

## Captain Peter Attwood, 1928 to 2020



Peter began his sea career in July 1943 when he was apprenticed to T & J Brocklebanks. With sea-time reduced from four years to three (as a wartime measure) Peter was able to sit for and pass his Second Mate's certificate in 1946 but did not return to the company. Having had his fill of the Indian sub-continent he was looking for something different. While having no bearing on his decision, Peter recalled an event in April 1944 in which the *Fort Strikine* exploded catastrophically in Bombay the day after his ship had sailed for Australia where they first heard the news. Peter had socialised with some of the *Fort Strikine's* apprentices.

He spent 1947 and 1948 with one of the Ellerman Lines Group on their Iberian and Mediterranean service before joining Shaw Savill Line in 1949, his final British company. It was during this latter period that Peter sailed in the old coal burner *Mahana*, on her final circumnavigation, an account of which he was fond of repeating. . . Peter gained his Master's certificate in 1952 and left Shaw Savill in 1955 to Join the Union Steamship Company for about a year, his final seagoing job.

From 1956 to 1962, he worked for Port Lines Operations before moving in 1963, to Colyer Watsons, agents for Columbus Line and ultimately other European Lines when they gained admittance to the Conference. After leaving the waterfront in 1974, he joined the shipping department of the Dairy Board where he remained until finally retiring in 1990.

In putting these few words together in Peter's memory I have drawn from the article submitted by Captain Graham Williams to the September issue of ON DECK, and information provided by Captains Ken Watt and John Brown. During Peter's membership he was Warden of the Wellington Branch circa 2006 – 2008.

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***Peter as Warden is pictured third from the right***

My actual association with Peter began in 1974 when I hired him to work for me in the shipping department of the then Dairy Board. He was at a loose end and willing to work for the Board's ungenerous wages. It was only after getting to know him that I learned that our paths crossed albeit briefly twenty years earlier when he was for a time third officer of *Gothic* preparing for the Royal Commonwealth Tour. Unable to get an assurance of leave to get married when the ship reached Wellington, he had himself transferred at the end of the short shakedown cruise we had to Greenock. He was replaced by Ian McIntosh for the voyage proper. Anyway, he probably would not have had any reason to remember the shipping manager as a young AB more than twenty years earlier. We shared another distinction in that we both sailed in two of the last of Shaw Savill's coal burners. And we each also spent 13 years afloat.

Tales abound of Peter's impressive knowledge of the shipping world as it was before containerisation! During his Dairy Board days I benefited from (and tolerated) his Friday afternoon 'intelligence gathering' absences because he was able to provide me on Monday mornings with all that was needed to know about happenings on the waterfront. According to Captain John Brown, Peter's persuasive tongue landed John as a Wellington pilot, in hot water with the

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Harbour Workers' Union. When helpfully expediting the departure of one of Peter's ships he used Peter to let go all the lines! The Union was not amused.

Owing to increasing ill-health, he resigned from the Wellington Company of Master Mariners. Peter passed away on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 at the age of 92.

*Submitted by Warwick Thomson on behalf of the Wellington Branch of the New Zealand Company of Master Mariners.*