

TABLE TALK / TO THE POINT :

JULY 2011

Just in case anybody reads this newsletter I apologise for the lack of a June edition. The omission was due to an unscheduled visit to the UK. Whilst there I was able to revisit Chatham Historic Dockyard, a facility well worth a visit by anybody interested in matters maritime who happens to be in the South of England.

The revamped No. 1 Smithery, which I last visited as an “appie” more than half a century ago, now contains many impressive ship and boat models loaned by the National Maritime Museum.

The three “River Docks” are occupied; No. 2 by the WW II destroyer *HMS CAVALIER*, No. 3 by the Chatham-built conventional submarine *HMS OCELOT* and No. 4 by the Victorian era steam gunboat *HMS GANNET*, formerly the *TS MERCURY* which lay for years in the Hamble River in Hampshire.



THE WORLD WAR II VINTAGE DESTROYER HMS CAVALIER
LIES AFLOAT IN No. 2 DOCK AT CHATHAM HISTORIC DOCKYARD.



OCCUPYING No. 3 DOCK IS *HMS OCELOT*, THE LAST SUBMARINE BUILT AT CHATHAM FOR THE ROYAL NAVY. THE FUNNEL AND CURVED PADDLE BOX TOPS IN THE BACKGROUND WERE FABRICATED BY APPRENTICES AT APPLIEDORE SHIPYARD, ON THE NORTH DEVON COAST, FOR THE PADDLE STEAMER *MEDWAY QUEEN*. THE HULL OF THE PADDLER HAS LONG SINCE RUSTED AWAY AND THE NATIONAL LOTTERY IS FUNDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A REPLICA HULL, PRESUMABLY ALL-WELDED, BY A SHIPYARD IN BRISTOL. THE GREY MINI-SUBMARINE SEEN ON THE DOCKSIDE IS A FILM PROP WHICH WAS BUILT ON No. 7 SLIPWAY, FORMERLY THE MAIN SUBMARINE BUILDING SLIPWAY, BY A PRIVATE COMPANY WHICH NOW LEASES THE FACILITY.

On 14 November 2007, HMS Cavalier was officially designated as a war memorial to the 142 Royal Navy destroyers sunk during World War II and the 11,000 men killed in their service. The unveiling of a bronze monument created by the artist Kenneth Potts was conducted by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. The monument resides adjacent to the ship at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham, Kent. - Wikipedia

OBITUARY : R. ADM. (JG) J.R.W. DART PrEng. (F 85008) : John Robert West Dart was born on 30 April 1938 and began his military career as a fitter apprentice with the SAAF, undergoing training at AFB Zwartkops, just outside Pretoria. In 1958 he transferred to the S A Navy as a midshipman and enrolled for the B Mil. degree course at the University of Stellenbosch. This was undertaken in conjunction with military training at the S A Military Academy in Saldanha; practical training in Simon's Town Dockyard and sea-time aboard Coastal Minesweepers and Seaward Defence Boats. John was selected to undertake further engineering studies at the R N Engineering College at Manadon, in Plymouth, and gained engine and boiler room watchkeeping experience aboard ships of the Royal Navy, qualifying as AMIMEchE before returning to the RSA in 1961 to serve as Machinery Officer aboard the new Type 12 frigates. He was the Machinery Officer aboard *SAS PRESIDENT PRETORIUS* when the ship was part of a flotilla which undertook a courtesy visit to Australia in 1968. During the early 1970s, after serving as Machinery Officer aboard *SAS PRESIDENT PRETORIUS*, he was selected as Simon's Town based Project Engineer for Project *Taurus*, which involved the construction of four Corvettes at Cartagena, in Spain. These ships were nominally for the Portuguese Navy but were to be transferred on completion, to the SAN. The fall of the Salazar Government in Portugal in 1974 caused the order to be cancelled.



John was then appointed Project Engineer for the construction of three "Reshef" Class Strike Craft at Israel shipyards in Haifa and he and his family spent several years in Israel where he co-ordinated the construction of the ships and the training of Naval and Dockyard personnel to support them after delivery.

On his return to South Africa in 1978 John settled his family in Westville and, as Officer Commanding Naval Dockyard Durban, set about managing the modernisation of the Naval Base and former Union Whaling facilities at Salisbury Island to create a mini-Dockyard and Operational Base which would be able to support a flotilla of Strike Craft equipped with state-of-the-art electronic systems.

During the period 1979 – 1982 he attended the Naval Staff Course in Muizenberg and the Joint Staff Course in Pretoria, passing both with flying colours. He then served as Senior Staff Officer (Logistics) in the staff of Rear Admiral Paul Wijnberg, the Flag Officer Commanding Naval Command East, based on the Bluff at Durban. After COMNAVEAST closed down on 31 March 1990 he was appointed Officer Commanding Naval Logistics Base at Simon's Town. The Base was responsible for the design, modernisation and upkeep of naval vessels and equipment and the procurement and management of a wide variety of items known collectively as "materiel." He held this appointment until he retired, and returned to Westville, in 1993.

John Dart was an active member of SAIMENA and also of the Naval Officers' Association of South Africa and had a wide circle of friends who will miss his companionship. He died on 9 June this year after a long illness bravely borne and his Memorial Service was held at the Glenridge Church above the Durban Station, on Saturday, 18 June at 1000. The service was, as might be expected, well attended and some of John's friends who were part of the RN Engineering Class of 1961 made the long journey to South Africa to attend the Memorial Service of this very special retired Naval Officer. Sincere condolences are offered to Vivienne, Gregory, Trevor and Jean at this sad and difficult time. John is gone, but he will certainly not be forgotten.

Who Does The Land of Israel Belong To? An ingenious example of speech and politics occurred recently in the United Nations General Assembly and made the World Community smile.

A representative from Israel began: 'Before beginning my talk I want to tell you something about Moses: When he struck the rock and it brought forth water he thought, 'What a good opportunity to have a bath!' Moses removed his clothes, put them aside on the rock and entered the water. When he got out and wanted to dress, his clothes had vanished. A Palestinian had stolen them!'

The Palestinian representative at the UN jumped up furiously and shouted, 'What are you talking about? The Palestinians weren't there then.'

The Israeli representative smiled and said, 'And now that we have made that clear, I will begin my speech.'

NAVY NEWS: The frigate SAS *AMATOLA* remains on her anti-piracy patrol off Mozambique while her sister SAS *ISANDLWANA* recently paid a visit to Richard's Bay to represent the SA Navy at the World Hydrographic Day celebrations. *Spindrift / Spunyarn.*

A wife asks her husband, "Could you please go shopping for me and buy one carton of milk, and if they have eggs, get 6."

A short time later the husband comes back with 6 cartons of milk.

The wife asks him, "Why did you buy 6 cartons of milk?"

"They had eggs" he replied.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST : In 1925 the Navigazione Liberia Triestina (Lloyd Triestino) began a round-Africa service with four steamships, the 5 524 grt *MAIELLA* (ex

AMBRA), built in 1913 and the sisters *PERLA*, *SABBIA* and *SISTIANA* (ex *SALVORE*), built in 1925/6. The ships sailed through the Suez Canal, down the East Coast of Africa, returning by way of the West Coast to the Mediterranean.

The 5 827 grt *SISTIANA* was in Table Bay in June 1940 and, with Italy about to declare war on Britain and France, the Master was planning to weigh anchor and sail without discharging the 600 tons of cargo destined for Cape Town. The merchants to whom the cargo was consigned obtained an interdict requiring the Master to discharge the cargo and *SISTIANA* was brought into Table Bay Docks and an armed guard was billeted in a train parked alongside.



S S *SISTIANA* AT SPEED – FROM A LLOYD TRIESTINO PICTURE POSTCARD IN THE SIMON’S TOWN MUSEUM COLLECTION.

At 21h30 on Monday 10 June 1940, two and a half hours before hostilities between Italy and the Allies were due to begin members of the Seaward Defence Force, accompanied by the armed guard, boarded and seized the ship. The crew and passengers were landed under guard and the ship was thoroughly searched. According to the Commander in Chief’s War Diary, kept in Simons’s Town Museum, no opposition was encountered and the crew departed for internment singing “Rule Britannia.”

On 30 June 1940 the ship was handed over to South African Railways and Harbours and was allocated the name *MYRICA* and the radio call sign MSJP. She was later transferred to the Ministry of War Transport and registered in Glasgow. Renamed *EMPIRE UNION* she was placed under the management of the Canadian Pacific Steamship Co. and on 26 December 1942 whilst sailing in Convoy ONS 154 from London to St. John, New Brunswick, she was torpedoed and sunk by U 356. Her Master, five crew members and one DEMS gunner were lost.

- *People born before 1946 were called The Silent generation..*
- *People born between 1946 and 1964 are called The Baby Boomers..*
- *People born between 1965 and 1979 are called Generation X..*
- *And people born between 1980 and 2010 are called Generation Y.*

Why do we call the last group Generation Y?

Y should I get a job?

Y should I leave home and find my own place?

Y should I get a car when I can borrow yours?

Y should I clean my room?

Y should I wash and iron my own clothes?

Y should I buy any food?