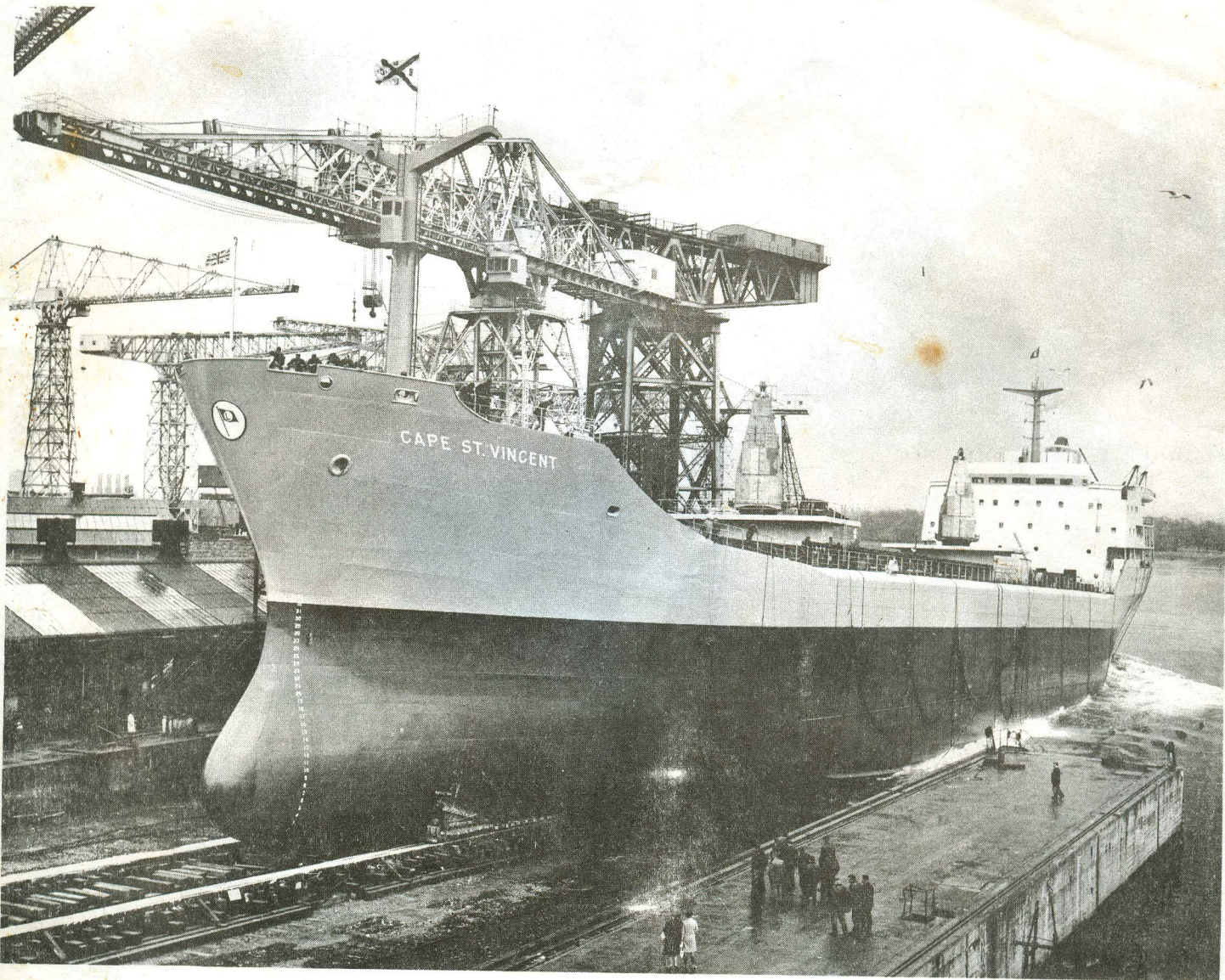




# LYLE NEWSLETTER

10/66 - JULY



M.V. "CAPE ST. VINCENT" - LAUNCHING 5TH MAY, 1966

We welcome new readers to these pages and hope you will find them of some interest, though, their contents being directed towards Lyle sea-going and shore staff, it is bound to be somewhat parochial.

One of our new readers - we hope - is Miss Peggy McKinnon of Auckland and we have sent a copy to her as a token of our thanks for the kindly treatment and friendliness towards Lyle visitors in Auckland. Her fame is certainly spreading abroad as it has now reached the 'Far North', and we would like to say 'thanks to you for all you have done in the past, and wish you well in the future. We hope this letter will help you to keep in touch with many of your friends in Lyles.' We understand her present address is Flat A6, Pensioners Flat, Khyber Pass, Auckland, N.Z.

Halt and Deliver - It is difficult to ignore the subject of the seamen's strike, despite the amount of publicity it has received, though there are some of us who can speculate on what has not been publicised. The difficulty in such situations is the raising of emotions which cloud the issues and give rise to quite astonishing comment from the ignorant. We, ourselves, long for the seaman, himself, to use his vote so that at least we know what the will of the majority is, and not, despite protestations to the contrary, the minority. Certainly the strike action has dealt a grievous blow to the industry, which, without doubt, affects the seaman's future in not quite the way he intended. Whatever the rights and wrongs, surely in this day and age there is a more modern and civilised way of obtaining a satisfactory solution. The real problem is the presence of undercurrents not under the control of shipowners, seamen, or, we suspect, the Union. It was sad to hear of the number of crew members who were against the action but helpless to do anything.

Our thanks go again to the contributors to this issue - now we know how Winston Churchill felt when he uttered the immortal words "Never has so much been owed by so many to so few."

The launch of "CAPE ST. VINCENT" is illustrated in this edition, since when vessel ran trials successfully on the 13th June. "CAPE ST. VINCENT" has experienced 'growing pains' which have left her a stout 20,022 tons (due to modifications giving her tanker immersion). This hefty infant was held up, of course, due to the strike. Short accounts of both launch and trials appear elsewhere in this issue.

Late Special - The "CAPE SABLE" has been sold to foreign buyers for delivery in the U.K. about 12th July. Despite her recent date of building, she proved uneconomic to operate and the seamen's strike was the final blow which forced us to act earlier than we had previously intended.

#### PERSONAL

Mr. W. Nicholson has recently been appointed Chairman of the Scottish Committee of Lloyd's Register of Shipping, and in that capacity attended the Conference of Chairmen of the National and U.K. Committees of the Society held in London in June.

Mr. F. J. MacKerron continues to make progress but, though back to full duty, is endeavouring to confine his activities to the Glasgow area as a temporary measure.

Captain R. D. Love has been appointed Marine Superintendent of the Company as from 1st June, 1966. Announcements have been made in the press to this effect, and fuller details of the reorganisation are given in Lyle Fleet Orders. We congratulate

Mr. A. McKenzie flew once again to Japan during June, this time on an unexpected and highly unwelcome visit to a stricken "CAPE WRATH" which limped into Japan with a machinery ailment.

Captain Hogg & Mr. Loughran attended the Shipping Federation Personnel Course at Dunblane in May. Reports of the value of this Course remain very favourable.

Captain J. R. McIntyre: We regret having to report the death of Captain John R. McIntyre on 14th June, aged 78. Captain McIntyre joined the Company as Chief Officer on 27th September, 1929, being appointed to S.S. "CAPE COMORIN". He took over command of the same vessel at New Plymouth on 14th March, 1934. After serving on many of the Company's ships, he retired from M.V. "CAPE RODNEY" on 21st August, 1954. Captain McIntyre visited us regularly until recently, and he will be sadly missed here as well as in his haunt at the Cape Horners' Club. Our sympathy goes to Mrs. McIntyre.

Miss Anne Bowie: Our congratulations on her appointment as Senior Typist - a well-earned promotion we might add.

Typists Department: We were a little premature in recording the arrival of Miss Sheila McOmish and Miss Gillian Hamilton, as it was very much a case of 'hail and farewell', both leaving after a short period for domestic reasons. In their places we welcome Miss Linda Taylor and Miss Linda Forbes, and wish them well in their appointments.

LETTERS

Captain C. G. Mallett  
M.V. "CAPE FRANKLIN".

Dear Editor,

We were all most interested to read in a recent edition of "NEWSLETTER" the article written by Captain Jones about this vessel's visit to Murmansk last July, and it has struck me that your readers might be interested in another voyage in this ship to the same port, but in the month of January. I am afraid, however, that I am not able to entirely agree with Captain Jones' somewhat pleasant account of this Soviet port, even allowing for the difference in seasons.

Vessel sailed on this occasion from the N.E. coast for Murmansk and, as heavy weather was encountered in the vicinity of the Lofoten Islands, it was decided to proceed through the Norwegian Fjords. For the next thirty hours good progress was made, despite heavy falls of snow and extensive areas of sea smoke. Eventually we again entered the open sea just East of the North Cape. From here to our destination weather was extremely cold, with heavy snow squalls and sea smoke, but no heavy ice. We duly arrived off the Kola River, keeping strictly to the courses as laid down by the Soviet Authorities, and entered the river during daylight. One is required to steam up river about five miles before a Pilot is available. While this was being carried out, we had the feeling of being continually watched with suspicion, and were twice examined by Naval patrol ships, both of whom completely steamed round vessel, but made no attempt to communicate. It should be explained that this area of the river, and up to Murmansk, about twenty miles, is used as the main Soviet Arctic Naval Port. The/

The Pilot, who was quite young and spoke very good English, explained that we should have to anchor in the roads for 3-4 days to await a loading berth. On our inquiring from the Pilot just how things were in Russia, he informed us that things were not as bad as one hears. He admitted, however, that the present Government was spending too much on heavy industry. It was noticed on this passage up river that the nuclear-powered icebreaker "LENIN" was moored just below the City. It seems she is widely used, but has been found almost too powerful. As she breaks the ice, a less powerful icebreaker must follow astern, clearing the huge masses of ice broken by the "LENIN". Merchant ships are then able to proceed astern of the second icebreaker.

On our arrival in the roads, vessel was boarded by usual Port Officials, but no agents, who did, however, keep in touch by V.H.F. radio. Pilot was requested or ordered to remain aboard to act as interpreter. Officials were found to be smartly dressed in warm uniforms, quite efficient but extremely suspicious. They refused rather curtly any hospitality in the way of drinks or cigarettes - most unusual for Port Officials. The Port Doctor was a female, who did appear friendlier and more cheerful than the male officials. The usual passes were issued to crew members for use when we eventually moved alongside, with a reminder that all shore leave expired at 2300 hours.

We remained in the roads for about three days and the outlook was most grim. Temperatures ranged from 7-15°F. Heavy snow blizzards swept the area every few hours. Daylight lasted about five hours and the view of the city was quite depressing and appeared to consist chiefly of huge blocks of flats. No attempt had been made to clear the roads of snow and ice, so that the entire city had a dark grim and frozen look. Crew was almost thirty-six hours in opening hatches, which were frozen solid. It seems that during the war, although the city was never occupied by enemy forces, it was almost destroyed by fire.

Eventually we were able to proceed alongside loading berth. Conditions were as Captain Jones has described, with an armed sentry at the gangway day and night. These soldiers are required to do eight hours of duty at a time, despite the Arctic conditions. Pilot who moved vessel alongside was an ex-Shipmaster and spoke fair English. He told me that as he was employed in an Arctic port he was allowed six weeks' holiday each summer when he and his wife were able to travel to a Black Sea resort - this being the Whitley Bay of Russia - and all at Government expense, apart from a small charge for subsistence. He also told me that it was not possible to own a car unless one had a very good job. This, it seems, was far beyond the reach of the average Shipmaster or Pilot. However, some of the fishing boat Skippers, who are paid on a percentage rate, were able to afford this luxury.

The agents' office appears to have three in the staff - two married females and one young man - who appear to work eight hour shifts day and night, with one full day off per week. All orders for loading and ship movements had to come from Moscow. Shortly after our arrival alongside, one of the female agents boarded, this being the first I had seen of any agent. When I informed her that lady agents were rather unusual she told me very proudly that in the Soviet Union men and women had equal status. It seems that everybody I met - Agents, Pilots and even the Shipchandler - all live in two-roomed/

