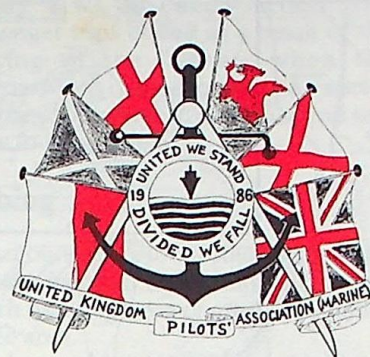


# THE PILOT

JULY 1992

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The official organ of the United Kingdom Pilot's Association (Marine)



## Editorial

With the longest day now past we move into the second half of 1992. The recession has hit many ports including my own, London, which had escaped the first bite of the economic downturn. We are assured on all sides that this is a temporary situation, but I have always found that shipping and pilotage is an accurate barometer of trade. In the past, as an inward pilot usually conducting loaded ships, a busy spell for the pilots always forecast an upturn in imports and a widening trade gap. The harder we worked the worse it was for the country!

Yet money is still squandered. Intrigued at seeing the Shell Oil Company's *Norrissia*, a Large Crude Carrier, alongside in Dover, I was amazed to discover that it was not a major breakdown which had necessitated its call at a port of refuge, but merely a sightseeing exercise for Shell shareholders. As Shell's dedicated North Sea oil tanker, one Shell shareholder was heard to remark it would perhaps be better off earning revenue for his shares in the North Sea than holed up like a quart in a pint pot at Dover.

My thanks go, as always, to those pilots and others who have sent me articles and photographs. It is difficult to get a balance to a magazine. *The Pilot* is no exception. To those of you still waiting for your contributions to appear I can assure you they will. We even have an article on the Queen Mother!

John Godden

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## Feature

# The Port of Boston

## History

There has been a port in Boston since Norman times, although the name Boston does not appear in the Domesday Book. At that time it was known as Skirbeck, the township in which the Church of St Botolph stood. The first certain mention of the name Boston - perhaps Botolph's Town - comes in 1130 and is probably attributable to one Alan de Créon, a Breton, who resided at Skirbeck manor and under whose influence Boston developed as a separate entity. The reason for the initial growth of the port probably lay in Boston Fair, one of the major institutions of its kind, on a par with St Ives and Sturbridge Fairs. As such it attracted foreigners and thus foreign shipping. Boston's main rival in the Wash, Lynn, was far less significant until Tudor times and other Lincolnshire ports were of little significance until the rise of Grimsby in the 19th century.

Boston is one of five well known Wash Ports, (the others being: King's Lynn, Wisbech/Sutton Bridge, Fosdyke and Wells next the Sea) it is situated on the River Witham some five miles upstream from the Wash. It was not always so far inland but due to reclamation and river improvement, the sea has been pushed further back.

The importance of Boston, as a port,

dates from the 13th century when it was a flourishing port and Staple town for the export of wool to the continent - between 1279 and 1288, 37% of all English wool exported went through Boston. Salt, lead and grain were other important export commodities; the main imports being minerals from Sweden, dried fruit and spices from the Mediterranean fish from Scandinavia and timber from the Baltic.

The German Hansa merchant group was fundamental to the growth of the port at this time and they established their own steel yard and warehouses at Boston as a depot to their London headquarters. From the amount of dues paid in one year £780.00 Boston ranked as the second port in England after London paying £836.00.

The stature of the port can largely be explained by its locational advantages; Boston is situated at the mouth of the River Witham, navigable to Lincoln and from Lincoln it was linked to the Trent by the Fosdyke. For a transit port to Holland, Flanders and Northern France no other port on the East coast combined so many facilities. For receiving goods from the interior for export and landing goods from the continent for distribution to the interior, Boston was the port into which the produce of 16 countries would naturally flow.

This period of high prosperity was short lived. By the 16th century the port had declined to a purely local outlet. The locational advantage was diminished by changing trade patterns. The discovery of America meant that the West coast became the focus for trade.

The deteriorating general economy of the County of Lincolnshire, the condition of the Haven which was badly silted through lack of scouring and the poor state of the inland waterways led in turn to the withdrawal of the Hansa Merchants.

In the early 17th century, Boston had its part to play in the story of the Pilgrim Fathers. In 1607 they came from Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and North Lincolnshire and embarked on a Dutch

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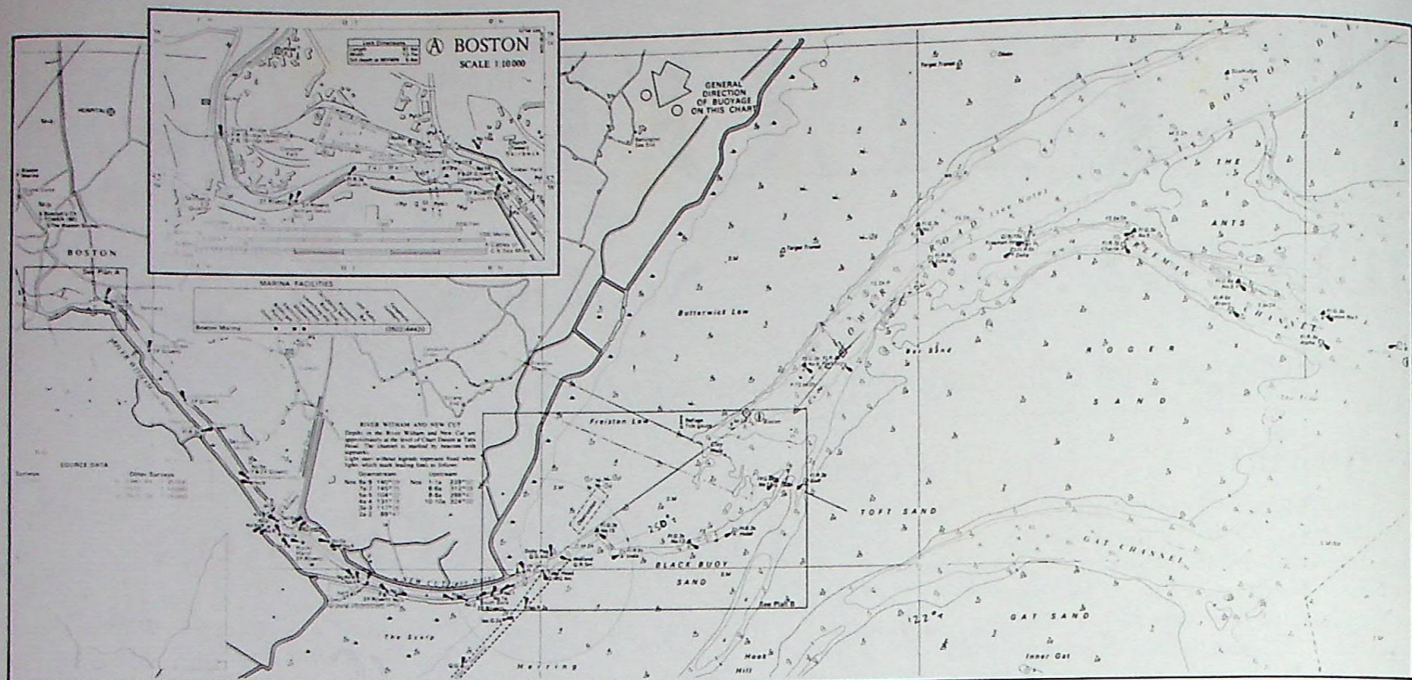
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vessel at Scotia Creek, about three miles down river from Boston. Unfortunately the captain betrayed them to the authorities just before they were to sail for Holland. The seven principal ringleaders were subsequently imprisoned in the Boston Guildhall. Brewster, the leader, "suffered both in person and in property" whilst the others after several months in prison were dealt with sympathetically by the magistrates in as much that they suffered no further punishment other than to be returned to their homes. This of course was punishment in itself as they then had to endure the rigours of ecclesiastical discipline and the scoffs of their neighbours. One year later a ship left for Holland from the Humber, with those who failed to escape from Boston. They remained in Holland until they made their way back to England to sail on the *Mayflower* on the 6th September 1620.

Trade in Boston remained low until the mid 18th century. Foreign trade was very small and exports were lower than imports. However coastal trade was growing with particular emphasis on coal from Northumberland and Durham. In 1710 there were 166 ships that landed cargoes in Boston and of these 155 came from Sunderland. At the same time the port began to resume its function as an outlet for much of the produce of South Lincolnshire.

The main boost to trade came with Fen drainage and enclosure which began in the late 18th century, most importantly for Boston being the improvements to the River Witham. Inland above the Grand Sluice the Witham was shortened, deepened and canalised from Lincoln to Boston. The water from this "new" river fell into the "old" through the Grand Sluice whose purpose was to keep out tidal water and control water level in the "new" river.

These improvements gave the river

more scouring power to remove silt further downstream as the fresh water from the "new river" was run off at low tide to maintain the desired level upstream. However silting during dry summers was still a major problem in the harbour, haven and outfall, by the start of the 19th century further work was necessary, as the silting was having an adverse effect on trade due to the poor state of the tortuous approach channels.

With the revival of trade of the early 19th century a Mr, later Sir John Rennie, an engineer, was called in to survey and suggest improvements. In 1811 he finalised his plan and in 1812 an Act of Parliament based on Rennie's plans allowed the harbour authorities to put into action the recommendations. They were in the main to confine the river within narrower limits in those parts of the channel where water had insufficient power to scour away the silt.

Despite these improvements the outfall was still a problem. The mouth became gradually silted, the buildup of mud and sandbanks caused the river to "follow a tortuous and circuitous route around these obstructions". The ebb flow of water being sluggish and the depth uncertain, it follows that the channels were also very uncertain changing from day to day. Of course this had the effect of discouraging trade. Big ships had to discharge into lighters in Clay Hole (see chart) as they could not get up to town. The inconvenience, danger and expense of this operation had the effect of making timber £1.00 per ton dearer in Boston than in Grimsby. These problems affected foreign trade and at the beginning of the 19th century this was very low. In 1822 only 13 foreign vessels averaging 119 tons came to Boston; this compares with 1080 vessels trading coastwise of 45-60 tons, much smaller and therefore more able to navigate the Haven.

Without work to the outfall all work upstream would have been in vain. Rennie published a new report in 1822 on outfall improvements and subsequently various works took place; parts of the course were trained by fascine work and a "New Cut" made at Wyberton Roads in 1833 shortening the route to deep water by 1.5 miles. This brought about considerable improvement to navigation and in 1840 there were 55 foreign vessels recorded bringing "oil cake from the Continent and timber from the Baltic" and in 1845 it is recorded that four brigs laden with timber from St Petersburg, each drawing 13 feet were able to come up to one of the quays.

With the coming of the railways in 1847 the immediate effect was an upsurge in trade. In the first week of operation 7 vessels arrived laden with pig iron. In early June 1848 the Great Northern Railway had 8 Baltic vessels discharging sleepers simultaneously, with 60000 tons of iron expected shortly. Trade peaked during the construction of the railway. In addition to the trade increase the local population grew as workers were attracted to the area; between 1841 and 1851 the population grew by 18.7%.

Shipowners fears for the long term effect of the railway were born out and the railway took away the coastal trade and that of the inland waterways also. The position was worsened by the railway refusing to link the harbour to the rail network. This hurt the port badly and although it was eventually linked to the midlands by railway in 1859 it was not until the wet dock was opened in 1884 that the foreign trade began to expand and the port showed an upturn.

By the 1860s the situation had worsened after a series of dry summers and in 1863/4 the bed of the Haven was more than 11 feet above its natural level. Eventually between 1880 and 1884 a completely new

outfall channel was cut and is one that remains today.

It was clear that Boston needed a dock. With the increase in the size of ships in both the foreign and coastal trades coupled with the increased use of steam power, vessels were avoiding ports where they could not remain afloat. Boston was facing increasing competition from other Wash ports, in particular King's Lynn and Sutton Bridge, where docks were built in the 1870s stealing trade from Boston. After prolonged discussion of alternatives a site was selected about a mile downstream from the town centre and in 1882 work began on digging out the dock basin. The basin was dug out of alluvium and concrete foundations were laid on the boulder clay below. The dock walls were built up using concrete held together with iron bands, they were capped with stone and faced with bricks. It is a tribute to the skills and materials used that the structure today is still made up of a lot of the original materials.

Two years later in 1884, the dock was completed, the total cost of machinery and sheds was £17200.00. The first ship that entered the dock was the *SS Myrtle* arriving from Alexandria on 15th December 1884. The "New Cut" to Clay Hole was being constructed at the same time and this improvement to navigation was vitally important to Boston. It meant that vessels of up to 3000 tons could now be received, a remarkable increase from the previous maximum of 300 tons. Large vessels such as the *Talk of Dee*, a clipper of 1845 tons carrying a cargo of 1000 tons, could reach the dock on the smallest of tides.

The opening of the dock had a profound effect on Boston's standing as a port. In 1881 a total of 396 ships of 27137 registered tons entered. In 1894 this figure had risen to 605 ships of 124696 tons and the cargoes handled totalled 273190 tons. By 1896 trade stood at 8 times the 1884 level with grain, fruit, timber and oilseed the main imports, whilst oilcake, potatoes, iron and coal were the chief exports.

This type of trade continued up to WWII. In a typical week in 1939 eleven ships entered coastwise plus 4 from Holland, 2 from Russia and one each from Germany, France and the USA, whilst 7 left coastwise, 2 each to Russia and Norway and one each to Holland, Belgium, Germany and Sweden. In 1963 the port received 1354 ships and handled 596787 tons, by 1971 this quantity had risen to 657000 tons. The heyday of the port in terms of tonnage handled, was the 1980s when 1.4 million tonnes of imports and exports were being handled annually. At present that figure has declined to around the 1 million tonnes mark, made up of imports of timber, steel, animal feed, paper, anthracite and general, with exports of grain, oilseed and general goods. Not all ships utilise the dock, a fair

number still berth at the riverside quays to discharge cargoes of steel, bulk cement or anthracite, or to load grain.

The last true sailing ship to enter the port was the Danish three masted schooner *Frida* which arrived in ballast from America to load 435 tons of coal in the dock, bound for Denmark departing in February 1932.

Before WWI sailing ships were towed in and out by the 3 tugs of the Boston Steam Tug Co. One was a screw driven tug of 72 tons register, built in 1884 and bought second hand from London, the other two were paddle driven. One, the *Privateer* was well known locally because when she was not engaged in towing, she doubled as a pleasure steamer running trips from Boston to the Wash and back, or on high days and holidays making trips as far afield as Skegness or Hunstanton piers. She was ultimately sold and sunk

during WWI by enemy action. The passenger trips ended as a result of the sinking of the *Titanic* when the repercussions of inadequate LSA's meant that the owners would need to spend vast sums to equip them.

### Fishing

No account of Boston would be complete without mention of the fishing industry, which has long been of great importance to the area.

As long ago as 1265 the Prior of Spalding had his own herring fleet in the Wash. Herring was basic to the medieval economy - vast numbers being caught, salted and packed until overfishing ruined the industry.

There was some cod fishing by line and by the 1440s a great congregation of fishermen, including Bostonians,



Above: Boston dock in 1901.  
Below: The River and docks today.





assembled off Iceland every summer, to the fury of the Icelanders. Nothing ever changes! There is frequent mention from the 14th century onwards of a great fish market at Boston, with Boston herrings cured on board in the Dutch manner, having a high reputation and a high price.

In Tudor times fishing fell into the doldrums and in 1573 forty Dutch fishermen were allowed to settle at Boston to try and revive the industry. They had little success and by 1614 there were few left and Boston was buying fish from Scotland.

A revival came in the early 19th century when fishing for herring, cod and sprat grew once more. By 1813 Boston fishermen were jealous enough of their grounds to try to keep Norfolk fishermen out of the Boston Deeps, without success. From the 1880s steam trawlers and drifters appeared and fished the Dogger Bank. The Boston Deep Sea Fishing and Ice Company came into being in 1885 with 8 steam trawlers and a number of smacks, they proceeded to dominate the industry and by 1905 it owned 35 steam vessels operating from Iceland to Portugal. In 1922 a great blow befell the port in the shape of a stranding which blocked the "New Cut" for several months. The *SS Lockwood* inbound with a cargo of coal suffered a steering gear failure, grounded and subsequently capsized blocking entry and exit to all but the smallest vessels which were able to pass around her stern at high water. The harbour commissioners asked Mr Fred Parkes, owner of Boston Deep Sea Fisheries, to remove the wreck. He tried but failed and when the corporation refused to pay his bill of £1,2000.00 he was so disgusted that he took his fleet away from Boston, based them in Fleetwood, and never returned. The *Lockwood* was eventually removed but since then the amount of whitefish landed at Boston has been negligible.

Shellfish from the Wash are famous, especially cockles and mussels. In 1810 fifty vessels visited the Wash and took away 1200 tons of mussels for cod bait on the Dogger Bank. After that Boston developed its own mussel fishery. In 1850 it had 50 boats of between 4 and 40 tons and by 1897 there were 85. Oysters were once good in the area, but by the 19th century the grounds, due to over exploitation, were denuded. One boat is said to have dredged up 17000 oysters in one day.

The trade continues today with 30 boats landing mussels, cockles, shrimps and skate at the town centre quays they have always used. There are 20 boats equipped to fish cockle season (May to December) and they are allowed a landing quota of an average of 5 tons per boat per day. Which equates to 240 days at 100 tonnes per day. A lot of little pots in your local on a Friday night.

## The Port Today

The port is holding its own during these depressed times in a very competitive market. The trading routes today have altered little from those of the 13th century, the Mediterranean, Spain, France, Holland, Germany, the Baltic, Scandinavia and the White Sea. There are currently 3 regular liner services sailing into Boston, they are Lys-Line to south east Norway, Ahlmark Lines to Lake Venen in Sweden and RMS to Rotterdam and Duisberg.

The port maintains its own towing, dredging and hydrographic surveying vessels and contrary to the beliefs of some local councillors, has not suffered the great disasters forecast, when, in light of Government plans to remove any ports from public ownership, the Borough council had the foresight to sell the port into the private sector. That happened two years ago and came not long after the scrapping of the NDLB, thus enabling the new owners to establish more flexibility in working patterns. A modernisation programme is well in hand and slowly the port is being transformed into a modern efficient unit which will more than hold its own when the economic climate improves.

## PILOTAGE

### History

Pilotage in Boston has been in existence for many centuries. As long ago as 1573, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1 the river below Boston was so decayed that a Royal Charter was granted giving the



Pilots hauling the Mayor as Admiral of the Wash in 1936.

Corporation the right to have a court of the Admiralty and jurisdiction over certain matters concerning the Wash; such as, the right to repair and maintain sea marks and to facilitate the navigation of the Deeps.

Pilotage was carried out by local fishermen who "had knowledge of the channels and river to Boston", Plying their trade in those days was extremely hazardous as the channels were continuously changing their courses, much to the dismay and consternation of both pilots and mariners alike.

The charter of 1573 gave to the mayor of Boston the title of Admiral of the Wash a title which still exists and one which the Mayor exercises annually when the mayoral party conduct an inspection of the buoys and beacons of the Wash. Before the last war it was tradition that the pilots towed the Mayor's carriage around the town prior to commencing the inspection.

Pilotage in Boston was formally organised and legislated upon when the Boston Pilotage Act received royal assent on 26 October 1775. The aims of the Act were: The better regulation and government of the pilots conducting ships into and out of the Port of Boston in the County of Lincoln.

It gave to the corporation of Boston the power to control pilotage and recognised the previous 200 years since the Royal Charter of 1573. Furthermore it made masters of outward ships launch a boat and land the pilot once clear of danger. Prior to the Act, if the master found it inconvenient he would bring his ship alongside a 25 foot beacon with a 3 foot cross trees near the top. Upon this pole he would deposit the pilot who had to await either low water when he could then walk ashore, or if he was lucky, a passing

fishermen would take pity on him and take him off!

By 1793 the pilots numbered 10, all licensed by the Boston Pilot Trust. In addition to their pilotage duties they entered into an agreement with the port trust to be responsible for laying, servicing and maintaining the buoys and beacons. They were paid the sum of £37 to be shared amongst them, by the Port Trust. In addition they received a further 5/- for each stone and whole chain returned to Boston.

There are no records of pilotage activities from 1793 to 1886. In 1886 it is recorded that the Boston Pilot Trust paid to boat builder Robert Keightley the sum of £9 14s 2d for a new boat for the pilots; a further 10/- was paid to the sailmaker named T Slator and to JH Tasker a sum of 4/- for new chain for the pilot boat. Those were obviously inflationary times as in 1898 another new boat was ordered from boat builder Charles Thompson which cost £15.

In those days the pilots were stationed aboard a sloop anchored in Clay Hole and the cutters operated from there. The station was kept supplied with men in a novel way. The pilots would "Walk the Main" at low water. They would travel overland to Freiston Shore and then walk out over the marshes and sands to be met by the sloop keeper in an open rowing boat who would ferry them the short distance to the sloop. Pilots returning ashore would do so by the same means. There is an hotel at Freiston Shore called the Plummers and the land-lady was a wonderful woman who would open up the Pilots' Room at any hour and would serve refreshments as they came ashore.

1901 saw one of the saddest days in the history of the service: Three pilots, George Taylor Dawson, Thomas Shepherd and Thomas Flynn were returning from Lynn Well after piloting a ship from Clay Hole to sea. Within two miles of the sloop they were overcome by a squall and were never seen again. Their boat was picked up on Black Buoy Sand by a fisherman who took it to Fosdyke.

As a result of this tragedy the pilots requested that the Pilots' Trust provide them with a steam launch suitable for all weathers in the Wash. This request was refused out of hand so they continued to use their sailing boats, the only change coming in 1917 when a new sloop *Zala* went on station and indeed remained there until 1971.

At the end of WWI all ten pilots received the British War Medal and the Mercantile Marine War Medal.

In 1922 the Boston Pilotage Order was made laying down local Bye Laws. This came as a direct result of the 1913 Pilotage Act but the time lapse was due to hostilities. The 1922 Order saw the birth of the Boston and Spalding Pilotage Authority. Vessels used to trade to

Spalding via the River Welland but in latter years Fosdyke was as far as ships went. The pilots for that river were only interested in Boston for one reason, the clerks to the Authority had their offices in South Square, Boston and that is where the money came from! Fosdyke closed as a commercial port in 1961 and remained so until 1979 when it re-opened for importing fertilizers. The Boston pilots undertook the pilotage function at Fosdyke and still do so.

On 31 August 1925 the service finally took delivery of a motor pilot cutter the *Lyndis Kitwood* designed by McBryde of Glasgow and built at Thompson's yard in Boston at a cost of £1000. Various cutters then came and went, most notably the *Elsie Wing* purchased in 1950 for £1900. The *Lyndis Kitwood* and *Elsie Wing* stayed in service until the end of the sloop days.

During WWII three pilots were killed by enemy action. In 1941 two were lost, AP Allen and E Bagley and in 1942 GW Wilkinson was lost.

"Walking the Main" continued right up to 1971 ending with the arrival of a new, purpose built, GRP 40 foot cutter with a service speed of 20 knots. The *Arthur Lealand* was built by Pinkey Marine in Middlesborough for £22000 when she entered service, so ending an era. Today Arthur Cowe, the senior pilot in Boston, is the only remaining Veteran of the Sloop.

### Pilotage Today

The present service is provided by the Boston and Spalding Pilots Association, a partnership of pilots formed as a result of the 1987 Pilotage Act. The pilots entered into agreement with the two CHA's to discharge the pilotage function for the

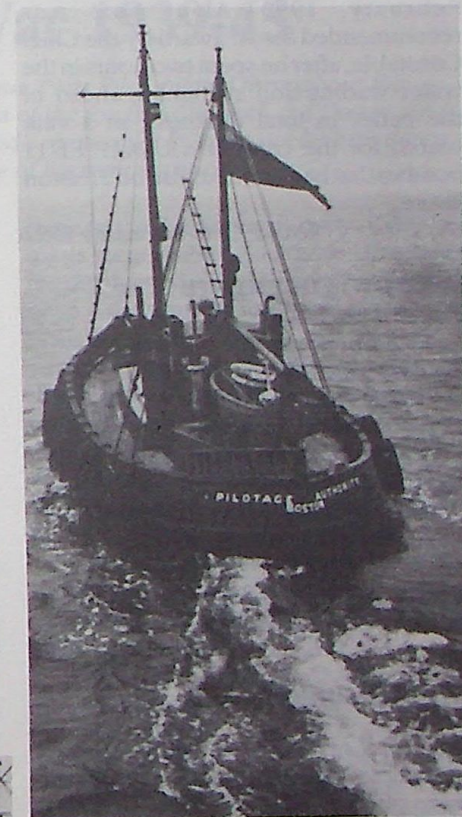
Right: PV *Lyndis Kitwood*, 1925-1971.

Below: PV *Ralph Jenkin*, Boston's modern Pilot Cutter.



Ports of Boston and Fosdyke. They are a totally self governing unit who do every aspect of providing the service other than setting the rates, issuing licences and operating the cutter service. The cutter service is provided by way of two Halmatic 44' boats, the *Ralph Jenkin* 1984 costing £120000 and the *Lyn Ellis* 1989 costing £225000.

Pilotage into and out of Boston and Fosdyke is compulsory for all vessels entering or leaving the ports other than those mentioned in the Pilotage Act 1987 section 7 ss 3. It is only compulsory to and from the Lower Roads (Clay Hole). Most of the ships take their pilot at Clay Hole but the larger ones and those unfamiliar with the district request that the pilot comes to Boston Roads. Today as always the major problem is the silting and the hot dry summers of the last couple of years have not helped. The ever shifting banks and channels still cause problems but with the aid of modern surveying





techniques we can keep in touch with the changes and buoys are frequently being moved.

There are currently six pilots on the station. The CHA's agreed on eight when the 1987 Act was implemented but two of us retired on health grounds last year and as trade was on the slide the necessity to appoint replacements rapidly diminished. Hopefully it will not be too long before the economic climate is such that the levels of trade allow the service to resume full strength.

Finally I feel it only right and proper to mention the cutter crews who not only discharge their duties with diligence and care but also supplement the RNLI service in our corner of the Wash. Indeed both current cutter skippers John Holland and Alan Cox have in recent years been involved in major incidents. In 1974 John Holland received a commendation from the Royal Humane Society after rescuing the navigator from an RAF Buccaneer which crashed off Freiston Shore. In February 1990 Alan Cox was recommended for an award by the Chief Constable, after he spent two hours in the water wading and swimming ahead of the cutter in total darkness, in a vain search for the crew of a USAAF F1/11 bomber that had crashed, also off Freiston Shore.

Keith T Cederholm May 1992

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Professor MJT Lewis  
Hull University  
Captain Peter Brown  
Boston Pilot (Retired)  
Captain Harry Fountain  
Boston Pilot (Retired)  
Captain BDC Franklin  
Harbour Master Port of Boston

## PROFILE

### Harry Fountain

No history of the Boston Pilotage would be complete without the mention of the name of Harry Fountain.

Harry, a Boston Pilot for 33 years, entered the service in 1934 and retired in 1967 at the age of 65. Now one of the oldest - perhaps even the oldest - of pilot pensioners, Harry at the age of 90 is a sprightly reminder of the joys of retirement.

Harry Fountain was born in Boston in 1902, where his parents kept a hostelry. Educated at Boston Grammar School, he decided at the age of 16 to be a Boston Pilot. Needing a square-rigged Masters Certificate to qualify, Harry went to sea as an apprentice with John Stuarts of London, joining the four masted barque *Routenburn* in Halifax, Nova Scotia.



Harry Fountain (centre), October 1988.

About a year later, when the *Routenburn* changed hands, he joined the fully-rigged *Monkbarns* and spent the rest of his apprenticeship time onboard, trading as far afield as Australia, the Americas, the Atlantic and Europe, rounding the Horn on many occasions. Forced to sail as an AB during the depression, Harry finally got his Masters Certificate in Hull with his square-rig endorsement.

With his name down for a place in the Boston Pilotage, he sailed with the Ellerman Wilson Line and with British Rail ferries. He was finally called for Boston in 1934, his life's ambition realized.

Due to the paucity of trade in Boston during World War II, Harry transferred to the Trinity House pilotage expecting to work in London. He ended up in Milford Haven! In 1941, after wartime losses in their pilotage service, Boston Pilotage obtained his release from Trinity House and Harry returned to his home port, where he worked for his final 26 years.

Since retirement Harry Fountain has remained active in the nautical world, writing many articles of his pilotage experiences and his sea-going days for his local press. A popular man, he is one of Boston's characters, a Cape Horner with a seafaring career which stretches back before most of us were born.

As previously reported in *The Pilot*, Harry has the unique distinction of owning and erecting his own, uncompleted tombstone in his local churchyard. (As a good storyteller he will appreciate I cannot miss the punchline). He will never live to see it used!

We can hope that Harry Fountain remains the oldest PNPf pensioner for many years to come.

Editor. From material supplied and published by Ray Malby of the Boston Target in April 1992.

## PENSION NEWS

### Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme

The next renewal date of the AVC Scheme falls on 1st October. This is the time of year when you can join the Scheme, alter your level of monthly contributions or change the investment medium.

Deborah Marten will write soon to all existing AVC Scheme members and to all new pilots who have asked for details, but if you want to join please write to us now so that we can make sure you receive full details well in advance of the deadline!

### AVC Scheme: Self-Employed Pilots

Since my last article we have received Inland Revenue approval to changes in the limits covering additional voluntary contributions paid by self-employed pilots. Perhaps the Revenue's new customer charter is working at last!

Mentioning this point leads me on to a related subject. We have had a number of telephone calls over the past year from financial advisers asking about our Fund in relation to their clients (a client being a self-employed pilot). We generally manage to convince them eventually that the PNPf is unique and that normal practices for self-employed people do not apply as far as contribution limits are concerned. To explain to you (as briefly as possible) the PNPf's special status, I must emphasise the fact that the Inland Revenue set down contribution limits which were unique to our Fund when giving approval in 1980. When the PNPf AVC Scheme started in 1981, special contribution limits were given for that Scheme (which have now been amended, as above). Because of the special contribution rates set by the Revenue for self-employed members of the Fund, it is not possible for them to take out Free Standing Additional Voluntary Contribution Schemes (FSAVCS). If you are approached by a financial adviser who tries to sell you a FSAVCS, would you please mention this fact to him!

### Transferring Pension Scheme Benefits to the PNPf

We have received a considerable number of enquiries from members who wish to consider transferring their previous scheme(s) benefits to the Fund and many of you have decided to transfer. It is worth mentioning though that pension scheme providers are not obliged to transfer out benefits which will become payable within the next year, for example, the

Merchant Navy Officers' Pension Fund's normal retirement age is 61 and MNPA will not transfer to us any benefits for someone who has already reached 60 years of age. If you are considering investigating the merits or otherwise of transferring, please do so before it becomes too late!

### Updated Rules of the PNPf and Explanatory Brochure

A number of changes have been made to the Rules/Definitions of the Fund since the last version was printed. We are again dependent upon the Inland Revenue but once we receive their approval of the revised wording for the Rule covering self-employed pilots' additional voluntary contributions, we shall circulate updated copies of the Rules and relevant sheets for the Explanatory Brochure.

### PNPF Members Retirements and Deaths

From now on I shall include in my article lists of newly retired pilots. On a sadder note I shall also list the names of serving pilots and pensioners who have died. I shall cover the latest quarterly period available as at the time of writing.

#### Retirements from Service

March to May 1992

DA Atkinson	Humber	April
DW Falconer	Forth	March
A MacKinnon	Milford Haven	March
FR Penrice	Manchester	March
GW Scully	Manchester	March
L Sidgwick	Tees	May
LG Volume	Manchester	March

#### Pensioners Deceased

March to May 1992

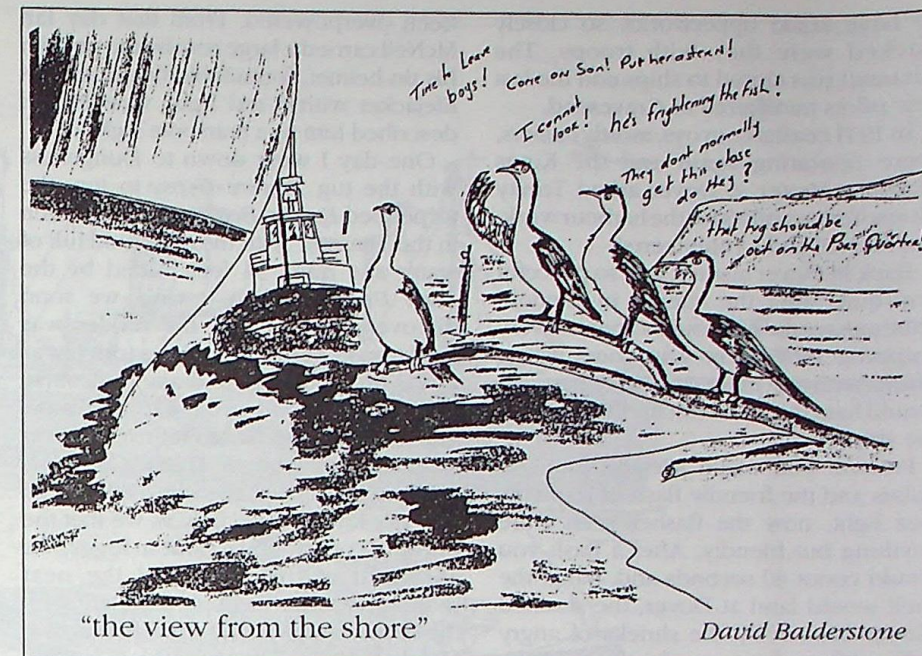
W Cattroll	Liverpool	Retired 1980
AF Findlay	Clyde	Retired 1973
DC Griffey	Gloucester	Retired 1988
JA Hall	London - River Thames	Retired 1989
E Richardson	London - River Thames	Retired 1984
PN Thornton	Clyde	Retired 1988
HB Watkins	Bristol	Retired 1988

In addition we hear that Ralph Knox Miller, retired Seaham pilot, died at the end of 1991.

Jan Lemon

### REMEMBER

It is in your interest if involved in any accident or injury, however trivial it may seem at the time, to inform your insurers **within thirty days**.



## A Pilot's War 1939-45

Captain Tod Carlton, a retired Cinque Ports Pilot, piloted throughout the Second World War in the front line area of the English Channel, the Downs and the River Thames. Retired since 1967, Tod's memory at 90 does not let him down. We reproduce some of his reminiscences.

The war started with us crewing normally at Dungeness, but with the Contraband Control established in the Downs we soon shifted there. Passage outside the Downs was prohibited and mined, Dover soon became a mass of shipping awaiting clearance, marine casualties being an everyday occurrence. Two Belgian Lloyd steamers were cleared together-one minute you could see Ramsgate-the next snow blotted out everything. The leading ship, the *Flandre* decided to anchor and swung round, the second ship came on and hit her amidships. She sank near the Goodwin Fork buoy. The *Mahratta*, whilst waiting for a pilot, went aground and despite five days of high water towing, finally broke in two.

There was a Greek anchored near the Goodwin Fork buoy so we knew where to make for. She was hit so many times they reckoned you could see right through her. The northerly tide swishing through the Downs has a lot to answer for.

Then came the magnetic mines. The South Channels were closed and we had to steer to a position 5 miles east of the N Goodwin LV, shape up north and go in through the North Channel, but that was soon mined as well. Minesweepers soon appeared, towing a long magnetic cable and planes equipped with a circular cable from wing tip to wing tip swooped down to try and explode them. The Edinburghs were kept open but the Princes Channel was closed throughout the war.

The *Matra* was mined and eventually took the bottom near the Shingles Patch,

close to the S Edinburgh buoy. Only her masts were visible. Could this have been the death knell of that important channel, once 6 fathoms at low water, now not even buoyed?

There were two horrible episodes in the Thames Estuary. A Shell tanker coming to anchor at the Nore set off a mine. Within seconds she was a mass of flames, only one cadet was saved. With the tide ebbing a mine was spotted in the mud at a jetty at Thameshaven. As a precaution a tanker discharging there was moved to No 4 Jetty, but another mine exploded and everybody went. Both these tankers burnt for days.

The Royal Navy was scouting around for anything that would float. I had two of them, both rust boxes. The *Saturn*, a trawler for Sheerness, only had a chart called a blue back with the First World War minefields plotted on it! When I enquired about the toilet it turned out to be a shovel in the stokehold! The *King Lear* was a salvage craft from Constanza., I shipped on the 22nd December and anchored off Thameshaven in dense fog. I slept on the flags in the wheelhouse, kept warm by the steam tiller. Christmas dinner was a tin of herrings and black potatoes.

Shipping in the Channel was gradually decreasing and the surplus pilots scattered to Gravesend, the Clyde, Freetown and Iceland. Dunkirk and the dive bombers made Dover untenable. It was nothing to see corpses floating past and the grey painted destroyers appeared



to have khaki upperworks, so closely packed were they with troops. The Channel was closed to ships and the last few pilots transferred to Gravesend.

In 1941 coastal convoys, mostly colliers, were operating again and the Kings Harbour Master at Dover asked Trinity House for two pilots for the harbour work. Ian McNeil and I volunteered.

Back in Dover again it was so peaceful and quiet after the inferno in London, although we did have our moments. Every shipping movement was compulsory, often without main steam, when we would haul the lines with the crew to shift the ships.

Pre-war you could see the loom of Calais and the friendly flash of Cap Gris Nez light, now the flashes seen were anything but friendly. After a flash you would count 40 seconds and, bang, the shell would land at Dover, the stunned silence broken by the shrieks of angry gulls. After clearance from the *Lady Brassey*, the examination tug, we would make for the unlit entrance, the tide racing across, negotiating the breakwater and the wicked boom defence contraption made up of baulks of timber and spikes. We had no time to wonder where the next shell would fall. Going in on the *Brian* with the *Lady Brassey* following, there was a tremendous explosion right astern. The *Lady Brassey* had had it, I thought, and he assumed I was finished. We were both intact although covered in shrapnel. A miracle miss.

On another occasion, whilst waiting at the Dockland for orders to proceed, we were intrigued to see the Harbour lit up like daylight. We learnt that some of the crew from a German ship sunk over the French side, had board a liferaft and been blown right across the Channel and through the Western Entrance of Dover Harbour! If we had sailed earlier we might well have picked them up and

been overpowered. From that day Ian McNeil carried a large revolver to go with his tin helmet, formidable beard and his lifejacket with a red light. One Master described him as a fearsome sight.

One day I went down to Dungeness with the tug *Empire Gypsy* to tow the torpedoed *Empire Beatrice* to Holehaven in the Thames. With the after hold full of water she drew 34 feet. Aided by the *Lady Brassey*, when towing, we soon discovered that either the rudder was hard to port or the after plates torn out as it was only possible to make the course with the tugs broad on the starboard bow. The *Lady Brassey* had to return to Dover before we reached the Thames and how we ever got through the South Edinburgh I do not know, especially as we met the outward convoy and it came in foggy. We anchored at the Nore and the next morning got her through the Gate with the London tugs to the casualty buoy at Holehaven.

Towing the concrete pontoons for the Mulberry Harbour (we called them bricks) was a nightmare. Painfully slow and 7000 tons, each with a 23 foot draught, if you misjudged passing a buoy that was it. One pilot took two of the South Edinburgh buoys, sinkers and all, to the Downs where he shed them, leaving the rest of us wondering where we were!

Before the invasion Southend anchorage was so crowded that every spot of water where a ship could float had one. A marvel of organisation, it was mooted at the conference on Southend Pier that only the lead ships would have pilots. But the masters were adamant. Every ship, large or small, demanded a pilot so we all went, including our former colleagues brought from far and wide for the job.

We were often overcarried to the Beaches. On one occasion we all went with an Antwerp convoy to Ternuzen, fed by the Navy on bully beef and cocoa and

put back on ships to Southend. One pilot overcarried to Gibraltar, another transferred in mid-Atlantic and I shipped on an American T2 tanker at Thameshaven to meet up with a coastal convoy. I was overlooked and they forgot to order the Cutter at Newhaven. Despite all our signals the Navy escort kept saying "later" and I eventually ended up in New York. Armed with a spare pair of socks, one clean collar and two or three pounds in cash, I arrived back in Liverpool a month later in a British tanker, loaded with goodies from the States!

One evening at Dover we heard and saw a plane coming in with a light on it. Cheeky devils we thought, little did we know it was the first of the Doodlebugs. Later it seemed that all the guns in England were stationed between Dungeness and Folkestone, putting up a barrage to stop them getting through, with shrapnel raining down everywhere. The convoys passing inwards in daylight were protected from the Cap Gris Nez guns by destroyers laying a smoke-screen from Dungeness to the South Goodwin. Whilst waiting at Chatham station for a train back we heard a Doodlebug's engine stop. We ran into the Gents toilet, followed by two old ladies, who, when they realised where they were, rushed out again. What modesty!

The War was now coming to a close and although the pilots shipping ahead and astern of me were both mined, I never got my feet wet. Such is life - that I have lived to tell the tale.



*The Cinque Ports Pilots and the Carltons were synonymous. Tod's uncle, father and brother Monty (a stripling of 86) and his son John, were all Cinque Ports Pilots in their time. Tod says he enjoyed every minute of it and could not wish for a better life.*

Government that they set up CGA's, Competent Government Authorities, to run Europe. But if our CHA's are anything to go by, perhaps we should leave well alone!

Panossim

### CANADIAN EXCHANGE

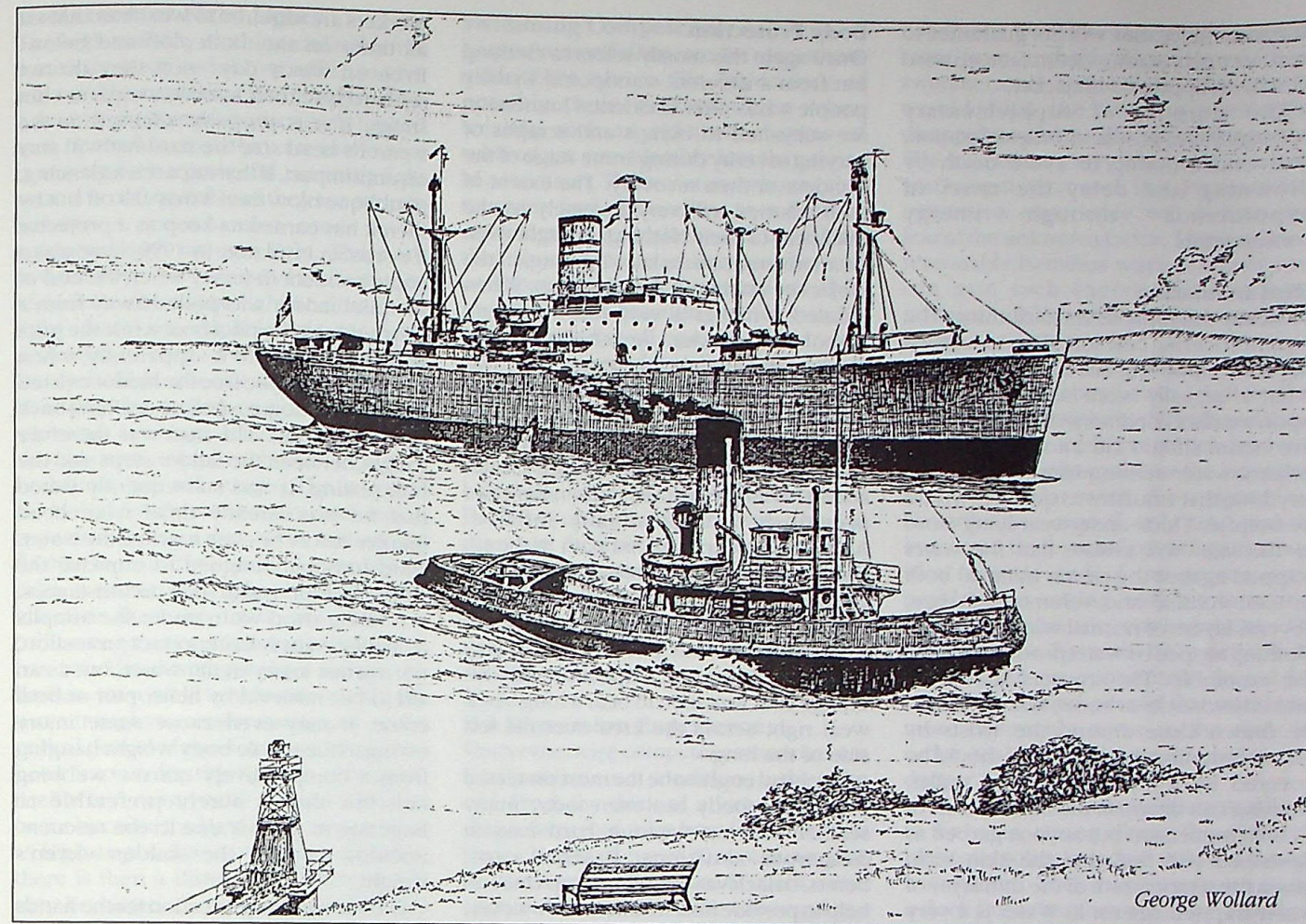
Former pilot and wife now living in the idyllic Gulf Islands of British Columbia would like to exchange houses for a few weeks in the South West of England.

For more information please contact Malcolm Armstrong, Otter Bay Road, Pender Island, B.C. VON2MO, Canada.

No one wants a common currency, no one wants to be other than his own nationality, no one believes that a Dane and a Greek lead similar lives and given that a European's human rights are properly expressed, no one believes they should be forced to. No one believes that the domestic problems of one nation necessarily reflects the problems of another. One aspect of the 1987 Pilotage Act I always had difficulty in refuting was the Government's insistence that all Ports were separate entities. So it is with the European Community.

I had agonized over the thought that my old arch-enemy, Mrs Thatcher, could be right. But sanity prevailed as I realised that the greatest accord by far from all the Europeans I talked to was that Europe was far too important to let politicians have anything to do with it!

Perhaps we could suggest to our



## Technical Committee Report

*We reproduce the second part of a paper presented by Ian Stirling, Southampton pilot and member of the UKPA(M) Technical Committee at the 1991 Conference for the International Association for Sea Survival Training, held at St John's, Newfoundland. It concerns us with the practical application of our survival aids.*

### Supplementary Buoyancy

Anyone falling in the sea without a lifejacket or buoyancy aid will have to make considerable physical efforts to keep their airways above water. Their movements are likely to be hampered by clothing. If they are not strong swimmers or are injured their movements will be unco-ordinated. This struggling will rapidly burn up energy causing an early onset of hypothermia and/or fatigue. Rescue must be very prompt if the victim is not to be lost. The penalties of not wearing a lifejacket can be somewhat delayed by relying on the human body's

natural slight positive buoyancy and relaxing in the water. The posture the body adopts means that it becomes necessary to lift the head every time a breath is required. Only the most confident individuals would have the courage to survive in this manner but it is a technique recommended for the soldiers of Britain's SAS Regiment.

Supplementary buoyancy enables anybody to remain afloat without swimming. An approved lifejacket will enable them to remain afloat with the airways clear of the water even if unconscious. Clearly this is the best option for survival but unfortunately many types of lifejacket are incompatible with the tasks people are required to perform while at risk. Bulky, solid filled vests may ensure immediate buoyancy but they are a menace in a working environment involving climbing or tight spaces. It is not helpful to wear a lifejacket that is likely to propel you into the water in the first place!

In Europe, pilots and pilot boat crews almost invariably wear inflatable vests, lungs or jackets. These may be either breath filled or gas filled. Gas filling may be either manual or water activated. Gas filling is banned where helicopter operations are involved. The great advantage of the automatic inflation jacket

is that ladder climbing is not impeded by a generous bosom. One sensible precaution with such sets is to ensure that a little air is puffed into the lung to prove that it will inflate evenly when the gas bottle is punctured. Some of the vests currently being sold mainly in the yachting market not only perform well but, at the same time are sufficiently unobtrusive to permit all day wear in an energetic environment. However, most European pilots tend to combine their buoyancy with their protection in a coat. The Southampton pilots have standardised on the Sea Safe Mariner coat which contains a single compartment lung with water activated and manual gas as well as mouth inflation. It is essential that such coats are tightly secured around the waist to prevent the lung riding up. Crutch straps can be specified to assist in this precaution. Unfortunately, while the waist belt does not interfere with normal activity the crutch strap certainly does and is therefore not generally popular. These coats are fitted with lifting strops to aid retrieval.

Buoyancy aids are often used by canoeists, windsurfers etc. who are frequently in and out of the water and are never far above the surface. They are inexpensive but are not recommended as an alternative for serious survival

## OPINION

Many European Community ships enter my port and many Community members, such as pilots, talk to other members, such as ship's officers, about the EC. To my amazement everybody, be they British, Danish, German, French, Greek, Spanish and the rest, are all united in their understanding of what kind of Europe we need.

We see a Trade Agreement, including things maritime, with free access to each other's country, with mountains distributed within the Community whenever they inadvertently appear, with a subservient European parliament of sorts for general issues and legal concepts. Similar working agreements would be tailored to each country's needs. National Governments would remain intact.



purposes since they will not guarantee to turn an unconscious victim face upward as will an approved lifejacket.

The purpose of supplementary buoyancy is to ensure effortless flotation, thus endeavouring to avoid death by drowning and delay the onset of hypothermia through energy conservation.

### Heat Insulation

Basically this topic refers to clothing. The type of covering best suited to aid survival depends upon the sea temperature but what is actually worn usually depends upon weather conditions on deck. Ideally, the victim should fall into winter North Atlantic water wearing a 6mm wet suit but anything that emulates its qualities would be helpful. Thick underwear lying close to the skin will ensure that the water trapped against the skin is minimal both in total volume and volume exchange. Several layers of normal winter working clothing topped by waterproofs complete the ensemble. The trousers should be tucked into socks or boots; sleeves should be drawn close around the wrists by velcro fastenings and the neck should be covered by a closely buttoned collar. Nothing can diminish the initial shock of a chilly immersion but anyone garbed as described will find that the skin soon raises the temperature of the thin layer of water trapped against it. Water is a very poor conductor of heat so once this layer has been initially warmed it will protect the body from further chilling - as long as the same molecules remain in contact. This is the reason why it is vital to tightly enclose wrists, ankles and neck to minimise the heat exchange from skin to water which would result from a flow of water up the trouser leg or sleeve and past the vital organs in the trunk. Wearing waterproofs helps because they prevent any exchange of water straight through the clothing.

Gloves would obviously insulate the hands but would be worn at the expense of dexterity. The circumstances of individual cases would decide the appropriate trade off. The author was wearing gloves while adrift but discarded them in order to assist in placing a rope strop around his body and to try to hold on to the boat's becketted lines. A head covering would reduce the great heat loss said to occur from the head. The best insulation would be obtained from a hood or balaclava but any hat or cap would be worthwhile if fitted with a chin strap. Without a restraint it would certainly be lost.

Incidentally, once a person has been rescued from the water it is not really necessary to strip and dry them unless full facilities are available. They may well be kept warmer in their wet clothing inside a foil blanket or any other baffle which will prevent heat loss by evaporation.

### Body Protection

Once again this mostly refers to clothing but from a different standpoint. Usually people who suffer accidental immersion are subjected to bumps and scrapes of varying severity during some stage of the accident or their recovery. The extent of their injuries will vary inversely as the thickness of their clothing. It might even be an inverse square law! Once again the lifejacket comes in handy here. When inflated it makes a very fine miniature Yokohama fender. Another personal reminiscence might be apposite on this subject. The author found himself hanging by one hand and one foot from a ladder while an 11 tonne pilot boat attacked him with its deck edge fender across his left breast. His built-in lung had previously been manually inflated. Although he experienced pain in the rib cage and was sufficiently frightened to cause him to deliberately drop into the water in order to avoid an encore, he suffered no serious chest injury. It was only on subsequent inspection that his orange coat was seen to bear a long black weal right across the area over the left side of the lung.

The head ought to be the most protected part of the body but even today many seamen are not wearing hard hats in dangerous situations. Baseball caps, berets, balaclavas or uniform caps may all help to provide heat insulation. However, none of them affords a reasonable level of protection to the skull in the event of a fall from a height, with the head striking a boat or quay edge. Only an industrial hard hat or motorcycle crash helmet is likely to save the victim from concussion or a skull fracture in such circumstances. The strongest argument in favour of survivors wearing hard hats is probably the protection they give against all the lifebuoys people throw at them! Of course plenty of objections can be found against the use of hard hats on pilot ladders for instance but almost none of them stand up to a logical scrutiny. On the one hand it is claimed that a chin strap is essential to prevent the hat separating during a fall. It is then further claimed that water trapped in the helmet could act as a drogue, tending to hold an inverted victim's head under water. It has also been suggested on the other hand that the brim of a hard hat which has been strapped on could catch on an obstruction during the course of a fall causing the victim to suffer a broken neck. In fact the weight of trapped water compared with lifejacket buoyancy is very slight though it must be admitted that canoeists wear helmets with drainage holes, and mountaineers wear helmets without brims. In both cases these sportsmen's protection is secured under their chins. It should also be remembered that their headgear is worn in the positive expectation of frequently falling in or off respectively. High rise construction

workers are required to wear hard hats at all times on site, both aloft and below. Even on windy days aloft they do not seem to lose their hat even without chin straps. If it is properly adjusted to the wearer's head size the hard hat will stay on until impact. If that impact is a glancing, or oblique blow then it may fall off but by then it has earned its keep as a protector if not as an insulator. In 1990 there was a tragic accident in Jersey when the end of the pilot ladder was pulled away from a ship's side by the pilot boat while the pilot was still clinging to it. Apparently, when it eventually broke free the ladder twisted through 180 degrees before crashing back against the hull. The man was therefore caught between the ladder steps and the hull plating. It was subsequently stated that he was already dead from head injuries before he even reached the water. Hard hats are designed to improve the chances of survival in such circumstances.

A lifting strop worn under the armpits as in pilot coats is an important protection, not against injury in the water, but as an aid to fast retrieval by helicopter or boat crane. It may even cause some injury owing to the whole body weight hanging from a comparatively narrow webbing belt but that is surely preferable to lingering in the sea due to the rescuers' inability to raise the sodden victim's weight.

Gloves worn as protection for the hands are rather controversial since they obviously promote the fumble. Their importance really depends on the job being undertaken at the time of the accident. Certainly, pilots should only wear the lightest of gloves, if any, on the ladder. PVC working gloves may be non-slip and waterproof but as the author knows to his cost they are also non-feel, non-grip.

### Retro-Reflective Surfaces

Anything which improves a victim's conspicuity is to be applauded. Nowadays high visibility colours are used for the materials of working jackets, tabards, lifejackets and pilot coats. They are primarily intended to give daylight protection but also do give quite a good short range light return to a searchlight. However, strips of retro-reflective tape stitched into the clothing at shoulder and collar height multiply the night detection range by several times. The chief failing of retro-reflective surfaces is that they work best at 90 degrees to the light source but this is difficult to achieve on an article of clothing without submerging them. A hard hat provides a suitable surface for adhesive strips as well as the most elevated position for detection. The person adrift without the aid of artificial reflectors has one other light reflecting surface available and that is the human face. He or she should always try to face their source of rescue.

### Strobe and/or Fixed Lights

The high visibility clothing and reflective materials described above suffice to give a good chance of detection at night when a searchlight is employed to scan a limited area. Unfortunately, they are ineffective in cases where a powerful, scanning light source is not available as they are entirely passive. A survivor also needs to be equipped with his own light. There are two main types which may be attached to lifejackets; the strobe light and the fixed light. Both are capable of automatic activation on contact with seawater while the strobe light at least can be switched on manually for testing or non-emergency attention seeking. Ideally, a lifejacket should carry one of each sort since they both have their advantages. The so-called strobe light really comprises a discharging capacitor giving a very short but intense flash at two or three second intervals. In calm weather this light is much more effective than the fixed one since its brilliance ensures much longer range. It has two disadvantages; in a seaway its flashes may well synchronise with the wave troughs to render it eclipsed over a critical period of eye-scanning; then it has been known for the light to extinguish itself when most vitally needed. This can occur because the light is sited in a pocket as high as possible to maximise visibility; there is then a distinct possibility that it may be raised above the water and dry out as the pocket drains. A conscious and uninjured survivor would simply switch it on manually at this stage but the loss of light could prove fatal to someone suffering from concussion; the short answer is - switch it on manually while on deck and to hell with the loss of night vision! The fixed light does not suffer from this problem since battery and lamp are operated by a lead wire permitting the battery to be stowed in a pocket well below water level. The battery is small and the power low so the light is necessarily dim. However, on a dark night even the tiniest light can be a beacon and it is always illuminated when on the crest of a wave as well as in the trough. Of course, its range cannot hope to compete with the smooth water performance of the flashing version but on a dark, rough night it might just be a life saver. Something which does not seem to have been tried at sea is a version of the miner's helmet with built in light. This would increase the elevation of the victim's illumination most effectively.

### Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacons

These must be a good idea. However, they are likely to be of most value in locating drifting craft rather than a man overboard whose position is usually known to his would-be rescuers to be within an area smaller than the area of probability of fixing by EPIRB.

### Swimming Competence

Non swimmers falling into the sea without a lifejacket have a life expectancy of possibly three minutes. Even when wearing such an aid their chances of survival are considerably less than those of a swimmer. Those victims who are able to swim find themselves in a familiar environment. It may be hostile but at least their shock is reduced because they can anticipate the feel of immersion. They also know that breathing under water is to be avoided at all costs so they ensure themselves a good lungfull of air at each opportunity. This in turn reduces the chances of hyperventilation. Hyperventilation is life threatening because it reduces the efficiency of the breathing process and induces panic. Furthermore, swimmers are able to orientate themselves in the water in a controlled manner so that they can be of assistance to their rescuers. In short, swimming competence is a positive psychological aid in the maintenance of reason over panic.

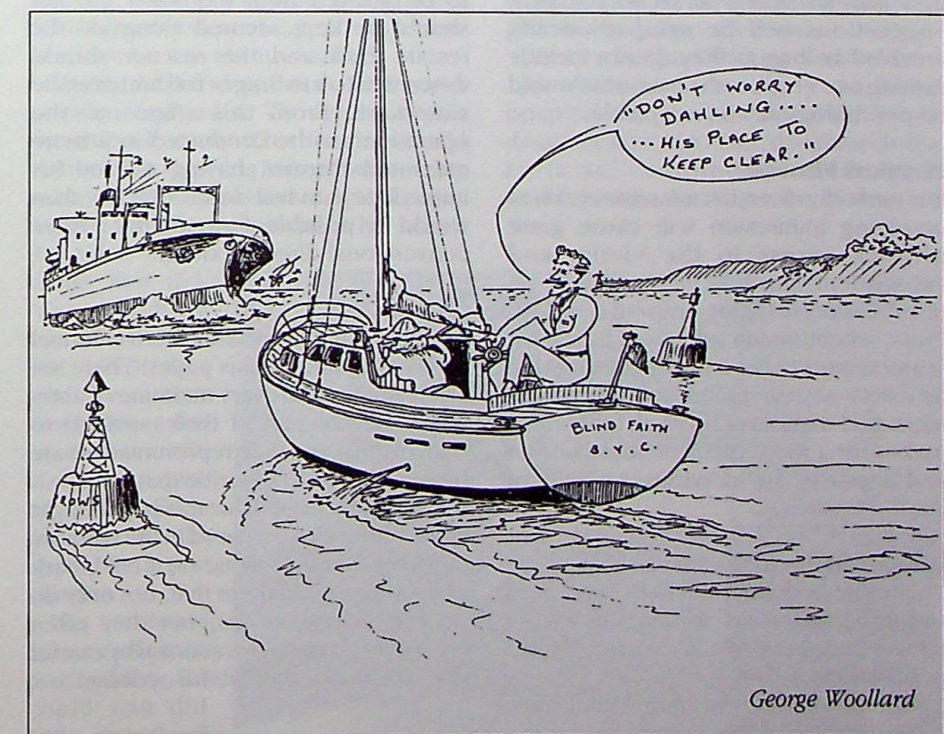
### Sea Immersion Experience

Many otherwise competent swimmers are totally oblivious of conditions in the open sea. From the deck of a large container ship a forty foot pilot boat looks tiny but from a height of eye of 20 centimetres the boat's minimum freeboard of over 1 metre appears insuperable. When attempting a rescue the crew must obviously try to lay their boat alongside the victim. This approach should be a comfort to the latter but in fact the whole process is liable to seem frighteningly like finding oneself standing in front of a charging bull. A force three wind causes only a slight sea, perhaps 30 centimetres high; even combined with a 1 metre swell such

conditions would be described as pretty tame from a ship's deck. However, a swimmer only about three cables away would find the ship increasingly disappearing from sight behind the crests. The sea can be a very lonely place when you're up to your neck in it. Previous sea immersion experience will reduce the fear of the unknown factor. There are two reasonably harmless ways in which one can gain such experience; perform practical drills or undertake suitable sports.

Drills in which every seaman gets an opportunity to spend time adrift in the open sea are obviously difficult and time consuming to conduct which in turn renders them expensive to the operator and unpopular with the operatives. Nevertheless, even if only one man is immersed the bystanders will gain some idea of scale and of the guinea pig's problems in coping with his new and potentially hostile environment. Of course, drills have to be practised in daylight but no opportunity should be missed to remind people that accidents more commonly occur in the dark in order to heighten their awareness of danger.

This calls to mind those becketted lines to be seen strung along the sides of lifeboats, police launches and pilot cutters everywhere. They may have their uses in a dock but at sea they are more usually a hindrance than a help. Just imagine hanging on to one of the loops; when the boat rolls away from the victim his arms are stretched upward until he can no longer bear the weight and lets go; when it rolls toward him the loop disappears far under water dragging him down until he once again lets go and surface, spluttering.



George Woollard







**John Anthony Hall**

John Hall a retired River Thames Pilot died on the 1st of May 1992. Born in 1925, John went to sea as an apprentice in 1940 with the Nailsea Steamship Company of Cardiff. Finishing his apprenticeship John served with several companies including Shell, Royal Mail, GPO, Cory's and the Orient Line.

In 1955 John was appointed as a Trinity House River Pilot having served two years as a pilot in Aden. After the Pilotage changeover in 1988 John continued to



**OBITUARIES**

work for the Port of London Authority. Unfortunately in 1989 John underwent an operation on both legs at St Thomas's Hospital making a very slow recovery. This eventually forced him into early retirement in December 1989. His family plus many friends and former colleagues gathered to pay their respects at the Medway Crematorium on the 8th of May 1992.

John is sadly missed by his wife, three sons, one daughter and by his grandchildren.

**Ernest Richardson BEM**

Ernie Richardson a retired River Thames Pilot died at his home in Gravesend on 19th March 1992 after a long illness.

Born at South Shields in 1921 Ernie commenced his seagoing career in 1935 at the age of 14 serving mainly in foreign-going ships. During the War he was awarded the BEM for his heroic efforts in repairing a damaged radio aerial on an ice covered mast of his ship during a North Atlantic blizzard. He worked aloft for some forty minutes where his hands became frozen to the mast necessitating several of his fingers to be amputated *in situ*. As a result Ernie was hospitalised in Iceland. His ship sailed without him and afterwards was lost with all hands.



A popular member of the Mid-Kent Golf Club, Ernie enjoyed both the game and the social life of the Club where he is fondly remembered. Licensed as a Trinity House River Thames Pilot in 1955 he retired due to ill health in 1984.

Cremated at Medway Crematorium on 26th of March 1992, the service was extremely well attended by family and friends, including many serving and retired pilots.

Ernie leaves a widow, Peggy and a son and grandson who are domiciled in Switzerland.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Sir

Following your editorial in the April edition of *The Pilot*, I thought I would contact you regarding the use of helicopters in pilotage.

I joined Portsmouth CHA as a pilot in January 1989 from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. During my time there I was both Helicopter Control Officer and Flight Deck Officer along with completion of a Flight Safety Course. If any of this would be useful to the service I would be only pleased to assist.

David Shenman, Portsmouth Pilot.

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Dear Sir,

Having noticed with interest George Woollard's cartoon 'The Art of Pilotage' in the April edition of *The Pilot*, it brought back memories of my own experience of a wayward anchor.

I had shipped at the Sunk in a 2500 ton Dutch motor vessel bound for Gravesend early in the morning. All went well making a steady 12 knots until we reached the Chapman. The young flood was just making and visibility became poor. The usual precautions at that time were taken but we had no VHF or Radar. At No 1 Mucking Buoy it really shut in, so full astern hoping to bring up in a vacant slot. However it was not to be, as looming out of the fog and swung across the river at anchor was an Everard (yellow peril) coaster. We made contact with the Everard under his starboard bow; his anchor was hanging in the hawse pipe and as we came astern the anchor flukes caught on our gunnel just at the break of the fo'c'sle head. The pilot on board the Everard must have been having a little nap as no doubt on feeling a bump or two he appeared on deck complete in long johns. It did not take him long to size up the situation and to slack away the cable so that we could slide clear. In the meantime the Everard's anchor had slid along our gunnel taking anything in the way with it and ended up crashing into the dining saloon forward bulkhead,

much to the amazement of the crew members taking breakfast. Meanwhile on the bridge, the Captain's wife appeared wondering what all the fuss was about, only just in time to cover her eyes so as not to notice another near miss by a vessel heading for the midships of a collier.

In due course we were able to return the anchor to its rightful owner, by lowering it into the river bed by means of our ship's derrick.

A very senior pilot anchored in the Swede at the bottom of the Reach made a very strong protest to Trinity House to the effect that more information should be given to pilots regarding visibility in the Lower Hope. My thanks to him as I was not called on to explain my behaviour to the Elder Brethren.

For many months I had to put up with much banter from my cruising colleagues - iron rations and Anchor butter being the main theme. However, being one of the fortunate ones, this was the only report of an accident I had to make in 27 years of Pilotage.

WS Scott.

London North Channel Pilot, (retired)

**Coastlines**

**THE SEAMAN**

Between the innocence of infancy and the recklessness of adultery comes that unique specimen of Humanity known as a Seaman. Seamen can be found in Bars, in Arguments, in Bed, in Debt and intoxicated. They are Tall, Short, Fat, Thin, Dark, Fair but never normal.

They dislike Ships Foods, Chief Engineers, Writing Letters, Sailing on Saturdays and Dry Ships. They like receiving Mail, Paying Off Day, Nude pin ups, Sympathy, Complaining and Beer.

A Seaman's secret ambition is to change places with the Owner for just one trip, to own a Brewery and to be loved by everyone in the world.

A Seaman is a Sir Galahad in a Japanese Brothel, a Psychoanalyst with Readers Digest on the table, Don Quixote with a Discharge Book, the Saviour of Mankind with his back teeth awash, Valentino with a fiver in his pocket and Democracy personified in a Red Chinese prison cell.

A Seaman is a Provider in War and a Parasite in Peace. No one is subjected to so much abuse, wrongly accused, so often misunderstood by so many as a Seaman. He has the patience of Job, the honesty of a Fool and the Heaven-sent ability to laugh at himself.

When he returns home from a long voyage no one else but a Seaman can create such an atmosphere of suspense and longing as he walks through the door with the magic words on his lips:

Have you got the Ale in then ?????



**CLYDE PILOT STATION**

The published photograph of the original Clyde Pilot Station at Princes Pier, Greenock, only recently came to light. No one knew such a Pilot Station had existed and research shows it was probably built between 1875-1880 by Abraham Lyle, the sugar magnate, who founded the famous Lyle Shipping Company, as he took pity on the unfortunate pilots waiting for ships at Princes Pier exposed to all the elements.

It would seem that the present Clyde Control Tower is located only about 100 feet from this old building, from which Tower the serving Clyde Pilots are now called for duty. Ironically there is no longer a Clyde Pilot Station in existence.

In addition, some of the entries in the old Pilots Suggestion Book make thoughtful reading.

1942. Suggested that an automatic door closer be fitted to the outside door to exclude the many undesirables at present entering.

1944. That a calendar be purchased forthwith, showing the month and nothing but the month.

1944. That the Committee approach the Deputy Harbour Master to have the Pilot Office cleaned from time to time, cobwebs removed etc.

1951. As only one teaspoon exists it would be a good idea to purchase three more.

Ewan C Ramsey, Retired Clyde Pilot.

**RETIREMENTS**

**Manchester**

**Frank Penrice, Jock Volume and Bill Scully**, the Canals' three senior pilots, retired on the 31st March 1992 due to a reduced requirement of numbers. All three joined the Pilot Service in 1953 as Helmsmen and subsequently gaining their 1st class licences in the latter months of 1960. Bill Scully, who was Chairman of Manchester Pilots Ltd has handed over the chair to John Jarvis.

**London**

**C Hudson**, River Pilot retired in July.

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The editor apologises to CV Hughes, retired PLA Pilot, who was wrongly reported in our last issue as being CM Hughes. Nobody ever did get it right!

**DISCOUNT TRAVEL**

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**THE PILOT**

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