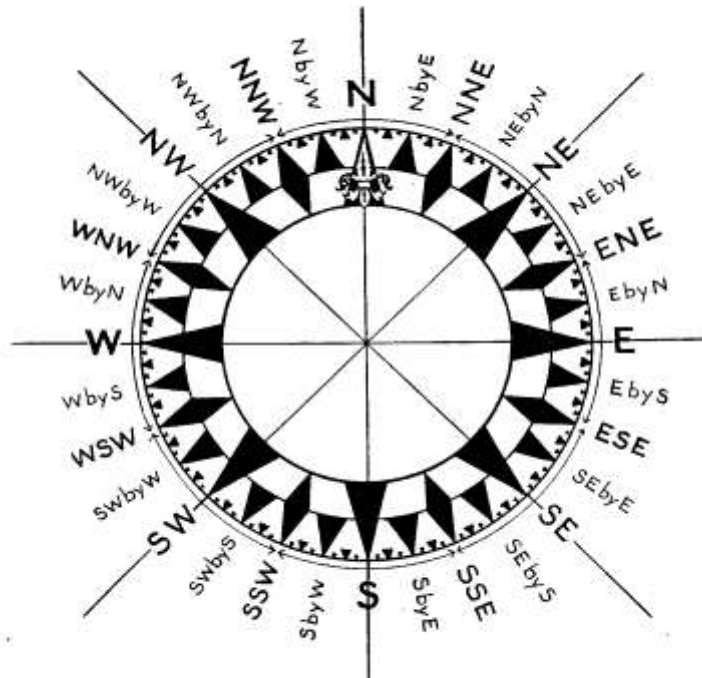




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Editor's Note

We would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and taken the time to tell us your stories. There must be



New Year and our thanks go to those of you who have plenty more out there that you can let us have.

Next Meeting Sunday January 30th 2011

Mick & Jill

Skipper's Log

Well another year has nearly finished. We have an exciting 2011 to look forward to.

We will be hosting the Downunder Reunion on the 4th,5th and 6th of November 2011 at West Beach

All arrangements are steaming ahead and we hope as many of our members as possible will be there.

All information will be available at the January meeting, which will be held at the Seafarers Mission Port Adelaide on Sunday 30th January.

Anne and myself with Mick and Jill Surfield and Mike Day attended this year's Reunion in Perth. Tony Harben and crew put on a fine show and once again it was great to catch up with old friends. That's what it's all about with Vindi Boys.

I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas time and a healthy safe New Year, also a big Thank You to you all for supporting our great Association over the past year. Thank you also to Mick and Jill Surfield for all their hard work with the newsletter.

For those of you who have had unhappy times and ill-health in 2010 may the coming year bring you Peace, Contentment and Better Health.

Tony.

SOCIAL:

The picnic in the park this year attracted fewer than normal people, due mainly to the fact that there were a few of our members or partners sick or away and then we had the added inconvenience of the car-parking which was very bad. Next year we will try something different.

The January meeting on the 30th will be held at Port Adelaide as mentioned.

March 27th will be at the home of Anne & Tony,
Soup and Sandwiches \$6 per head.

May 29th will be at Port Adelaide with deposits of \$5 per head being taken for the "Christmas in July" Lunch.

July 31st will be "Christmas in July" at the home of Anne & Tony.

The cost for this will be at a special pensioner rate of \$15 per head.

This will be all inclusive of all food and refreshments with Father Christmas making an appearance with a gift for all.

September 25th will be at Port Adelaide and it is hoped all of you will bring a special raffle prize to go towards the Reunion in November.

****November 4th 5th and 6th REUNION at West Beach, Sea Squadron Venue.****

November 27th End of Year Get together venue yet to be announced.

Anne

From the Almoners desk

It is with regret I report the passing of esteemed member Pat Rix, a lady of great courage, spirit and humour. Vindi members attended Pat's funeral and we extend our sincere heartfelt condolences to husband Peter and family.

Also I make mention of Mary Farr who passed away recently. Mary and husband John would regularly make the journey from Moonta to join us at Vindi meetings. John of course passed on some years ago.

We send our best wishes to Paul Charlish who is recovering from the effects of a Stroke. Paul, we have missed you and your uncanny luck in winning our raffles! We hope to catch up with you in the New Year.

Our special Vindi member Mike Day was flown from Pinneroo to the RAH for treatment. Can imagine Mike keeping the doctors and nurses on their toes! Get well soon Mike.

Also at the time of writing, Peter Foster is in the East Wing of the RAH for heart surgery. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery are with you Peter.

Our get well soon wishes also to Vern Evans who hurt his hand in a fall and to Margaret McTigue recovering from a broken arm.

Last but not least... my Vindi boy Keith recently underwent surgery at FMC for a replacement Pacemaker/Defibrillator, all went well, so we can now fly off to New Zealand for a much anticipated family reunion holiday.

May the New Year of 2011 be a happy and healthy one for all of us, Merry Christmas everyone.

Anne Withey

To Patricia (Trish) Rix

*Such an elegant lady
Always dressed with style
The pain and the discomfort
You just covered with your smile*

*We will miss you now you've gone
You were an inspiration
Your sense of humour, the wicked
jokes
Your cheeky presentation*

*Thank you Pat for cheering us
When you yourself felt low
We will think of you often
We are sorry you had to go.*

Anne Iles for the Vindi Ladies





Twenty one of our members met up for our annual picnic, there would have been twenty three but John and Maggie were unable to find any parking. As you can see the winner of the hamper kindly donated by Winston and Shirley Kay was Peter Rix.



Cooking up Trouble

Alan S Pope (1948) *Brittany*

I was told to report to Leith to join a collier running down the east coast to Beackton Power Station. Having been at the training ship I was street wise and said 'Not me sir, I am a deep sea man'. This brought many smiles from the other shipping officers there, so another boy was called over and told to get a train voucher and report to the ship that I had turned down. I was then instructed to go and have a medical, after which I was to sign on the *Brittany*, as galley boy. She was bound for the West Indies and the Spanish Main. The doctor gave me the once over and said, 'Ah, injections' – typhoid, yellow fever and something else. Having had the jabs, I signed on and was directed to No. 1 Victoria dock to join my first ship. Once on board I reported to the Chief Steward, Charlie McCullum, who passed me over to the second steward, Gerry Bullen, who took me to the galley to report to the Chief Cook, none other than Zacharia Gerald, 6ft 3in of pure Jamaican.

I was set to work with a potato peeler and introduced to a large sack of spuds. That evening we sailed on the tide bound for La Guiara in Venezuela. The following morning we were called at 0530 for 0600. I felt really ill. The effects of the jabs were beginning to take over and a large swelling was coming up on my right arm and I was unable to raise it higher than my chest. Day two arrived and Zacharia was aware that he had a complete greenhorn honky with him, and I should have all his attention. There was a clash of personalities. Whenever I was near the galley stove Zacharia grabbed a lump of fat and made clouds of greasy smoke. I continued to do my work but with so much abuse at times I felt sure I would not survive.

After many more incidents I flipped. The Chief Cook had thrown a large pot across the galley which landed in the sink and covered me with hot, soapy and greasy water. I walked across the galley pulled myself up to my full 5ft 8in and plonked a haymaker. Then I took off and went aft. In a minute or so Zacharia appeared carrying a meat cleaver. I eventually managed to hide in the crew's quarters and stayed there for over an hour, during which time it was thought I might have gone over the side, so a search was made. The bos'n, Karl Karlsen, who found me was of Norwegian origin. He took me to the Chief Steward, who told me to go to my cabin and wait. Soon the Second Officer came along and I was frog marched to the bridge. This was day six of my time with the Royal Mail. On the bridge was the Chief Steward, with the Chief Cook, Captain Harry Wright and Chief Officer John Fox. I was read the riot act by Captain Wright, who made it quite clear that this sort of conduct was taboo in the Merchant Service and was certainly not going to be tolerated on his ship. After a lengthy lecture I was asked if I had anything to say before sentence was passed. So I gave him my side of the story and after I had finished, Captain Wright sent me to the wing of the bridge while he had words with John Fox and Charlie McCullum. After a few minutes I was called back into the wheelhouse and told by Captain Wright that my kind of person was not required at sea and that when we got back to London I should seek another vocation. However, I was not going to be logged, but moved to the pantry and the pantry boy was to be moved to the galley, but if I put one foot out of place I was for the high jump. I settled in the pantry but was always wary when I entered the galley. I always kept my tight hand free in case it might be needed.

At the end of the voyage, just before we docked, I was asked by the Chief Steward if I wanted to come back on the next voyage. I agreed and went on to do six voyages in the *Brittany* before I was moved on to the *Highland Brigade* to do my penance. That was the end of my confrontation with Zacharia Gerald as I thought, for we didn't meet again until many years later, when I was appointed as Chief Steward to the *Barranca*. I joined her in Middlesbrough at the infamous Dorman Long steelworks, went on board and reported to the Captain before going to the galley to see my Chief Cook. Who should be standing there but none other than my old friend Zacharia. We shook hands and exchanged niceties and, after we had wandered back to my cabin and sunk a couple of shots of the amber nectar, we went on to be the best of friends.

I remember my first trip well, but I will never know if the Chief Cook remembered me.

This story was first published in Roy Derhams book 'Maiden Voyages'.

Canada's Worst Maritime Disaster.

Canada's worst maritime disaster occurred on the 29th May 1914 when the *Empress of Ireland* was in a collision with the Norwegian collier *Storstad*. Within 14 minutes the *Empress of Ireland* sank with the loss of 1,012 lives.

Under the command of 39 year old Henry George Kendall the ship sailed from Quebec on the 28th May 1914 bound for Liverpool, England. This was to be the 96th crossing and the first of the summer season, carrying 1,477 passengers and crew. Of these there were 167 members of the Salvation Army on their way to London. As they cast off the band played 'God be with you till we meet again'. After dropping the pilot and exchanging mail at Rimouski the *Empress* picked up speed and headed for open water. The lights of another ship were seen on 29th May at approximately 1.38am. Arriving on the bridge the Captain observed the vessel about six miles away off the starboard bow. It was the 6,000 ton Norwegian collier *Storstad* heading up river from Nova Scotia. The order was given to alter course just before the *Storstad* disappeared into a fog bank.

The Captain gave the full astern order and then gave three blasts on the whistle to indicate that he was going astern. The ship was stopped and then two more blasts were given to inform the oncoming ship that the *Empress* was dead in the water.

At 1.55am the *Storstad* appeared out of the fog heading straight for the *Empress*. Kendall quickly ordered full speed ahead but it was too late. The collier struck the *Empress* between its two funnels causing extensive damage opening a 350

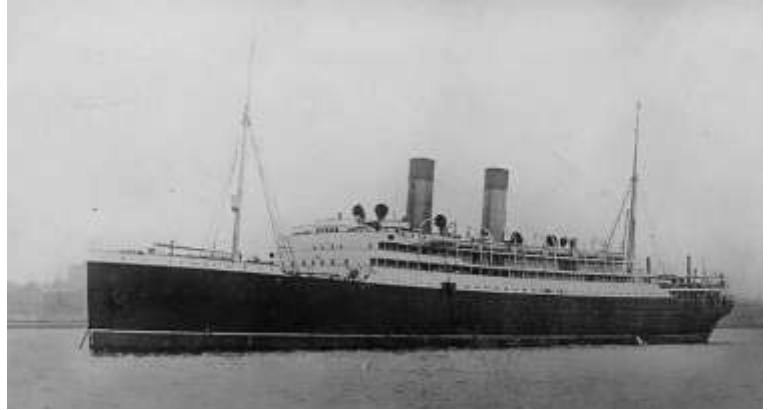
square-foot hole in its side. Within minutes the water reached the dynamos plunging the ship into darkness. Kendall tried in vain to beach the ship on the shores of the St Lawrence two mile away. As the water poured into the damaged area it took on a sharp list to starboard, the order was given for the lifeboats to be lowered and an SOS was sent out. Passengers scrambled up on deck, many of them in their night clothes, some jumped into the water but many more remained trapped below. Only nine lifeboats could be lowered before she foundered. Kendall was thrown from the bridge as the ship rolled over and hauled into a lifeboat. From the time of the collision until the time she went down less than a quarter of an hour had passed.

Two rescue ships from Rimouski and the *Storstad* picked up the survivors. The final count in the morning was, 465 rescued and 1,012 were lost.

Kendall never returned to sea after the war, he died in England at the age of 91.

On the 30th April 1998 the wreck of the *Empress of Ireland* was declared an historic sight.

Grace Hanigan Martyn died on 15th May 1995, she was the last survivor.



The sinking of the *Empress of Ireland* resulted in more loss of life of passengers than the *Titanic* disaster, but less crew.



A man walked out to the street and caught a taxi just going by. He got into the taxi, and the cabbie said, "Perfect timing. You're just like Brian"

Passenger: "Who?"

Cabbie: "Brian Sullivan. He's a guy who did everything right all the time. Like my coming along when you needed a cab, things happen like that to Brian Sullivan, every single time."

Passenger: "There are always a few clouds over everybody."

Cabbie: "Not Brian Sullivan. He was a terrific athlete. He could have won the Grand Slam at tennis. He could golf with the pros. He sang like an opera baritone and danced like a Broadway star and you should have heard him play the piano. He was an amazing guy."

Passenger: "Sounds like he was something really special."

Cabbie: "There's more. He had a memory like a computer. He remembered everybody's birthday. He knew all about wine, which foods to order and which fork to eat them with. He could fix anything. Not like me. I change a fuse, and the whole street blacks out. But Brian Sullivan, he could do everything right."

Passenger: "Wow. Some guy then."

Cabbie: "He always knew the quickest way to go in traffic and avoid traffic jams. Not like me, I always seem to get stuck in them. But Brian, he never made a mistake, and he really knew how to treat a woman and make her feel good. He would never answer her back even if she was in the wrong; and his clothing was always immaculate, shoes highly polished too. He was the perfect man! He never made a mistake. No one could ever measure up to Brian Sullivan."

Passenger: "An amazing fellow. How did you meet him?"

Cabbie: "Well, I never actually met Brian. He died. I'm married to his ***** widow."

Chapter Four

Goodbye Vindi, Hello Navy

Well all good things must come to an end, so they say, and my time at the Vindi although short seemed a long time. Throughout all the hardship and bad meals we had many good laughs and made new friends although they were short friendships because I never heard from any of them again.

One man who needs a special mention is Mark Allen who lived in the town of Sharpness and was allowed onto the Vindi camp and was the friend of all Vindi boys. If you were worried or afraid Mark was the one you went to see. He was a gentle quiet man who cared for the young lads, and more importantly managed to bring cakes and biscuits into the camp and they were a welcome sight at times even though you had to be quick to get some. I don't recall what his official role was but I will never forget the kindness of that dear man. Many other horrors were experienced during my time at the Vindi such as cleaning a corridor with a toothbrush, standing on the deck in ones and underpants at night for having a go at an officer for calling me a son of a bitch and meeting the formidable Codene Annie (The camp nurse) who always prescribed codene for just about everything.

The day finally came at last and we all said our goodbyes and once again made our way to the railway station, this time there were no officers shouting and screaming orders just the quiet conversation of Vindi boys who were both sad and happy leaving the Vindi for the last time and heading into the oceans wide and blue, and as it says on the plaque where the Vindi used to lay, 'Though her splendor may have ceased to be, she played her sovereign part in making me', that is so true.

As the train progressed up north the lads got off at different stops to catch connecting trains and it was sad to see them go. Soon there were just three of us left on the train then I got off at Preston for my connecting train to Accrington and home, the other two were headed for Carlisle and Scotland.

Eventually my train pulled up at Accrington station and as I got off the train with my trusty suitcase I recalled my father helping me on the train to go to the Vindi. It really wasn't all that long ago but to a young lad it seemed ages ago. There was nobody there to meet me because communication was not what it is today and by letter I had told my family I would walk to mums place which was only around the corner from the station.

My homecoming was joyful, mum cried again but this time they were tears of joy, dad was happy I had stayed the course and didn't jump the fence and come home earlier. Mum made my favourite meals while I was home and what a happy time I had eating her wonderful meals. It only lasted a couple of weeks and then I got orders to report to The Shipping Federation in Liverpool to arrange to board my first ship the *Crystal Cube* a sugar ship owned by Tate and Lyle. Dad and I decided it would be better if I went a day earlier and stayed at the seaman's mission overnight and got an early start the following day, which proved to be a wise decision.

After a cheap and greasy breakfast I think I had to go and sign some papers at the Pool and then make my way to the ship. Getting there was the problem, I didn't have much money so it was buses and shoe leather, but after a long walk and asking countless questions I found my way to Husskinson Dock and as I rounded a corner I came face to face with my mode of transport to the world, my first ship, the *Crystal Cube*. I remember standing there just looking at her for quite a while. This was what I had dreamed of since uncle Harry had first started to tell me tales of the sea, and now it was my turn to live my own adventures in far away places. I was so excited, eventually I started to walk towards her and the closer I got the bigger it seemed even though it was just a normal sized cargo ship, but I hadn't seen one before and to me it was enormous. As I walked up the gangway to the ship I thought my heart had stopped. The people at the top were all looking at me with suspicion, probably wondering who the hell I was, but when I got to them and introduced myself they made me feel right at home and introduced me to other members of the crew and showed me down to my very own cabin. Once in I was told to unpack my things quickly and then report to the galley. Alone in my cabin I remember feeling a little sick, probably because I was a young lad living his dream but when I got to the galley my dream turned into a nightmare.

Winston C Kay

