all a belated Happy New Year.

We would like to thank Ken for his great work in starting the bi monthly edition and continuing it for so many years.

After talking with Tony and Anne, we have agreed on a different format and making the newsletter quarterly. As with all good things we cannot do this alone and we need your input to make it a success. You may think that you have nothing to contribute so we are giving you a gentle nudge (in some cases a shove).

Mike Day kindly sent us a page from one of his diaries, if you think he has trouble reading his own writing, think what we had deciphering it.

As you will read in the following pages, one of the new features will be a member profile, in which willing participants spill the beans on their lives before and after service. Prepare to be shocked and amazed at your fellow Vindi boys' escapades! There is so much that we don't know about you even though we meet every two months. I have started this off and hope that you find my profile interesting. Hopefully this will give you inspiration to put pen to paper (and sort out any photos that you would like included which of course will be returned).

The 2006 Reunion at Umina was well attended by the members of our branch and it was good to be reunited with those who came to Tanunda in 2005.

Let us have any contributions or suggestions no matter how big or small. Please don't put it in the too hard basket. Our email is surfield@adam.com.au or hand up any material at the next meeting.

Mick and Jill Surfield

To the Members of the SA Branch of the Vindi Association.

At the last meeting at the Seamen's Mission, it was announced that I was standing down as Newsletter Editor. I am sorry to have had to make this decision, but I was finding it increasingly difficult to fire up the imagination to create Newsletters even though it was only on a bi-monthly basis.

As you will know from the issue of this Newsletter, Mick and Jill Surfield have taken on the duties of the publication. I have no doubt that they will do a good job, and I also hope that the readers (members) wherever they are will help by submitting stories, articles and or jokes to help them out. I will be submitting articles from time to time and I am looking forward to reading some of your stories.

At the meeting, the Committee, on behalf of our Association presented Margaret and I with a gift each. Margaret was given a bone china cup, saucer and plate, and I was given a bottle of Mount Gay Rum (*Extra Old Barbados Rum*).

No comments please on the use of the word 'Gay' on the bottle...; the only complaint I have is the fact that Margaret won't let me use her cup and saucer to drink my rum.

Ken

Skipper's Log

To our Vindi Boys and Girls, this is a sincere wish for a peaceful, healthy and prosperous 2007. Already we have had our first meeting for the New Year and a great turn out it was. Our latest member Bob Burning attended his first meeting with us. We had a presentation for the outgoing newsletter Editor Ken McTigue and his lovely wife Margaret. Ken has been a hard worker for the SA Branch for many years and his efforts will always be greatly appreciated.



We welcome Mick and Jill Surfield who are taking over this daunting project and call on you all to show your support by contributing information. There will be a new format as already detailed by Mick and Jill, but we need everyone's input, everyone has a story to tell.

John Williams, who runs the web site <http://www.vindicatrixboy.com> also needs more input from members and would really appreciate comments after they have read updates. Our website is really great and John keeps updating all the time.

We will be asking the President of the Merchant Navy Association of SA, and committee members and partners to join our next meeting on the 25th March and stay for lunch. We also ask that our members bring lunch to share for the day.

Anzac Day is fast approaching and we hope as many members as possible will be marching that day. After the march, a lunch will be held at the Cathedral Hotel. Please advise Anne (tel: 8523 1655) as soon as possible if you will be attending. A deposit of \$10 per person will be taken at the next meeting.

As was agreed at the previous meeting, Anne has approached the Weintal, Tanunda and they are offering us the following package. One night's accommodation including a 3 course meal for the Saturday night and a continental breakfast Sunday for \$200.00 twin share. Possible dates: 7th, 14th or 21st July. Anne needs definite numbers by the March meeting to ensure bookings are received by the resort in time.

Next Meeting Sunday March 25th 11.00 am

Tony Iles

Translation of Mike Day's Diary



Payne Ohio (Ex Sam Dart)

1944 December

25th Xmas Day Monday. Up 10am coffee and toast. Present from V \$50.00 in billfold washing up. Sat around till 3pm. Visitors arrived 4.30pm dinner at 6pm. Turn in 12.30am.

26th Boxing Day Tuesday. Up 8am coffee, toast and orange. Dinner 1pm changed into uniform. 2.30pm Fort Wayne 5pm. Pictures till 10pm. Train at 11.30pm.

27th Wednesday. Van Wert 12.40, Lima 1.20, Harrisberg 1.15, Baltimore 5.20. On board 7.30. Wrote letter, phoned Virginia.

28th Thursday. Mixing paint in fore peak. Dhobied. 4pm. Tea. Went ashore 7pm. MN club. Phoned John Henry V's brother. On board 9.30.

29th Friday. Out from 9.10. Cleaned No 2 office. 10-12 over stern. 1-4 port quarter finished sides of ship. Tea 5pm. Phoned at 6.30pm lines down at Toledo. Bathed, did painting in light globe of ship. Filled in diary and wrote letters.

30th Saturday. Put away stages and ladder, cleaned out rooms. Snowed all night, couldn't get through to Payne, got leave till Tuesday. Got ticket at station. Rang V told to wait. Got mail from office. Ashore at 7pm. Posted two letters. One to Fairly (gardener in orphanage) and South Africa. Got ticket changed. Went to Boy Scouts.

31st Sunday. Up at 12.20pm. Dinner, washed towels and shirt, bathed and shaved at 2pm. Wrote letters. Tea and washed up at 5.30. Ashore 6pm. Church closed. Deanna Durbin in 'Can't Help Singing'.

1945 January

1st Monday. Out 11.30am. Dinner 12pm. Turkey, plum duff, apple. Washed up. Pouring with rain. Went to MN club. Wrote letters to Florrie and Virginia, posted them. On board 4.30pm. Tea 5pm salmon, chips, jelly, mince pie, cake, washed dungarees. Bathed. Cleaned up locker, filled diary.

2nd Tuesday. Breakfast 5am egg and bacon. Painted out steering flat all day. Got letter from V at dinner time. Phoned her, wrote letter at 4.30pm. Tea. Went ashore and bought slippers, writing paper and wrote letters in club. Went to post office. Bought gloves. Back at 10pm with A.B. Myers. Turned in at 10.30pm.

Once again the sun shone on us at our annual Christmas lunch in the park. Our salads were accompanied by chicken and roast potatoes brought in by Anne and Tony along with rolls and butter but what happened to the cheese!! It was hard to choose a dessert as there were so many but I'm sure not much was left.



What is he talking about?



Skipper Iles



Is that a raffle prize again?



Lunch over

A young couple who were just married were in their honeymoon suite on their wedding night. As they undressed for bed, the husband, who was a big burly bruiser, tossed his pants to his bride and said, "here put these on". She put them on and the waist was twice the size of her body. "I can't wear your pants" she said. "That's right" he said, "and don't you forget it. It's the man who wears the pants in this family".

With that she flipped him her panties and said, "try these on". He tried them on and found he could only get them as far as his knee caps. "Hell" he said, "I can't get into your pants". "That's right" she said, "and that's the way it's going to be until your attitude changes".

For those who could not attend the 2006 Reunion at Umina, here are some of the photos taken by the SA Branch members who enjoyed the hospitality of the NSW Vindi boys and girls.

If you have any that you would like to share please send or email them to us.



Leaving for Umina Reunion



After breakfast



Drink it quick Eunice, Vern's watching



Jack and Brother take a well earned break



Lunch time for the croc



Ice cream break

Reunion continued



Anne with Tommy Cooper minus funny hat



Hang on Betty



Shirley shares a joke



Sunday BBQ



Two of a kind



Vindi cake tricks

The end of a great weekend

Member Profile: Mick Surfield



26th December 1942, this was the day I was born in a large house called ‘The Wayside’ in the town of Oadby in Leicestershire. I was named Richard Michael Surfield (aka Mick). Shortly after I was born, we were evacuated to Chesterfield in Derbyshire. My first experience of the country side was wandering into the chicken run and being attacked by the resident cockerel. After being scratched on the face, the owner promptly wrung the bird’s neck and we had it for dinner!

18 months later, we moved back to Enfield near the small-arms factory which wasn’t the best of places to be as I believe there was still a war going on. An episode that will remain with me for the rest of my days was something that I don’t remember happening at the time. I was playing on a park bench and slipped between the seat and the back hitting my jaw and biting my tongue half off and I still bear the scars from the stitches. A little later, buoyed with my newfound courage from the chicken episode, I attempted to break up a dog fight between two Alsatians. One of the dogs trod on my face and put its paw in my eye resulting in a black eye, but no scars.

After the war, the house was requisitioned by the authorities as people were returning to their homes and we were moved into a half-way house, still in Enfield. This next place was a large house on ‘The Ridgeway’ in Enfield and housed three other families. The time spent there was pretty good for a lad like me as there was plenty to do in the surrounding countryside, chasing cows and such. Plus the fact that I could race around the large garden wearing relics from the war such as tin hats and gas masks full of dust, cobwebs and spiders. Eventually we were relocated to Oakwood, the better end of Enfield (still not our own house). Here we lived until I was about 13 years old. I spent my time here attending Merryhills Primary School where I learnt to fail the 11plus exam making me eligible to attend Oakwood Secondary School. During this time my friend and I, being approximately 11 years old, would travel to London Airport on the underground and bus to watch the aircraft. Nobody seemed to worry about two young kids wandering all over the place; a bit different to today’s society.

I was about 12 years old when I met my first Vindi Boy, not that I knew what one of those was. His name was Paul Charlish who eventually had the honour of becoming my brother-in-law after marrying my big sister Pamela. This was probably the beginning of my becoming a Vindi Boy and eventually meeting all of you. In the meantime, we moved house once more to Ware in Hertfordshire where I completed my education. I worked for my father for six months before arriving at the Vindi in February 1959 to continue my education which I thought I had already finished.

They reckon the Vindi was a hard place to be but I seemed to fit in anywhere. I didn’t know what was in store for me when I was given the title of ‘Camp Boiler Boy’ (camp did not mean gay back then). I soon realised that I was on to an easy number. After a few lessons about ships and things, I would wander around the camp with a wheelbarrow full of coke for the boiler rooms in the many huts. After finishing my work, I could lay on a stock-pile of coke and smoke the maintenance man’s Woodbines. This man wasn’t altogether silly as he would unload some of his work on me, such as going to different huts and replacing panes of glass (this all put me in good stead for later in life). Another perk was not going on parade as I was busy with my wheelbarrow.

Training over and I was ready to put to sea!

On arriving at the London docks (Connaught Road Shipping Pool), I was offered my first ship The RMS Saxonía, a Cunard passenger liner of 21,637gt which sailed from the Victoria docks on the 4th May 1959. Destination - Montreal Canada. What were my thoughts at the time? A mixture of excitement and apprehension. After training to be a deck-hand, I found myself serving meals to the Quarter Masters in the PO's Mess where I gained the new name of Peggy. After acquiring a name like that I was worried about the high percentage of queers on board. On my return to Southampton I spent a week's leave at home in Ware and then did a second trip to Canada on the same ship. This time I was a bridge boy answering the phones and watching the radar for icebergs that were on the move and other ships as most of the time we were in thick fog. For both trips my gross pay was £34.13.8. and net pay £2.2.4. I had a long way to go to make my fortune.



RMS Saxonía

After paying off the Saxonía on the 19th June 1959, I signed on the Royal Mail Ship Teviot, a small cargo ship of 7084.93gt, sailing from Victoria Docks on the 26th June 1959 heading for South America. This seemed more like a ship to me - old and rusty. After being shown around by the ordinary seaman we then prepared to sail. Whilst the gangway was being lowered to shore by one of the ship's derricks, the cargo runner parted and the gangway dropped, unfortunately the bight of a rope was through a ringbolt in the deck and the ordinary seaman had his foot in the wrong place and partially severed his foot, hence we sailed with 10 deck crew leaving him in hospital. After leaving the Thames estuary and heading into the English Channel we had a couple of dozen pigeons land on the ship which stayed with us for two days so the carpenter decided to build them a pigeon loft. After three weeks at sea travelling at about 7-8 knots, we reached La Guaira in Venezuela where we released the pigeons for a fly and only half of them came back. They were to stay with us until we reached the English Channel in September where we released them after their numbers were entered in the ship's log. Meanwhile, after a few different ports in South America we left my cabin mate in a house of ill repute in Cartagena (where I also left my virginity - free of charge). This then left us with 9 deck crew; hence I had to go onto a permanent watch. One night a few of us went ashore for a drink or two and whilst returning to the ship I ended up flat on my back in a puddle and very quickly sobered up when I was awoken by one of Castro's soldiers pointing his rifle at my head, luckily my mates were on hand to get me back to the ship. Each morning I gave a stevedore a cooked breakfast in exchange for a bottle of Bacardi which we drank at smoko. After three weeks loading sugar in Cuba we then returned to Liverpool where I signed off in September 1959.



Mick



Crew - RMS Teviot

Taking shore leave of a month, I had managed to spend my wages of £32.15.6½. So once more it was up to the pool to sign on another ship; the MV Aramaic, a Shaw Saville vessel weighing in at 6552.97gt. This turned out to be the best ship I ever sailed on. The four trips I made on this ship had the same crew and we all became one big happy family travelling to Australia and New Zealand. There were always drinking parties taking place, mainly in the Bosun's cabin and the Captain's Tiger (Jeannie) was usually present with her collection of records and record player; the records must have got pretty scratched with the movement of the ship but nobody seemed to worry. Eventually the crew all went their separate ways and so it was time to change ships once more. Whilst on leave, I met the girl who was to be my future wife, the sister of my friend John Meads.



MV Aramaic

My next and final ship (although I did not know it at the time) was the MV Wairangi which was a Shaw Saville ship net tonnage 9441 on charter to the Union Castle Line sailing down the west coast of Africa to Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and anywhere in between with a general cargo and returning with oranges. This was the worst ship I had sailed on with plenty of drunken fights which resulted in the police coming on board at the Captain's request and taking some crew off to prison in Cape Town. On the return trip, a stowaway was discovered amongst the deck cargo and he spent the rest of the trip living with the crew and eventually disappeared when we docked at Antwerp where the crew were paid off and were returned via ferry to Harwich.



MV Wairangi

In the meantime, my parents had moved house once more to Royston in Hertfordshire and so I went to stay at my friend John's parents' house where I began seeing Jill. Instead of returning to sea I went to work with my father again. In March 1964 we were married. Six weeks later along with my brother and his wife we emigrated to Australia on the SS Orcades and made our home at Port Noarlunga and our daughter was born in March the following year at McLaren Vale. As I had no special qualifications, I worked in a number of different jobs including a joiners shop at Noarlunga but did not last long as I was no good at playing football for their team. I ended up being on a bread round for Lovell's Bakery thanks to Paul who quit his job there the previous week and stayed there for 14 months. In 1967 we returned to England and once again my education began. While waiting to go to college to learn welding, I got myself a temporary job at the local brewery. Once trained I began building racing car chassis. Six months later I applied for a position in an engineering company owned by a New Zealander (who originally went to the Isle of Man to take part in TT racing) building go-karts and motorbike frames for the racing industry and various shop fittings for the larger stores. We then progressed onto more precision work for the aircraft industry and electron-beam microscopes for Jill's father's company. I was

employed as the manager with a work force of approximately 30 until 1985. In December 1983 we came to Adelaide for a holiday, as most of my family still lived here, and stayed with my sister Pam and her husband Paul. On returning to the UK after our four week holiday, Karen, our then 18 year old daughter informed us that she wanted to live in Australia where she was born. She returned in October 1984 and we followed in December 1985.

In February 1986, I started work for a small family owned manufacturing company in Brighton producing aluminium security gates, doors and fences, where I am still employed as the foreman and installer of the finished products.

In August 1996 I received an invitation from Ralph Cook to attend a meeting of the Vindicatrix Association SA Branch at the Port Dock Brewery Hotel. I attended my first meeting on the 29th September 1996 along with another Vindi Boy Paul Charlish. Never did I think when I first stepped through the gates of the Vindicatrix National Sea Training School that I would be writing this profile 48 years later for other ex Vindi Boys.



Wake up Peggy!

A special thankyou to our daughter Karen for her help in getting our first edition into print.

A husband heard his wife calling from the kitchen "Come here quick" she shouted. The husband rushed into the kitchen "what do you want?" he asked. "I want you to make love to me right this instant" she cried. The husband thought Wow! my luck is in, she wants me to make love to her right now. So he complied. He threw her across the kitchen table and made passionate love to her. When he had finished, he realised he was puzzled, so he asked her "what was that all about?" She replied "My egg timer is broken".