

readers' letters

Aboard Windsor Castle he found the man who made the long voyage in sail

Sir,

Almost seventy years have passed since Britain had a sizeable sailing fleet. Yet it is amazing how often one can come across people who sailed in those days. If one cares to look.

To me, the days of sail provide an interesting pastime whilst at sea. It is always a source of pleasure to see how my knowledge stands up to that of men who have sailed in those days.

During the past five years in the company's passenger vessels, I have come across first hand knowledge of the following sailing ships: the skysail yarders *Arno*, *Forth* and *Main*. The four-masted barques *Medway*, *Marlborough Hill*, and *Bidston Hill*. The stumpy t'gallant vessels *Arranmore*, *Cambusdoon*, *Lathill* and *Garthpool*, and the ship *Monkbarns*. Not a bad average for five years.

Last voyage, in the *Windsor Castle*, I was lucky enough to meet a passenger who had sailed in two of these sailing ships as far back as 1906.

A group of officers were having after-dinner coffee in the lounge. The chief officer remarked that we had an author on board. All he knew was that he had written a book about a long voyage. Now several years previously an apprentice had lent me a copy of "The Long Voyage." It made so much of an impression on me that the author's name remained in my mind—H. C. de Mierre.

After looking through the passenger list we decided that this was the same person. To my delight it was: de Mierre and his wife were doing the round voyage with us.

Though older than us by more than half a century, we found the de Mierres an exceedingly lively couple. We had many enjoyable evenings in their company.

The voyage began quietly for the de Mierres, but before long they had three firm friends in the 2nd officer, Miss Lemon the nursing sister, and myself. On one occasion we all ended up at the late night disco!

The author began his sea career 65 years ago. He was apprenticed to the James Nourse shipping company. For three com-

plete years, without leave, he served aboard the full-rigged ship *Main*. Not without danger and excitement. The *Main* was partially dismasted in a storm off Bermuda. After only six weeks leave, he then joined the magnificent full-rigged ship *Arno*, in which he completed his time.

He then went into steam, qualifying for extra master in 1913. Apart from war service in the Royal Navy he served in the Cunard Line until 1920, when he left the sea. Until his retirement he worked in banking, finance and industrial management.

We were delighted when the de Mierres thanked us for a pleasant and entertaining voyage aboard a fine ship. We look forward to his next book "Many Seas," which is to be published shortly.

R. A. WILSON,
2nd radio officer,
Windsor Castle



■ H. C. de Mierre, author of "The Long Voyage", visiting the bridge of *Windsor Castle*. With him are R. A. Wilson, second radio officer, Val Lemon, nursing sister, and M. J. Baker, second officer. All are looking forward to his next book "Many Seas", to be published shortly.

Trevesa's boats : one went down with B-I ship

Sir,

Referring to the articles about the *Trevesa's* lifeboats and particularly the chief officers boat and the *Clan* vessel: I hesitated to reply initially as this type of query in our magazine usually elicits an answer and my contribution is only sketchy. It may however ring a few bells elsewhere.

I had the pleasure of sailing in the late 50's with George Raines, then commodore chief engineer (*Clan*). He spoke of the time when he was chief engineer of the *Clan Robertson* (?) and how, during bad weather, the decks were swept clean, stokehold flooded and lifeboats washed away.

They put in to Port Louis for repairs and to enable them to continue to Calcutta they borrowed the *Trevesa's* lifeboat from the museum. They arrived at Calcutta safely

but the B-I vessel returning the lifeboat to Mauritius was sunk en route.

P. WILKINSON,
Chief Engineer,
MV *Elbe Ore*.

Seeking the wit of the sea

Sir,

A South African journalist, who is a very good friend of our company, is hoping to compile a book on humour which is particularly related to the sea. He has asked whether we can help him with stories of this nature.

I am sure there must be plenty of stories of this nature and I would be most grateful to any *CLANSMAN* readers who would care to drop me a line at Cayzer House telling me your favourite stories.

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