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The Bluff

portsider



MSC MANAGERS VISIT SOUTH PORT



On 19 February South Port was pleased to welcome to Bluff Mattia Melegari, the newly appointed MSC Line Manager for Australia and New Zealand, accompanied by Phil Abraham, MSC General Manager for New Zealand and Kevin Inder, MSC Regional Manager – Southern. While Mattia works at the MSC Head Office in Geneva both Phil and Kevin are based in Christchurch.

The visit presented the opportunity for an interchange of ideas between senior management of MSC and South Port regarding the development and enhancement of MSC's existing Capricorn Service through Bluff and opportunities for future co-operation between the companies.

Posing beneath one of the most photographed sign posts in New Zealand are, from left, Phil Abraham (MSC), Mark O'Connor (CEO, South Port), Mattia Melegari (MSC), Kevin Inder (MSC), Geoff Finnerty (Cargo Operations Manager, South Port).

SOUTH PORT 2012 SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTED



South Port C.E.O. Mark O'Connor presents Darcy Kerr with the Staff Scholarship.

Staff Scholarship

Darcy Kerr - Darcy is Bluff born and bred and is the son of Kevin Kerr, South Port's Cold Store Clerk. Having completed seven years at Verdon College, Darcy has enrolled with the Southern Institute of Technology for a Bachelor of Audio Production. On completion of the degree Darcy would like to begin a career in the music industry.

While at school Darcy's main sporting interest was martial arts, having trained in Karate and then Taekwondo. His other interests include being a regular member of The Southbound Blues Band and Panache Choir. As a member of the Misty River Country & Variety Music Club, Darcy was awarded a trophy for best overall musician.

In his last year at College, amongst the prizes Darcy was awarded were those for leadership, music, singing and outstanding work and ethic achievement.

GREMLINS

Those who have been collecting 'The Bluff Portsider' may have noticed that the volume numbers for the last couple of issues seem to have been picked at random, although the dates have been correct. We must plead 'mea culpa' for allowing gremlins into the volume sequence and rest assured this is indeed the issue of May 2012, Vol 32 No. 2.

FRONT COVER: Fiordland experienced warm, dry weather through much of the cruising season which has now drawn to a close – at least it was warm and dry by Fiordland standards. This meant that it wasn't necessary to console those cruising Fiordland with the oft quoted statement, "At least the waterfalls will be spectacular", for, as this photograph taken aboard "Radiance of the Seas" shows, sunshine and 'cruising weather' prevailed.




South Port Finance Manager Lara Stevens presents Jesse Goodman with the Community Scholarship.

Community Scholarship

Jesse Goodman – Jesse is also Bluff born and bred and is the son of Donna Goodman, South Port's Finance Assistant. Jesse has a love of water and the sea, enjoying diving, spear fishing and swimming. From a young age Jesse was a member of the Bluff Swimming Club and was twice Southland age group champion. He recently became a volunteer coach for the Club. A member of the Bluff Yacht Club since the age of 11 he is also a member of the Bluff Coast Guard and Bluff Volunteer Fire Brigade.

Having completed six years at Southland Boys' High School, Jesse is now attending the New Zealand Maritime College in Auckland studying for a Diploma in Nautical Science as a precursor to a seafaring career and realising his ultimate goal of becoming a Harbour Pilot.



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“MSC RAFAELA” – OUR LARGEST AND LONGEST CONTAINER SHIP

When she arrived on 22 April the “*MSC Rafaela*” became the longest ship – albeit by only 20 centimetres – and the largest container ship to visit Bluff. She is also a notable ship in the history of MSC. As described in our brief history of the Mediterranean Shipping Company, which appeared in “The Bluff Portsider”, Vol.21 No.3, MSC was founded by Italian sea captain Gianluigi Aponte in 1970 and expanded rapidly through the purchase of second-hand ships.

A momentous occasion in the company’s history occurred in 1996 when the first newly constructed ships for MSC were delivered by their Italian builders. These were the 3,300 TEU container ships “*MSC Alexa*” and “*MSC Rafaela*” and both are still in service with MSC.



“*MSC Rafaela*” inbound on her first visit to Bluff.

CONTAINER HANDLING ENHANCED



The Hyster Reachstacker working on the container pad

To ensure that the larger container ships now visiting Bluff can be handled efficiently and despatched on schedule South Port recently expanded its container handling facilities with the purchase of a Hyster Reachstacker. With the ability to lift over 40 tonnes the Reachstacker can handle all ISO containers and, unlike conventional container-handling forklifts, can work in areas with restricted headroom while the drivers cab can move forward or back for better visibility in confined spaces. The adjustable spreader can also be rotated for precise container positioning, adding to the versatility of the Reachstacker.

Representing a \$770,000 investment the Reachstacker is a valuable addition to South Port’s container handling facilities.

SOUTH PORT GOLF TOURNAMENT

South Port’ annual golf tournament for the Mayall Cup was held on 25 March at the Queens Park Golf Course with a field of over 70 golfers turning out. The day began fine and clear, turning overcast later but even a post-lunch shower couldn’t dampen the golfing spirit. It certainly didn’t dampen the spirits of Brent Hewitt and Stu Low who repeated their efforts of last year by taking away the Mayall Cup, but as they were representing the Queens Park Greenkeepers we can only conclude that home ground advantage came into play. Bluff Golf Club took second place and Southland Stevedoring Services was third. Dennis Kent, representing NZAS had the closest shot to the pin and Aaron Drake, of AWS Legal, the longest drive.



Brent Hewitt and Stu Low keep the Mayall Cup firmly in their grasp.

BLUFF FOR THE CRUISE SHIPS



Dawn's early light sees the "Radiance of the Seas" approaching Milford Sound.



During the course of her World cruise P&O's "Oriana" spent a day cruising Fiordland.



"The World" comes to Stewart Island where she spent two relaxing days.



Australia's only international cruise ship, the "Oceanic Discoverer" is seen here sailing in a fjord with Mitre Peak in the background.

When a cruise ship comes to town local businesses rejoice at the influx of visitors, for people who travel aboard cruise ships tend to be more free-spending than those who line roadsides with thumb extended. In fact the economic benefit to New Zealand derived from cruise ship visits was estimated to be some \$470 million for the 2011-2012 season.

Most of this income is garnered during port calls, especially in Auckland where passenger exchanges usually take place. Welcome though these visitors may be in our main centres New Zealand's ports and cities are not the main reason that cruise ships come calling; rather it is the wilderness areas that attract, especially Fiordland. Even so, it must

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er", moored in Harrison Cove, Milford Sound, with the iconic

have come as something of a surprise to one of the major cruise lines when a survey of its passengers revealed that their favourite New Zealand port of call was Stewart Island.

The 'mega-rich' residents aboard the exclusive apartment ship "The World" appear to agree with that assessment as this year she again visited Stewart Island. While she was there the South Port pilot vessel "Takitimu" proved her capabilities by going around "The World" in 80 seconds – Phileas Fogg, eat your heart out.

As the senior provider of pilotage services to both Fiordland and Stewart Island South Port plays a vital role in the continuing expansion of the cruise ship industry in New Zealand.



Another visitor to Stewart Island was the "Silver Shadow", seen here preparing to disembark her South Port pilot.



The "Seven Seas Voyager" off Bluff after disembarking her pilot en route to Timaru.



Inbound for Milford Sound the "Celebrity Century" continues Celebrity Cruises presence in New Zealand.

GOURMETS DELIGHT

Oyster lovers everywhere have cause for celebration this year with the Bluff Oyster Season in full swing; and what a season it is proving to be. Blue skies, blue seas and windless days have seen the season blessed by weather conditions that even the most loyal of Bluff supporters would have to admit have been exceptional.

Even the oysters are playing their part being fatter, juicier and tastier than most connoisseurs who relish the delicacy can recall. It has the makings of a season that epicureans will recall with affection, twinged with nostalgia, in the years ahead. Bon appetite.



"Torea", 'Grande Dame' of the oyster fleet, inbound from the oyster beds with the "MSC Didem" in hot pursuit, no doubt crewed by epicureans anxious to get their share.

ANTARCTIC CRUISING

Bluff was once again the New Zealand departure port for Antarctica with the "Professor Khromov", marketed by Heritage Expeditions as "Spirit of Enderby", making several cruises out of Bluff to the sub-Antarctic islands of the Southern Ocean, and Antarctica. As our photograph shows, she was joined on one of her visits to Bluff by another Antarctic voyager, the "Orion", which is also becoming an annual visitor to Bluff during her voyages south.

As mentioned in the previous 'Portsider', a third Antarctic cruise ship, the "Akademik Shokalskiy", also visited Bluff during the summer season, confirming Bluff's position as New Zealand's Antarctic cruising capital.



Antarctic cruise ships "Professor Khromov" and "Orion" at number five berth, Bluff.



H.M.N.Z.S. "Resolution" during her last visit to Bluff.

RESOLUTION FAREWELLED

The final visit of H.M.N.Z.S. "Resolution" to Bluff was a doubly sad occasion. Not only was it the last time we would welcome her into port but while here she assisted in the search for the fishing vessel "Easy Rider", which tragically sank in Foveaux Strait with the loss of eight lives on 14 March.

H.M.N.Z.S. "Resolution" was commissioned into the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1997 as a replacement for "Monowai" and "Tui", being adapted as a hydrographic survey and research ship. Given this role it is appropriate that she should be named after Captain James Cook's ship H.M.S. "Resolution".

H.M.N.Z.S. "Resolution" was decommissioned in April.

DEPARTED

As well as a home for Antarctic cruise ships – see story opposite - Bluff has been something of a haven for heavy-lifts just lately. The heaviest of them all was the new ship unloader for Tiwai Wharf detailed in our September issue and at 530 tonnes it does make more recent lifts seem comparative lightweights. Since South Port's Liebherr LHM400 mobile crane entered service in December 2010 its predecessor, an LHM320 model, has been mostly an immobile crane with little need for its services. Sold by South Port to a company in the Bahamas it has now left Bluff for Nassau where it should soon regain its mobility to a calypso beat.

Off to the Bahamas, the partially dismantled crane aboard the "Jumbo Spirit".



The transformer being inched ashore at Tiwai.

ARRIVED

An inbound heavy lift was a new transformer for the New Zealand Aluminium Smelters plant at Tiwai. Arriving aboard the Dutch ship "Damgracht" the transformer, at 165 tonnes, was too heavy for road transport from Bluff to the Tiwai plant therefore a multi-wheeled trailer was pre-positioned aboard a barge. When the transformer arrived it was discharged onto the trailer and the barge was then taken across the harbour by the tug "Levanter" and South Port's work boat "Oreti" to a landing site at Tiwai.

There the road trailer and transformer were towed ashore, with two heavy tractor units operating in tandem being required to move such a heavy load over unformed roads, and the transformer was relocated on site.

DECONSTRUCTED

With the new ship unloader on Tiwai Wharf now fully commissioned the original Hartmann unloader has found itself, like South Port's redundant crane, an unwanted entity. Unlike South Port's crane, however, there is no sunshine or calypso beat in the unloader's future and it has now been completely dismantled. With scrap metal a regular export out of Bluff the old unloader may well comprise part of the cargo of the next ship loading scrap in Bluff.

Once modifications to the conveyor system are completed Tiwai Wharf's transformation will be complete.



A unique view of the inner workings of the Hartmann ship unloader during dismantling.

THE SCHEPERS SHIPPING COMPANIES OF HAREN

Haren (Ems) is a city of some 30,000 inhabitants in North-West Germany, virtually on the border with the Netherlands. As the River Ems, one of Europe's major waterways, flows through the city it is not really surprising that much of Haren's wealth is derived from boats, barges, ships and the sea. In fact it is Germany's third largest shipping centre with more than twenty shipping companies having their headquarters in Haren and the locally owned fleet comprises over three hundred coastal and deep sea vessels, with a further fifty or so river barges also being based in the town. A good proportion of the tonnage operating from Haren (Ems) belongs to companies controlled by members of the Schepers family.

Among the many attractions which make Haren a popular tourist destination are several maritime museums. One of these features floating exhibits of historic craft including a replica of the "*Helene*". Completed in 1890 the original "*Helene*" was a locally built schooner of 220 tons deadweight in which Captain Hermann Kiepe sailed across the Atlantic to Brazil. During the following ten years he continued his voyages to South America together with his wife Maria, nee Schepers, and their enterprise led to the formation of Reederie Schepers by Captain Heinrich Schepers, whose wife Helene was the youngest daughter of Hermann and Maria.

About the same time as Captain Kiepe was sailing for South America Rudolf Schepers, who was born in 1875, began shipowning in Haren with small local barges on the River Ems, later expanding into the Weser and Elbe. Between 1928 and 1931



The "*Thea-S*" made many visits to Bluff during the 1980's while chartered to Jebesen Line.

three small motor-coasters, the "*Hans*", "*Rudolf*" and "*Thea*", joined his fleet. Other members of the Schepers family also became ship-owners to the extent that by 1940 there were no fewer than twenty-one different Schepers family shipping companies in Haren Ems. All these companies were small, numerically Rudolf had the largest fleet with his three coasters, but most of the ships were modern motor-vessels of between 130 and 230 gross tons.

A similar situation prevailed during the post war decades with over thirty companies bearing the Schepers name operating as ship-owners out of Haren into the 1960's. Most continued to be single-ship companies operating modern ships in the coastal and short-sea trades with which they had become so familiar. Shipping was changing, however, with deep-sea liner services becoming dominated by container ships. Then, as now, large container ships called at only a few European terminals and

the onward distribution of containers by sea lead to a new type of short-sea trader – the feeder container ship. Feeder ships are designed to distribute containers to smaller ports and feed export containers from them back to the main terminals, but are also suitable for overseas trades where cargo volumes are insufficient for larger container ships. German ship-owners, including several branches of the Schepers family, were among the first to realise the potential of feeder ships and remain major operators of the type to this day.

It was one of these smaller container ships, the "*Thea-S*", that became the first Schepers-owned vessel to visit Bluff when she was chartered by Jebesen (N.Z.) Line for its service from New Zealand to Asia shortly after her completion in 1982. A second Schepers vessel, the "*Karin-S*", followed in 1984 and was renamed "*Jebesen Southland*" for the duration of her charter.

More recently SE Shipping has voyage chartered two 'state of the art' feeder container ships, the "*Bernhard Schepers*" and "*Johanna Schepers*", for its service from Bluff to Europe. Both these ships were on their maiden voyages from their Chinese builders to Europe, having been completed for HS Schiffahrts GmbH, yet another company operated by members of the Schepers family.

Today there are not as many Schepers owned shipping companies as there used to be but the number of ships and the total tonnage controlled by the families is greater than ever with container ships ranging from feeders to some of the largest afloat and a burgeoning fleet of bulk carriers coming into service. We look forward to more of them visiting the Port of Bluff.



Latest Schepers controlled vessel to visit Bluff is the "*Johanna Schepers*", seen outbound for Europe on a choppy day.