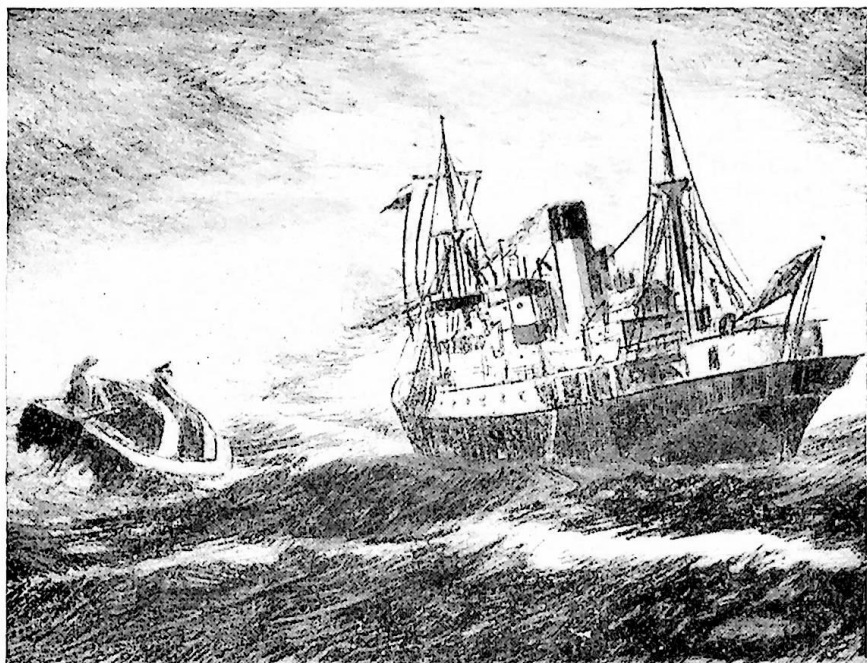


The Pilot

(OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM PILOTS' ASSOCIATION)

No. 2. Vol. 37

June, 1958



Shipping the Pilot

Reproduction of an etching by John Grier of Harwich who is well known in the London Pilorage Service. He was apprenticed in sail under Captain James Learmont long ago and a close friendship was maintained by them in after years. Captain Grier supplied the illustrations for "Jimmie's" book "Master in Sail". He tells us that during the East Coast floodings he had the misfortune to lose all copies of etchings, pictures, references and photographs of ships galore. After that blow his enthusiasm as an artist waned, but he still produced a few paintings and engravings. Between spells during the summer months he uses his experience to sail yachts and recently has been sailing on the Clyde.

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C. D. GRIFFITHS, O.B.E., D.F.C., General Secretary and Solicitor
to whom all communications are to be addressed

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1957-1958 of the **Pilots' Association**

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Executive Committee :*Date elected :*

- 1956 J. H. INNES (Clyde), 16, Belhaven Terrace, Glasgow, W.2.
 1955 M. M. MARSHALL (Tyne), 8, Vespasian Street, South Shields.
 1956 L. R. SLADE (Cardiff), 111, Windsor Road, Penarth.
 1957 D. GRAINGER (Humber), 39, Link Road, Cottingham, E. Yorks.
 1957 D. MAIN (Gourock), Ashtower, 22, Victoria Road, Gourock.
 1957 S. GREEN (Barrow), 63, Furness Park Road, Barrow-in-Furness.
 1956 F. V. JANES (Southampton), Sunrise, Lakewood Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants.
 1956 R. B. PAGE (Channel), Channel Pilots' Office, Royal Terrace Pier, Gravesend.
 1957 W. C. DUNCAN (Cinque Ports), 23, Waterloo Mansions, Dover.

Finance Committee :

THE TWO VICE-PRESIDENTS AND L. R. SLADE

Auditor :

J. B. WATLING, F.C.A. (MESSRS. WATLING AND PARTNERS, Bristol).

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ALFRED CURTHOYS, 79, Gloucester Road, S.W.7 (FREmantle 0500)

CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 4th and 5th

THE seventy-first Conference of the United Kingdom Pilots' Association will be held by courtesy of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners in their Court Room in H.Q.S. Wellington berthed at King's Reach off the Victoria Embankment on November 5 and 6, 1958.

The usual pre-Conference meeting of the Executive Committee will be at 3 o'clock on the afternoon of November 4th.

These dates are unusually late in the year. Although a great deal of preparatory work had to be done in connection with the formulation of plans for the creation of a national pension policy which last year's Conference asked for, it was hoped to have the 1958 delegate meeting in October, but no dates could be arranged with the Wellington until early in the following month.

It is important that Conference should be as fully representative of the widely scattered membership of the Association as possible and the ports are asked to see that they exercise the right to send the full quota of delegates to which their numbers entitle them. Other members are always welcome as visitors and may address Conference but cannot vote.

Pensions—National Policy.

Pensions will be one of the chief items on the agenda. As reported in the March issue of *The Pilot* there was an extremely satisfactory response to the questionnaire concerning pensions and the information supplied was of great assistance to the sub-committee (Messrs. Tate and Page) in the careful preparation of a memorandum which was submitted to the Executive Committee at their meeting in April. The memorandum, as Mr. Tate said, did no more than make a general survey of the position.

"A most enlightening document involving a tremendous amount of work"

commented Mr Innes who voiced the thanks of the Executive to Messrs. Tate and Page.

There was considerable discussion on the memorandum and the Executive then authorised the sub-committee to approach the Transport and General Workers Union with a view to co-ordinating their efforts before seeking preliminary discussions with the Chamber of Shipping. It is hoped that these talks will prepare the way for an approach to the Ministry of Transport.

Association Finance.

The annual statement of the Association's finances is printed in this issue and delegates to the Conference are asked to make a point of bringing this copy of *The Pilot* with them so that they may follow what the Hon. Treasurer says in presenting the balance sheet and raise any points on which they may require clarification.

When the statement was before the Executive Committee in April Mr. Wynn pointed to the significance of an £80 increase in subscriptions. The membership of the Association is growing, not by leaps and bounds perhaps, but steadily, and now stands at 827. After all the scope for recruitment is limited; probably fewer men being engaged in piloting than in any other profession.

Pilot Ladders.

Thanks to Mr. Page we are able in this issue to treat the new aspects of the old problem of pilot ladders with the prominence they deserve. Throughout the years the subject has been more or less on the minds of pilots and it came to the surface again at the Executive meeting last January when the case of a Channel pilot who suffered a strain on leaving a ship was mentioned. (See *The Pilot*, March 1958, page 10).

After the meeting Mr. Griffiths wrote to Mr. Page who went to considerable

continued on next page



AS promised in the March issue of THE PILOT here is a picture of Mr. Daniel H. Tate taken outside Buckingham Palace in March after he had been decorated by the Queen with the M.B.E. With him are Mrs. Tate and his mother. We hoped to get the whole family in the picture but in the hectic half hour after an investiture when cameras are clicking in all directions it was impossible to organise all the Tates into a satisfactory group, to say nothing of all the friends from

trouble in preparing a memorandum dealing particularly with the large modern vessels. The Executive again had the subject before them at the April meeting and its scope was widened by references to difficulties peculiar to smaller craft. It was suggested that Mr. Page might also deal with this in his memorandum and that the whole document should be given prominence in this issue of *The Pilot*.

Identity Badges.

An innovation at this year's Conference will be identity badges. The suggestion came from Mr. Janes at

Teeside. It must be sufficient to record that Mr. Tate's son Robert who is 22 was there and his sisters Betty who is nineteen and Pamela, eleven; also Tees pilots Messrs. Young, Guy and Skipsey. The two last named were accompanied by their wives and Mr. Young brought his camera with what result we have not heard or seen. Our picture, which was selected because it was the best one of Dan who played chief role in the proceedings, was taken by Kemsley Newspapers.

last year's Conference when he rightly pointed out that delegates were not all known to one another and it would be helpful if each man wore a little badge in the lapel of his coat bearing his name and port. This, of course, is adopted by many organisations at their general meetings, and at an American gathering in London not so long ago the visitors went about displaying their identity in postcard size! Something much less pretentious is visualised for the U.K.P.A. and it has been passed back to Mr. Janes to get suitable discs.

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PILOT LADDERS : Modern Design of Ships Presents New Aspects of an Old Problem

By ROGER PAGE

From time immemorial pilots have been very concerned about the difficulty of boarding or landing from ships and pilot ladders are a "hardy annual" at Conferences of the United Kingdom Pilots' Association. Although the Minister of Transport made rules on the subject in 1952 the problem is still there, but with different aspects resulting from modern developments in ship design.

There is an increasing tendency to streamline the hull form of large cargo liners and to extend the bridge deck. In this type of ship, great difficulty is often experienced in finding a position from which the pilot ladder can be rigged, so that a pilot can embark and disembark safely from the ship.

Difficulty of Finding Suitable Place for the Ladder

If the ladder is placed in the traditional position, forward of the fore-end of the bridge deck, it is found that only the top few rungs rest against the side and that the foot of the ladder is some distance from the shell plating, due to the extension of the fine entry. Placing the ladder abaft the bridge deck accentuates this trouble, although the height above the water may be less. The obvious alternative of placing the ladder amidships requires an extremely long ladder, to climb which taxes the endurance of a pilot unduly. Further, when the ladder is placed amidships, there is danger of the ladder, pilot and boat being fouled by discharges in the way of accommodation, or swamped by circulating water from the Engine Room.

Problem Acute at Exposed Stations

This problem is particularly acute at the seaward pilot stations of most United Kingdom Ports, as these are in exposed positions and the vessels requiring to embark or disembark pilots

are, more often than not, in light trim proceeding from port to port with part cargo, or to or from dry-dock. It follows that even in a moderate breeze, these light high-sided vessels develop a considerable list to leeward when the way is taken off, causing any ladder to swing freely for the greater part of its length.

These difficulties were not experienced with the older type of vessel which was not so high-sided, had the same cross-section for the greater part of the length and a pronounced tumble-home, which provided a wide choice of position where a ladder could be rigged so that it would rest firmly against the ship's side.

Side Openings Suggested

The time has come when special attention should be given to providing facilities in large fast cargo liners for rigging a pilot ladder from a position not too high above the water line at a place where the shell plating is vertical. In many cases, it would seem that this can only be done by the provision of side openings or gangway doors opening inward and easily secured by clamps, such as are found in the majority of passenger liners, at between deck level. Such doors would probably prove useful in port as access to storerooms and would save delay and minimise danger when embarking or disembarking a pilot.

One most useful adjunct to a pilot ladder is a stanchion clamped to the rail, or shipped through a hole in the bulwark rail to a shoe on deck, the latter being best as it tends to be more rigid. This is often provided in large ships, but rarely in small vessels where the need for a hand-hold is most urgent owing to their motion in a seaway.

Small Ship Difficulties and Dangers

At the present time there are a large number of motor coasters of 500

gross tons and less, which are built with masts at each end, so that there are no stays leading to the bulwark to offer a hand-hold in a position where a pilot can be embarked or disembarked. In a smooth sea, there is of course little difficulty in transferring a pilot between a small ship and a pilot boat, but in bad weather, the pilot boat can appear above the rail on the ship one moment and far beneath it the next. It happens at times that small vessels are quite unable to obtain or discharge a pilot owing to the weather, but these occurrences would probably be less if all these vessels were fitted with a stanchion through the bulwark rail to provide a firm support, so that a pilot could stand on the rail ready for his chance to jump to the boat, or have something to steady himself with when jumping from boat to ship.

Coastal Oil Tankers

Perhaps the most difficult type of vessel for a Pilot to board or leave in bad weather is the coastal oil-tanker as the harbour deck is normally only a few inches above the water line and is continually awash at sea, so that a boat coming alongside is in serious danger of being stove-in or capsized by the gunwhale bar of the ship. This trouble has been overcome in some of these small tankers where there is no midship section extending to the ship's side by the erection of a platform at cat-walk level extended to stanchions or a plate flush with the side.

Good Ladders Generally Available

The Merchant Shipping (Pilot Ladders) Rules, 1952, require ships to be provided with efficient pilot ladders. These rules were really the outcome of the energetic efforts of Captain W. H. Coombs at the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea held in London in 1948. He said at the time that he did not get all he wanted, but it took hours to get as much as he did. Nowadays, instead of the wide variety of contrivances used in the past

which included a few pieces of broomstick seized into the lay of two ropes, good ladders with elongated steps or battens at intervals to prevent twisting are generally available, and it is rare to find a dirty greasy ladder which has been used for other purposes put over.

Importance of Maintenance and Rigging

Even the best of ladders however can become as difficult and dangerous to negotiate as some of the makeshifts unless care is given to their maintenance and rigging. It is understandable that with the strain of the many things required to be done by the deck personnel in a limited time when making or leaving port, proper attention to the pilot ladder may be overlooked or entrusted to boys. Inattention to this matter may cause delay to the ship and risk of life to a pilot, so a proper routine should be observed.

Some time before being needed, the ladder should be stretched, any kinks straightened out and the whole inspected for broken rungs or slack seizings.

Care Should Be Taken

Should the vessel be in light trim and it be necessary to join two portions of ladder together, care should be taken to see that as far as possible the distance between the lower rung of the one part and the upper one of the other is the same as that between rungs of each ladder and that the whole is squarely lined up. If the attachment of the two portions has to be made with lanyards or rope lashing, the hitches employed should be as compact as possible. Using up stray ends of rope by making overlapping hitches, forms a bulky pudding which offers no hand hold.

Care must be used when the ladder is placed in position to make sure that the length is correct. This can best be determined by lightly touching

the surface of the water, then raising ladder about three feet before securing. It is important that both sides of the ladder are lashed evenly so that the steps remain horizontal.

The practice of attaching a tripping line to the bottom rung can be dangerous. If slack it will trail in the water and may foul a motor-boat's propeller. If handled from the deck, the distance cannot be judged and a man will sometimes haul up suddenly as the boat comes alongside, with the laudable

There seems to be a lighter side to the gravest problems so we invited Captain H. S. Rogers, a Clyde pilot with quite a reputation for humorous sketches to read Mr. Page's article and present some of the points in his own special way. He rose to the occasion as you will see on the the next page. He assures us that "any resemblance to any past, present or future member of any pilot service is entirely imaginary"!

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Retired Pilot Members

WE often wonder why more pilots do not preserve their link with the U.K.P.A. when they retire from active service. Rule 3 of the Association which deals with the constitution makes provision for them to continue as Retired Pilot Members and Rule 5 requires them to pay a yearly subscription of only five shillings.

The point was brought home to us last September when in a tea shop at Weston-super-Mare we had a suprise encounter with Isaac White a retired Cardiff pilot who seemed to know nothing of what was happening in U.K.P.A. circles. Some time later we were sorry to hear from Mr. Slade

intention of preventing possible damage to the ladder, which usually results in the pilot being faced by a jumbled bunch of wood and rope just as he is about to jump for it.

Much of what I have said about maintenance and rigging may seem very elementary and one may wonder whether lack of experience of over-side work by crew members, due to most of this now being performed by shore labour, is partly responsible for haphazard rigging being so common.

that Mr. White had died suddenly at a football match in Cardiff.

The Association is losing something if pilots, some of whom have been members throughout their years in the service, are allowed to fade away on retirement. They know what the Association has done for the men in the service and can be excellent propagandists.

We suggest that local secretaries should make a point of following up the retired men and see that the membership is continued. They will be put on the mailing list of *The Pilot*.

* * * * *

The Executive Committee's next meeting will be at 10 a.m. on July 9th on board H.Q.S. *Wellington*.

Mr. RICHARD WILKINSON

THE Sunderland pilots have suffered a great loss of a much respected friend and colleague, by the very sudden death, while on holiday at Torquay, of Mr. RICHARD WILKINSON, senior Sunderland pilot (retired).

Mr. Wilkinson retired from the service on September 15, 1956 after serving for a period of 53 years. During his outstanding career, he was a faithful member of the U.K.P.A., and for 28 years was local secretary.

During World War I the vessel in which he was serving as 2nd officer s.s. *Hornsea* was shelled by an enemy U-boat, south of Flam-

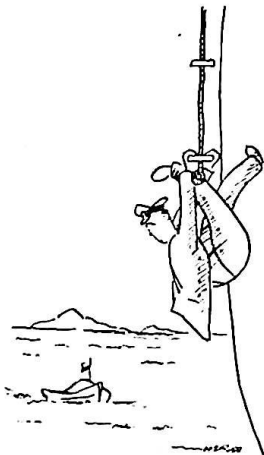
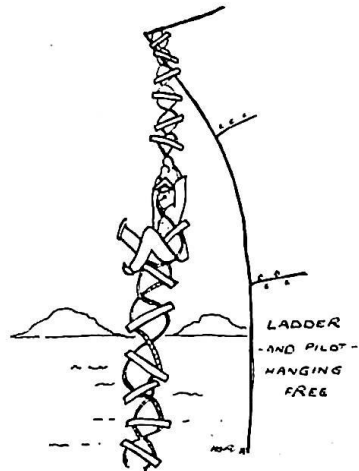
borough Head. The submarine was engaged by a destroyer and captured. For his part in helping to save his ship, Mr. Wilkinson was awarded Lloyd's silver medal and diploma.

For a period he was a pilots' representative with the Sunderland Pilotage Authority, and in 1953 received the Coronation medal.

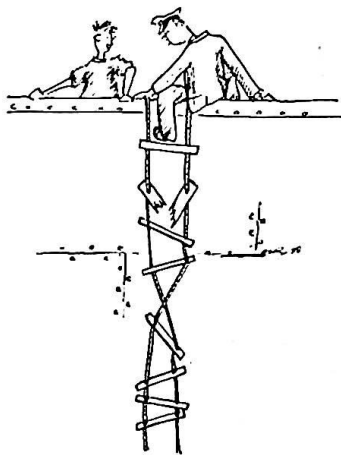
He leaves a widow, two daughters and a son, who is a Sunderland pilot.

I can truly say this, that "old Dick", as he was affectionately known, will long be remembered, not only by his former colleagues, but by all the seafaring fraternity of Sunderland.

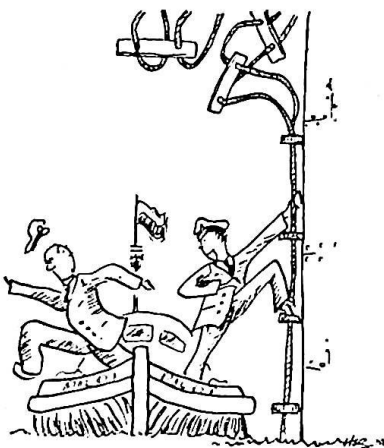
STANLEY HALL.



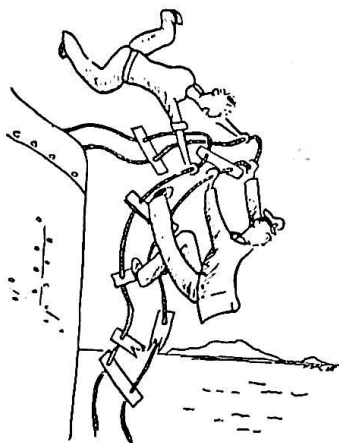
"... did not get al' he wanted ..."



"... the pilot ladder ... entrusted to boys ..."



"... that the length is correct ..."



"... rigging may seem very elementary ..."

GRAVESEND'S UNIQUE CRICKET CLUB

THIS is so personal an article that for once in a while the editorial "we" is put aside.

On many occasions in my few moments in the limelight at Conference—an ordeal instituted for my discomfiture by Lord Apsley always with a chuckle—I have invited members to send notes for *The Pilot* on social events and their off-duty interests. The response, alas, has been disappointing, but there have been some notable occasions. I have happy memories of some gay times at Conference functions in the provinces, notably at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1939. Then there was the wonderful day I spent aboard the Liverpool cutter *William M. Clarke* at the naval review at Spithead in 1937 with that cheery songster Peter Dawson as companion, followed by a nerve racking drive home in the small hours with cars three abreast on the Portsmouth road and Harry Smith chugging along in our wake until at the end of the Guildford by-pass he set his own uncertain course for Gravesend.

And now I am happy to record another. The United Pilots Cricket Club at Gravesend wondered whether I would be interested in their annual dinner on Easter Tuesday this year. They didn't know, of course, that in my boyhood I was a not very distant neighbour of "W.G." that lion of the game—and he could roar like one! So my interest in cricket was long established and no second bidding to Gravesend was needed. And jolly good hosts they were.

Tom Pickering, who is hon. treasurer of the club, met me at the station and there was time for a brief visit to the pilots' pier before dinner for a few introductions. In two cases introduction was not necessary; one of them I had known as a former member of the Executive of the U.K.P.A. and from 1947 to 1951 a vice president—Mr. F. R. E. Goldsmith looking as fit as ever. The other was Roger Page with whom there is pleasant association at meetings of the Executive Committee.

Another old friend, Mr. J. A. Sparrow who was on the Executive for a considerable time and has now retired, greeted me at the Royal Clarendon Hotel where the dinner was held.

and there were others I have known through the years; this indeed was a very pleasing side of my visit to Gravesend.

Before I say anything about the actual function let me give you the background of the club. The outstanding feature is that as far as is known it is the only cricket club whose members are master mariners and "foreign going" at that. In most cases it amounts to a revival of cricket activities in their thirties, thirty being the average age of entry into the Trinity House Pilotage Service. It was actually founded in 1905, six years before I came on the pilotage scene. All members then, as now, were Trinity House pilots.

The first meeting did not take place until the following February when these officers were appointed—captain, W. Mulley (Channel); vice-captain, H. J. Redman (Channel); hon. secretary, W. Matthews (River), and hon. treasurer, A. N. Owen (Channel). When Mulley was lost at sea in 1909 A. J. Humphreys took on the captaincy and later became hon. secretary. Both he and Owen are still living in Gravesend.

The annual fixtures include a match between Channel pilots and River pilots, and two with the team of the training ship *Worcester*. After one of the *Worcester* games it is the custom to present a cricket bat to the most promising player of the year. Other matches include Trinity House, H.M. Customs, Thames Police, Gravesend Police, Medway Police, Gravesend Wednesday, Meopham, Imperial Paper Mills, Army, Gravesend United Banks, and Thames River Police.

The club use the Bat and Ball cricket ground, the home of Gravesend C.C. famous for its picturesque setting as a Kent county ground on which many famous players have appeared including Dr. W. G. Grace.

The president of the club is Capt. Sir Gerald Curteis, K.C.V.O., R.N., Deputy Master of Trinity House and the deputy president is Capt. H. A. Fraser, M.B.E., Ruler of Pilots. The other officers are—captain, H. F. Lunn, vice-captain, C. R. Brook, hon. secretary, J. Matthews and hon. treasurer T. Pickering. The playing membership last

continued on page 12

season was 24, and there were 51 honorary members.

The best batting feat for the club was H. R. Allen's 151 not out against *Worcester* in 1938 and David Hunter holds the bowling record with 8 for 77 against H. M. Customs last year.

The annual dinner of the club is one of the high spots of the year; the annual ball is another. Sweepstakes help to bring in a bit of cash. During the war the dinner function could not be held, of course, but it was revived in 1952.

Among the trophies I brought back from this year's feast was a toast card of the jubilee dinner of the club held on April 12, 1955. Above the menu were these lines of Kipling—

The game is more than the Player of the Game and the Ship is more than the Crew.

Apt words, and they were repeated on this year's card.

In the unavoidable absence of the President, Captain Fraser presided and submitted the loyal toast which was duly honoured. Then Mr. H. Tuffee let loose the flood of oratory which produced cheers and laughter to say nothing of a few blushes for the next hour or so, after which a breezy and tireless entertainer, Florence Raynor took over and kept the proceedings on a merry note.

Mr. H. Tuffee brought the tang of the sea into his speech in proposing the toast of the club, the origin of which, he said, was wrapped in the turbulent mysteries of the river.

From Mr. Lunn we heard about the exploits of the club last season when seven matches were won, thirteen lost, three drawn and one abandoned. It did not sound particularly good, but some of the matches lost were very close indeed and were really most enjoyable. In the annual fixture River v. Channel, the River scored 207 for 9, declared, and during the tea interval they hoped it would not make the poor Channel pilots look too silly; if they scored 180 it would not be too bad, but in fact they made 210 for 8 and won the match for the second year running! The match against the staff of Trinity House provided an afternoon of good cricket and was won by the pilots who hope the event will become an annual one. A firkin of ale sent down from Trinity House by Capt. Sir Gerald Curteis was enjoyed by all. The skipper also handed round compliments

to the best players of the season, not forgetting the umpire, Ernie Wright, and had a special word for David Hunter for all the work he put in year after year in connection with the dinner. All the moans and groans never seemed to upset him; he just went on and did a good job.

Next came Mr. J. Martin, the Kent and England player, who rattled off story after story which made us all laugh but somehow I cannot remember more than one of a certain well known player who on a festive occasion in India addressed a very important prince as Gunga Din. Then Martin invited us to drink to the greatest game of all, which we did right cordially.

Taking the cue from the proposer, Mr. T. Church responded by telling a lot more stories and then Captain Fraser announced the guests and proposed their health. Among them were the Mayor of Gravesend, Councillor R. H. Goodwin, Captain G. C. H. Noakes, R.D., Elder Brother, Trinity House and Captain R. Gabbett-Mulhallen, Captain-Superintendent H.M.S. *Worcester*; Vice-Admiral A. D. Read, C.B.; Commander G. V. Parmiter, R.N. Retd., Port of London Harbour Master Dept.; Captain Barnard, Elder Brother Trinity House; Mr. S. Rawlings Smith, O.B.E., principal Pilotage Dept., Trinity House, Dr. J. A. Jones, Port of London Health Dept., and Mr. M. Gunn of Gravesend C.C. The first three responded to the toast.

Captain Noakes spoke for us all when he said how much we were indebted to the club for a very good dinner and an extremely enjoyable evening—good luck to the U.P.C.C. When anything drew people together apart from their job it served a very good purpose and the club had served a very fine purpose in Gravesend.

One of the best stories of the evening came from Captain Gabbett-Mulhallen. He was interviewing a number of young candidates for the *Worcester* and asked one of them, aged 13½, what his ambition was.

"Get all my certificates" the boy replied.

"And then?" asked the Captain.

"I would like to become a Thames pilot, settle down and raise a family."

Channel Pilot W. J. Sutherland, an honorary member of the club and popularly known as "Steamboat Bill" was M.C. at the dinner and skilfully piloted the proceedings.

A.C.