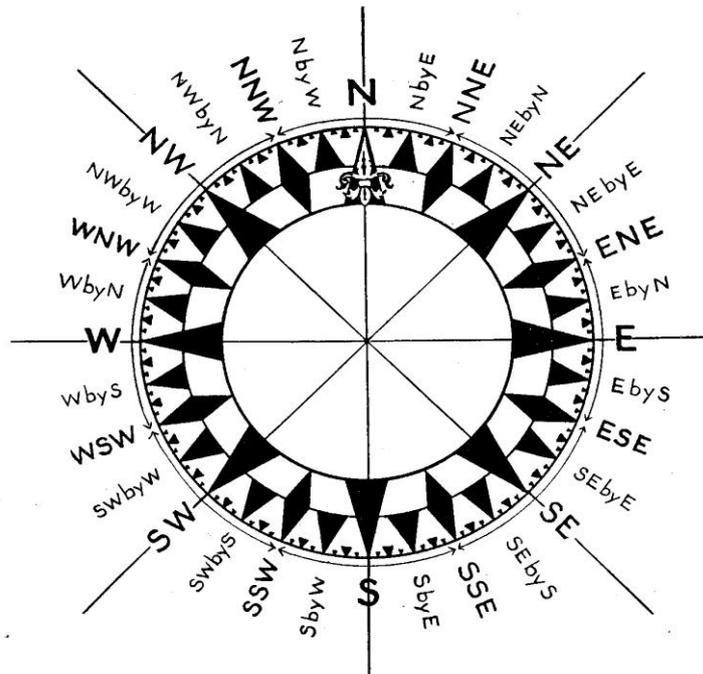


JANUARY 2016

ISSUE 82



SKIPPER/TREASURER:
SECRETARY/SOCIAL ORGANISER:
SUPPLY OFFICER:
ALMONER:
P.R.O.:
NEWSLETTER:
EMAIL:
WEBSITE:

TONY ILES 8523 1655
ANNE ILES 8523 1655
KEITH WITHEY 8278 7917
ANNE WITHEY 8278 7917
WINSTON KAY 8248 1900
MICK & JILL SURFIELD 8381 4500
surfield@adam.com.au
sa.vindicatrix.com

Editors Note



Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

It would be really good if we could have some input to our newsletters as we are sure there must be something you could tell. You may just open the envelope and read the contents but we scratch our heads and wonder what we can put in it.

Next meeting

Sunday April 3rd 2016

Skippers Log

Welcome to Vindicatrix Members and their faithful, hardworking, patient and loving wives and partners.

Just to remind you, all those who attended our last meeting will be aware that the Port Dock Hotel has now changed ownership once again and is closed for more renovations. We have been told the premises will not be open again until after April.

So there we were, all dressed up and no-where to go. It was very unfortunate that the previous owners omitted to let us know about this, especially as we spoke with the Manager just a few weeks before Christmas when we confirmed our booking for January.

Barbara and Peter suggested we ring the Boathouse Hotel to accommodate us at short notice, which they did with a table for 20 people. It turned out we had a great meal with a splendid salad bar to choose from. I had booked for the March meeting but as that falls on Easter Sunday we have changed the date of the next meeting to Sunday April 3rd.

For those of you who have not been to the Boathouse Hotel, it lies along Victoria Road, Osborne. So that is over the swing bridge to the end turning left into Victoria Road. Drive a couple of kilometres and it is on the left, in fact I think it is the only hotel along that road. We will meet at 11.a.m. for our meeting. Meals do not start until 11.30 which I am sure will suit us all just fine. See you there.

I would like to pay tribute to John Tamkin who sadly passed away. He was a fine member of our group and attended meetings regularly. He was a good friend to all and we will miss him greatly. Thank you to those of you who managed to attend his funeral. RIP Vindi Boy John.

Regards, Tony

PS I start my diet the day after the 3rd of April.

From the Almoner's desk

Our year ended on a sombre note with the passing of Vindi member John Tamkin in Resthaven at Mitcham. John trained at the Vindi as a deckie in 1946. He was a dedicated member and attended our meetings and social functions with his partner Margaret until health problems for them both prevented them from participating. A condolence card was forwarded to Margaret at Resthaven and Vindi members attended the funeral service. We will keep in touch with Margaret. Vale John.

Our thoughts too have been with Jill and Mick on the passing of Jill's mother in England, which necessitated a trip over there in November.

So ended the year 2015.

On a lighter note birthday's to be celebrated are:
Val on January 28th.
Tom Billingsley and Ken Dunlevey celebrate in February.
Happy Birthday everyone.



Just a thought
Getting up in the morning is simply a question of mind over mattress.
The amount of sleep required by the average person is just five minutes more.
Anne Withey

SS EASTLAND

The *SS Eastland* was constructed in 1902 for the Michigan Steamship Company, built specifically for the route between South Haven Michigan and Chicago Illinois on Lake Michigan. She was christened in May 1903 and began a regular passenger service later that year. In July 1903 the ship was opened to the public for inspection. The increase of weight due to the passengers who flocked to the upper deck caused the *Eastland* to severely list causing water to come into the gangways. This was a critical design fault that should have been corrected, however another case of listing occurred a month later.

In August 1903 the ship reversed into a tugboat sustaining damage to the stern. Six of the ships firemen were arrested at gunpoint for mutiny and for refusing to return to the boiler room to stoke the fires. The reason given was that they were angry for not getting their potato ration for their meal. Because of this situation Captain Pereue was replaced.

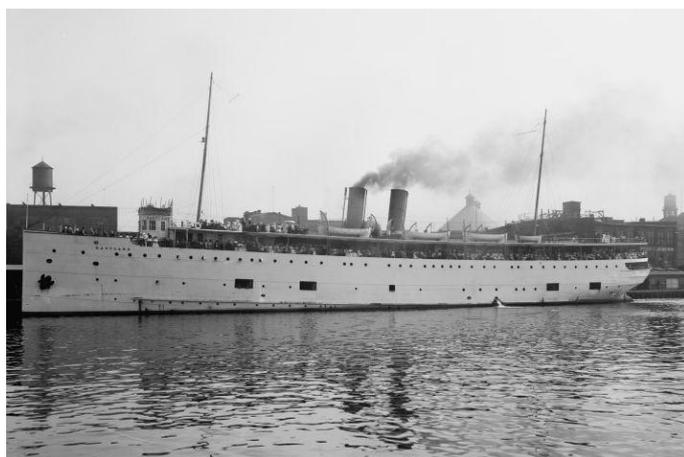
On route to Chicago in 1904 she listed dangerously to port and starboard whilst carrying 3,000 passengers, after this incident the carrying capacity was reduced to 2,800. Evidently the cause for listing had not been corrected. The *Eastland* was sold to the Michigan Transportation Company in 1905 being the first of many changes of ownership.

In August 1905 the ferry *Phylida* with a dozen passengers on board ran under *Eastlands* stern in South Haven Harbor. With her bow badly crushed she quickly sank, there were no fatalities but some passengers suffered severe burns. The *Eastland* suffered minor damage.

The *Eastland's* capacity was reduced once again to 2,400 passengers when it listed once more in 1906. But yet again in July 1912 she listed to port and then to starboard while carrying passengers.

Following the *Titanic* disaster the 1915 LaFollette Seaman's Act was passed. The Act stated that lifeboats would no longer depend on gross tonnage but on how many passengers were onboard. But ships like the *Eastland*, that were top-heavy to start with would be more unstable than ever with this extra weight on their upper decks, a fact that should have been heeded.

On July 24th 1915 the *Eastland* and two other steamers were in Chicago awaiting embarkation of passengers. These were employees of the Western Electric Company who would be transported across Lake Michigan for their annual picnic in Indiana. Of the thousands of employees awaiting to board, the *Eastland* was the first ship to take on passengers. Whilst the passengers were boarding, it was noted that the ship was listing to port and attempts were made to right the situation by letting water into the ballast tanks but this was to no avail. The ship continued listing to port and water began to pour into the port gangways unbeknown to the majority of passengers. Many on the upper decks were seen moving across to the port side and panic set in as water rushed in through the portholes. Within a short time the ship rolled over and settled on its side in 20 feet of water.



Passengers on the upper decks began to jump into the water but many were trapped below. This all happened within minutes leaving no time to put on life jackets or launch the lifeboats.

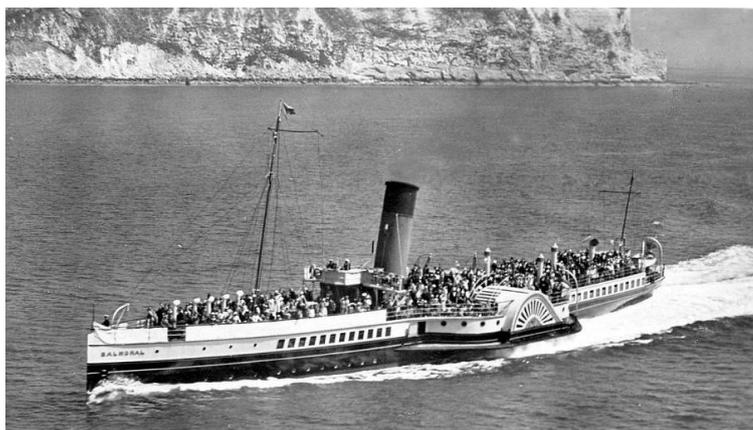
Some of the survivors who were clinging to the hull were rescued by a tugboat, and many were helped by the people still standing on the dock. Hearing screaming from within the ship, rescue workers tried to cut through the thick plating of the hull without much success as only a few remained alive. In the ensuing days, divers managed to retrieve all the bodies from the river and temporary morgues were set up in nearby buildings. The final death toll of this tragedy was 844 making this the greatest loss of life for one ship on the Great Lakes. Three months later after the ship was refloated it was purchased by the Naval Reserve and was restored and re-commissioned as the *USS Willmette* and served as a training gunship on the great lakes for 32 years.

A MEMORY

Two weeks ago a friend loaned me an English book called 'Ships Monthly' and while reading it I came across an article about the restoration of the Balmoral ferry. She operated between Cowes and Southampton and would be my mode of transport off of the island on my way to join the Vindi. This jogged the old grey cells.

BALMORAL FERRY

The *Balmoral* ferry was built to replace the paddle steamer of the same name (*PS Balmoral* went into service in 1900 and served in two world wars and scrapped in 1949). *Balmoral* was launched in June 1949 and could carry 10 - 12 cars and 600 passengers. The ferry was the only way the people living on the Isle of Wight could reach the mainland. The service ran between Southampton and Cowes. During the summer months she was to be seen cruising around the Isle of Wight. Taking part in the Coronation Fleet Review in 1953, having the Duke of Edinburgh on board in May 1958 and fare welling *RMS Queen Mary* as she left Southampton on her final voyage in September 1967.



The Isle of Wight was becoming a popular destination for tourists and more room was needed to accommodate the cars, not to mention the lorries delivering supplies. *Balmoral* was withdrawn from operating her regular sailing in 1968. She was laid up at Weymouth until she was chartered to P & A Campbell White Funnel Fleet in 1969, becoming their flagship and based in the Bristol Channel. Now sporting a white funnel she began cruising to Lundy and other Bristol Channel resorts. Taking part in the 1977 Silver Jubilee Review would have been another highlight in her career.

By 1979 the White Funnel Fleet closed down operations. A rescue attempt by Campbell was made together with the Landmark Trust to keep *Balmoral* cruising, but his was unsuccessful. She had been in operation for 12 glorious years.

She was sold in 1980 to become a floating restaurant in Dundee, a venture that failed. *Balmoral* was put up for sale in 1984 and became of interest to the Waverley organisation who eventually bought her and under her own power she moved to Glasgow. Once again she was destined to cruise, this time as a consort for the paddle steamer Waverley. To raise funds for the restoration an appeal was launched, and in



January 1986 *Balmoral* entered the dry dock at Govan shipyard for her refurbishment. She returned to Bristol in April 1986 and her new career.

By 2003 *Balmoral* was in need of new engines and up- dating of the dining saloon, this was achieved with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donations. Later on, other work to the interior was carried out with the support from The Peoples Lottery. She became un- profitable in 2012 and was laid up.

A group of enthusiasts came to the rescue and established the Balmoral Fund Ltd and her ownership was changed once again. *Balmoral* was put into dry dock and found to be in good repair and retained her passenger certificate. Under the flag of White Funnel Ltd, the operating company owned by *Balmoral* Fund Ltd, she sails the Bristol Channel and the coast of North Wales.



A long long time ago a sweet young lad aged 15½ left the Isle of Wight to start his long held dream of life's great mysteries, travel and adventures of foreign countries and of course fair maidens. Memories that would last a lifetime, to be revived every time he met a fellow Vindi boy, and a time to swing the lamp telling each other of fun and bad times which we all went through our time at sea.

To start this great journey of mine I first had to get off of the island. This meant catching a bus from Newport to Cowes (not many of our parents owned a car in 1955) and on reflection the traffic was very light on the roads. In fact, in 1956 when I got my driving licence there was only one set of traffic lights on the island and that was to control the traffic over a bridge at Yarmouth where the ferry went over to Lymington, the closest point from the island to the mainland. Anyway the big day arrived, up at sparrows, a bath in the early hours in the tin bath that hung behind the back door. Dressed in my Sunday best, Dad carried my suitcase, we had nearly a mile to walk to the bus station in the middle of Newport. There we would catch the bus to Cowes to catch the ferry. Mum was left behind at home a blubbering mess, her dear little fellow had flown the nest and was ready to meet the wide, wide world. Neither she or dad had ever been abroad so they couldn't impart any words of wisdom, however dad did mumble 'beware of loose women' as we boarded the *Balmoral* ferry. Eventually we docked at Southampton ferry port (that's where I used to take my boat ride back down to Fawley oil terminal to pick up my next Esso tanker). It was then another half mile walk to the train station. A quick hug, a hand shake and the words 'all the best'. He put me on the train that would take me to London where I would catch the train to Bristol and finally Sharpness. Vindi boy's have all been there and done that.



Esso Westminster

A little further on in the book was a picture of a tanker called the 'Windjammer', on reading the article it turns out she was once an Esso tanker called the 'Esso Westminster', a 24,000 ton deadweight of the city class. I served on three of her sister ships, the Esso Guildford, Cambridge and Bristol. I was part of the work up crew taking out the brand new ship from Hamburg on the 10th July 1959 as 2nd cook and baker, signing off on the

14th October 1959. I can't remember where the first shake down voyage went to.

I only did one more trip to sea after that and that was on the oldest Esso tanker in the fleet, the Esso Appalachee, an old oil burner, including the galley stoves. One of the crew had to light all the stoves in the early morning hours to get them heated up ready for the galley staff to prepare breakfast. From hero to zero in a year, what a bummer.

Below is a portion of my school leaving report dated 21.4.53, as you can see I was thinking about the merchant navy even then. By the remarks in the General Report do you think that he was trying to get shot of me.

GENERAL REPORT

A good-natured and willing boy who has worked hard and achieved a fair measure of success in his work and play. A pleasant, honest and trustworthy lad.

..... *B. J. Martin B.Sc.*
Form Master.

During his year at this school he has impressed as being essentially sound and reliable. He has an even temperament, is seldom ruffled, mixes well and is certainly of pleasing disposition and manner. He should do well. I have no hesitation in recommending him for entry to the Merchant Navy.

Date 16th November, 1955. *H. D. Jones B.A.*

To finish I would like to wish everybody a Very Happy and Healthy New Year.
Brian Toogood

EDMUND FITZGERALD

The *Edmund Fitzgerald* was a lake freighter launched in 1958 with a GRT of 13,632 tons and until 1971 it was the largest carrier on the Great Lakes between Canada and America.

Departing from Superior, Wisconsin with a cargo of 26,000 tons of ore destined for Detroit, Michigan on November 9th 1975, this would be her 30th voyage. A gale warning had been issued at 7pm that day with winds ranging between 34 - 40 knots. At 2 am on the 10th November the gale was upgraded to a gale warning with winds of 48 - 55 knots.

The *Edmund Fitzgerald* had contact with the *Arthur M Anderson* which was on a similar route bound for Gary Indiana. The captains discussed the weather and decided to change their route which would take them towards the coast of Canada hoping this would give them some protection from the weather. Waves of up to 16feet were reported by Captain Bernie Cooper of the *Arthur Anderson* with winds of 43 knots. The *Edmund Fitzgerald* reported structural damage and a list to one side. Later that afternoon Captain Ernest McSorley of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* was in radio contact with the *Avafor* another ship in the area reporting that they had lost both radars and had a bad list, and heavy seas were washing over the deck, making it one of the worst storms he had experienced in his 44 years at sea.



At 7pm on the 10th November the *Anderson* had the *Edmund Fitzgerald* on their radar and also made radio contact asking how they were making out, to which they replied 'they were holding their own'. Shortly afterwards about 7.10pm the *Edmund Fitzgerald* disappeared from their radar screen. As there were no distress

signals issued or survivors of the 29 crew, it was presumed that due to taking on water from the storm it plunged head first into a large wave and quickly sank. She rests 530 feet down on the bottom of the lake, 17 miles northwest of Whitefish Bay.

Footage from submersible craft show that the bow and mid-ship section are sitting upright on the lake bed, whilst the stern section had broken off and is upside down.

Between the time of her launch and sinking, the load line on the ship was raised over one metre therefore making her to sit lower in the water, thus causing a greater quantity of water flooding the deck during rough seas.

The discovery of the ship was made a few days after her sinking but it wasn't until May 1976 that it was confirmed.

Over the years there have been many expeditions to the wreck site to see if there could be an explanation to the cause of the tragedy.

Nineteen years after sinking in the Great Lakes a request was made by the families of the lost crew of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* for one item to be brought to the surface to serve as a memorial for the families of those lost and to bring closure to their grief.

The families agreed that if possible the ships bell would serve this purpose and a replacement brass bell with the crews names engraved on it to be put in its place. This would then serve as a permanent grave marker for their loved ones.

With the help of US and Canadian authorities and the owners of the wreck plans got underway for the recovery of the bell, hopefully on the 4th July 1995.

With the help of two submersibles from *HMCS Cormorant*, a Canadian Navy ship and diver Bruce Fuoco using the NEWSUIT diving system and a cutting torch the bell was cut loose and sent to the surface on July 4th 1995. The replacement bell was installed in the same place as the original bell.

At a ceremony on the 7th July the bell was rang 30 times, 29 for each crew member and once for all sailors who have lost their lives on the Great Lakes.

NORMA

Built in Glasgow in 1893 the *Norma* was a four masted iron barque sporting a figurehead of a priestess from Welsh mythology. She was anchored off Semaphore, South Australia on 21st April 1907 with a cargo of 31,045 bags of wheat destined for the United Kingdom, waiting for the right conditions to set sail when she was hit.

It is not clear how the *Ardenraig* misjudged the distance between the two ships, perhaps it was the appalling weather with rain coming down in a torrent. However the *Norma* was struck amidships and sank in 13 metres of water within a few minutes. The ships carpenter was the only fatality. The *Ardenraig* remained afloat.

The coastal steamer *Jessie Darling*, on approaching the *Ardenraig* to give assistance, ran over the wreckage of the *Norma* tearing a hole in her hull causing her to sink on top of the *Norma*. Once again the crew were saved. In 1908 the *Jessie Darling* was refloated and repaired. The *Norma* was considered a hazard to shipping and the site was dynamited.

The Welsh priestess figurehead was found in the mangrove swamps at Gawler Point and now resides at the Port Adelaide Nautical Museum.