

# THE SEVEN SEAS CLUB of AUSTRALIA

**"TO PROMOTE AND FOSTER THE COMRADESHIP OF THE SEA"**

**Founded 1968**

**Incorporated 1996**

**Patron**

**The Governor of South Australia**

**An elected COM shall run the Club in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation & Standing Orders**

## NEWSLETTER No. 89 Spring 2021

### Greetings Members-

At the last SSC General Meeting it was discussed as to what should be the frequency of this Newsletter. It was decided to aim for a quarterly issue. With this in mind, I will endeavour to produce the newsletter at the start of each season. So, the deadline for content will be the end of the months of November, February, May and August.

I would like to include an article on a member's boat as a regular feature of future newsletters as was done by Bob Smedley in the last issue; so please consider sending me a story of your boat.

Thank you to those who have sent in contributions for this edition of the Newsletter:

John Braendler, for the President's Report along with an additional article on Robert Leslie Russell, one of the last Cape Horners; Captain Peter Thomas for his monthly historical notes and Captain Bob Smedley for sending me the article "Scratching won't Help." Trevor Powell has also sent in some of his wonderful random photos of ships taken at Port Adelaide.

Fair Winds,  
Terry Beaston

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### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

#### **October 2021 John Braendler**

I am meeting our newsletter producer's request for this next report, in support & appreciation of what Terry does for our Club.

Firstly, the "elephant in the room" for us at this time is Covid. We are all overloaded with reports and news coverage of this, although aware of the absolute importance of that, so let me be brief.

Covid has only had us miss or postpone one dinner meeting and one Committee of Management meeting. Credit goes to our meeting venues for accommodating us. Both the Bombay Bicycle Club and The Public Schools Club have continued with meals, bar services, separate meeting rooms set for us and the provision of IT requirements to facilitate our meetings.

The Club has welcomed new members of calibre and standing, including Commander Alistair Cooper of the Royal Australian Navy, who, having attended a meeting as a guest, elected to not only join, but offered to be our guest speaker at his **induction** meeting - this October dinner meeting.

Very contributory meeting segments continue as part of our tradition with each meeting including presentations on:

- a) The "In this month" note of world events in history.
- b) Summaries of the writings of the legendary Allan Villiers and

c) Shipwrecks - mainly of here in S.A.

The Club continues to grow and outreach in many ways -

- (i) Liaison with RSAYS has afforded us a storage facility there and a link with their library.
- (ii) Social events continue and expand exemplified by the proposed BBQ lunch day at an Adelaide hills farm property.
- (iii) Club wines with innovative Seven Seas Club labelling with relevant and catchy seafaring slogans are being produced for members purchase and as guest speaker gifts.
- (iv) Support with and to the Baxter/Grimshaw Trust continues with a recent youth recipient of the sailing venture upon the "One & All" presenting in a talk to our upcoming dinner meeting.
- (v) The documentation and recording of the Club is continuing with website development and compiling an accurate and interesting history of the Club.
- (vi) An awareness of the need to bring our Club rules, Constitution etc... into line with current Govt requirements is with us - as with many similar organisations in coming times.
- (vii) The continuation of our mixed nights with ladies' and partners. We have 2 of these as dinner meetings with the next being December and looming as one of real interest again and the off-site social days as above.
- (viii) Fund raising via entertainment at our December meeting in the form of an auction, lottery, competition, quiz, or whatever aids our annual contribution to the Baxter Grimshaw Trust.

A succession plan is an agenda item ongoing for Committee of Management and looks to be in good stead for the coming year.

The spirit of the Club is a pleasure to behold and be part of, with so many members so willingly and unobtrusively taking on those tasks which make the Club what it is.

As president, I am very aware of the privilege of this position and so appreciative.

Aye,

John Braendler

## Recent Seven Seas Club Speakers:

**18<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Captain Bob Smedley**  
**"Ship Handling School with Manned Models"**

**15<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Trevor Powell-**  
**"The Pocket Battleships"**



The Admiral Graf Spee was the most famous of the Pocket Battleships built to circumvent the rules set by the Treaty of Versailles after WW1 for rearmament by Germany.

# On this month (September)

Compiled By Capt. Peter Thomas

## Historical notes for the month of September 2021

**Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 1652**

Robinson Crusoe, a fictional character, began his first sea voyage.



Robinson Crusoe standing over Friday after he frees him from the cannibals.

**Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 1985**

The remains of the Titanic, sunk by an iceberg in 1912, were discovered in the North Atlantic.

**Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> 31BC**

Roman legions under Augustus Caesar defeated Mark Anthony's naval force at Actium, Greece.



Battle of Actium 31BC

**Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> 1666**

The Great Fire of London begins and rages for 5 days destroying London.



**Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> 1945**

Vietnam declares independence from France.

**Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939**

Great Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany after its invasion of Poland two days earlier.

**Sept 6<sup>th</sup> 1866**

Clipper ships *Taeping* and *Ariel* arrive in London within two hours of each other after a voyage of 16,000 miles in 90 days. They departed from Foochow, China on 30 May and averaged in excess of 16 knots.





Clipper ship *Taeping* 1866



Clipper ship *Ariel* 1866

### Sept 7<sup>th</sup> 1838

One of the Victorian era's most celebrated heroine was Grace Darling, daughter of a lighthouse keeper in Northumberland, she and her father rescued four men and one woman from the wreck of the *Forfarshire*, a feat of bravery which changed her life dramatically.



The wreck of the steamship *Forfarshire*

### Sept 7<sup>th</sup> 1940

The German Luftwaffe began its Blitz bombing campaign against London during World War II.

### Sept 8<sup>th</sup> 1944

The first V2 flying bombs kill 3 people in London.



### Sept 11<sup>th</sup> 2001

Worst terrorist attack in the US. Nearly 3000 people killed in the World Twin Towers.

### Sept 14<sup>th</sup> 1914

The first major loss in the Great War was the loss of its first submarine AE 1 off the coast of Rabaul near New Guinea.



HMAS *AE1* underway in 1914

### Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 1513

Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa first sighted the Pacific Ocean after crossing the Isthmus of Panama.



### Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 1916

Tanks were first used in combat, during the Allied offensive at the Battle of the Somme, in World War I.

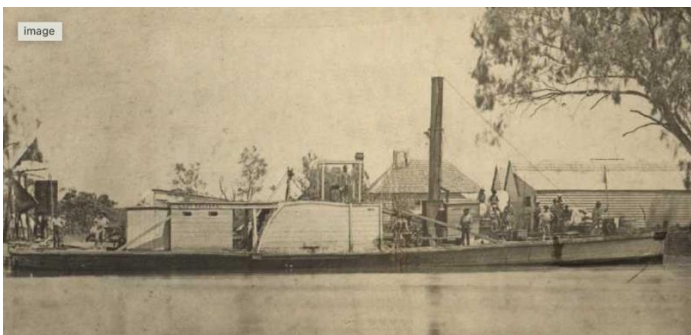
### Sept 16<sup>th</sup> 1620

The *Mayflower* ship departed from England, bound for America with 102 passengers and a small crew. The ship weathered dangerous Atlantic storms and reached Provincetown, Massachusetts on November 21st.



### Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1853

Captain Francis Cadell arrived at Swan Hill in the "Lady Augusta". This being the first powered vessel to transit the River Murray.



### Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 1908

First factory-built Model T Ford completed.

### Sept 26<sup>th</sup> 1580

The *Golden Hind* arrives in Plymouth harbour having sailed around the world under the captaincy of Sir Francis Drake.



### Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1066

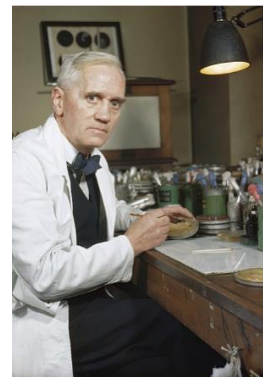
The Norman conquest of England began.

### Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1850

Flogging on US Navy and US merchant marine ships is abolished.

### Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1928

Alexander Fleming discovers Penicillin.



### Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1994

Car and Passenger Ferry the Estonia sinks off the coast of Finland killing 852 passengers and crew.



Scale model of MS *Estonia*



Note: Ron Thiele was a seaman who had his start in the South Australian trading ketches. He was born in 1926 and after leaving school, worked around the Australian coast in ketches, colliers and liners. He retired from the sea in the early 1960s and died in 2016 at the age of 89. He spent his later years in Sydney and worked as a volunteer with the Sydney Maritime Museum. In his retirement he wrote widely on his experiences at sea and a book called 'Ketch Hand', which was published in 1976. He also wrote articles for 'Sea Breezes' magazine and the 'Annual Dog Watch'. Thanks to Captain Bob Smedley for this article!

The following article is from the 1988 edition of the 'Annual Dog Watch'.

# Scratching Won't Help

by RON THIELE

The ships of my youth all had one thing in common. To one degree or another they were all plagued with vermin, a fact which we accepted with resignation unless the degree of infestation made life unbearable. There were three major pests, rats, cockroaches and fleas either singly or collectively, they preyed upon the sailor's person, his belongings or his food. Australian ships maintained fairly high standards of cleanliness when compared to those of other nations, but the very construction of, and the materials used in, the quarters made the eradication of pests very difficult.

By law all Australian ships were fumigated at regular intervals, this accomplished little, sometimes merely a respite counted in hours. The thousands of egg sacks deposited by the cockroaches in warm, dark corners of the ship hatched out, and a fresh troop of rats marched boldly up the gangway the first night after ship had been declared clean by the Health Department.

The rats, of course, brought aboard their own fleas and the cats we kept to ostensibly catch rats, harboured and fed fleas by the thousands. I don't think I ever saw a ship's cat actually catch a rat. I did see one or two make a half-hearted pass at a rat, possibly in an attempt to justify their privileged position, or to ingratiate themselves with the crew. Why ever should they chase rats when their food tins were filled three times a day with left-overs from the messroom tables, and whatever would they do with a rat if they caught one?

Even the cats at times reached plague proportions. One ship I sailed in had seventeen of them at one time until the Captain, finding two of them in his bunk and one using the corner of his cabin as a W.C., lost his temper. The crew's delegates were summoned to the bridge and informed that, as of that moment, he had instituted a new rule of felines allowed onboard to two. Either they took action, or he would.

When the ship sailed there were fifteen cats left sitting on the wharf. Cruel perhaps but, knowing those cats, I was sure they would quickly establish themselves aboard other ships.

Soft hearted sailors would be cutting up pieces of corned beef for them, petting them, and crooning "Poor pussy, did you miss your ship?" Ship's cats had a wonderful life, even in the poorest of vessels, and I never saw one mistreated. Drunken firemen and sailors would stagger back on board after the pubs shut, fights would begin and develop into bloody brawls, then the survivors of this mayhem would sit on the after hatch, taking it in turns to cradle the ship's cat in their arms. Fleas appeared to be almost seasonal, in that, one day, the ship would seem to be almost free of them then, overnight, they would be tormenting us in their bunks

What we did know was that coal cargoes brought fleas, and the trimmers, working in the bunkers of coal burning steamers, were always itching. How those fleas came to be in the coal, and on what they lived, was to us an insoluble mystery.

The extensive use of timber in the living quarters of ships provided the sanctuaries necessary for the continuing life cycles of these various pests until, in the 1950's, larger ships were built, with improved accommodation which almost entirely eliminated the use of wood. In the old tramp steamer's messrooms, the tongue and groove lining hoard was commonly used to cover steel bulkheads, and in the dark, sweating cavity between them, conditions were ideal for the rapid multiplication of cockroaches.

The Macedon, an old coal burning steamer built in 1916 and which traded on the coast for many years, had messrooms lined in this manner. Even in daylight hours we could see cockroaches darting in and out of the cracks and joins, but it was after sundown that they emerged in their legions, particularly if the deckhead light was switched off. In desperation, when sprays and powders failed, we made a sport of killing them.

The men on the 12-4 a.m. watch, having been called out at 7 bells have a cup of tea before going on duty, spread breadcrumbs over the tables and decks in the messroom. They then switched off the lights, left the room, and shut the door, remaining on deck until 8 bells when they relieved the helmsman, lookout and standby man. These three men, coming off duty, made their

way to the galley where they filled buckets with boiling water, and carried them to the messroom door. Each man stood with bucket poised, the door was open and the light switched on. In they rushed, flinging boiling water in every direction, over the seething swarms of cockroaches. That they would have to spend at least half an hour of their off time, cleaning up the mess they had made, did not dampen the satisfaction they felt at having eliminated hundreds of "the enemy". These forays made little, if any, difference to their numbers, for think they merely reproduced at a greater rate, but they provided an endless topic of conversation at meal times. As the 12-4 watch, coming off duty at 4 a.m., also went into action with boiling water, the campaign became a little competitive, with highly exaggerated casualty claims.

Alternative methods of attack were seriously discussed, ranging from steam jets directed through holes drilled in the timberwork, one potential arsonist who wanted to set fire to the messroom. The war was endless and was still being waged with undiminished intensity when I paid off the *Macedon* in Port Adelaide.

My very first ship introduced me to the type of company I would have to keep for many years. She was a small sailing ship, so we had small rodents. In her tiny foc's'le, mice ran everywhere so, mixed the stench of her bilges was the pungent smell of these furry pests. My bunk, which contained a grubby mattress and pillow, was never disturbed by such a civilised activity as "being made" until, one sunny day, I decided to give my bedding an airing on deck. As I picked up my pillow, mother mouse darted away, leaving for my inspection her pink, hairless litter, sleeping contentedly in a small depression in the mattress. Scooping them up in my hand I climbed the short set of steps to the deck, where I flung them over the side. Mother mouse would have to start again, and NOT under my pillow.

Each succeeding ship was much the same, only the type of vermin, and the degree of infestation, varied. Many of the early ships had wooden platform bunks, with fairly high wooden sides to prevent the occupant from being flung out in bad weather. This type of bunk was a natural incubator for bed-bugs, and only someone who has suffered them throughout a watch below, desperate for sleep, can know what a torment they are.

The introduction of pipe frame bunk stanchions and metal frame bunks virtually eliminated these obnoxious pests, but many an old shellback was upset at losing his wooden 'nest'. They were so much cosier and, besides, one could press one's shore going suit under the mattress.

I joined the steamer *Arkaba* in 1950, one of the last ships on the coast to have a common foc's'le. By then the crews of most ships were living in the modest comfort of two or three berth cabins, and seamen were already talking of the ultimate in luxury, a single berth cabin for all. The foc's'le of the *Arkaba* occupied the whole of the stern, sailors on one side, firemen on the other, and the name was only applied to these quarters through prolonged usage. The foc's'le proper, of course, was forward and in the *Arkaba* was used as the deck gear store and carpenter's shop.

The ship was infested with rats and, because of their numbers, they were desperate for food. That they were cannibals we were sure for the trimmers, shovelling coal in the dimly lit bunkers, often heard the squeals of rat attacking rat. Several watches later, as the coal was used up, they would find a skeleton of cleanly picked bones, lodged under a frame.

These rats were without fear and, especially at night, scampered openly about the foc's'le. They stole socks, chewed boots, and nibbled books. To be sound asleep and have a huge rat run the length of your bunk and over your face, leaving his stink behind him, is a very unnerving experience. No food could be left uncovered in the messroom or saloon, or unguarded in the galley.

As we tramped about the coast we complained continually to the Captain and the Company's agents, but there was always some reason why the ship could not be fumigated. The last straw came shortly before the *Arkaba* berthed in Townsville, where we were bound to load sugar. A fireman, asleep in his bunk, had his ear badly bitten by what must have been a king size rat.

The crew's delegates went to the bridge the following morning and informed the Captain that the ship would not leave Townsville until it had been fumigated, and no excuses or pleas would make them change their decision. The Captain, a reasonable man, replied that he would notify the Company office immediately we docked and, as the ship was empty, there should be no problem.

Well, the Company was most unsympathetic, and of course there were problems. Firstly, there were no fumigation facilities in Townsville, personnel and equipment would have to be sent up from Brisbane. This would cause a lengthy delay to their loading arrangements for the ship and incur great expense. Also, accommodation for the whole crew would have to be found for a night, not easy to do in Townsville, and would cost them a great deal of money. "Now, won't you be good fellows and take the ship south to Melbourne. We promise it will be fumigated there".

But the crew were adamant. Fumigation then and there or no steam for the wharfies to load sugar, so the Company yielded and made necessary arrangements. The morning after fumigation, we all I trooped up the gangway about 8 o'clock, in time to see

the Health Department men haul three sugar bags, full of dead rats, over the coaming of No. 4 hatch. They told us that the quantity of rats from our ship was the highest they had ever seen, and these were only ones they could find. The ones they couldn't find became very noticeable in the next few days as, in the tropical heat, the sickly, sweet stench of their rotting bodies became overpowering. The wharfies went ashore, and so did we, and there were no recriminations.

Rats are tenacious creatures, and their will to survive is probably their only admirable trait.

The *Beltana*, like most old ships, had wooden lifeboats. They were in class condition but, like any boat built of wood, were subject shrinkage, so the Mate had a standing rule that they should be lowered into the water at least once a month. All the equipment was removed from them for checking, the plug was left out, and they allowed to sink until they were supported by their own buoyancy tanks. Once settled all that remained above water were the thwarts, side benches and bulwark capping.

In Bowen, one trip, we lowered the port side boat, ran fore and aft painters to keep her in place, then began work on the equipment which was spread about the boatdeck. Sometime later the Bosun over the side to make sure that the boat had settled in the wilier without placing any strain on the falls, which had been left but still hooked on.

"Hey, lads", he called, "come and have a look at this lot". We left our various jobs and, going to the ship's side, looked down. There scurrying about the benches and bulwarks of the lifeboat, were at least thirty rats, some very wet, and all very agitated. Their flooded homes had been the boxed sections under the side benches, which contained the buoyancy tanks. Some were already attempting climb up the boat falls but, by alternately pulling and slacking the hauling parts which led inboard over the thumb cleats on the davits, we shook them off so that they fell back into the boat with a splash.

Various suggestions were put forward about how we could get rid of the rats as we did not intend bringing them back aboard again.

The storekeeper wanted one man to climb down the boat-ladder, armed with a broom then, balancing on the almost submerged boat, sweep the creatures into the sea. As there were no volunteers, and "Stores" didn't feel inclined to go himself, that idea was allowed to lapse.

The Bosun settled it all by saying, "Right, we'll have a fire drill. Two of you rig a fire hose and tell the donkeyman we want all the pressure he can give us. The rest of you, get these falls led to winch drums. " Within minutes the fire hose, held by two men, was directing a high pressure jet at the rats, knocking them off their footholds on the boat and into the sea.

Owing to the weight of water which the boat would contain if it was hauled out in the normal manner we had to "cock-bill" it, that is, haul one end up first, thus spilling most of its contents. When the boat was almost clear of the water in this way the other fall was hove until the boat was level, then allowed to drain completely. While this was being done, under the direction of the Bosun, the fire hose party continued their assault because, as fast as they were blasted into the sea, the half stunned rats swam back and attempted to scramble onto the boat.

When at last the boat had been cleared of rats, and hove out of the water, the fire hose was turned off. Swimming about in the sea directly below were the rats, some clawing at the rusty steel of the ship's side, others aimlessly paddling to and fro. For them we could feel no sympathy, only watching them with idle curiosity until the Bosun called, "Come on lads, there's work to be done".

Sometime later curiosity drew me to the ship's side. What appeared to be the same number of rats were still paddling gamely about, still within an area of a few square yards. They had no way of knowing that, if they followed the ship's side to either stem or stern, they would be able to find refuge under the wharf.

By mid-afternoon the number of swimmers was considerably less and, in desperation, some rats were attempting to climb onto the backs of others. I watched, fascinated. The rat thus imposed upon did not attempt to fight, he merely allowed himself to sink, so the aggressor was compelled to swim again. The meeker rat then paddled doggedly to the surface and continued his own struggle for survival.

Towards evening I was drawn again to the ship's side, but the surface of the harbour appeared undisturbed. As I stood there, looking down into the clear green water, I saw three small bodies paddling vertically up to the surface. As their little snouts emerged into the air they hung there for a second, then they stopped paddling and sunk back, tail first, into the depths. Several minutes later they re-appeared and, in the bright, clear water, I could see that their eyes were already closed. I turned away, feeling quite sick.



Thanks to Trevor Powell for sending me the epic photographs of ships taken at Port Adelaide recently:



Box ship MV MSC Shahar departing from Port Adelaide - 29 July 2021.



Box ship MV APL SAVANNAH departing from Port Adelaide - 3/08/2021



Bulker MV Obrovac arriving in the Inner Harbour, Port Adelaide - 2/08/2021.



SL Endeavour, Port River, Port Adelaide - 4/08/2021



Vehicle Ro-Ro MV Iguazu Highway arriving at the Outer Harbor, Port Adelaide - 5/08/21

# Baxter & Grimshaw Foundation Inc.

“One and All” sponsored voyages

The Baxter and Grimshaw Foundation sponsored a young participant in the latest voyage of the “One and All” which left Port Adelaide on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 and returned on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> of September. Club member Barry Allison was there to see him off and to greet him on his return.

They enjoyed favourable weather for the trip, travelling down the coast to the foot of the Yorke Peninsula and return.



The “One and All” leaving Dock 2, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> of Sept.



Returning to Dock 2 on the 30<sup>th</sup> of Sept with many of the young people straddling the rigging.

# Naval Association of Australia

35 Quebec St Port Adelaide

Recently, as part of SA History Month, my wife Meridith and I visited the Open Day at the Naval Association at Port Adelaide.

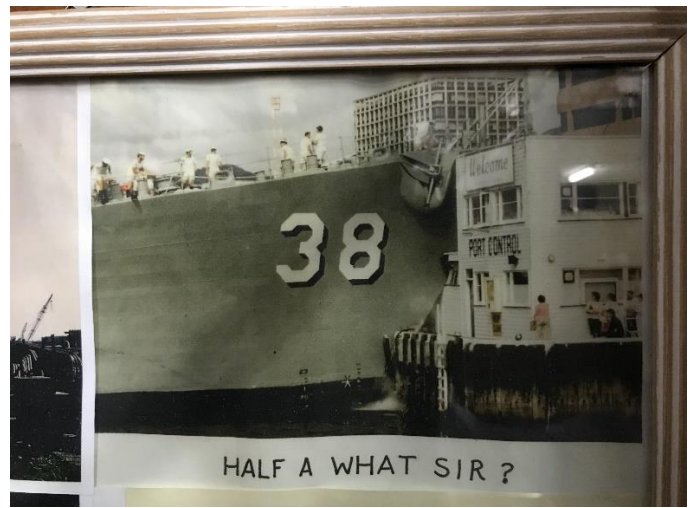
We were impressed with the range of displays in the clubrooms, with many scale models of ships, photographs and marine memorabilia.

One that I found fascinating was the history of the Torpedo boat station located near Garden Island. There were maps and photos of the interesting boats that once patrolled the Gulf.

Perhaps we could organise a Club visit there in the future?  
-Terry



One of the many displays at the Naval Association Clubrooms, which includes a bar and dining area.



There would have been a few red faces over this one!



## ROBERT LESLIE RUSSELL

By Jenetta Russell (Daughter)



Born: 29 Jun 1926, Adelaide, South Australia  
Marriage: Ms Rosalind Tapply on 15 Sep 1951 in Adelaide, South Australia  
Died: 15 May 2005, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia at age 78

Men of the sea and of agriculture have historically had much in common. Robert Leslie (Bob) Russell, who has died at the age of 78 after a long illness, managed to combine both in a very full life.

Born in South Australia, Russell grew up at Brighton near the beach, engendering his love of water and 'things maritime' from a very early age. After excelling in sports at school, Queen's College, gaining his 'blues' in Athletics, cricket and football, he joined the Navy in 1943 at the peak of WWII training at Flinders Island Naval Base. As a signalman he served North of Australia on Goode and Booby Islands before joining the Corvette minesweeper, HMAS Deloraine and being personally involved with the removal of many mines. This was often achieved by either shooting the mine with a rifle or rowing over to the mine, attaching an explosive charge, and (once clear) detonating.

In 1947 he went ashore, was demobbed and joined Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort; however, 18 months later, the call of the sea was too strong, taking up an offer to join the four-masted barque, S.V. Passat on its last voyage round Cape Horn and on to Europe carrying grain from the grain belts of York Peninsular in South Australia. This was the end of the era of merchant sail as costs required for new safety regulations onboard made it uneconomic compared with steam. Russell signed on as "Donkeyman", helmsman and (officially) Ordinary Seaman - they sailed away in June 1949 carrying 4,500 tons of barley. The voyage took 110 days sighting land once only (Cape Horn) on the entire voyage.

Life aboard these last windjammers was pretty Spartan - no different to 100 or even 200 years earlier. Their Navigation aids (the sun, the moon, the stars and a sextant) were the same - they didn't have engines and relied on wind in sails alone.

The crew was divided into 2 teams, a Port and a Starboard watch. Watches were 4 hours with each watch working alternately. However, if you hadn't finished your job at the end of your watch, you kept working.... even if this meant continuing on through the next four hours and going back onto your next watch. Russell loved every minute of it, the harder it got the more he loved it - his enthusiasm emanates from every page of his log!

"Splicing the Mainbrace" or a tot of rum - as much as you can drink in one swallow was the Captain's reward for hard labour in extreme conditions such as they experienced down at Cape Horn and off the Antarctic. This excerpt from his log is an example of what befitted this reward:

"At 4AM three whistles [means all crew on deck] and had to get in Fore Upper Topsail when we should have gone below. .... Finished at 5AM and down below into bunk. Got to sleep at quarter to 6 and was awakened at 6 AM and on deck once more as the four course had blown out. Finished this job of furling at 7.30 and down for breakfast and on to wheel at 8AM. Off wheel at 9.30 and then Jack and I had to get some wire strops that were hanging over the side from the four course, inboard ... Then up aloft for one and a half hours putting new rovings on the main topsails. Boy was it cold. It was snowing and hailing most of the time and the yards and stays were covered with ice. Very thankful to get below. Its amazing how when working aloft all thought of cold and tiredness disappear and when on deck after it you feel warm all over. Off watch at 1 PM head down and just thinking of turning in at 2.15PM when three whistles once more. This time to furl main and mizzen topsails.....Finished at 3.30 PM a tot of rum from Captain and down into bunk and sleep till 6.20PM. Only 4 hours sleep in 44 hours and I'm not feeling particularly tired."

Russell's brother, an electrical engineer, set up a Crystal set radio for him before "Passat" left South Australia, with an aerial rigged to the base of one of the masts so that music could be heard when off land. The Captain got to hear about this and asked if his radio could be attached to this aerial.... which was done! Voila! Music for the Captain too! Russell was presented with a bottle of rum that was duly shared round the mess. In due course, the rum ran out and mysteriously, the Captain's aerial became unattached. He was called in to see why the Captain couldn't get music. As he was not into electrics (as his brother was), he made a good show of looking very seriously at the radio, lifting out the valves one at a time returning them quickly while he remembered where they went. A quick trip to the mast and re-attachment of the aerial quietly and, Hey Presto! The Captain had music once more and Russell and his mess another bottle of rum! This happened 3 or 4 times during the voyage (every time rum supplies ran low)..... At the end of the voyage he received his pay cheque - less 4 bottles of rum!

Russell returned to Australia on P&O's 'Strathmore' in 1950 where he met the children's hostess, Rosalind Tapply, who would become his wife and life-long partner. His arrival back in Adelaide marked the start of a career in the agricultural industry. From 1950 to 1967 he worked for the



oldest agricultural machinery company in Australia, Horward Bagshaw Ltd rising to State Manager before being headhunted by Howard Rotavator, the originator of the rotary hoe. He was appointed as National Sales Manager but was quickly promoted on to the board as Sales Director. It was during this era that Russell became federal president of the Tractor and Machinery Association of Australia - being instrumental in turning the organisation into a political mouthpiece and focal point of the Australian tractor, farm and construction machinery industry. In 1983, Russell left 'Howards' and, with his son and daughter, started 2 agribusinesses, importing and distributing glass-fused-to-steel tanks and silos for agriculture and industry and also agricultural consumables and additives for feedmills and intensive animal production. His commercial and sales experience helped to take those companies to where they are today.

Being one of the last Cape Horner's (there are now only approximately 100 left in the world) has meant 50 years of camaraderie and friendship with hundreds of others who rounded the Horn under merchant sail prior to 1949, through the global organisation of Cape Horners (Amicale de Cap Horniers), meeting annually up till 2003, somewhere in the world. In 1988 at the instigation and organisation of Russell, the Cape Horners World Congress was held in Sydney around Bicentenary Day, January 26th, where the group were given Clarke Island on Sydney Harbour to view the momentous and historic spectacle of boats and ships - as President of the Australian section of Cape Horners, he was also a member of the Sydney Harbour Bicentennial Authority and for organising the event, awarded an Australia Day medal.

Through his work and Cape Horner interests, Russell travelled to many remote parts of the world regularly up until 2000, A highlight in recent years was a return to Cape Horn in 1991 as the guest of the Chilean Navy for the unveiling of a memorial to those who lost their lives in that treacherous piece of water. On the day of the unveiling the sea was so calm, Russell was quoted in the British press as saying he was pleased his family were not present as he had been telling them stories for 50 years about how rough the waters in that region were normally.

An enthusiast to the extreme, Russell was also a true gentleman and popular in all the walks of life his path took him. He will be sincerely missed by many who knew him. Russell is survived by his wife, Rosalind, and a son and daughter, Chris and Jenetta.

**Thanks to John Braendler for forwarding this article**

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## *Film of the month:*



Lifeboat is a 1944 American survival film directed by Alfred Hitchcock from a story by John Steinbeck. It stars Tallulah Bankhead and William Bendix, alongside Walter Slezak, Mary Anderson, John Hodiak, Henry Hull, Heather Angel, Hume Cronyn and Canada Lee. The film is set entirely on a lifeboat launched from a passenger vessel torpedoed and sunk by a Nazi U-boat. It is a fascinating story with amazing character studies. Available on youtube and other online platforms.

