

The Bluff

# portsider

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# ▶ CHANGING GEARS

While searching for some words to describe the past 12 months it was difficult to settle on anything that would suitably sum up the year.

However, on further reflection "teamwork" rings true and is undoubtedly how South Port and many other companies have made it through a rather challenging period.

We are extremely proud of the way our staff have stepped up and worked through the COVID-19 lockdown, changes to work patterns and ongoing restrictions. This would not have been possible however without the excellent teamwork between the Board, the wider Leadership team, the COVID-19 response team and our staff.

It was pleasing in this respect that the most recent staff survey highlighted marked improvements in all key areas measured by the Port. This has been achieved through a lot of reflection following the 2018 survey and then some good old fashioned "hard graft" to improve our performance. This is one of the areas that we will always be striving for continuous improvement.

It is also important to acknowledge the collective work of the contractors, customers and the port sector to meet the COVID-19 crises. Port companies work together in many areas for the betterment of the industry with health and safety always one of the top priorities and this come into play during the pandemic.

At the point of writing this column the outcome of the New Zealand Aluminium Smelter negotiations between Meridian, Transpower and Rio Tinto are still unknown. This process has been ongoing for 12 months now starting with the strategic review in October 2019 and then later with the termination of the electricity contract with Meridian in July 2020. The incoming Government made a positive statement prior to the election promoting an extended shut down period for the Smelter of 3 to 5 years to allow for a transition to new industries.

It is hoped that there will be a resolution to these negotiations this side of Christmas.

While there have been a few headwinds this year the Port has been working diligently on its strategy and is looking forward with optimism.

The recent announcement of the Channel Improvement Project (CIP) and investigation into the purchase of a new tug shows positive intent from the Board and Leadership team towards building the Port for the future.

The CIP is focused on gaining further depth by removing the tops of the high points within the channel and increasing the 9.7 metre operating draft of vessels. This will increase the safety margins for larger vessels transiting the channel, expand the safe operating windows in terms of weather and to cater for more cargo volume shipped on each vessel calling at the Port.

The Port held a successful "coffee and a chat" session in the Bluff township recently to answer any questions or concerns that the community may have about the proposed CIP. There were a number of informative display boards on show with the Leadership team and our consent experts on hand to discuss any topics that were raised, and obviously a hot cup of coffee.

The Port is also investigating the purchase of a new tug with a minimum bollard pull of 60 tonnes which would bring the combined bollard pull at the Port for a two-tug operation to 100 tonnes. This will provide increased safety margins for handling the larger vessels calling on a weekly basis and the capacity to increase volumes shipped through the Port should the CIP go ahead.

This past year we have made some excellent progress in our Corporate Social Responsibility:

- There is now a conscious effort to track the Port's impact on the environment, illustrate this in our Annual Report and work on strategies to reduce our footprint.
- Our Community Engagement Policy was rolled out and it has been a huge success with staff donating their time to become involved in community events, more face-to-face interaction with our stakeholders and the running of a Port Open Day for the first time in many years.
- There has been continued improvement in the safety, health and wellbeing space. The use of our wellbeing platform 'Pulse', the running of bowtie workshops, regular interaction with port stakeholders, customers and users to discuss safety have been highlights. One standout would be the establishment of a safety, health and wellbeing "Why Wall". This involves all staff writing down and sharing with their colleagues why it is important for them to go home safe at the end of each day. These were insightful sessions and it was great to see individual staff members stand up and share their personal thoughts, adding significant value to these discussions. Look out for the "Why Walls" which will be illustrated in each department and the main foyer of the administration building next time you are at the Port.



▶ Chief Executive, Nigel Gear

Again, this is another area that we will always be striving for continuous improvement!

Finally, it's hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner. The Board, Leadership team and staff would like to wish all our readers a well-deserved Christmas break and hopefully a freshen up for a great 2021. To all of those that are working during the Christmas period, including South Port staff, customers and suppliers we would like to thank you in advance for keeping the Port operational during this busy period.

**Nigel Gear**



**South Port NZ**



▶ **COVER:** Export logs being loaded to a ship (out of shot to the right) while a ship with import fertiliser is in view in the background.

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# ► SOUTH PORT'S PEOPLE



## JOANNE THWAITES

As New Zealand's Alert Level 4 Lockdown period ended, Joanne Thwaites joined the team as Payroll/Human Resources Administrator.

Joanne brings a number of years administrative experience and joins us from South Pacific Meats where she was employed as their Payroll Officer.

Most of Joanne's payroll training has been on-the-job and she is enjoying working at South Port, the people and the new challenge of learning our systems.

She is a born and bred Southlander, married with three adult children and two grandchildren. Away from work she enjoys time with her family, gardening and being outdoors.

## MICHELLE LAWSON

Michelle Lawson has joined the South Port Container Terminal team and has been signed off to operate our heavy container handlers.

Michelle joins us from her previous employer Mico Plumbing (Fletchers NZ). Her role varied over time with Mico's including trade sales, ordering goods for small to large-scale projects and more recently bathroom design.

Michelle is a happy-go-lucky active person with a wide range of interests including the outdoors, whitebaiting and is very keen on sports having previously played and coached for the Panther's Softball Club and has also been Assistant Coach to the Southland Under 15 Girls' softball team.

She enjoys spending time with her family and getting her hands dirty in the garden.



## NICOLE HODSON

Nicole Hodson joins the South Port team as the Executive Assistant who will work closely with the Port's Leadership Team and Board of Directors.

Nicole joins us from the Southland Building Society where she held a number of roles. The highlight of her time with the SBS was stepping in as their Executive Assistant covering a 12-month parental leave period.

Nicole is a proud born and bred Southlander. Outside of work, Nicole enjoys catching up with family and friends and experiencing the outdoors.

She is making the most of the Bluff Hill in close proximity as her training ground for the Molesworth Station Run in November. Good luck Nicole.

## RAYMOND TULL

Raymond Tull was appointed as a Marine Pilot/Tug Master, joining the South Port team in July 2020.

Ray moves some distance to us from Solstad Offshore operating in North West Australia in the Oil and Gas industry where he was employed as a Master/Chief Mate.

As a child and teenager, Ray spent every school holiday period in Bluff with his grandparents and is thrilled to have the opportunity to now work in the Port where his love of seafaring began (inset photograph of Ray as a small boy on the original *Hauoko*).

Ray has settled in Invercargill with his wife and two children and his extended family in Bluff is enjoying him being closer. Outside of work Ray enjoys music and he plays guitar.



## PETER ZOTOV

Peter Zotov is the latest appointment to the South Port Marine Team as Marine Operations Manager. Peter has over 20 years' experience in the maritime industry and holds a Diploma in Nautical Science and is also qualified as a Master Foreign Going.

Peter joins us from the Offshore Oil and Gas Sector, returning to New Zealand following an extended stint in Western Australia where he was the Chief Officer/SDPO on board a 5th generation deep water semi-submersible mobile offshore drilling unit. Peter has set up home in Invercargill and is looking forward to being joined by his wife and two young children very soon.

Aside from spending quality time with his family, Peter's interests are flying Model aircraft with his son and flying gliders (he is looking forward to seeing Omarama). He also enjoys hunting and fishing, and competition pistol shooting.



## ► 10 YEAR MILESTONE

### In April 2020, Scott Faithfull achieved the milestone of 10 years' service with South Port.

Over this time Scott spent 8.5 years as a member of the Container Terminal Team based on the Island Harbour in the role of Depot Supervisor before taking over the role of the Intermodal Freight Centre Supervisor in Invercargill in December 2018.

In February 2020, Scott was appointed to the newly created Bulk Cargo Coordinator position, back on the Island Harbour.

*"The past 10 years have been character building with many varied challenges along the way. However, you expect there to be challenges in any career, especially by the time you get to the 10-year mark.*

*During those 10 years I have had the privilege to have worked with some great people and being part of South Port's continued growth over that time.*

*I now look forward to the new challenges ahead over the next 10 years."*



► Scott Faithfull

## ► ANNUAL MEETING



► David Stevens and Rex Chapman

On Thursday, 29 October South Port held its 32nd Annual Shareholders' Meeting at the Port. There were a couple of things that made this year's meeting different from others, and also a little bit special. The meeting had an online 'virtual' presence with the addition of shareholders having the option to join the meeting via an online platform where they could view the entire meeting as if they were in the room. Technology was engaged in the event the Port was unable to hold a physical Annual Meeting should COVID-19 level limitations handbrake proceedings. During the 2020 financial year the Port celebrated 25 years as an NZX-Listed Company having listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange on 8 July 1994.

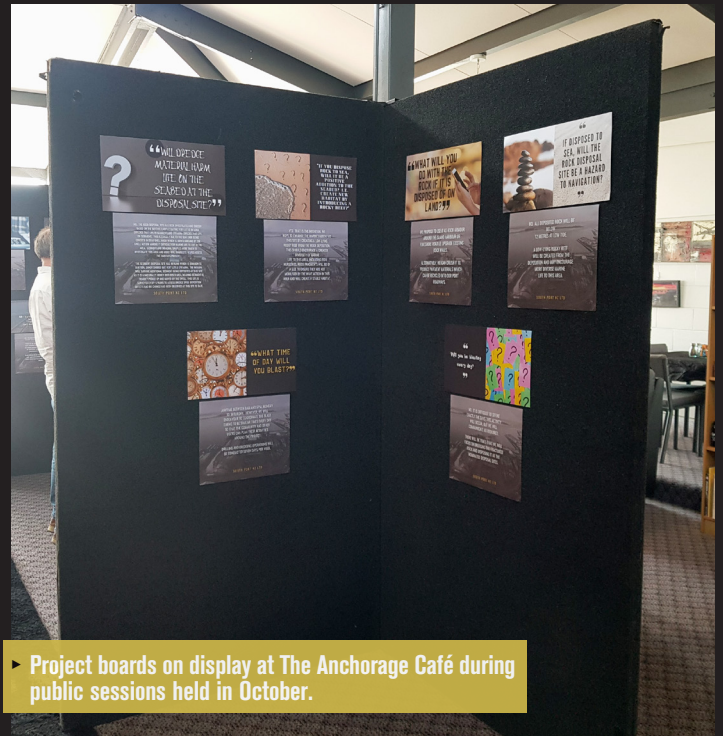
*Photo – Environment Southland's South Port Sub-Committee Chair, Cr David Stevens has the pleasure of cutting the celebration cake at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Shareholders' Meeting joined by South Port Board Chair, Rex Chapman.*



# ▶ CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



▶ South Port's Port General Manager, Geoff Finnerty explaining the Channel Improvement Project to South Port Accountant, Sarah Smith.



▶ Project boards on display at The Anchorage Café during public sessions held in October.

Following South Port's announcement to the NZX and media on 28 August in relation to the investigation into the deepening of the entrance channel, the Port held public sessions to provide information to the Community on what the project might look like and answers to some of the questions they may have. The project is currently at stakeholder consultation stage with a view to lodging a resource consent application with Environment Southland before Christmas.

South Port has a lot of work ahead of itself should this project proceed and together with the work the Port wishes to be involved with in the community engagement space, a new position has been established within the Business Development team which has been filled by the Port's former Executive Assistant, Kirsten Hoyle. In her new role as Communications Advisor, Kirsten will facilitate the conveyance of the who, what, when, where and why of what is happening at the Port to ensure information is factual, appropriate and timely.



▶ South Port staff taking the opportunity to find out more about the Channel Improvement Project from South Port Chief Executive, Nigel Gear.



# ▶ SANFORD INVESTS IN THE FUTURE

It wasn't just the *Pan Nova* (see below) that completed her maiden voyage in Bluff recently as Sanford's latest piece of floating plant *San Hamana* also arrived from her builders. In this case however, the maiden voyage was made under tow from Tasmania for the *San Hamana* which is a salmon feeder and accommodation barge intended for Sanford's operations in Big Glory Bay, Stewart Island. Costing \$5.5 million the *San Hamana* has four silos capable of holding 200 tonnes of salmon feed which is distributed to the salmon pens in a computer-controlled operation.

Underwater cameras and sensors monitor feed distribution and provide data such as oxygen levels in the sea. With 4,500 tonnes of salmon harvested annually, Big Glory Bay is a site worthy of the investment.



▶ Sanford's latest piece of floating plant, the barge *San Hamana*, at Bluff.

# ▶ A STELLAR OCCASION



▶ The *Pan Nova* begins her northbound voyage attended by the Bluff pilot vessel.

On 13 July Pan Ocean Company Limited's latest ship, the *Pan Nova*, arrived in Bluff at the end of her maiden voyage from her builders in Japan to commence loading logs for China. Pan Ocean was founded in South Korea in 1967 and its ships have been a familiar sight in Bluff since the 1990's with the maiden voyage of the *Pan Nova* being acknowledged with a brief ceremony aboard the ship before loading began. Her first cargo was a consignment of 20,562 JAS from Rayonier Matariki Forests bound for China and the *Pan Nova* departed on schedule to complete loading at other New Zealand ports.

Rayonier was established in New Zealand in 1988 as an exporter of logs but expanded its scope to a 'seeds to shipment' operation with the purchase of its first forest in 1991. Today Rayonier Matariki Forests, which is managed by Rayonier New Zealand Limited, is the third largest forestry company in New Zealand with about 120,000 hectares of plantations on a total land base of 160,000 hectares. Rayonier Matariki Forests has been shipping logs out of Bluff since 2015. The 'Matariki' of its title is, of course, the Maori name for the Pleiades constellation which rises in June signifying the Maori New Year, the time to be planting crops or trees as the case may be. With nova, as in *Pan Nova*, applying to a star that undergoes a sudden increase in luminosity, then a gradual decrease to its original brightness, the loading of Rayonier Matariki logs aboard the *Pan Nova* was surely a stellar occasion.



▶ Those involved in the transit of the *Pan Nova* through Bluff gather before her pristine paintwork.



# ► THE HARBOURMASTER AFLOAT

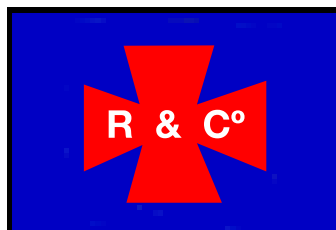
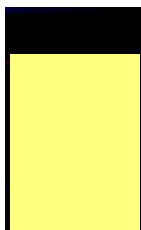
Southland Regional Harbourmaster Lyndon Cleaver has a new weapon in his armoury to ensure safety protocols are observed on Southland's waterways with the delivery of the dedicated vessel *Kewa*. The basic hull and superstructure were built by Marco Boats, Morrinsville, to its proven Sou'wester 760 design with fitting out by Inders Marineland in Gore. Named for Te Ara a Kiwa, 'The Pathway of Kiwa', the Maori name for Foveaux Strait, the *Kewa* will be based in Bluff giving easy access to the Strait and Rakiura/Stewart Island which will be its main areas of operation. It is an area that was not always accessible in the smaller boats which were all the Regional Council had available prior to construction of the *Kewa*. Southland has the longest coastline of any region in New Zealand, over 1,800 nautical miles including Fiordland, the biggest gem in the country's tourism crown and the reason cruise ships come here. Construction of the *Kewa* was therefore funded through the marine fees paid by visiting cruise ships transiting Fiordland as this area is also under the Regional Harbourmaster's jurisdiction. Being trailerable the *Kewa* will allow ready access to Fiordland and the many other waterways within the Harbourmaster's domain. Bon Voyage Lyndon.



► The *Kewa* running trials off Bluff.

## ► A FLAG FROM THE PAST – RICHARDSONS OF NAPIER

While coastal shipping services around New Zealand were dominated by the mighty Union Steam Ship Company many smaller companies provided essential services to the communities they served, none more so than Richardsons of Napier that operated a sort of seagoing courier service right around the east coast of the North Island from Palliser Bay to the Bay of Plenty calling at over seventy beaches and bays enroute. In the days before road or rail reached these tiny settlements the visits by a Richardson's steamer were often the only contact many of the settlers had with the outside world.



Captain John Campbell landed on a beach near the little township of Napier in 1856, having travelled from his native Scotland via the Ballarat goldfields, and was soon a prominent figure in local affairs. Within two years of his arrival Campbell and a partner, J. Blair, were operating a lighterage service (transporting passengers and cargo between ship and shore), there being no adequate port at Napier in those days. In 1859 Campbell purchased the little schooner *Hero* which was used for both lighterage and local trading in Hawke's Bay, the trading prospects being such that Campbell ordered a new ship from Dunedin builders. This was the 45-ton, iron steamer *Fairy*, completed in 1873, but Campbell was unable to meet payments, requiring assistance from local businessman George Richardson. Their relationship was formalised two years later with the establishment of Richardson & Company.

Expansion of the company's services followed two paths, lighters working cargo to and from overseas vessels and steamers operating coastal services, although the steamers were also used for lighterage. This was probably a welcome change for the

crews as the coastal trade was hard, dangerous work using surf boats carried aboard the ships. Most of the 'ports' visited were exposed beaches where the farmers would drive a bullock cart laden with wool bales into the surf where the wool would be transferred to the ship's boat, with the boat crew often working up to their

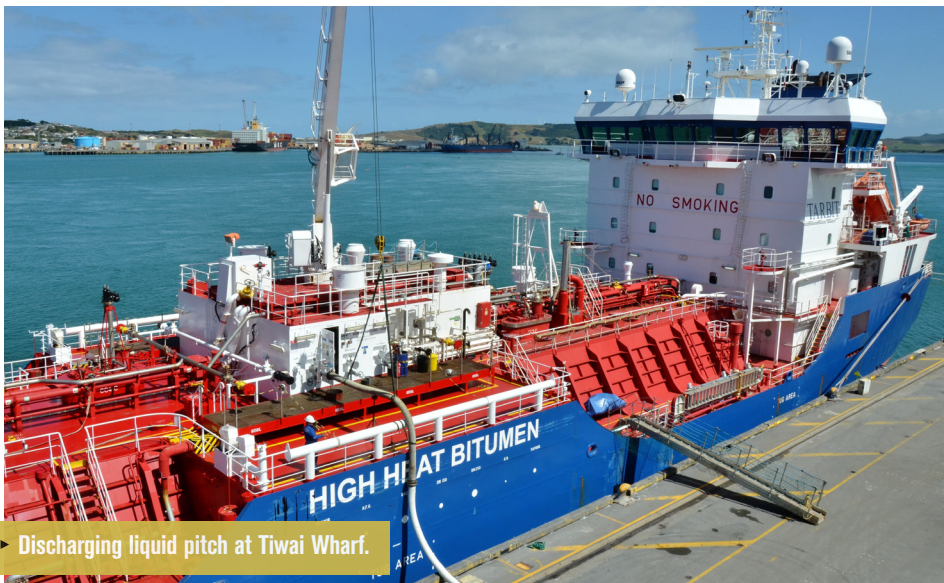
waists in water. An onshore wind increased the difficulties and if too strong would cause cargo work to stop leaving the ship lying idle until conditions improved. Today the trade would probably be considered an essential service and attract a subsidy, but no such assistance existed in those days and the coastal service was not very profitable.

Seeking longer and hopefully more lucrative routes Richardsons managed to step on the Union Steam Ship Company's toes, the outcome being the latter acquiring 25% of the former in 1912. This was par for the course and Union Company came to control the fortunes of most New Zealand coastal companies including the Canterbury S.S. Company, Holm & Co., and, of course, Richardson & Co. As Union Company withdrew its own ships from unprofitable coastal services it required these companies to take them over and Richardson's ships were allocated the Bluff to Auckland service, becoming regular visitors to Bluff. The *Kopara* was the first on 4 May 1965 followed by the *Parera*, *Pateke* and *Pukeko*. Last and largest ship owned by Richardsons, the *Pukeko* was also the last to visit Bluff on 21 October 1972, her twenty-fourth visit to the Port, but by then she and the rest of the fleet had been sold to Holm & Company and wore that company's colours. The last meeting of Richardson's directors was held in 1978 when they voted to liquidate the company bringing to a close 119 years of coastal trading.

# ► TARBIT SHIPPING AB

Aluminium smelting requires a large, stable supply of electricity so smelters are invariably built close to such a supply with the raw materials of manufacture being imported. This is why New Zealand's only aluminium smelter is located at Tiwai Point on Bluff Harbour as it is the closest deep-water port to the purpose-built Manapouri hydro-electric power station. Among the raw materials brought in to Tiwai is liquid pitch which is combined with petroleum coke to form anodes used in the reduction cells to make aluminium. Originally this was imported in dry bulk form (pencil pitch) but was a hazardous cargo to handle, therefore when the *Rakiura Maru* was built in 1995 to serve the smelter she was designed to carry liquid pitch in special tanks capable of handling the cargo at temperatures in excess of 200°C, and to also carry a full cargo of aluminium on the northbound voyage to Asia. Last year the *Rakiura Maru* was withdrawn which might have left the smelter in a predicament as very few tankers can handle the high temperatures required to transport liquid pitch. Fortunately, there is one company, Tarbit, that specialises in doing just that and its *Bit Redo* has become a familiar sight in Bluff delivering liquid pitch to Tiwai, with the smelter using some 2,200 tonnes of it per month.

Tarbit operates as two distinct branches, Tarbit Shipping AB based in Skarhamn, Sweden, and Tarbit Tankers BV under the Dutch flag with its home port in Dordrecht. Both fleets now comprise highly sophisticated ships but both began with very basic war-built tankers of the 'CHANT' type, CHANT being an acronym for 'Channel Tanker', ships of 450 tons deadweight intended to supply fuel to the Normandy beachheads. In fact the



► Discharging liquid pitch at Tiwai Wharf.

founders of Tarbit Shipping, Knut Hermansson and Sture Svanstrom, met in 1958 when Knut arrived in Gothenburg with his tanker *Redon*, ex *CHANT 67*, which was to have a new boiler installed and Sture was the ship's agent. The two had an immediate rapport leading to the purchase of the "Oiltank" in 1962, their first jointly owned vessel. The very similar "Scantank" was bought the following year and the company's first asphalt tanker *Redo* joined the fleet in 1976. She remained with the company for twenty-seven years and was the first ship to use oil rather than steam to heat the cargo. Most subsequent ships were designed to carry asphalt or other cargoes requiring high temperatures.

Some twenty years before Knut Hermansson and Sture Svanstrom met in Gothenburg J. F. van Seumeren, director of Tar Company Uithoorn, decided to embark upon the maritime transport of tar, asphalt and other 'high heat' cargoes. In

April 1947 he founded Reederij Theodora and purchased the *CHANT 53* which he renamed *Theodora* after his wife. In all, three 'Chants' were purchased, two fitted with steam heating coils for high temperature cargoes, the third equipped to carry sulphuric acid. Furness Shipping and Agency, Rotterdam, a subsidiary of the British Furness Withy Group, was appointed agent for the company's ships.

The first new building for the Theodora fleet was the *Stella Maris* in 1954. She, and her sisters that followed, were designed to carry products such as tar and creosote and ten years later the first purpose-built bitumen tanker, the *Stella Fornax*, was delivered. During this period Furness took shares in the company, acquiring the entire shareholding in 1971. Thereafter the company continued to transport high heat products such as bitumen and pitch, the *Bit Redo* being one of the Dutch fleet.

On 14 June 2001 Theodora Tankers BV was sold to Tarbit Shipping AB, retaining its name until 1 January 2011 when Theodora Tankers became Tarbit Tankers BV. By the time of this takeover both companies concentrated on transporting 'high heat' cargoes and the combined fleet is one of the largest in the world capable of handling such products. From coastal services around Europe and Scandinavia its ships now operate worldwide, although surely its longest regular service must be that of the *Bit Redo* from the Far East to Bluff.



► The *Bit Redo* inbound for Bluff.