

Capt John Goldsmith

Crossed the Bar February 24, 2020

John joined his first ship, MV Mutlah, (Nourse Line) as an indentured deck cadet on New Year's Eve 1956 and a few days later sailed for Ceylon and India, then loading for Mauritius and the West Indies. The route was repeated yet again and 14 months later the ship returned to England. John was 159 cms when he left England and on return had grown to 175 cms. His uniform trousers were flying at half mast and being paid eight pounds per month, he had to make do.

Less than three weeks later he re-joined the same ship in Immingham where fertilizer was loaded for China, a very closed country at that time, the year being 1958. The Suez Canal had by then been re-opened and the ship sailed for Whampoa calling at Singapore for bunkers. There the Naval Attaché from the British Embassy came aboard to brief the senior officers on what to observe whilst in Chinese waters. On arrival in China all cameras, binoculars and telescopes were confiscated and placed in the ship's bond, sealed and guarded during their stay and the ship's radio room received the same treatment. It was a fascinating time observing all the Russian built warships whilst sailing up and down the Yangtze River to and from Shanghai, the next and final port.

The normal trading route was then resumed, loading in India, then East Pakistan and now Bangladesh, for the West Indies and Cuba. The year 1959 saw the ship enter Havana harbour on the same day that Fidel Castro made his triumphant entry into the city.

John remained with Nourse Line for over four and a half years before joining Port Line as Second Mate. This shipping company traded from the United Kingdom and Europe to Australia and New Zealand and also served Canada and the East Coast of USA to Australia and New Zealand. During these years, John became Chief Officer.

In 1967 Port Line joined a consortium with two other British shipping companies to form a container shipping line operating on similar routes to the conventional vessels. At this time the company owned and operated almost 30 vessels but within a few years this was all to change. On 18 October 1968 ACT1 was launched (the first joint managed container vessel) and a few months later in March 1969 this vessel left Europe on its maiden voyage to Australia and New Zealand.

In 1971 John and his wife, Pamela, joined the Townsville Star in New Zealand for a lengthy voyage to various Mediterranean ports. The next and last British ship he joined was the ACT2 which loaded in Tilbury then Hamburg and sailed from Antwerp arriving in Fremantle 24 days later, arriving in Sydney in July 1972 and with minimum of bureaucracy John was granted Australian residency with just a quick stamp in his UK passport. By then, John had been First Officer for a number of years but by this time the older ships in the fleet were being scrapped while other newer vessels were sold or converted into cruise ships and the number of ACT ships being built continued at a pace. Promotion to command had stalled and to John's generation it appeared that retirement would probably occur first.

He then joined an Australian coastal shipping company where he stayed for two years and in 1974 he swallowed the anchor and joined ACTA. During the next 15 years he worked for a number of shore based container companies including Glebe Island Terminals, finally joining P & O Ports in 1985. By

then Port Line had ceased as a company and the ACT ships had been taken over by P & O. Thus, the lure of the sea held John until the end of his working life.

Others who knew him said ...

John Goldsmith was known to many in the industry. He was a polite, soft spoken meticulous gentleman and always most professional in his conduct. He was always reliably good to work with.