



# The Foghorn

Newsletter of the Maritimes Division of the  
Company of Master Mariners of Canada  
www.mastermariners.ca



December 2019



From the Master  
Captain Marshall Dunbar

Good Day Everyone,

I am not sure if I need to apologize, but the start of my last input to The Foghorn I mentioned that November would no doubt bring some uncomfortable days at sea. Well November 1 welcomed us with Gales of 40+ knots and off shore had seas of 4-6 meters. No more weather forecast predictions.

Many ceremonies were Remembrance Day held throughout the HRM and the good weather contributed to a large turn out at the events. I had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of The Maritimes Division at the Sailors Monument in Point Pleasant Park.

The monthly professional meeting was held on Wednesday November 13 at the MMA. The tentatively planned speaker from London Offshore Consultants could not attend as the topic he was going to present is still an ongoing project. Hopefully it will soon wrap up and he will present to us in the New Year.

Fortunately, we had Mr. Peter Ziobrowski come to our meeting and gives us a presentation. Peter contributes to The Chronicle Herald with his regular feature the Shipping News and which is also the title of Peter's Blog (<https://blog.halifaxshippingnews.ca/>). He gave an interesting presentation to the members present on why he started the blog and his ongoing interest in the marine industry and in particular the happenings in an around the port of Halifax. Peter can be reached at [peter@halifaxshippingnews.ca](mailto:peter@halifaxshippingnews.ca) and encourages input to his blog and articles.

The presentation and discussion was followed by a meeting in which a moment of silence was observed for the passing of Captain Eric Bosivert who crossed the bar 09 July 2019.

Received an email from our National Master, Captain Chris Hall, commenting on the last issue of The Foghorn and that it contained lots of great content. BZ Captain Calvesbert.



## Upcoming Events

We will be holding Year End Dinner celebration on 10 December 2019 at the Nova Scotia Royal Yacht Squadron. Please contact Capt. Chris Connor - [connor@mastermariner.com](mailto:connor@mastermariner.com) - to confirm your attendance.



## Inventor of foghorn celebrated in Saint John

CTV Atlantic

Published May 11, 2019 5:36 p.m. ET

Updated May 11, 2019 5:45 p.m. ET

The low and loud sound of the foghorn is one that many Maritimers are familiar with. But what may be a little less familiar is the pioneer behind the lifesaving navigational invention, and his Maritime connection.

For more than 130 years, the sound of the foghorn has bellowed out from Partridge Island in Saint John Harbour. It was on that very island that the idea of the foghorn was invented by Scotsman Robert Foulis in 1853.



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CCGS Robert Foulis



CCGS Partridge Island

“It was foggy and he was working on the lighthouse in a gas operation,” describes Harold Wright, a local historian. “He had read in the newspaper about a shipwreck off Newfoundland, in the fog, great loss of life, and he figured there was a better way than just ringing a bell.”

Before there were bells, Wright says a series of cannons were fired during foggy weather to alert ships of navigational hazards.

“You hear a big boom, that doesn’t tell you where you are, doesn’t tell you how close you are to the rocks,” describes Wright. “That’s why in Saint John Harbour there were at least two dozen ships that went around and sank around Partridge Island.”



Partridge Island Lighthouse

The local historian is putting a spotlight on the life and times of the inventor who settled in Saint John.

Foulis’ fog alarm was built in 1859 on Partridge Island, but he didn’t receive credit for his invention right away. It wasn’t until the release of a government report that he was recognized as the inventor of the world’s first steam-operated fog alarm.

“It’s kind of unfortunate that we don’t have anything to show for it today,” says Joshua Thompson, a former Partridge Island committee member. “Out on the island there is a plaque to it, but unfortunately there’s nothing existing today to show that we had the world’s first fog alarm.”

“I don’t think we teach enough or talk enough about who we are, how we got here, and the accomplishments, and I don’t just mean Saint John, I mean fo

He’s doing his part to make sure New Brunswickers know some of their history, and that Robert Foulis, the man behind the foghorn, is not forgotten.

*With files from CTV Atlantic’s Laura Lyall.*



## Latest seafarers happiness report paints optimistic picture November 5, 2019

<http://shipmanagementinternational.com/latest-seafarers-happiness-report-paints-optimistic->

After concerning reports earlier in the year, the latest Seafarers Happiness Index report has shown a marked improvement in happiness levels amongst seafarers across all sectors of the industry.





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The index, undertaken by The Mission to Seafarers and supported by P&I insurer the Shipowners' Club, is a gauge for measuring the feelings and experiences of seafarers across the global maritime industry. Conducted every quarter, in the latest report overall seafarer happiness has risen from 6.27/10 to 6.59.

Happiness regarding interaction with other crew members has also increased notably, up to 7.28 from 6.85 last quarter. This is one of the highest figures provided in the five years since the report began and suggests a growing sense of camaraderie amongst seafarers.

The latest report, which covers the third quarter of the year also saw a record number of participants engaging with the Seafarers Happiness Index. This is encouraging as it suggests that more seafarers see the value in having their voice heard on a global platform.

After findings from the second quarter of the year showed happiness amongst seafarers onboard cruise and ferry vessels to be 15% lower than other vessels, it is said to be very encouraging to see that happiness levels in this sector leapt up a full point to 6.3/10. It is hoped that this indicates an improvement in working conditions, while the pressures from a busy summer season are also likely to have eased.

Steven Jones, Founder of the Seafarers Happiness Index, commented: "The Mission to Seafarers has been contacted by several cruise ship operators following the release of the last report. It is a very positive sign to see the results from the index being taken seriously by the industry. Hopefully, some of the insight we provided has contributed to this improvement in seafarers' sentiments about life at sea, although there is no room for complacency on any of the barometers of happiness used by the index."

Louise Hall, Director – Loss Prevention at the Shipowners Club commented: "The positive results from this quarter's Seafarers Happiness Index demonstrate the effectiveness of this initiative, and its associated outreach projects, in improving the quality of life for those at sea.

"The index is providing a more accurate image than ever before of the conditions across the global fleet. With record numbers of seafarers participating in the survey and engaging with the research, we have been able to identify more

ways to support our Members in prioritising the health and wellbeing of their crew."

While results across the board were generally very positive, the anecdotal evidence from seafarers identified a number of ongoing concerns. The impending IMO 2020 sulphur cap appears to be a source of stress for many seafarers. The report indicates that there is a widespread fear of blame for non-compliance, suggesting that some seafarers don't feel prepared for the cap, which comes into effect in the New Year. Many participants reported concerns that discrepancies in data, in addition to tougher inspection regimes, could result in seafarers facing prosecution by authorities.

While there has been much attention given to the financial impact of IMO 2020 on ship owners, this evidence shines a light on the day-to-day pressures on those serving at sea and the need for governments and shipowners to prepare seafarers for the change. The report indicates that the companies investing more resources into training have happier crews – highlighting the importance of seafarers feeling confident in their own abilities and with the responsibilities placed upon them by new regulations.

Understandably, salaries also play a significant role in helping seafarers to feel stable in their careers. Whilst youngest seafarers appear to be the happiest – reflecting enthusiasm about seeing new parts of the world, with a very high 7.9/10 – many reported that low wages were making them question their future careers. This is concerning for the future of the maritime industry, with the potential for a 'talent-bleed' if seafarers are lost to other industries.

Happiness amongst those aged over 45 showed a marked turnaround in this quarter, reaching an impressive 7/10. While a number of seafarers declared their pride in working at sea, budget cuts were a common concern with no seafarers feeling "wealthy" in their home nations. This indicates that although life at sea is a cheerful one, the practicality of wages may not support the career choice in the long-term.

Overall, this report has shown a more promising set of results as we approach the end of 2019. It would appear that industry-wide changes in attitudes could influence widespread progress in





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2020, and there is a strong sense that some of the improvements that The Mission and others have been advocating may be gaining traction.



**From the Divisional Treasurer  
Capt. Greg Wilkie**

Don't forget to contact Capt Wilkie to renew your membership for 2020. The following from Greg:

I will soon begin a review of the Regional Membership Cards and Receipts, with goals of streamlining the paperwork and better compliance with Canada Revenue Agency requirements. The other CMMC branches will be canvassed for best practices. Any members with general comments, or who would like to comment on proposed new designs, can contact [wilkieg@gmail.com](mailto:wilkieg@gmail.com).

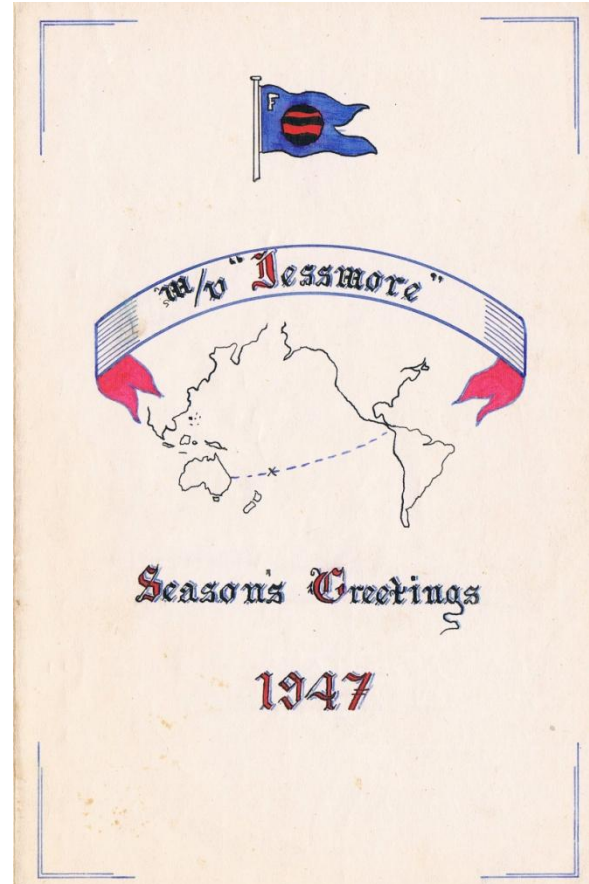


There are 4 black soft-sided briefcases available from the Shipping & Environmental Issues conference years ago. Available to anybody interested, they can contact Capt. Wilkie.



**CHRISTMAS AT SEA AND THE GREAT  
SOUTHERN COMET OF 1947  
Captain Charles Douglas Maginley**

I still have the menu for the Christmas dinner served on board the M/V *Jessmore* in 1947. These menus were drawn and hand coloured by the Third Officer, Mr. Coe.



As you can see by the map on its cover, we were a couple of hundred miles North Nor'East of New Zealand, en-route from the Panama Canal to Brisbane. The menu shows we had a sumptuous feast: fruit cocktail, soup, fish, ham, turkey with choice of potatoes and veg, plum pudding with brandy sauce, mince pie, fruit, nuts and coffee. Not bad for a perfectly ordinary freighter crossing the Pacific, especially when you remember that back in Britain, food was still scarce and rationing was in effect. However, ships seemed to get what they needed and when in an American or Canadian port the Chief Steward stocked up. The company, Furness Withy, was generous: all the ships were well manned and provisioned. I believe the whole crew got the same meal but only the officers and cadets got individual menus.

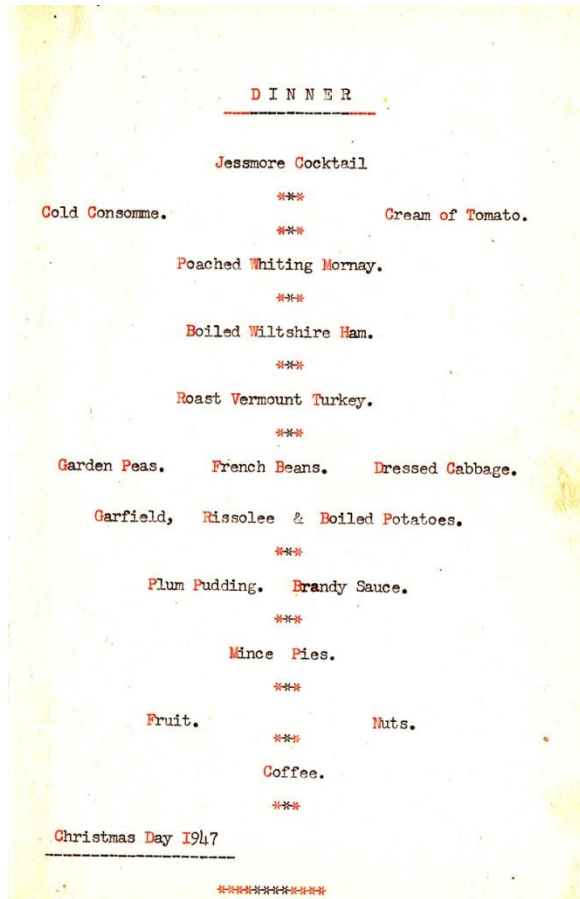


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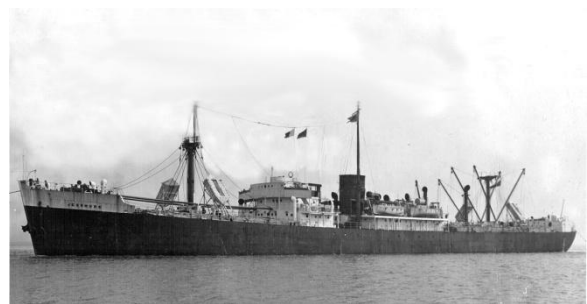
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During the previous weeks we had nighttime views of the Great Comet of 1947. It was only visible in the southern hemisphere. I have seen brighter comets but never one as big: its broad tail stretched for about twenty degrees. Comets are usually named for the first person to report it but this one suddenly appeared from behind the sun on December 8<sup>th</sup> and so many saw it at once it never received a name but was just known as The Great Comet or Comet 1947n, 'n' meaning it was the fourteenth comet of the year, a record number. Most of them were only visible through large telescopes.

I was 18, and the *Jessmore* was my first ship but this was not my first voyage. I had joined her from the *Conway* in March and we had done three transatlantic trips from Liverpool to St. John's, Halifax and Boston. Before the war the company had two passenger/cargo liners on the run, the *Nova Scotia* and *Newfoundland* but both had been sunk and their replacements, with the same names, were not quite ready. We were

there to re-establish the cargo aspect of the trade. On the fourth voyage, instead of Boston we went to New York and loaded cargo for St. John's, another of the company's established routes. We sailed but shortly after disembarking the pilot in a dense fog, we were in collision. We were not fitted with radar: during the war it had been very secret and even in 1947 was found only in warships and large, fast liners. Anyway, a Victory ship ran into our port side at the No.4 hold, which flooded. (As all our members know, if you are in a collision it is better, for legal reasons, to be hit on the port side).



Fortunately, it was dead calm. We made our way slowly back to Pier 97 on the Hudson River. The American yards were still working with wartime efficiency and in a remarkably short time a coffer dam was built to cover the gash in the ship's side and the hold was cleaned out with grabs and pumps. It had flour, sugar and rice in it which fermented with very dirty Hudson River water, forming a heady brew. Then over to Todd's Shipyard in Brooklyn and we were made good as new.

In St. John's another cadet joined: my old friend John Spencer, later Master of our Canadian Company of Master Mariners, who is now living in a retirement home in Montreal. Merry Christmas John! We then heard that we were chartered to the Montreal, Australia and New Zealand Company, the M.A.N.Z. Line. (I believe it did not last long). It was up the Saguenay for aluminium ingots, covering the tank tops of the main holds, then Montreal for general cargo, mostly Ford car parts in crates for assembly in Australia, then Trois Rivieres, I forget for what. After Brisbane we went to Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and then across to New Zealand to Napier and Wellington to load wool. The N.Z. Longshoremens' Union insisted that a certain number of men was required in each



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gang working in the holds but if any preferred not to work overtime, they had no objection to crew members making up the difference, so we made quite a bit of money that way. We lost some of the crew there and in Australia. Immigrants were wanted, so if a deserter kept out of the way until the ship sailed, they were sent to work on a farm and after a year they were legal.

Another crossing of the Pacific to the canal and on to New York, Saint John N.B. and back to the U.K. arriving at Victoria Docks, London, on 12 May 1948, seven months and twelve days after leaving Liverpool. To me it was a great trip. My family did not live in the U.K. so I didn't care how long I was away.

Jim's request for Christmas at Sea stories brought it all back. The Great Comet is out there, now just an insignificant rock hurtling through interstellar space. And I still have the menu!

*(Ed. Thanks for the contribution Doug)*



## Seafarers Need Games, Shore Leave and Internet Source : MAREX

New research by Cardiff University urges shipping companies to provide more amenities for seafarers. Specifically, the report states that they should be provided with internet access and:

- At least one activity onboard, such as basketball, squash or swimming;
- At least four activities from table tennis, darts, barbecues, karaoke, bingo, and card and board games;
- A gym with at least three pieces of equipment;
- At least two facilities from a sauna, a book and DVD library, satellite TV with cabins and a library of interactive video games;
- Comfortable mattresses and furnishings within cabins;
- Shore leave at every opportunity for all ranks;
- Varied, good quality food.

The study, funded by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), involved over 1,500 seafarers completing a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with

small group of seafarers, employers, maritime charities and other stakeholders.

Lack of internet access, long periods away from friends and family, poor accommodation and food were among the leading causes of concern for those working at sea.

Professor Helen Sampson, who led the study, says there is evidence that recent-onset psychological disorders are increasing among serving seafarers, yet more than half (55 percent) of employers said they had not introduced any policies or practices to address mental health for a decade.

When questioned in an interview about suffering from mental ill-health, one seafarer said: "Between pressure, workload, no days off and you are a gazillion miles away from home with limited communication, what do you think is going to happen?"

Another said: "Three months on land is nothing. You can't see your kids grow up, you can't see anything. You are just like an uncle coming and going."

Sampson, Director of Cardiff University's Seafarers International Research Centre, based in the School of Social Sciences, said: "It is all too easy for seafarers working out on the deep ocean to be invisible to those ashore. Their remoteness allows for abuse to go undetected. Sometimes seafarers are subjected to bullying and harassment by superiors and colleagues on board. However many employers also mistreat seafarers by failing to provide decent and humane living conditions which promote good mental well-being."

The report concludes that the provision of free internet access would make the most significant contribution to improving the mental health and well-being of those working onboard ships. In addition, organizations are urged to provide self-help guidance on improving mental resilience, provide contracts that balance work and leave time, introduce and enforce anti-bullying and harassment policies, train officers on creating positive on-board atmosphere and set up





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## Our November Guest Speaker

### Capt. Knight in his “real” job

*From the Mission to Seafarers newsletter*

Key to our role is to provide a “home away from home” and provide seafarers opportunities to share their needs and to help resolve problematic issues. For example; Are crews being paid? Do they have sufficient provisions? Does the cook have food enough to prepare meals to sustain the crew? How is morale?

Should we be advised something is not right, we call the experts to investigate and resolve. One would be surprised at how often we run into situations where Transport Canada and/or the ITF are required.

Recently, we were made aware that fifteen crew had not been paid for months. Our experts at Transport Canada were on board ship first thing in the morning to ensure the situation was resolved. In this case, we thank Captain Alan Knight, Transport Canada, with 52 years in the marine industry for prompt follow-up.



Captain Alan Knight



Peter Ziobrowski is the man behind HalifaxShippingNews.ca He holds a BA in the History & Theory of Architecture, as well as diplomas in Computer System Technology and Information System Security. By Day he is a Senior IT System Architect. Peter contributes to The Chronicle Herald with his regular feature the Shipping News. He gave an interesting presentation to the members present on why he started the blog and his ongoing interest in the marine industry and in particular the happenings in an around the port of Halifax. Peter can be reached at [peter@halifaxshippingnews.ca](mailto:peter@halifaxshippingnews.ca) and encourages input to his blog and articles.





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## Remembrance Day 2019

Captain Marshall Dunbar presenting the Maritimes Division wreath at the Point Pleasant Park ceremony.



And see the latest issue of *From The Bridge* on our website at  
<https://www.mastermariners.ca/from-the-bridge/>

As well as following Captain Ivan Lantz's "Master Mariner Newsclips" on his daily email.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year to everyone.**

**Captain Jim Calvesbert  
Editor, The Foghorn**

