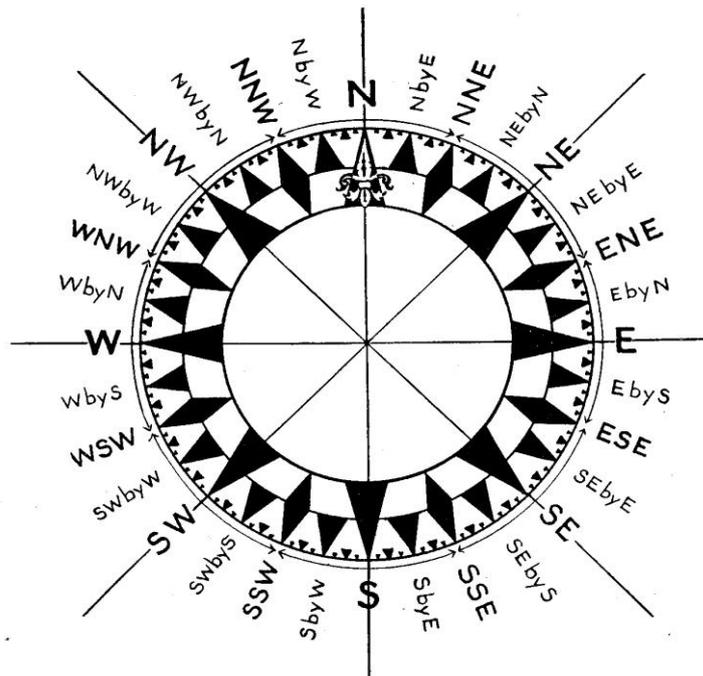




AUGUST 2012

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Editor's Note

While on holiday we visited the Buckler's Hard Maritime Museum in the New Forest and read the story of SS Persia and saw the exhibition of artefacts retrieved from her. Unfortunately we were not allowed to take any photo's for you to see. We have given you a little insight to Buckler's Hard history.

Next Meeting Sunday November 18th 2012 - Picnic in the Park

Mick & Jill Surfield

Skipper's Log

Welcome Everyone!!

What an eventful year it has been so far. The major items being The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, then the Olympics and Paralympics, weren't they all just the greatest events ever. Anne and I enjoyed watching every minute we could. Our Mother Country did us and itself proud and for all the World.

Another great event was getting rid of Mick and Jill Surfield for six weeks, now they are back after being kicked out by the Poms. Seriously though folks we did miss them and all the good work they do for the Branch as well as being good news editors of our famous Newsletter. As I understand it they had a great time visiting Jill's Mum and also visited our wonderful Niece Elaine who lives and works in South Wales for the RSPCA. Apparently she looked after Mick and Jill well in the short time they spent with her. Unfortunately they arrived back home in Australia only to find a burst pipe in the wall. Fortunately clever Mick had thought to turn off the water before leaving for their holidays.

In August Anne and I hosted a stay for part of our extended family from Scotland showing them around South Australia over the few days they spent with us at Willaston. My Brother in law Jim and his Son and Wife and two teenage children came together, unfortunately my Sister was missing, she had died of ovarian cancer just a year ago. We miss her dearly, she was my Big Sister, I thought she would live forever.

Just a reminder to those that who we rarely see, the subs are now due and a swift response would be appreciated. So if you want to continue to be a Member of the South Australian Branch of the Vindicatrix please send the usual \$25 promptly by cheque/money order/or internet banking into our Vindi Account. Cheques made out to Vindicatrix please. Everyone who attended the July meeting will know they are up to date with their subs.

Our last meeting was held at the Port Dock Brewery in an upstairs room. The stairs proved a bit troublesome for some of us but everyone managed it eventually. It is a good room and will do until anything better comes up. We have had a look around but unless we are prepared to pay a big fee for the hire of a room there is nothing out there that we can see would be appropriate.

The July meeting was our AGM and all officers were voted in again. We had lunch after and there were 20 of us in all. A good turnout. Also we only have to order our lunch and it is there waiting for us at 1.p.m.

As mentioned the new date of our end of year Picnic in The Park will be the 18th of November. It is best to get there early for parking purposes. This is a trial date to see if having the picnic earlier solves our parking problems.

Regards Tony

Crossed the Bar 14th September 2012 Jack Thomas C43.

From the Almoner's desk

The dreary winter months seem to have dragged on and at last we have springtime to look forward to. One thing for certain though, we have the reassuring warmth of our Vindi friendship.

On our caring list are members Brian Toogood who has battled torn hand tendons and undergone surgery. Peter Foster has had a detached retina, hope all is well Peter. Vern Evans and Margaret Maddocks and Les Cook are always on our best wishes list.

At the time of writing I received news from John Hines who was in Flinders Medical Centre with heart valve problems, and the prospect of surgery. Our very best wishes are with John and his family.

On a happier note, it is delightful to report and add our congratulations to Vern and Eunice who have celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary.

The birthday list for July-September;
July – Jack, Eunice and Jan.
September – Margaret Maddocks and Bill.
Hope you all enjoyed a lovely special day.



The birthday list is still being completed so hopefully we won't miss anyone out.

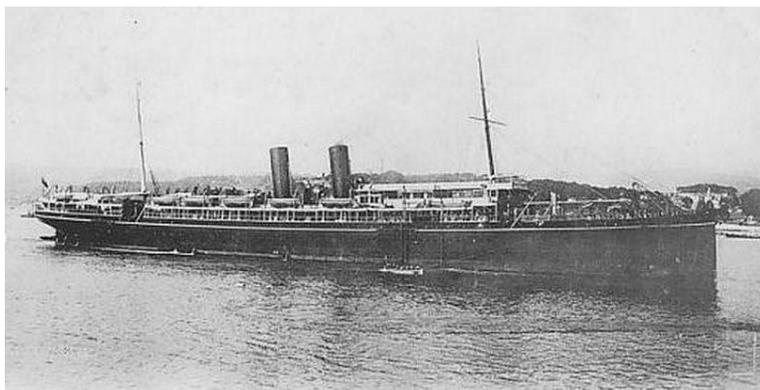
Cheers everyone
Anne Withey

SS PERSIA

As passengers were having their lunch on 30th December 1915 U-38 commanded by Max Valentiner fired a torpedo without warning striking the ship on her port bow. Shortly after the boiler exploded and within minutes she had sunk in one of the deepest parts of the Mediterranean, approximately 70 miles off the coast of Crete.

The liner had left London on 18th December 1915 and was on her way to India carrying passengers and cargo. After the explosion the passengers that were able to collect their lifebelts and made their way to the lifeboats. By the time they reached them the incline of the ship made it difficult to launch the lifeboats and passengers were washed overboard. Eventually four lifeboats were launched and made it to safety. 334 lost their lives including Commodore Hall and most of the 167 survivors were picked up by a trawler some 30 hours later.

The Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala should have been on board but it is said that he received secret information that the ship was a target for the Germans so he stayed in Marseilles and waited to take another ship. As all his personal belongings including a large quantity of jewellery, gemstones, silver and gold bullion were on board he was replaced by Inder Singh. He was a middle aged man and in good health and he was able to jump into the water and swim to a wooden raft that had fallen off the ship. He floated on the raft in freezing temperatures for three days finally being rescued by a ship that had come looking for survivors.



Another survivor was Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, an automobile pioneer from England and editor of the illustrated magazine The Car. Unfortunately his girlfriend and secretary Eleanor V Thornton who was the model for the Rolls Royce 'Spirit of Ecstasy' car radiator mascot drowned. On his return to England he read the obituary articles in the newspapers about his demise.

The Maharaja, having providentially avoided travelling on the ill fated SS Persia, sailed on the Dutch boat Prinz Due Nederland for Egypt where he boarded the Medina and arrived safely in Mumbai on January 18th 1916.

In 2003 the wreck of the Persia was found off Crete at a depth of 10,000 feet and a salvage attempt was made to find the treasure of the Maharaja. Only a few gemstones (rubies) were retrieved along with many other items from the ill fated ship including the strong room door, a chair from the dining room and even postage stamps.

One thing that was not found was the silver and gold bullion belonging to the Maharaja!!



THOMAS VERDUN EVANS (Vern)

Memoirs - Merchant Navy

(Identity No. R318597)

Date of Birth: 26 May 1926

MEDALS

1939-1945 Star (Service medal)

The Atlantic Star

The Africa Star

The France and Germany Star

The War Medal 1939-1945

BADGES OF SIGNIFICANCE

UK Merchant Seafarers Veteran's Badge

HM Armed Forces Veteran's Badge

60th Anniversary of the end of WWII Badge

MERCHANT NAVY SHIPS SERVICE

S.S. Imperial Valley

S.S. Empire Mariner (2 tours)

S.S. Obsidian (145709)

S.S. Penhale (146388)

S.S. Fort Ellice

S.S. Bellerby

I departed Wales, United Kingdom at the age of 15 and travelled to Coventry, UK and gained a job working at Morris Motor Works.

After convincing my Auntie Annie to sign the Vindi Entrance Papers (as I had run away from my mother's home), in 1943 I boarded the Vindicatrix to commence training which was held at Sharpness, UK. This training lasted 3 months.

During training: (notes of interest)

- During the 3 months of training all trainees slept in the tween decks on blankets.
- The smell of breakfast (galley smells) was really bad and the food was all steamed.
- Every morning we had to run the canal (offshoot of the Severn River) as part of our training.
- We were taught how to read the compass and had to know this before seeing Captain Angel who conducted the life boat training. I remember Captain Angel saying to me "I am going to get a cup of coffee and by the time I return, I want you to have your brain working better" – so when he left, my fellow Vindi trainees told me of all the mistakes I was making and how to rectify them. When Captain
- Angel returned, because of the help of my Vindi mates, I was able to carry out life boat training correctly.
- Mr Strang instructed us in knot tying and rope splicing.
- We went to Whale Island to undertake gunnery course. On Whale Island everything was electronic (audio visual) (shooting blanks) – and while undertaking this course I was approached by an instructor who quite bluntly said to me "You are a bloody idiot because you are shooting your own aircraft"

After completing training on the Vindi, and now an Ordinary Seaman, I spent time at my grandparent's house (Daniel and Beth) in Williamstown, Wales, waiting for a messenger (telegram) to arrive with instructions to report to Cardiff.

When reporting at Cardiff I was advised that I would be on the Imperial Valley and while visiting my Auntie Annie in Coventry, she told me that she had worked for the owner of this ship. (Small world)

After a few nights at Coventry I went to Cardiff to board the Imperial Valley (40 Merchant Navy Seamen on board).

We set sail from Cardiff to Scapa Flow, Scotland, to assemble with the convoy. This was definitely the coldest place I have ever been in my life – it was on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. We stayed in Scapa Flow until the Skipper received his orders. (While in Scapa Flow, as the Wireless Operator had relatives to visit, he was permitted to visit them, however, upon his disembarking from the Imperial Valley, he was crushed by a huge swell while climbing down the rope ladder, from the Atlantic Ocean, between the tender boat and the ship..I have a very vivid memory of this event. Needless to say the Skipper had to replace the vacancy this left in his crew). We set sail from Scapa Flow, Scotland, to Murmansk, Russia, coming out of the Atlantic Ocean towards Canada in a 10 knot convoy.

We loaded the ship with timber in Canada (St John's New Brunswick) and headed to Liverpool UK to unload. This exercise took 14½ days to travel to Canada and the same time to return to Liverpool.

After disembarking from the Imperial Valley I returned to Williamstown to wait for further orders.

One week passed, and I received my orders to go to Cardiff to board the Empire Mariner and set off for New York, USA, to load supplies which we took to the Persian Gulf. As a note of interest, while in New York Kate Smith was performing on the Hoboken ferries which travelled from New York to Hoboken continually.

From New York we travelled to Alexandria, Egypt, via the Suez Canal. While here I wandered down Sister Street (red light district) with another mate and visited the Welsh Bar. At this Bar I met a welsh elderly lady who actually owned the Bar and who had gone to Egypt as part of the white slavery trade. She looked after us with great care.

We headed back to England and then south to Trinidad/Jamaica to collect sugar to return to a company "Tate and Lyle" in London.

We boarded the Obsidian from a port just out of London and headed to Bologne, France, with a load of Victory cigarettes (... = Morse code for Victory). On the journey, the Obsidian hit a German submarine and as the Obsidian was sinking, all crew were rescued by the Canadian Army out of Bologne.

During my time in Bologne we were taken to hospital to monitor any medical injury sustained during the sinking of the Obsidian.

While in Bologne a Canadian Officer took myself and one other crew member to see "Big Bertha".

In Bologne, a memory still quite strange and vivid in my mind was the sight of german prisoners in cyclone cages cleaning up the streets of Bologne. As they finished cleaning one section, the cages were moved along for them to start on the next section.

While we were stranded in Bologne the ship "Penhale" loaded some of the crew members (including myself) and headed back to a port near London UK.

The war ended in early 1945 and I then boarded the Fort Ellice heading for Buenos Aeries first to unload our cargo and then on to Montevideo who turned the ship away as this was a neutral country.

While in Montevideo we saw the "Graff Spee" a ship which had been sunk by its' skipper during the war.

Back in London, I visited my Uncle Selwyn who lived in Slough, Berkshire, after which I boarded the Bellerby in early 1946, as a 4th Engineer.

On board the Bellerby we headed for Texas, USA, then on to Australia to participate in cargo tours (mining materials) around the circumference of Australia. While in Texas (Galveston) I recall the sounds of country music everywhere. I bought myself a Sharkskin jacket while here and also some silk handkerchiefs.

A LOVE STORY (Brief Overview)

Eunice and Vern met in early 1947 and after many letters and visits, in October 1947 Vern left the Bellerby (jumped ship after completing 18 months of a 2 year contract) while in Melbourne and made his way to Adelaide to make a life with Eunice.

While in Adelaide Vern lived with John and Monie Jenkins (Eunice's parents) in Queenstown and worked in the mooring gang with the Harbours Board.

Eunice completed her coat hand tailoring certificate at Cooks Son.

Vern and Eunice married on 29 May 1948.

After a short stay with Eunice's father, they built a temporary home at 13 Rosewater Terrace, Ottoway which was later replaced (Vern and Eunice built this premise themselves) with a 3-4 bedroom home, swimming pool and triple garage.

Vern had started a business "Rosewater Park Motors" which then became "Evans Motor Cycles" (a business owned for 20 years). Eunice and Vern then ventured into the service station business owning and operating the Amoco Service Station at Croydon and then, after 4 years, Vern ventured into the taxi truck business as an owner operator.

Eunice worked as a tailoress at Dickson Clothing and then David Jones Ltd.

In 1972 Eunice and Vern travelled extensively overseas for 11½ months, returning to host their 2 daughters (Diane and Pam) Double Wedding.

Eunice and Vern retired in 1984.

They have 4 children; Diane, Pam, Brian and Trevor :: 6 grandchildren; Greg & Scott, Kirstie & Michelle and Ryan & Jay. And are now great grandparents to Christopher, Britney, Jacob, Cooper, Bailey, Charlize, Noah and Kai with another great grandchild due in July 2012.

Vern was and is still a fanatical motorbike enthusiast participating in outfit races (side car racing) – held at Pt Pirie, Pt Noarlunga, Sellicks Beach, Gawler Air Strip, Pt Wakefield and competed in the 1953 Australian Championships held at Pt Pirie.

Vern was and is a Member of the British Working Men's Club (period of 55 years), the Port Adelaide Naval Association, the Vindicatrix Association and the Largs North RSL

Eunice was a volunteer with rehabilitation at the Philip Kennedy Rehabilitation Centre for a period of 8 years.



During their retirement, Vern and Eunice physically built a 10 berth houseboat "Aurora" with the assistance of son Brian and son in law Hartley. This vessel was 60 foot long.

After 5 years, the houseboat was sold and both enjoyed their caravanning around Australia and, in particular, their time at Mission Beach, Queensland, where they would spend 5 months each year. More recently they spend a few months at Bargara Beach, Queensland (near Bundaberg).

Eunice and Vern are avid Crows supporters and are not shy in letting people know their daughter Diane was granted the first female Life Membership of the Adelaide Football Club.

Daughter Pam was an Australian Gymnastic Champion for many years and during her career Eunice & Vern hosted many many fundraising events to raise monies to send Pam to the Yugoslavia World Games. They succeeded in their fundraising efforts – which included some performances by Vern dressed as a lady (wig, long dress and the makeup) with 2 other performers – They were called The Debs and mimed to The Andrews Sisters songs.

Vern marches proudly every Anzac Day with his son Trevor who has served as a regular soldier with the Australian Army.

Vern gained Australian Citizenship on 31st May 1974.

What is a Senior Citizen?

A Senior Citizen is one who was here before; the pill, television, frozen foods, contact lenses, credit cards.....and before man walked on the moon.

For us, "Time Sharing" meant togetherness, not holiday homes, and "chip" meant a piece of wood.

"Hardware" meant nuts and bolts, and "software" wasn't even a word.

We got married first, then lived together, and thought cleavage was something that butchers did.

A "stud" was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and "going all the way" meant staying on a double decker to the bus depot.

We thought that "fast food" was what you ate at lent; a "Big Mac" was an oversized raincoat and "crumpet" we had for tea.

In our day; "grass" was mown, "pot" was something you cooked in, "coke" was kept in the coal house and a "joint" was cooked on Sunday's!

We are today's Senior Citizens. A hardy bunch when you think how the world has changed.

LETTERS FROM A SAILOR

My story starts in 1958. One of my first ports of call on the Brittany in August 1958 was Salvadore – located on a small roughly triangular peninsular that separates Todos-os-Santos Bay from the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Then Rio De Janeiro – nicknamed Cilade Marvelous City and finally Porto Allegro – which was founded in 1772 by immigrants from Azores, Portugal. It has a long coastline on the Guaiba Lake.

1959 just to mention a few trips – The Beaverdell – May 1959 – first stop Dalhouse which is right out in the Gulf of St Lawrence opposite Newfoundland. It lies right down a sort of inlet touching the North Corner of New Brunswick. The Gulf flows into the Atlantic Ocean through the outlets of Strait of Belle Isle, Cabot Strait and the Strait of Canso. Since the construction of the Canso Causeway in 1955 the Strait of Canso does not permit free flowing exchange of waters between the Gulf and the Atlantic. 1959 was also remembered for listening to the fight on the radio at sea between Ingemare Johanson and Floyd Patterson, where Floyd was floored many a time and finally beaten by Johanson. On shore we also watched a few films, Edward G Robinson in "Vice Squad", "Golden Age of Comedy" and Kirk Douglas in the "Indian Fighter". On Radio CJAD 800 on the dial was a Merchant Navy talent show where any ship could send a competitor. I think somewhere along the way visits to the YMCA were in order for a swim in the "nuddy".

Then the Blomfontein Castle to Cape Town/ Port Elizabeth and Durban. The vessel was 18,400 tons with 300 crew and on that trip we had 600 passengers with 10,000 tons of cargo. Durban was a most interesting place to stay and a few memorable moments there. A visit to the Catholic Mission was on the cards most nights with bingo downstairs and jazz playing upstairs. Purchases on that trip to bring home included ½ a gallon of Invalid Port and a gallon of Brandy. In Port Elizabeth "Shane" was playing at the picture house.

The Tintagel Castle took us to Hamburg, Rotterdam and Antwerp.

December 1959 I was on the Tremeadow, docked in Gladstone – Dock 12 Liverpool for 12 days docked opposite Cunard's "Coronia" the magnificent Green Goddess. Not much to do so heard a fair amount of The Archers on the radio. After trying to make the five pounds left to get me home to Kent for Christmas for two days we eventually left on the 31st of December for Swansea.

Some of the last few ships sailed on were Tasmania Star to Wellington, Napier Star, Hobart Star and New Zealand Star although in July 1960 there was a strike and we were stuck in North Shields for a while. Eventually all was well for the September wedding with both bride and groom present.

I haven't been on any of these ships or travelled to the countries mentioned. My very brief report (and hopefully a somewhat accurate one) has been taken from snippets from the 200 hundred or so "love" letters sent by a sailor of the world to an innocent English Rose in London. For 2 years I also "Sailed" and found out all sorts of things about places I had never dreamt of. The letters were sent at least three at a time from every port my Beau travelled to. The "juicy" bits have been purposely omitted.

Who would have thought all those years ago I would be writing this down for publication to be read by a few "old" mariners, hopefully bringing back some of their own memories.

Anne Iles.

CHAPTER FIVE

Disaster at the Shipping Federation

Tom and I never forgot our plan to join the Merchant Navy and embark on our great adventure to become hunters in India, and follow in the footsteps of our hero Jim Corbett. Time passed slowly and our sixteenth birthdays came and went but finally the big day arrived and after several boring jobs as a Van Boy, a Labourer, a Warehouseman and a Post Office Telegram Boy in and around Bermondsey, I met up with Tom and we set off to follow our dream, putting the first part of the plan into action and ready for anything that may happen to us along the way.

And so it was that we both walked excitedly over Tower Bridge towards Leadenhall Street hardly speaking a word to each other – each with his own thoughts and focusing only on finding the Shipping Federation and joining the Merchant Navy. We made our way through the bustling City full of men in their uniforms of dark suits marching mechanically along the pavements in time to the swinging of their umbrellas. It was like a scene from a bizarre nightmare – nothing could be further from the kind of life Tom and I were looking for. We reached number 52 Leadenhall Street. It was meant to be an impressive building but to us it was just another boring old monument. Tom and I walked straight in through the wide doors and up to the reception desk where an old sombre-suited man watched us approach with a notebook and pen held closely to his chest as he waited for something to do. He came alive as we reached his desk and stood up. ‘We’ve come to join the Merchant Navy,’ said Tom confidently but our important request seemed to make no impression on him. ‘Have you got an appointment?’ he asked sternly. ‘No, not yet,’ said Tom searching through his trouser pockets, not quite sure what an appointment was. ‘How old are you both?’ asked the old man, looking suitably officious as he spoke. ‘Sixteen!’ we both said together proudly. And the man glared into our eyes as if trying to catch us out – and getting no response said, ‘Wait here’ and walked off disappearing into one of the many offices along the corridor.

After what seemed a lifetime he came back clutching two important-looking forms in one hand and blank sheets of paper in the other. He handed each of us a form and several blank sheets of paper and turned smartly on his heels and ordered us to follow him. Taking us to an upper floor along a narrow corridor with rooms on each side Tom was placed in one of the rooms and I was next door to him, where we were told to complete the application form and intelligence test attached to it and warned there was to be no talking. In my room was a small table and chair where I sat down and began filling in the form. The old man left our doors slightly ajar in order to keep an eye on us. The test was not difficult and I completed it quickly and now only needed to complete mum and dad’s details. After a few minutes I could hear the sound of shouting coming from Tom’s room. It was Tom’s voice – he was seriously annoyed about something. I knew that he had a bad temper, which had often got him into trouble. There was now the sound of a chair falling over and more raised voices, but after a while it quieted down and the old man came into my room looking flustered and angry. I had no idea what had happened. He looked at my form, which I had not quite finished completing saying, ‘I want you to finish filling in the whole form straight away’ he said angrily. ‘Remember, all of the questions must be answered.’ I said nothing and carried on with what I was doing and he walked off leaving me alone. I now had a good idea why Tom was being stroppy, he hated tests and had probably argued about having to complete this one. For the moment all was quiet next door and through the gap in my door I could see the old man was now restless and upset, sitting angrily on a squeaky chair in the corridor keeping a careful eye on Tom.

I had now completed all the forms but now could hear the sound again of Tom swearing and the old man shouting, someone else also got involved and was trying to calm things down and then the second man told Tom to leave the building immediately and then more shouting. I got up and peeped round the corner of the door in time to see Tom being frog-marched out of his room and along the corridor and was thrown out onto the street. I could hear him, still shouting from the street below. A few minutes later the old man came into my room, ‘Have you completed the papers?’ he demanded his once smart tie now skew-whiff and his hair ruffled. ‘Yes,’ I said and handed them over. ‘Good – you can go now,’ he said grumpily and I left the building to find Tom waiting outside looking very sorry for himself. ‘What happened Tom?’ I asked in dismay. ‘The man’s an idiot,’ he said, ‘Why do I need to answer stupid questions like ‘How much would I have to pay if I bought two pairs of socks at four shillings and sixpence a pair!’ The question clearly annoyed him – but I couldn’t see why. ‘But Tom, it was only a test, everyone has to take it’ ‘And I’m not an idiot and won’t take that kind of treatment,’ said Tom, still fuming.

We walked gloomily back over Tower Bridge towards Bermondsey – I was devastated. How could he let it happen? I looked at Tom and could see he was very upset with himself too. We had so looked forward to our great adventure and now all our dreams had been shattered. Tom had blown it, the Merchant Navy didn’t want anything to do with him, we can rule out any chance of getting a ship to India. All Tom’s planning had been in vain.

Tom went off the rails a bit after that, he seemed lost, and our relationship changed. He wanted more and more to be alone and we drifted apart. Not long afterwards I heard that he had moved away with his family to another part of London and after that I was told he had joined the British Army and had been posted to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. But my own fate was not to end up in disappointment as many teenagers' lives had done. I did feel bitterness and emptiness about what had happened but a few weeks later a miracle occurred – or it seemed like a miracle to me because it was so unexpected. It all came about one morning while I was sitting at home having breakfast, eating jam on toast, when mum casually mentioned that a letter had arrived from the Shipping Federation informing me that I had been accepted for training at the Merchant Navy Training School 'Vindicatrix.'

I can't describe how I felt but it was a mixture of elation and unease and the letter had come out of the blue. Tom had caused a lot of trouble at the Shipping Federation office and had been thrown out, but they hadn't held what happened against me, and now I had another chance to join up. The letter stated I needed two referees and the consent of my parents. My mind was in a whirl – a new door to adventure had opened up, but this time without Tom which made me sad. Could it be true? I asked myself will I really, at last, be leaving this awful place, but my joy was short-lived. 'I suppose you won't want to go to sea now that Tom has gone away.' said mum coldly. I was horrified to hear her say this, 'of course I do mum – I really do. I want to go to sea' 'well you can't,' she said, 'I have already spoken to your father and he will not sign the papers – and I don't think you should go either.' I was shocked that it had already been decided. 'But why mum, why?' I pleaded, trying to hide the tears – 'I do want to go – I do, I do, honest mum.' She was quiet for a while and looked at me long and hard, possibly remembering her brother had been an officer in the Merchant Navy and going to sea might do me some good – I had always been a problem to them and the sea might straighten me out. 'I will speak to your father again' she said, 'Now eat your toast.' To this day I don't know why dad was so against me joining the Merchant Navy, but mum did speak to him and he did change his mind – I was so grateful to mum for that and the acceptance forms were returned with the two referees to the Merchant Navy Office. No words could describe my feelings of exhilaration at that time.

Colin Crawley

BUCKLERS HARD

On the banks of the Beaulieu River in the heart of the New Forest sits the small village of Bucklers Hard; originally called Montagu Town. The 2nd Duke of Montagu created the town to be used as a free port for trade with the West Indies but as the French took over the islands this did not happen. Instead it became a thriving ship building village.

With an abundance of timber; oak, elm and beech from the New Forest, many famous ships were built there in the late 18th and early 19th centuries under the guidance of Master shipbuilder Henry Adams. Of these marvellous wooden ships HMS Agamemnon, HMS Swiftsure and HMS Euryalus were to be part of Nelson's fleet that fought in the Battle of Trafalgar.

Approximately two thousand oak trees were used to build The Agamemnon and she carried sixty four guns. As a 'ship-of-the-line' she saw action in The Saints, Copenhagen, The Battle of Santo Domingo as well as The Battle of Trafalgar. A 'ship-of-the-line' was a term given to warships built between the 17th to mid 19th century to take part in battle where opposing ships would face each other in a line to fire their guns at maximum firepower broadside on, thus giving victory to the ships with the most powerful guns.

From 1793 to 1796 the Agamemnon was commanded by Horatio Nelson and was believed to be his favourite ship. Whilst in this command at the Siege of Calvi in 1794 he lost the sight of his right eye when an enemy shell hit a battlement sending stones, splinters and debris into his face and chest during a shore action. During this period of time whilst in the port of Naples he met Lady Hamilton.

Agamemnon ended her days in Uruguay when she was holed by one of her own anchors; she slowly sank without any loss of life. The wreck site has been found and excavation is taking place.

In WWII the village played an important role in the D-Day landings by making segments of the Mulberry Harbour. These were made in secret in various parts of Britain and towed to the Normandy coast for assembly. These artificial harbours were flexible steel roadways that floated on concrete or steel pontoons and assisted in the moving of troops and transport. The village was also used for the building of motor torpedo boats and the Beaulieu River was a base for hundreds of landing craft for the Normandy invasion, Operation Overlord.

Sir Francis Chichester, the first man to circumnavigate the globe held a mooring for his yacht Gipsy Moth IV at Bucklers Hard, returning to the village after his record breaking feat.