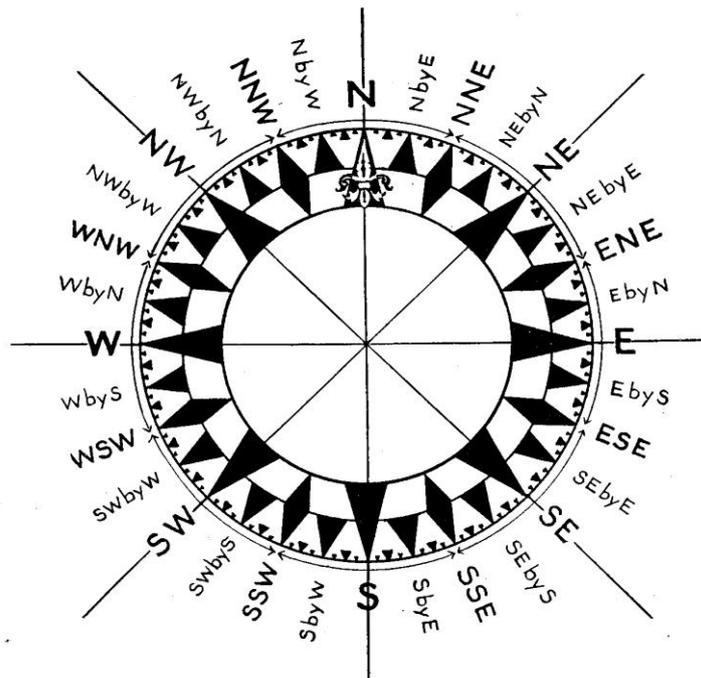




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Editor's Note

At the January meeting Jan Hill suggested drawing up a list of prompts that could be completed by our members in an endeavour to help give an insight to their lives. Just to show how well this worked Roy read the list and then wrote a story. Hopefully this will do the same for you.

Next Meeting Sunday 7th April 2013

Mick & Jill Surfield

Skipper's Log

Our last meeting was attended by almost everyone in January. Well done! As this was a long weekend the turnout was bigger than I expected. We had a great time as usual, followed by lunch where all but two of the Members attended.

The Port Dock venue is only a temporary arrangement and we are still on the lookout for a more permanent place as with the premises being sold we may be there for a limited time anyway.

Other places have been kindly suggested by some members but so far have not proved to be as accommodating as the Port Dock. So until further notice that is where we will stay.

Mike Day contacted me the other day and sends his regards to one and all. He is shortly off to the UK again for a holiday and we wish him well.

The next meeting will be on Sunday the 7th of April the change being because of the Easter weekend in March. Look forward to seeing you all there.



Tony

Wishing you all a Happy Easter



From the Almoner's desk

I am pleased to report that Margaret Maddocks has happily settled in her new home at Resthaven, Mitcham. Margaret is in low care and is able to get out and about with John and family.

Les Cook is undergoing chemotherapy treatment and as always is cheerful and uncomplaining. You are a champion Les.

Anne and Jack Nicholls are taking an around Australia cruise in March. Whilst aboard they will be celebrating Anne's Birthday and their 64th wedding anniversary, we add our hearty congratulations.



January- Val McCabe

February- Tom Billingsley and Ken Dunlevy.

March – Anne Iles, Brian Toogood, George Hutchings and Anne Nicholls.

Hope you all enjoyed a great day.

Winston's Board quotation

Learn to appreciate what you have before time makes you appreciate what you had.

Just a thought...The last accurate weather forecast was when God told Noah it was going to rain.

Cheers for now and stay well.

Anne Withey

MIDDLESBROUGH TRANSPORTER BRIDGE

The transporter bridge was built in 1911 and spans the River Tees, it is capable of carrying cars and pedestrians in a cradle that is suspended beneath the main span of the bridge and the trip takes 2½ minutes. Its length of 259.3 metres makes it the longest remaining transportable bridge in the world. The passenger gondola runs on a wheel and rail system and is suspended by 30inch steel cables approximately 48 metres above the Tees.

With the advent of the coal trade and the growth in the local population in the 1830's a considerable increase in traffic arose between the towns of Newport and Middlesbrough. To meet this need a ferry was used. Up to 1856 the ferry continued as a private enterprise, the recently incorporated Middlesbrough Corporation established a public wharf and passage over the river.

Tenders for a steam ferryboat were obtained and in 1862 the *Progress*, a shallow draft wooden ferry with a carrying capacity of 139 passengers made the first crossing.

In 1872 Charles Smith of the Hartlepool Ironworks put forward a scheme to the council for a transporter or aerial bridge, he is credited the originator of this kind of bridge. But at a cost of £31,162.00 the council decided in 1874 to commission another ferry, the *Perserverance*, for the sum of £2,975.00. As well as carrying more passengers it could also carry horse and carts.

A larger ferry the *Hugh Bell* was built in 1884 at a cost of £6,050.00 and was licenced to carry 857 passengers.

In 1888 a tender was accepted by the council of £5,000.00 for the steam ferry *Erimus* which could carry 927 passengers.

In 1901 reconsideration was given to building a transporter bridge but it would be another five years before the idea was progressed in Middlesbrough. This type of bridge was already in operation abroad. On the 9th June 1909 a contract was signed for the sum of £68,026. 6s.8d for the construction of a transporter bridge, that was to be completed in 27 months. The first foundation stones were laid on the 3rd August 1910 and the bridge was opened on 17th October 1911. The final cost of the bridge was £84,000.00 and it was completed 42 years after Charles Smith submitted his first design of a transportable bridge.

The giant blue steel structure joins Port Clarence to Middlesbrough and 100 years later the bridge is still operating daily crossing the River Tees.



In the television series *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* the bridge was the focal point of the series being dismantled and sold to an American millionaire and erected across the Grand Canyon for easy access to the casino. Luckily for the residents of Teesside it was only a TV show and the bridge remains where it is.

Another funny story was that of 'Carry On' star Terry Scott, when in 1974 whilst on his way to a club across the Tees the comedian paid his transporter toll and drove his Jaguar off of the approach road where it was caught by the safety net saving him from the icy water below. Next day on returning to the mishap he was photographed holding his hand to his head.

Book Review

'ONE FALSE MOVE' Author Robert Macklin, published 2012, tells of four highly decorated Australian mine disposal officers in WWII.

Leon Goldsworthy of Perth specialized in underwater defusing.
George Goss of Adelaide
Stuart Mould of Sydney
Hugh Syme of Melbourne

They sailed for England in 1940 under a British admiralty scheme for Royal Navy Reserve Volunteers. Eventually they trained at HMS VERNON Torpedo and Mining School shore based in Portsmouth.

Initially they worked during the blitz all over England and Wales. Later their work extended to docks, defusing mines washed up on beaches and latterly European ports and in the Pacific theatre.

Travel to assignments was made in the comfort of Humber saloons, accompanied by naval ratings that carried equipment and generally shared in the dangers at hand.

They disarmed mines that were capable of levelling city blocks, at times working in extremely difficult situations, all the while trying to keep ahead of the constantly changing brilliant German technology of booby traps, intricately timed mechanisms, acoustic and even light sensitive devices.

The men learned firsthand the effects of close proximity blast from mines on land, at least there could be chances measured in seconds to dash for protective cover, but working in heavy diving suits was a very different story.

There are many interesting characters mentioned in the book, these volunteers came from all walks of life, and their exploits make riveting reading.

Many ships were involved in operations, in particular I thought at least three warranted research.

TRAINING SHIPS involved with mine disposal.

HMS WORCESTER - There is an extensive exhibition of her work in Chatham Dockyard in Kent.

HMS MERCURY

HMV ESMERALDA - A 70 ton yacht donated to the Royal Navy at the outbreak of war by the COLEMAN family of mustard manufacture fame. Did she continue service in The Royal Navy or return to the Coleman family?

I hope I have managed to whet your appetite to read this enthralling book that gives due recognition of men whose epic stories have largely remained untold.

So settle in your favourite armchair, turn off the computer and TV and marvel at mans unceasing endeavour to beat the odds.

Anne Withey

Where to put a ship when not in use? The River Fal, in Cornwall comes to mind. I can remember crossing the river on the King Harry Ferry while on holiday and marveling at the ships at anchor.

Because of the depth of the river large ships can shelter from the weather with a skeleton crew to wait for a new cargo to be found.

King Harry Ferry can be seen in the bottom right hand corner; this is a newer one than I crossed on.



Picture from Mail on line

ALMANZORA

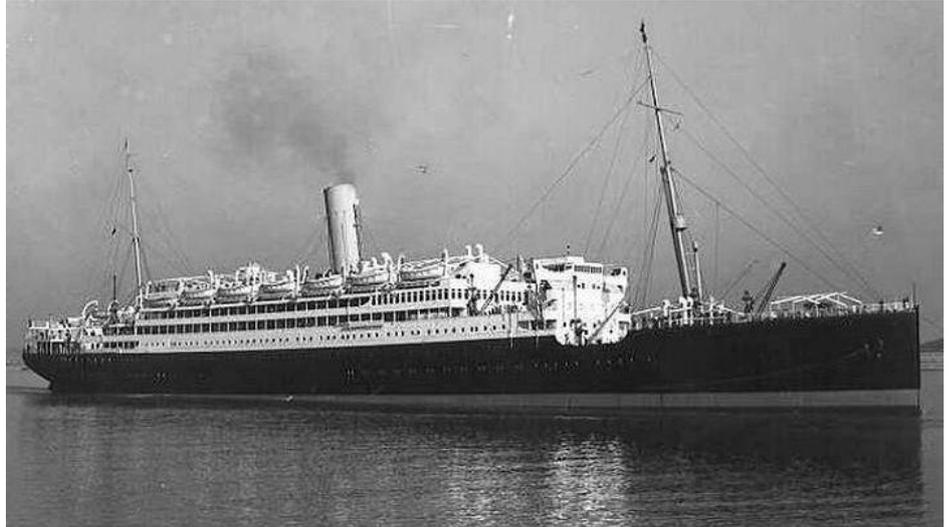
The *Almanzora* was built for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co by Harland & Wolff, Belfast and launched on 19th November 1914. She was 16,034 gross tons and 590ft long, with two masts, one funnel and twin screw with a speed of 15knots. There was to be accommodation for 1,390 passengers (1st, 2nd & 3rd class) but her completion was as an Armed Merchant Cruiser for the 10th Cruiser Squadron.

In 1919 she was reconditioned to 15,551 tons and began her commercial services on 9th January 1920 from Southampton to La Plata, Argentina.

She was requisitioned for WWII where she was mainly used as a troopship. When the White Star liner *Georgic* was bombed in the Suez in 1941 she assisted in the rescue of survivors

In July 1943 *Almanzora* took part in the Sicily Landings and was given the honour of serving as the Commodore Ship of Convoy MWF-37.

From 1945 she was used as a government emigration ship and was finally laid up at Cowes, Isle of Wight in 1947. She was scrapped in 1948 at Blyth.



THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

This name has been applied to the operations attending the delivery to North Russia from Britain during the years 1941-45 of over 3,500,000 tons of weapons and war material, including aircraft, guns, tanks, vehicles, fuel oil and aviation spirit. These were delivered in more than 40 separate convoys, which followed the Arctic route around the North Cape, often proceeding as far north as Bear Island.

This has been described as one of the great sea operations of the Second World War. Without the important and timely aid thus afforded, the Soviet forces would have been much handicapped in their resistance to the German invasion. Almost every convoy had to fight its way in vile weather against unremitting attacks by enemy submarines, surface vessels and aircraft and the menace of the ice. To escort these convoys was one of the commitments of the Home Fleet under the successive commands of Sir John Tovey, Sir Bruce Fraser and Sir Henry Moore.

Altogether 792 supply ships sailed outward in convoy under British naval command and almost entirely under British naval escort. Of these ships, 62 were lost, equivalent to a percentage of 7.8; while out of 739 vessels sailing homeward, 28 were lost, corresponding to 3.8 per cent. This may be contrasted with a loss of under one percent on Atlantic convoys. Warships sunk while engaged in protecting these convoys included the cruisers HMS Edinburgh and Trinidad, six destroyers, a submarine, two sloops, two frigates, three corvettes, two fleet minesweepers and two fleet oilers. Few men survived immersion in the icy sea, and it is not surprising that the lives of 2,055 naval officers and men and 829 mercantile personnel were lost.

It was during an abortive attempt to intercept one of these convoys that the German battleship Scharnhorst was sunk in December 1943. Too late, she found that she had run into a trap, her attention being occupied by cruisers and destroyers until HMS Duke of York, a battleship of greater power arrived and engaged her.

In the following year a larger enemy battleship, the Tirpitz, which had also been despatched to Northern Norway to operate against the Arctic convoys, was first disabled by midget submarines and then destroyed by bombing.

From the New Book of Knowledge

Member Story by Roy Hill

I joined the Vindicatrix on 2nd August 1955 after growing up in Lowestoft. I was in the Merchant Navy for a total of 8 years in my working life and had many interesting trips in my career.



**Roy, Vindi Boy
August 1955**

One eventful experience was in March 1957 when I signed on to the Loch Ryan at the KGV Docks, London. It was to be my seventh trip and my first as an S.O.S. When I first saw the Loch Ryan I had a moment of doubt, looking at her I could see she would be a hard working ship. She was rigged to take heavy lifts with massive jumbos and heavy duty block and tackle gear which meant a lot of back breaking work. I signed on anyway, mainly because her destination appealed to me, visiting ports such as Kingston, Panama, Long Beach San Francisco, Vancouver and Vancouver Island.

The outward bound trip was uneventful and on schedule progressing at a steady 16 knots. She was a happy ship with most of the crew coming from London and southern parts of England. There was quite a bit of musical talent amongst the crew; in the evenings while sitting on the aft hatches we would have a sing-along. The Loch Ryan was built to take 20 passengers with midships accommodation so on these musical evenings on deck the passengers enjoyed free entertainment. The stopover we had in Jamaica is where I had my first experience with rum (Appleton's) mixed with prune juice, terrific! but very potent.



S S Loch Ryan

The Panama Canal was very interesting especially when you were on the wheel steering the ship, this gave you a huge perspective of the canal.

At Long Beach San Francisco we berthed close to Fishermans Wharf which is where they ferried the prisoners to Alcatraz it was still operational then and I actually witnessed this happening on a couple of occasions. Then it was on our way to Vancouver where we were berthed close to the Stanley National Park. We were there for a couple of days and had the opportunity to visit the park and walk over the Capalano Canyon by the rope suspension bridge we also saw authentic Indian Totem Poles.

Next stop Port Alberni right in the centre of Vancouver Island. What a beautiful scenic voyage, sailing up the river watching the lumberjacks skilfully running across tree logs and steering them to their destination, the saw mills. To me it depicted what Canada was all about, colour, atmosphere, the smell of timber and rapidly flowing rivers. It was here that we loaded many tons of timber to bring back to the UK and the continent. We left Port Alberni and set sail for Caracas Venezuela where we loaded drums of oil for deck cargo, from here to Plymouth where we were to disembark our passengers and take on board personal from the Royal Mail Head Office for a trip to the continent.

Unfortunately things didn't go to plan as we left Plymouth, when we were entering the Plymouth sound there was a dense fog developing with zero visibility. Our engines were cut to dead slow ahead and extra lookouts were posted. We even had one man on the fo'castle banging a metal plate with the ships foghorn continually blasting. The sea was like a mill pond, I was on deck on the port side when out of the fog came a ship, it was the Hudson Firth travelling at full speed and ramming us between the second and third hold. There was a horrendous crunching noise as she crashed her bow right into us. After a few moments the Hudson Firth reversed out of the Loch Ryan and that's when she took a huge list to port.

The captain then ordered six short and one long blast on the ships funnel and everyone ran to their boat stations where the lifeboats were swung out ready for launching. Two tugs were alerted and were with us in a short space of time. They were kept on standby whilst we limped back to Plymouth under our own steam. When we arrived there we tied up in front of HMS Eagle in the Naval Dockyard.



HMS Eagle

The damage was assessed by naval divers who discovered that the collision had caused a hole that was big enough for a double decker bus to drive through!. It took ten days for the divers to weld a plate on our side to make us more or less seaworthy.

Whilst we were in Plymouth we made the most of shore leave. Each day we would go to Union Street to visit a club that I can't recall the name of; it was however frequented by the matelots as obviously the town was full of them. On the way back to our ship we always bought a Tiddly Oggie from a caravan next to the dockyard. All in all it was an interesting stay. We eventually left Plymouth and headed for Southampton at half speed. On arrival the Loch Ryan went into dry dock and we were paid off !.



Vindi Boys August 1955

A Tiddly Oggie

A pastie is called an "Oggie", in Cornwall. The miners' wives made a simple pastry envelope; this would keep the food inside clean while the men worked in the mines. In Devonport and Plymouth, the sailors called them Tiddly Oggies. Cornish rugby supporters would chant (Oggie, oggie, oggie, oi, oi, oi) when cheering at their teams games. Some people think this is where the Australian sporting chant (Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi) came from.

MY FIRST CAR

I bought my first car at seventeen years of age through a girl friend whose uncle and aunt wanted to purchase a newer car. The car in question was a 1936 Austin 10 coloured black and nineteen years old. It was in very good condition and you could smell the leather interior. The uncle asked if I could drive to which, tongue in cheek, replied of course!! My white fib ensured him that I could take it away. Which, I did.

So I put in the spade key, pressed the starter, put it in first and slowly drove down the road, then into second and that is how my driving continued 1st and 2nd gear everywhere. I was just too scared to use 3rd and 4th. This lasted probably a couple of months or more until I worked up the courage to advance to 3rd gear then eventually 4th gear. I was tired of being referred to as the two gear kid.

We lived on a main road with no driveway, no rear access or garage so everyone who owned a car had to leave side lights on if you wished to park over night on the main road. Every morning the battery a 6 volt was all but dead flat so I had to crank up the engine with the handle. The side road opposite had lots of space and sloped towards us which was an advantage because if all else failed to start the car I could always bump start it. The battery was a constant pain as the charging gauge would only put about 2 volts in even at top speed of 45MPH. I did try fitting a spotlight, wrong move as when I switched on the gauge would register minus 5 volts. Trying to convert it to 12 volts also proved impossible, at that time.

On inspection of the underside I noticed that the king pin was half out and had to be tapped back in. It worked out that every 5 miles it had to be tapped back in. I only ever once forgot to check it and after travelling further than 5 miles the wheel collapsed and the wishbone parted. Those were the fun days.

Coming back late one night I parked the car about fifty to eighty yards up the road opposite and went to bed. Awaking next morning I looked out and saw the car on the corner as it had taken all night to creep down the kerb. Had I slept in the car would have crossed the main road. That day the gods were looking out for me.

Having a car I was always invited to parties free of the entrance fee of one pound. My duty was to round up the girls and drive them to and from to the party. One of those girls was Anne my Wife to be, guess things happen for a reason.

Going back to when I first purchased the car the Suez crisis was on, petrol went on ration and the government decreed that learner drivers could drive for that six months without supervision. After the crisis I decided to go for my license and purchased four driving lessons with a school of motoring.

My instructor drove an almost new Hillman Minx and inquired if I had driven before, my answer being “not much really” and that I could only afford four lessons. It became apparent to the instructor after four lessons that he should make application for a driving test. He therefore proceeded to coach me on what to do and look out for during the test, which I practiced and followed his advice to the letter. He stated that my chances of passing were good providing I didn't get one inspector in particular who generally did not pass many on the first test. As it happened on the day of the test I did get allocated the very strict inspector.

Once seated I followed my instructor's advice by banging my elbow against the door to check it was closed, rattled the gear stick to prove it was out of gear, adjust the rear view mirror and check the side mirrors. What is the number plate of the third car on your left, said the inspector, so I promptly gave him the fifth car further on then the third car. Pen in hand he marked his sheet on a board with a cross. The car we were in was parked on the right side of the road. Move off when ready, said the inspector and head for the main street of Bromley. Looking back to my left indicating and moving slowly out to the crown of the road I drove down the road (another cross) then into the main street where I stopped just in time at a Zebra crossing to let pedestrians cross (another cross on the sheet). I thought what did I do wrong this time? It seemed every move I made and every corner I turned I got the big cross.

I was then instructed to park halfway up a hill and reverse in between parked cars (another cross). Now move up the hill without rolling back he said. This I did but still got a big cross. Finally we came to the emergency stop. I thought – right - I will be more than ready. Just before changing to fourth gear he tapped the dashboard. I hit the brake that hard he shot forward. I thought to myself that will teach you to put crosses on my check sheet! I will not do that again he said so just drive back to the test centre. By this time I was that peeved I didn't care as I had obviously failed. Once parked he got out without saying a word, walked ten or so paces up the path stopped turned around looked me in the eye and said well you've passed.

My instructor was so pleased he gave me the compliment of being the best driver that he had to teach with only four lessons to boot. I didn't have the heart to inform him that I had been practicing for almost two years.

I still miss that old car. I had to sell it for five pounds because the cam follower had gone and needed replacing. I had no idea what a cam follower was then and still don't know today. It was well loved and cherished. My only wish is that it has been preserved somewhere by someone or in a museum even. Real car lovers never forget their first car.

Tony Iles

The Farmers Donkey

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a dry well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey.

He invited all his neighbours to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then to everyone's amazement he quieted down.

A few shovel loads later the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back the donkey was doing something amazing, he would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbours continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal he would shake it off and step up. Pretty soon everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off.

Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping and never giving up. Shake it off and take a step up.

Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

Free your heart from hatred – forgive

Free your mind from worries – most never happen

Live simply and appreciate what you have

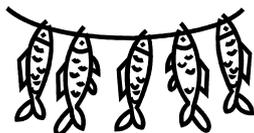
Give more

Expect less

Now – enough of that crap..The donkey came back later and bit the farmer who had tried to bury him. The gash from the bite got infected and the farmer eventually died in agony from septic shock.

Moral from today's lesson:

When you do something wrong and try to cover your ass, it always comes back to bite you.



I am always hearing you Vindi boys talking of the Sea pie that was dished up while you were at the training ship but nobody seems to know what was in it.

This is my fish pie recipe that I make for my Vindi Boy, just halve the amounts for a smaller pie.

6 Large potatoes cooked
3 Hard boiled eggs
½ Bunch fresh spinach cooked
1 Large onion chopped
1 Large carrot chopped
1 Cup cream
Juice of a lemon
1 Teaspoon English mustard

6 or more spring onions chopped
Chopped parsley
1 Cup grated cheddar cheese
500grms Barramundi cut into small pieces
1 Atlantic salmon portion cut into small pieces
1 Dozen cooked prawns
Grated nutmeg - optional
Salt and pepper to taste

Fry the onion and carrot in a little olive oil for a few minutes until soft, add cream and bring to the boil. Take off the heat and stir in the cheese, mustard, spring onions, parsley and lemon juice.

Combine the fish, prawns, drained spinach, chopped egg and creamy sauce and put into a large ovenproof dish. Mash the potatoes with a little olive oil, salt and pepper and if liked nutmeg. Spread on top of fish mixture and dot with butter. Bake in a hot oven (200°) for 30 minutes, or until potatoes are lightly browned. Serve with your choice of vegetables.

Jill