

TABLE TALK / TO THE POINT :

APRIL 2010

Here's wishing all our members and other readers a very Happy Easter, especially those brave souls who will be taking part in the Two Oceans Marathon on Easter Saturday.

The Apollo 11 spacecraft was equipped for its mission to the Moon with a state-of-the-art on-board computer. The CPU ran at a pace of 1 Megahertz, and the system memory was 36K in size. Currently, the typical home computer is equipped with a CPU running at least 300 MHz and many hand-held calculators contain more than 36K memory.

H.M.S. SCOTT : The Hydrographic Survey Ship H.M.S. *SCOTT* sailed from Simon's Town on Monday 29 March to resume her patrol in the disputed, possibly oil-rich, waters around the Falkland Islands, or Las Malvinas if you prefer. The ship was designed around a large multi-beam sea bed scanning sonar; the hull of an 18-knot, 131 metre "reefer" being found to be the most suitable platform to accommodate the system. She was built by Appledore Shipbuilders (formerly P.K. Harris and later A & P Appledore) in their covered building dock on the North Devon Coast. The yard no longer builds ships but has just completed a bulbous bow unit for the first *QUEEN ELIZABETH* class aircraft carrier which is being assembled in a dry dock at Rosyth.

HMS *SCOTT*, the sixth largest vessel in the Royal Navy at present, has the radio call sign GCUP which, if you think about it, is quite appropriate for a "big girl."

Jack was sitting on the plane when a guy took the seat beside him. The guy was an emotional wreck, pale, hands shaking, moaning in fear.

"What's the matter?" Jack asked.

"I've been transferred to Detroit; there's crazy people there. They've got lots of shootings, gangs, race riots, drugs, poor public schools and the highest crime rate in America."

Jack replied, "I've lived in Detroit all my life. It's not as bad as the media says. Find a nice home, go to work, mind your own business, enrol your kids in a nice private school. It's as safe a place as anywhere in the world."

The guy relaxed and stopped shaking and said, "Oh, thank you. I've been worried to death. But if you live there and say it's OK, I'll take your word for it. What do you do for a living?"

"Me?" said Jack. "I'm a tail gunner on a Budweiser truck."

NEWS FROM THE FLEET : Exercise GOOD HOPE IV involved the sinking of a trawler and also one of the S. A. Navy's Strike Craft, the thirty year old *RENE SETHREN* ex *OSWALD PIROW* (P 1566). She was the sixth Strike Craft built for the SAN and the third to be constructed by Sandock Austral at Bayhead. Her career had an inauspicious start when she shed her port outer propeller on the first day of sea trials but she made up for it later and was one of the ships involved in rescuing boats and crews in the Southern Oceans during the Spice Race in the 'eighties. The ship was originally named after Oswald Pirow, the founder of South African Airways, who was Minister of Defence from

1933 to 1939, when he handed over to Jan Smuts. After 1994 the ship was renamed *RENE SETHREN* after a CPO (Stoker) aboard the minesweeper HMSAS *SOUTHERN ISLES*, who took over an anti aircraft gun and shot down an enemy aircraft although seriously wounded. René Sethren (1920 – 1967) was the only South African to be awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (CGM) during World War II. In spite of protests, permission has been granted for the nuclear powered submarine HMS *SCEPTRE* to visit Simon’s Town from the third to the fifteenth of April.

*It may come as a surprise to those of you not living in Las Vegas , but there are more catholic churches than casinos in that city.
 Not surprisingly, some worshipers at Sunday services will give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed.
 Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings. They send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casinos of origin and cashed in.
 This task is carried out by the Chip Monks.*

QUEEN MARY 2 : Widening and dredging of the entrance to Durban harbour allowed the liner *QUEEN MARY 2* to enter the port for he first time. One of the passengers disembarking on this auspicious occasion was none other than our Globe-Trotting Travel Correspondent who will write of his adventures in a later issue of Table talk.



THE LINER *QUEEN MARY 2* ALONGSIDE IN DURBAN ON 23 MARCH 2010. – PHOTO : ZDENEK STEPANEK.

Large and impressive as she is, Queen Mary 2 is much smaller than the mighty Oasis of the Seas :

	Tons Gross	Length	Beam (wl)	Passengers	Crew
<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	148 528	345m	41m	3056	1253

A BLAST FROM THE PAST :



ISTHMIAN SS Co. C3-S-A2 STEAMER *STEEL ARCHITECT*
LEAVING TABLE BAY IN DECEMBER 1970.

The 8 040 grt. steamer *Steel Architect* was completed in 1945 for the US Maritime Commission and was acquired two years later by the Isthmian Steamship Co. The previous *Steel Architect*, a C3-S-A1 steamer, was launched in 1941 and completed as the Escort Carrier USS *Copahee* (CVE 12), which served throughout World War II and remained in the US Naval service until being sold for scrap. *Steel Architect* served her owners for twenty four years on their Atlantic and Pacific routes until being scrapped in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in September 1971.

The light turned amber, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crossing, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up.

He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the Charge Office where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while

you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker; the 'Choose Life' license plate frame; the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the boot, so naturally... I assumed you had stolen the car."

