

# WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

## Mid - Essex Branch

Newsletter Number 1 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020

### AN CCASIONAL NEWSLETTER TO KEEP IN TOUCH DURING THIS STRANGE TIME IN OUR HISTORY

#### THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME

Obviously our program for this year has slipped considerably. This month we were to welcome Janet Hall from Maldon to talk about the Tug BRENT, currently alongside the "Bath Wall". I have been in contact with Janet and she is happy to come and talk to us when the situation allows

In May, Ian Wells would have presented Part Two of his PowerPoint show "In Black & White" that he started in March.

In June we were anticipating a "Slide Show" from the WSS Show Library but I have not made any steps to secure this as yet.

July might be the first month when we can realistically have a meeting but that must be dictated by Government Restrictions. Perhaps we can pencil in Ian's "Black & White" Part 2 show.

The Ingatestone Club is closed for the duration and I believe we will not be charged for our "Committee Room" until the club opens again. If this is the case it will help keep our finances on track.

We will have to see what August and September throw at us before we make any decision on meetings in the autumn.

#### Ex-Chairman Robin

Our retired Chairman, Robin Butcher has supplied us with his notes and thoughts on the shipping scene each month since he stepped down from his position some years ago now.

He is pleased to carry on with his monthly report and has spurred on the production of this Newsletter so hopefully you will find his article useful and thought provoking.

*Welcome to all WSS Mid - Essex Branch members. I hope all is well with you all and that you have not succumbed to the virus that is affecting the whole world and the shipping industry has not escaped from its effects and I thought you might like some of my thoughts!*

*The dry bulk shipping market has not escaped and has been very badly affected during the first quarter of the year. Capesize bulkers have been the worst hit. Their reliance on China trade made them particularly vulnerable following the outbreak of the virus there which seriously dampened demand. Cyclones in Australia and heavy rains in Brazil significantly affected these countries export volumes as well which did relatively little to help the market. Panamax fared somewhat better as their size generally allows for more flexibility with soya beans playing a big part.*

*Although we continue to live in very uncertain times China seems to have weathered the storm which offers a positive approach to looking to see an improvement in rates overall as 2020 progresses. Who can tell this is shipping after all and who knows where the next event will be or where it will come from that will affect the industry for either better or worse. China's demand for soya beans is expected to increase by 6% this year. All we know is that anything is likely!*

*Whilst looking at the markets we must remember the ships crews which includes those who cannot repatriate due to travel restrictions as well as those who may not be able to join due to lock-down in Ports. Cruise liners have been very badly affected but the main focus has been on the plight of the passengers some of whom have died as a result of not being allowed to enter port. Not only are passengers and crew not able to leave but necessary supplies etc. cannot be delivered. If you want to consider the effect on the crew and the shipping industry take a quick look at the share price for Carnival (owners of P&O, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises et.) over the last twelve months. It will tell you all you need to know. The price has dropped over the last twelve months from £40 a share to just a little over £6. Which means that your 100 shares have gone from being worth over £4,000 to just about £600.. Hopefully your pension fund is not too dependent on shipping company shares!*

*Not a good time to be building new cruise ships either. The ships under construction are now worth less than the contract price by some millions of dollars. I think it will take some time for the industry to recover or will it? Staying with the cruise industry for a while and talk about 'scrubbers' and the benefit of scrubbing as compared to burning IMO Grade 2020 fuels. When IMO 2020 was introduced in January a compliant fuel was some 66% more expensive than a standard fuel and the capital cost of fitting scrubbers was thought to be a very wise decision! The dispute between Mr Putin and Saudi princes has ensured that oil prices have tumbled as any one of you who has reason to fill up your car can testify. Brent Crude has dropped from some \$60 a barrel six months ago and on Christmas eve reached \$68 is now trading at \$33 in less than three months. Makes your scrubbers look expensive as standard and compliant fuel prices are getting closer.*

*I hope some of this has been of interest. Stay safe please and continue to follow the Government advice for virus protection and look forward to when we can all meet up again in Ingatestone.*

*Robin Butcher*

## VISITOR TO THE RIVER BLACKWATER

After restoration in the North East, the Arun Class Lifeboat, Sir William Arnold, has made a journey down the East Coast, stopping off at various ports on the way. Her owner, former Maldon resident, Colin Trowles intends to display her at her new home at St Katherine's Dock, London.

Originally destined for a short stay at Maldon's Hythe Quay she entered the Chelmsford & Blackwater Canal, Heybridge Basin, due to the tidal ranges expected at Maldon.

I am uncertain of her current whereabouts but would suspect she is still at Heybridge Basin

### Famous lifeboat to visit the town!

*By Colin Trowles ex RNLI Volunteer*



A piece of RNLI history will be coming to Maldon's river at the beginning of February. The former St Peter Port (Guernsey) Lifeboat, Sir William Arnold now privately owned would have travelled down the East Coast, stopping off at a number of lifeboat stations on route and is expected to be in Maldon from Sunday 9th (weather permitting). This famous lifeboat, the second of the Arun class to be built in 1973, served all her time at the Channel Island station and was involved in some heroic and famous rescues, saving a total of 224 lives and earning her volunteer coxswains & crews 15 medal for gallantry

in addition to a whole host of other bravery awards. The Sir William Arnold (Lifeboat 52-02) cost £100,000 in 1973, with at least half of that raised by the local community.

The Sir William Arnold retired from active service in 1997 and her future was then unknown. Many later Arun's went on to continue their life saving careers in other countries, but Lifeboat 52-02 was destined for private use and until September 2019 had also been used again a private lifeboat in Northumberland. Now after extensive restoration, she's back looking very similar to how she would have looked in her RNLI days.

The ex-lifeboat's new owner Colin Trowles (originally from Maldon) and with close links to the town, is a former RNLI volunteer and trainer /assessor on the East Coast. Colin has been restoring her to her former appearance and is intending to open her up to the public as London's first and only floating Lifeboat Education and Experience Centre. Her new home will be St Katharine Docks, London, but for a couple of weeks she'll be open for people to look over whilst moored alongside the Hythe quay. There will be a small admission charge to cover her restoration costs and donations are also welcome to the RNLI.

Lifeboat5202.com <https://www.facebook.com/guernseyhero/>

Best wishes to all WSS Mid-Essex branch members along with other WSS members that we maintain links with. Please take care of yourselves until we can meet on a Monday evening once more.

Thank you to Robin Butcher and Colin Trowles (John Raven) for their contribution

Newsletter Number Two will be published as and when there is any further news to impart.

If you have any articles or photos of interest for publication please contact me on [bravedown09@live.com](mailto:bravedown09@live.com) or through our website contact form:

<http://www.midessexships.org.uk/contact.html>

*David Brown*, WSS MID-ESSEX BRANCH Secretary