

POTENTIAL EVENTS for 2024

Glenlee sailing ship and
the Transport Museum
in Glasgow

Maid of the Loch at
Balloch, Loch Lomond
Maid of the Forth,
South Queensferry,
with options for the 3
Bridges tour, Jazz/Folk
evening, or landing on
Inchcolm Island

Scottish Maritime
Museum at Irvine

Union Canal boat trip
from Linlithgow.
Options for a 2 ½ hour
trip, or at certain
weekends, a trip to the
Falkirk Wheel.

Scottish Fisheries
Museum at Anstruther

Suggestions are always
welcome for new
potential visits.

At the 2023 AGM it was
also mooted that there
could/should be a
consideration to go
further afield to visit
other maritime venues.

Galley Radio

Merchant Navy Association – Edinburgh & Forth Branch

AUTUMN 2024



Welcome to the fifth issue of **Galley Radio**, where we cover some of the events that have happened during the Autumn session.

As always, we still need assistance with providing material for the bulletins and look to our members to offer stories, ditties, anecdotes, or any up and coming news and events for including in the newsletter.

A Fond Farewell

Unfortunately, one of our colleagues and founder member of the Branch, Donald Sargent, passed away in September. Donald will be remembered for the stories he would recount about his time with Gibsons, Ben Line and his time in the Far East and Middle East. He will be sadly missed.



Merchant Navy Day – 3rd September



Tuesday 3rd September saw a gathering of a few seafarers at the Scottish Merchant Navy Memorial in Leith to celebrate Merchant Navy Day with the laying of wreaths and a commemorative service. An opportunity to fly the Red Ensign, helping to raise awareness and show gratitude and appreciation for the commitment of the community of seafarers, both past and present, often regarded as the forgotten and “invisible” navy.

Special thanks to the Reverend Dr. Iain May for leading the service and to the Right Honourable Lord Provost and Lord Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh, Councillor Robert Aldridge for his moving speech.

AGM 29th November 2024

Will be held at the offices of the Northern Lighthouse Board in George Street, Edinburgh starting at 1.00pm sharp.

There will be a lot to cover at the event, including Branch Constitution, an update on the MNA AGM and appointment of a new branch secretary, along with re-appointments of committee members.

Your attendance and patience would be greatly appreciated.

There's always a trier...

From the wheelhouse of a small ferry crossing the Clyde, the captain noticed a couple of lady schoolteachers out on the open deck. Noticing the approach of a heavy shower of rain, the captain called to the crew members down below, "Is there a big macintosh down there that would cover two ladies?" The answer came back, "No, but there's a wee MacGregor here that willing to try."

Summer Lunch

After the branch meeting in September, a few colleagues visited Berties Fish & Chip Shop in Victoria Street for an F & C late lunch. Apparently, the haggis was tasty too!! We were joined by one of our friends from Glasgow MNA, a welcome to Jim Holmes. We then retired to Biddy Mulligans in the Grassmarket for some harmony.



City of Winchester

In the Summer edition, we mentioned the first British ship to be sunk in the Second World War, so here is a snippet about the first British casualty of the First World War.



The story began before the war when the German government decided to post a modern cruiser to their

East African colony, Tanganyika, which today is the country of Tanzania. Captain Max Loeff was assigned command of *Königsberg* in April, 1914. There was a great deal of excitement stirred up by the new mission, and *Königsberg* departed Kiel on April 25. By the middle of May, 1914, *Königsberg* stopped at Alexandria Harbor in Egypt, and then passed through the Suez Canal on the way to Aden where Loeff dined with the British governor.

On June 28, 1914, Austrian Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Serbia, and as the political situation in Europe slid toward open war, the authorities in German East Africa began to discuss their own options. Captain Loeff's immediate and less controversial goal was to make sure his light cruiser was at sea if war came. All wood furnishings were removed, lacquered panelling stripped away and supplies poured into every empty space. So it was that on July 31st, to avoid being trapped in the harbour, Loeff took the vessel out in to the Indian Ocean and managed to avoid three British cruisers, using a squall of driving rain to cover her retreat at 22 knots, burning tons of valuable coal in the process.

Six nights later, *Königsberg* was pushing her way through heavy seas off Cape Guardafui when she received the long anticipated order: EGIMA, the code word meaning that Germany was now at war with England, France and Russia. *Königsberg* headed for the main

Christmas Lunch

A brief reminder that the Christmas lunch will be on Thursday 12th December at 12.00 noon at DINE in Edinburgh, 10 Cambridge Street, first floor. It is the circular building called Saltire Court, where the Traverse Theatre is, just beside the Usher Hall on Lothian Road.

Local buses Nos. 1, 10, 11 & 12 stop right outside the Usher Hall.

3 course lunch is £32.50

shipping lane which ran through the Gulf of Aden. After making contact with three German steamers and passing a Japanese freighter *Königsberg* captured her first prize when she came upon the British steamer *City of Winchester*.

On the evening of August 6, 1914, the 6,608 ton lone cargo ship S.S. *City of Winchester*, who was on her maiden voyage, was steaming southwest through the Gulf of Aden en route to London. With her load of general cargo, including the first of India's seasonal tea crop and a consignment of antlers, the *City of Winchester* represented a humble fraction of Great Britain's merchant power, but on this particular evening, she entered the history books both as the first merchant shipping loss of the First World War, and as the first war time target of the German light cruiser S.M.S. *Königsberg*. As the *City of Winchester*'s Captain George Boyck was called upon by one of his officers to investigate an unidentified vessel approaching their ship, searchlights stabbed out of the evening haze followed by a rapid signal lamp query: 'what ship and nationality.' Captain Boyck believed the approaching vessel to be a British cruiser and so he dutifully replied to the inquiry with the ship's name and port of registry. He was immediately ordered to stop his ship. It was only when a German naval officer accompanied by an armed party of sailors climbed aboard that Captain Boyck realized all was not right. His ship was commandeered by a 'prize crew' from *Königsberg* and taken to the Hallaniyat Islands, east coast of Oman.

By now *Königsberg*'s coal situation was becoming a concern. She headed for a rendezvous with her supply ship *Somali*, bringing with her the *City of Winchester*, and the German freighters *Zieten*, *Goldenfels* and *Ostmark*. Eventually all five ships lay at anchor off the island of Hallaniyat, the largest of the Kuria Muria group on the Oman coast. Despite being loaded with inferior Bombay coal, *Königsberg* transferred four hundred tons of supplies from *City of Winchester* and then scuttled her by placing charges in the engine room. As she was going down, they fired three rounds from her 4.1 inch guns in to her, just to speed things up. Fortunately, there was no loss of life as the crew of the *City of Winchester* had been transferred, with some crew later landed from a supply ship *Goldenfels* at Sabang into Dutch hands, the remainder from a supply ship *Zieten* in Mozambique.

The *Königsberg* met her end on July 11th 1915. Besieged up the Rufiji River Delta, with insufficient supplies of coal to make a run for it, she fought a battle with *HMS Mersey* & *HMS Severn*, who were in contact with aerial spotter planes. It was one of the earliest examples of cooperation between aircraft and warship in attacking a target which could not be directly sighted. *Königsberg* was so low on ammunition that she was unable to maintain the same rate of fire as the two monitors and soon numerous direct hits impacted along the length of the German cruiser. The order was sent out to abandon ship and the remaining crew scrambled down the side of the ship, bringing with them what wounded they could. Finally, the remaining crew scuttled the vessel, using torpedo heads to blow up the keel. Of the *Königsberg*'s original crew of 350 men, only 15, including Captain Loeff, survived the war and returned to Germany.

Remembrance Day Ceremonies

We have had a busy November with several of our colleagues representing the Merchant Navy at various Remembrance Day events.



Our Chairperson, Ned Kelly attended the ceremonies at the Cenotaph in London

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Branch Treasurer, Allan Dickson represented the Merchant Navy at the Edinburgh Remembrance Day event at the City Chambers.



Branch member, David Reid, was honoured to be asked to represent the military fallen and the Merchant Navy in presenting a wreath and to give the Eulogy at the service of remembrance at the Swinton memorial. Our thanks to the pastor Rev. Alan Cartwright and David, as this was the first time for acknowledging the role of the Merchant Navy during both World Wars at the Swinton Kirk.

The Scottish Service for Seafarers

Sunday 17th November commemorated the 80th year of the Scottish Service for Seafarers at South Leith Parish Church in Edinburgh. In attendance were the Councillors and High Constables of the City of Edinburgh and the Depute Lord Provost, the High Constabulary of the Port of Leith, the Masters and Members of Trinity House and representatives of the Royal and Merchant Navies. Our thanks to Reverend Suzie M. Stark and Jamie Sutherland for conducting the service and to former Port Chaplain, Tim Bell, for a very poignant sermon. There was also a good turnout for the wreath laying ceremony at the Scottish Merchant Navy Memorial where our Branch Standard had its first outing.



Branch member Mike Ashworth laid a wreath at the Kirkcaldy memorial