

The Bluff

portsider



Rex Chapman takes the Chair

Following the decision of John Harrington to relinquish his position as Chairman of the South Port Board of Directors, as detailed in the previous issue, the vacant chair has been taken by Rex Chapman. Large shoes have been left empty but it would be difficult to find a more able person to fill them than Rex.

Born and raised in Invercargill Rex received his primary and secondary education there before attending Otago University. Returning to Invercargill he began his career practicing law with Macalister Brothers, who were then the solicitors for South Port's forebears, the Southland Harbour Board, before joining Cruickshank Pryde as a Partner in 1987.

Married to Trish the couple have four children, ranging in age from seventeen to twenty-seven. They live on a lifestyle block at Myross Bush, which keeps Rex fully occupied at

the weekends, perhaps explaining his own description of himself as 'a terrible holiday golfer'.

Rex specialises in civil litigation, and is a highly respected member of the legal fraternity in Invercargill, being a former council member of the Southland District Law Society. Other fields in which Rex specialises are Resource Management and Environmental Law, Employment Law and Company Law. All are fields pertinent to South Port's business but his intimate knowledge of Resource Management and Environmental Law are particularly valuable to a

South Port's new Chairman ready for action.



port operating company, working as it does on the land/sea interface.

Apart from his legal credentials Rex is very familiar with the niceties of port procedures in Bluff having been a member of the South Port Board of Directors since 2002. Supported by an experienced and familiar Board we are sure Rex will find the Chair a comfortable one.

Prestigious Award for Visiting Shipmaster



Captain Zhu Qianchun on the bridge of the "Port Pegasus". (Photo courtesy of Sarah Hopkins, Pacific Agencies Limited)

As she is named after a nearby harbour on Stewart Island the visit of the "Port Pegasus" to Bluff on 20 September would have attracted attention even without the presence of her illustrious Master, Captain Zhu Qianchun. Acknowledging his exceptional seamanship and leadership when the "Port Pegasus" was berthed at the Japanese port of Onahama during the devastating earthquake and tsunami of 11 March, Captain Zhu was presented with Lloyd's prestigious 'Seafarer of the Year' award.

The difficulties faced by Captain Zhu would have tested the skills of the most experienced of shipmasters, which makes Captain Zhu's handling of the crisis even more notable as he had been promoted to master

only a month before the disaster. When the earthquake struck the "Port Pegasus" was discharging bulk cargo with an unloader deep within number four hold. It was left there and for the next eighteen hours Captain Zhu and his crew battled the ensuing tsunamis and exceptional currents without assistance from pilots, tugs or port personnel. At times the wharf to which the "Port Pegasus" was secured disappeared under as much as three metres of water as eight metre swells rolled into the port and at times full power was required on the engines to hold the vessel in position. For eighteen hours captain and crew battled the extraordinary elements and at the end of their ordeal the ship was undamaged, there were no injuries

to the crew and no pollution was caused. What is more, the unloader was still in number four hold.

The presentation took place at the Lloyd's List Awards, Global 2011 held in Hong Kong on 20 September, coincidentally the same day Captain Zhu and the "Port Pegasus" arrived in Bluff. At the same function the owners of the "Port Pegasus", Pacific Basin Shipping, received awards for shipmanagement and an environmental award for the company's efforts to reduce its fleet's impact on the environment. These may be added to the growing list of accolades bestowed upon the company in recent years. Ships of the Pacific Basin fleet are among our most frequent visitors and it is always a pleasure to welcome them to Bluff; it was especially so in the case of the "Port Pegasus" and Captain Zhu Qianchun.



South Port NZ

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FRONT COVER: MSC container ship "MSC Monica" approaching Stirling Point. In the foreground is the 'anchor chain' symbolising the link in Maori mythology between the South Island, Te Waka a Maui, or the canoe of Maui, and its anchor stone, Stewart Island, or Te Punga o Te Waka a Maui, allowing Maui to catch his great fish, Te Ika a Maui – the North Island.

MSC introduces the Oceania Express Service

MSC has complemented its existing services through Bluff and the rest of Australasia with the introduction of the Oceania Express Service. Directly linking Australian and New Zealand ports with Central and North America the Oceania Express Service offers Southland importers and exporters new destinations throughout North, South and Central America, the Caribbean and Northern Europe. In New Zealand the Oceania Express Service will operate out of Tauranga and by hubbing through that port, with which Bluff has a weekly link through the existing MSC Capricorn Service, Southland is offered rapid transit times to some of our most important trading partners.



"MSC London" is one of the Capricorn Service ships linking Bluff with the new Oceania Express Service through Tauranga.

MSC introduces New Ships to the Capricorn Service



Recently introduced to the Capricorn Service is the "MSC Nora", seen passing Stirling Point.

MSC has enhanced its Capricorn Service through Bluff with the introduction of several new ships bringing a more uniform capacity to the ships operating this link to Australia and Asia. Typically the MSC ships maintaining the service have a capacity of around 3,300 TEU (Twenty Foot Equivalent units) of which about 150 may be refrigerated. Among the ships that have visited on the Capricorn Service are the "MSC Brianna" and "MSC Monica", currently the longest ships to have visited the port. With an overall length of 244 metres they only just hold this distinction as several of the Capricorn Service ships exceed 240 metres.

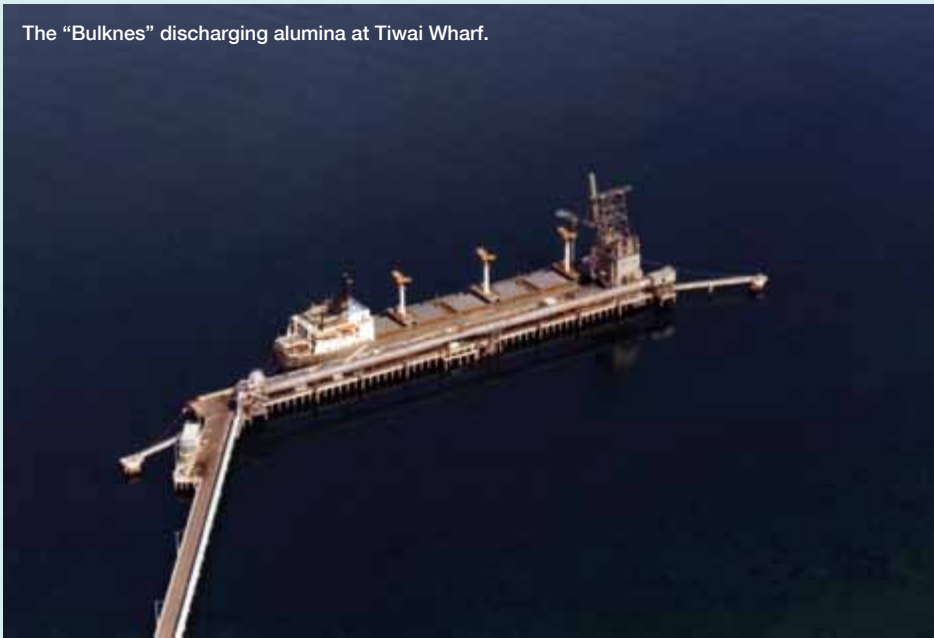
Accolades accompany the "Penguin Arrow"

Captain Zhu Quianchun and the "Port Pegasus" were not the only regular visitors to Bluff to distinguish themselves in the aftermath of the Japanese earthquake. The Gearbulk vessel "Penguin Arrow", under the command of Captain Kresimir Karabatic, gained the heartfelt gratitude of all who live in the Japanese port city of Hachinohe when she became the first Gearbulk ship to visit after the earthquake and a floral tribute was presented to Captain Karabatic to acknowledge this. Her visit was anything but routine as the port's breakwaters were destroyed, navigational aids missing and the crew had to monitor Geiger counters during their coastal passage past the damaged Fukushima nuclear power station.



The "Penguin Arrow" during a recent visit to Bluff.

The "Bulknes" discharging alumina at Tiwai Wharf.



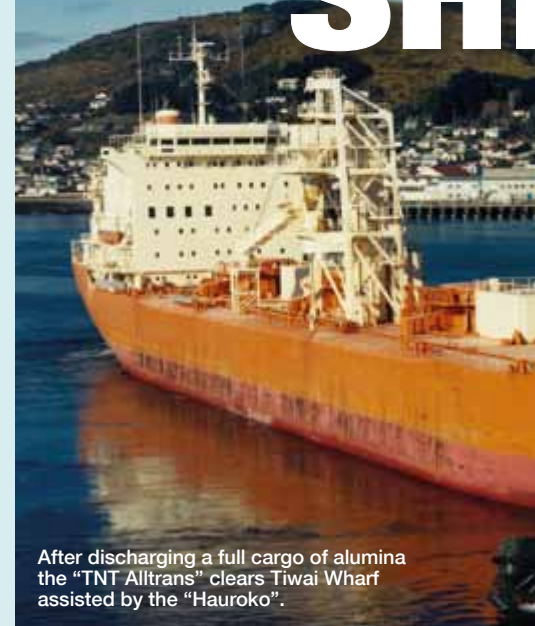
Outbound with aluminium for Asia, the "Trust" approaches Stirling Point.



A faithful servant of the smelter was the "Southland Maru", later renamed "Tiwai Maru", seen inbound for another load.



BLUFF FOR THE SMELT SHIP



After discharging a full cargo of alumina the "TNT Alltrans" clears Tiwai Wharf assisted by the "Hauroko".

2011 was a year of milestones for New Zealand Aluminium Smelters Limited at Tiwai Point - during the year the company celebrated its fortieth anniversary, a new ship-unloader was commissioned on Tiwai Wharf and the company produced its 10 millionth tonne of aluminium (see P.6). None of this would have been possible without the ships that serve the smelter. All the raw materials required to produce aluminium arrive by sea and a very high proportion of the finished product departs the same way. Since the "Shinyo Maru" arrived at Tiwai Wharf on 22 April 1971 with the first cargo of alumina to be discharged there a large number of vessels have played their part in the production and export of aluminium.

In the early days of aluminium production conventional bulk carriers brought in the raw materials and the aluminium was exported in a variety of vessels including cargo liners on scheduled services. The "Bulknes" was then chartered to operate regularly into Bluff bringing alumina from Gladstone and the "Trust" to take export aluminium to the Far East, the "Bulknes" being remembered for her unique funnel adornment with a kiwi on one side and a kangaroo on the other, recognising her mixed New Zealand and Australian crew. In 1983 the "Bulknes" was replaced with

FOCUS ON THE ALTER IPS



the Australian-flag, self-discharging bulk carrier “TNT Alltrans”, built especially to serve the smelter at Tiwai Point and capable of discharge rates in excess of 1,000 tonnes per hour. The following year another purpose-built ship berthed at Tiwai. This was the bulk carrier “Southland Maru”, equipped with two gantry cranes and designed to carry export aluminium to the Far East, although she sometimes brought general cargo south. Both these ships gave long service to the smelter with the “TNT Alltrans”, her name by now shortened to “Alltrans”, sailing for the last time on 20 June 2008 after delivering 10,600,000 tonnes of alumina to the New Zealand Aluminium Smelters plant, and the “Southland Maru”, with her name changed to “Tiwai Maru”, being replaced by the “Rakiura Maru” in 1996. Another ship designed specifically to serve the smelter the “Rakiura Maru” carries liquid pitch to the smelter on her southbound passages from Asia and returns with aluminium northbound.

Since the withdrawal of the “Alltrans” alumina is again imported in conventional bulk carriers, usually those of Pacific Basin, and the company has recognised this trade by naming one of its modern fleet “Tiwai Point”, acknowledging the location of New Zealand Aluminium Smelters Limited.

Seen early in her career when operated by Navix Line the “Rakiura Maru” now sails for Gearbulk.



Gearbulk has had a thirty-year association with the New Zealand Aluminium Smelters plant at Tiwai – here “Weaver Arrow” arrives to load export aluminium.



Pacific Basin ships are frequent callers including the eponomously named “Tiwai Point”.



The unloader probes the "Tiwai Point".



The Unloader Unloading

The new ship-unloader recently delivered to Tiwai Wharf, as detailed in our previous issue, is now in action. Appropriately enough one of its first customers was the Pacific Basin ship "Tiwai Point" which has paid several visits to its 'home port' bringing in alumina for the New Zealand Aluminium Smelters Limited plant. An anticipated consequence of the fast discharge rates possible with the new equipment was an end to cross-harbour shifts when vessels with priority required a berth at Tiwai Wharf. Since the new unloader entered service this has proven to be the case, although inevitably someone will come along and spoil that record.

The Ten Millionth Tonne

On 13 December 2011 the New Zealand Aluminium Smelters Limited plant at Tiwai Point reached a significant milestone with the pouring of its 10 millionth tonne of aluminium and also anticipated producing a record 354,000 tonnes of aluminium for the year.

Aknowledged as producing the highest grade aluminium available the output from the Tiwai smelter has been put to many esoteric uses, including the wings of the world's largest civilian jet airliner, but to express the output more mundanely, 10 million tonnes would produce 714,280,000,000 drink cans.

Cheers!



Early days of aluminium exports. Ten million tonnes later Tiwai products still set the standard.

The "Bulk Orion" departs at the end of her maiden voyage.



Maiden Voyage

Bluff seems to have an attraction for ships on their maiden voyages and the "Bulk Orion" was another unable to resist the temptation and terminated her maiden voyage here. Although we are more accustomed to seeing gantry cranes aboard Gearbulk ships the "Bulk Orion" is equipped with conventional luffing cranes and is one of a popular class of 'Supramax' bulk carriers from the Mitsui Shipyards. To date thirty-five of the class have been built or are on order with the "Bulk Orion" being delivered on 16 September 2011. Six weeks later she was discharging fertiliser in Bluff.

In Learned Company

Antarctic cruise ships are not uncommon in Bluff at this time of year but rarely does academia make its presence felt to the extent of having two learned gentlemen attending at the same time. This, however, was the case on 27 December when “Akademik Shokalskiy” joined “Professor Khromov” on a visit to Bluff. Although bearing men’s names they are actually sisters, being two of the small cruise ships that spend the southern summer cruising south. The “Professor Khromov” is a regular visit on charter to Heritage Expeditions while her sister, “Akademik Shokalskiy”, is the ships with which Heritage began its Antarctic cruises in 1994.



The learned gentlemen, “Akademik Shokalskiy” (foreground) and “Professor Khromov” in port together.

In Pakistani Company

The “Chitral”, the first Pakistani-flag ship ever to visit Bluff was in port during November. She is one of ten ships operated by the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, a fleet that includes tankers and multi-purpose dry cargo ships as well as bulk carriers and operates on world-wide routes. At one time Pakistan had a substantial merchant fleet and we were surprised to find that “Chitral” was the first of that nation’s ships to call here. She proved to be a modern, log-fitted bulk carrier although, at 46,710 tonnes deadweight, larger than most that have loaded logs here.



Pakistani bulk carrier “Chitral” loading logs in Bluff.

The “Titiroa” being prepared for her road journey.



Real Journeys Road Journey

The latest tourist vessel to be built for Real Journeys is the “Titiroa” which recently arrived in Bluff from her Wanganui builders. In Bluff the “Titiroa” was lifted from the water and prepared for the road journey to her home on Lake Manapouri where she will transport tourists from Pearl Harbour, Manapouri, across the lake to West Arm on the first stage of their journey to Deep Cove at the head of Doubtful Sound.

“Titiroa”, named after a mountain overlooking the lake, weighs 55 tonnes, is 24 metres long and can carry up to 138 passengers.

Precious Shipping Limited

Thailand is probably not the first country that comes to mind when considering the major maritime nations of Asia, but a number of important shipping companies are based there. Among them is one of the region's largest operators of 'handy-size' bulk carriers, Precious Shipping Public Company Limited, generally known as PSL. Its 44-strong fleet makes it the biggest shipping company in Thailand.

Although founded as recently as 1 December 1989 the origins of PSL can be traced back far beyond that date. PSL was established by the GP Group, which in turn had evolved from the family firm of G. Premjee, a company that engaged and prospered in the Burmese rice trade during the 19th century. Shifting to Thailand in 1918 the company widened both its sphere of operations and the commodities in which it traded. Its involvement in the grain trade encouraged the company to move into shipping and in 1984 Geepee Corporation Limited was formed to manage its shipping

Limited". All the company's ships were, and are, under the Thai flag.

Growth of the company's fleet in its early years was phenomenal, from seven ships in 1991 to forty-eight by 1997. The company concentrated on carving itself a niche at the smaller end of the 'handy-size' bulk carrier market and in 1995 twenty-two of the twenty-seven vessels in the PSL fleet were between 10,000 and 20,000 dwt. With many of the ports the company traded to in developing countries being severely restricted in the dimensions and draughts of ships they could handle these smaller ships proved ideally suited to the company's requirements.



PSL funnel colours carried by "Fonthida Naree".

During 1997 the company bought six ships from other owners and took delivery of four new-buildings. The "Asipara Naree", delivered on 22 November 1996, had the distinction of being the company's first new building and, with a deadweight of 18,596 tonnes, maintained the company's philosophy of operating smaller bulk carriers. Three of the company's older ships were sold. 1997 was also the year when many of the Asian economies went into a severe recession leading to the collapse of the freight markets and the demise of many shipping companies. PSL survived through financial restructuring and the slimming down of the fleet, emerging with twenty-eight ships at the end of 2003.

Since those difficult times the company has moved into a new period of expansion, signing contracts in July 2007 for twelve new double-hulled, open-hatch, 'handy-size' bulk carriers, with delivery commencing in 2010. This was followed later the same year by further contracts for three 'Supramax' bulk carriers of 54,000 tonnes deadweight, which will be the first PSL ships of this size. We look forward to these new ships enhancing the PSL presence in the port of Bluff.



"Tharinee Naree" at number 5 berth, Island Harbour, Bluff.

activities. Subsequently Geepee Lines was established, followed by Great Circle Shipping Agency to recruit personnel and engage in the technical management of ships.

Between 1987 and 1989 the company bought seven second-hand vessels and the acquisition of these ships lead to the floating of Precious Shipping Limited in December 1989 to own and operate the fleet. Commercial operations started in 1991 when PSL raised sufficient equity to purchase the seven-ship fleet from the parent company, followed by a further equity issue in 1992 allowing the fleet to increase to twelve ships. In 1993 PSL was listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand, becoming a public limited company. Its official name was then changed to "Precious Shipping Public Company



"Urawee Naree" inbound for Tiwai Wharf with alumina.