

MORIN SCOTT, MBE, FNI
1922 to 2009

Life Commodore of the Square Rigger Club

The founder of the Square Rigger Club, the principle instigator in the creation of TS Royalist and the Life Commodore - Lieutenant Commander (SCC) Morin Scott MBE passed away peacefully on 14th August, 2009, age 87 years and so ended the life of a man, who achieved so much and influenced so many past and current seafarers, who over the years have enjoyed the involvement in TS Royalist.

Photographs of Morin Scott taken in 1988-1990

The photo of Morin Scott as a young cadet was taken aged 13 in Jan 1936 on entry to the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth'.



MORIN SCOTT, MBE, FNI

Compiled by Frank Scott.

Born in Glasgow in 1922, Morin entered the Royal Naval College Dartmouth with St Vincent Term in January 1936. At the college he took every opportunity to get afloat on the Dart, where he enjoyed sailing various service boats, and successfully raced his National Twelve. Unfortunately at the end of his time there he was incorrectly diagnosed as suffering from an acute eyesight problem, and this killed off his career hopes. When war broke out a few weeks after the end of his last term he was racing six-metres on the Clyde. There he caught the eye of a sympathetic retired Naval Captain, who considered that his skill and enthusiasm was of more import than the opinions of the medical branch, and anachronistically 'nominated' him into the armed merchant cruiser HMS *Worcestershire* as a 'T124' RNR midshipman. As a result he went to sea not only well before the rest of his term, but with a higher rate of pay. Subsequently he transferred to the RNR proper, and amongst other adventures was sunk minesweeping in the corvette HMS *Auricula* during the 1942 invasion of Vichy-held Madagascar.

Peace took him back to sailing, first of all skippering the 50 square metre 'Windfall' yachts *Seetaube* (now *Disdaine*) and *Zeisig* (now *Sea Scamp*) for their delivery voyages from Kiel, and it is nice to report that over sixty years later both boats are still going strong. After that he cruised and raced his Dragon, *Gerda*, with Conny van Rietschoten as his regular crew. Notably they sailed her over to Arendal in Norway to compete in the 1948 Dragon Gold Cup, an achievement that so impressed the host nation that they arranged for them to be presented with a special prize by King Haakon VII. Although Conny went on to achieve lasting fame by winning the Round the World race twice (1977/78 & 81/82) he always maintained that, after *Gerda's* stormy passage across the North Sea, Cape Horn and the Southern Ocean held no terrors.

Marriage prompted a temporary move to motor racing, notably in a huge 8-litre Hispano-Suiza. When he returned to sailing it was in the field of sail training, and this started when he found that the Sea Cadet Corps had no plans for an entry in the 1966 Tall Ships' Race. Irritated by their lack of initiative he arranged to borrow the little brigantine *Centurion* from a fellow Royal Cruising Club member, found a cadet crew, and went on to have a very successful race. This experience of the value of sail training for young people was a revelation for him. In short order thereafter he decided that the SCC needed their own vessel, which should be a brig, got his friend Colin Mudie to produce the designs for TS *Royalist*, and cajoled the SCC Headquarters into accepting the idea. He also browbeat the Royal Navy and *The Daily Mirror Group* into putting up half the cost of the project between them, and came up with the scheme that raised the rest of the money, all of this so quickly that the project became unstoppable. To judge his boldness, it should be realised that back in 1971 not only had no square-rigger been built for the British flag since 1907, none had been on the British register since 1936; and brig rig was both entirely extinct, and widely considered too complex. His success may be judged by the fact that, 38 years later, TS *Royalist* is still going strong, and brig rig has enjoyed a world-wide revival.

Morin then joined the Jubilee Sailing Trust, when it was distinctly unfashionable, and persuaded them that square rig was ideal for their physically-disabled and able-bodied partnership concept. Although in his mid-sixties, he took on the physically demanding role of Mate for the proving trials in the brigantine *Søren Larsen*, before collaborating with Colin Mudie on the innovative barque *Lord Nelson*. Next he moved on to the 'British-Australian Bicentennial Schooner' project, which under his influence evolved into the brigantine *Young Endeavour*. He also helped his friend Manfred Hövener establish the case for the *Alexander von Humboldt* being a barque rather than a schooner, a move which all have since come to applaud. By then deemed too old to sail as an officer in any UK vessel, he enjoyed many miles of sailing with the Germans over the next few years, eventually completing

his last Tall Ships' Race in the 'Alex' at the age of seventy-three. Even when physically unable to continue with active seagoing he maintained a close interest in the direction of sail training, most recently with the Little Brig Sailing Trust.

He wrote two books, *Gerda's Sea Saga* (1949) (recently translated into Dutch & re-issued in paperback), and *War is a Funny Business* (1990), along with numerous articles on the subject of sail training.

His circle of friends was very cosmopolitan, and his parties at Tall Ships' events were legendary. His epitaph lies in those who have benefited from his sail training projects.

As a demonstration of the hurdles to be overcome in the sail training world, here are some of the cardinal sins committed by Morin Scott (generally aided and abetted by Colin Mudie) in the opinion of that great expert "*Everyone knows*"

1. Proposing Square Rig for a UK sail training ship
"They cannot go to windward & working aloft is much too dangerous"
2. Brig rig -
"The most over-complicated & impractical of all square rigs"
3. Cadets to sea for only one week -
"Two weeks is proven as the absolute minimum"
4. Cadets to sea aged 13-15
"Much too young & weak"
5. Female cadets in a square rigger -
"They simply could not cope poor dears"
6. Mixed male/female crews -
"Highly improper & immoral"
7. Fire-Retardant foam for soft furnishings & mattresses -
"Unnecessary expense"
8. Rattling bars for lower shrouds -
"Not traditional"
9. Man-made fibre square sails
"Not traditional"
10. Lightweight Aluminium masts & spars
"Not traditional"
11. Painted aluminium masts & spars
"Unnecessary expense - Bare metal is cheaper"
12. Low maintenance rig - stainless fitting, Tufnol blocks, etc. -
"Not traditional"
13. Reefing single topsails
"Too complicated & dangerous"
14. Chequer-board paint scheme for TS *Royalist* -
"Too old-fashioned"
15. Designated bracing & sail handling stations -
"Far Too Naval"
16. Four-watch system for Trainees
"Too much time-off"
17. Battery-powered emergency navigation lights
"Too modern - Oil-fired lamps are more reliable"
18. No ship-side opening portholes/scuttles for safety in Knockdown
"Full size opening ship's side portholes essential for ventilation"

19. Square rig sail training ship for physically handicapped
"Only a charlatan would even suggest such an idea"
 20. In-yard roller-furling square sails
"Not traditional & will not work"
 21. Split spanker for *Lord Nelson*
"Not traditional & Not British"
 22. Name '*Lord Nelson*' for first Jubilee Sailing Trust Training Ship
"Too Naval & will offend the French"
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Morin Scott left England in 1994 to enjoy retirement in Cyprus. He maintained his contacts in the sail training and formed the Cyprus branch of the Jubilee Sailing Trust. Morin gained many friends amongst them being Susan Munn, who became his lifelong companion and helped him through the latter years, when his health deteriorated.

Morin finally passed away peacefully on the morning of 14th August 2009. The news was quickly disseminated to friends and one of the Square Rigger Club's senior members and close friend, Bernard Fox went to Paphos to attend the funeral. This was held in the beautiful little Church of St Paul's the Pillar and conducted by the rev. Tony Jeynes. Bernard delivered an interesting and detailed eulogy on Morin's life incorporating the comments of Morin's dear friends Rosemary and Colin Mudie and of the Club's Vice Commodore, Hugh Illingworth. Additionally, a long serving friend from Cyprus, Hugh Atkinson provided the background to Morin's fifteen or so enjoyable years of living in Cyprus.

Morin had arranged some years ago to be buried in the British Military Cemetery at Dhekelia near Limmasol, which is quite some distance from Pathos. The mourners travelled to Dhekelia and after a short ceremony, Morin was laid to rest to the strains of The Last Post in the background and now rests in peace among all those comrades who had honourably served our country.

A few weeks later, family and friends gathered for a memorial service in the 12th century Church of St Mary the Virgin, Felpham near Bognor Regis on 23rd October 2009. Family and friends met in the Fox and then walked to the Church where seafaring hymns were sung, prayers read and a eulogy presented by Colin Mudie after which the Last Post was played. The service was conducted by Father Timothy Peskett. Afterwards, there was a return visit to the Fox where many anecdotes on Morin's colourful life were relived amidst the appropriate refreshment. Morin would have been well pleased with the day!

There is so much fascinating information on Morin's life, borne out through the eulogies provided by Colin Mudie, Bernard Fox and Hugh Atkinson. These follow.

Eulogy given by Bernard Fox at the funeral of Lieutenant Commander Morin Scott MBE on behalf of The Square Rigger Club, at St Paul's the Pillar, Cyprus Thursday 24th August 2009

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very privileged and honoured to be here to join with you in commemorating and celebrating the life of Lieutenant Commander Henry Francis Morin Scott MBE and Fellow of the Nautical Institute.

I have been a friend of the Scott family for forty years. Morin who I considered to be my Sailing Rabbi inspired me with his vision and ambitions regarding the charity, the Square Rigger Club, which he set up to support the training ship Royalist in 1970. As a Vice Commodore of the Club the

members have asked me to represent them and to convey to you their heartfelt sentiments about their much loved Commodore and Life President.

Morin was a Navy man through and through. Having been schooled as a Cadet at Dartmouth Naval College he entered the Service in October 1939 as a 17-year old Midshipman (RNR) and after nearly three years of active service at sea he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1942.

After the end of the War in 1946 he became a school master for some years. Then in the early 1950s, he moved with his wife Vicky to Jamaica to run a sugar plantation business there.

Subsequent to that, he moved back to the UK and set up several of his own companies. I remember at the time I met him, one of the businesses was manufacturing wire supports for ladies bras !Morin was very involved in the Sea Cadet Force in the 60s and 70s and at this time he was promoting the idea of Sail Training as being a positive social good in the education and upbringing of young girls and boys especially those who were considered to be socially disadvantaged including young delinquents. This was a difficult task during the prevailing political climate of the day.

At this point I would like to give you the thoughts and memories of Colin and Rosemary Mudie. Colin is the world famous yacht designer, a very old friend of Morin's and his long time collaborator in many sail projects including T.S. Royalist and the Jubilee Trust vessels.

Rosemary and I knew Morin for a great many years. I from early sailing days and Rosemary , before we even met, had friends in Cranley Mews in London who told her of the man down the street who had not one but two Hispano Suiza motor cars.

I am sure everyone has read Morin' s books and know a lot about his life history; *War is a Funny Business* about his naval career and *Gerda ' s Sea Saga* about his voyage across the North Sea in his little Dragon yacht.

We got to know him better when he assembled a team to build a sail training ship for the Sea Cadets. It was typical of Morin that once he had set his course that he worked day and night towards its achievement. He had seen the benefits of sail training for young people and that square rig produced the very best results. In those days this was a highly unpopular view but Morin persisted, borrowed vessels to demonstrate the practicalities involved, raised a remarkable team and *Royalist* was the result. Morin' s vision and persistence was a considerable and possibly critical factor in the emergence and appreciation of sail-training world-wide. We should also note the number of people over many years who have said to us "I sailed in *Royalist* and it changed my life".

Then he was the practical inspiration for the Jubilee Sailing Trust where crews of so-called able and so-called disabled sail together. This concept was highly condemned when first given publicity. However, the result was a new appreciation that the disabled were anything but second class citizens and this concept has grown and grown all over Europe until there is severe legislation to stop any bias against those who we once more or less discarded. Morin' s principal contribution to this revised attitude was to require the specialist ship to be as normal and natural in every aspect and so demonstrating how such a conjunction of abilities could work for everyone.

It is here we would like to mention Morin's ability to get the size of a project right. Little *Royalist* was optimum for very young cadets. *Lord Nelson* was much bigger than many people would have chosen initially but Morin stipulated that she had to be big enough for wheelchairs to operate successfully at sea and that those in wheelchairs had to be able to pass each other on deck.

Just to recite the names of some of the ships on which Morin sailed or influenced gives a considerable reflection of his life and times. *Gerda, Centurion, Dulas Dragon, Royalist, Varuna, Lord Nelson, Young Endeavour, Tarangini, Tunas Samudera, Alexander von Humboldt, Bob Allen and Caroline Allen.*

Many of us will remember him as a great raconteur and party giver, but Rosemary and I also remember the practical man. For instance there was the time when we all went up to Lowestoft for the sea trials of the Malaysian sail training ship *Tunas Samudera*. There was a howling gale and heavy rain and we all cowered in the saloon. Then we wondered where Morin had got to. There he was going up and down the deck checking the running rigging, making sure every line was correctly cut to length, properly whipped and on the right pin -all in the pouring rain.

And then there is the Little Brig project based on money from his old friend, Bob Allen. There were a number of possibilities but Morin came down firmly on the idea of having two tiny brigs which would be able to take much younger children sailing. This is proving to be a great success and so far the first one has taken 650 children afloat.

Then, of course, we remember the parties, particularly the old days and the ones he held in London each year during the sail training conferences. Someone to whom we broke the sad news that Morin was no longer with us said that she remembered them, or at least most of them, but perhaps not all of all of them!

Another Morin legend involves *Asgard II*, the Irish sail training ship sadly lost last winter. She had an early involvement with *Royalist* in that her builder Jack Tyrell and an Irish contingent including an Irish minister, came to see *Royalist* and talk about their proposal with Morin, me, and David Gay. The lunch party was friendly and convivial, as might be expected; the drive back certainly benefited from the fact that the minister's presence required a police escort. Morin it was who gave *Asgard I* her famous mascot, Shamus O'Leprechaun. Shamus was often kidnapped by the *Royalist* crew, but somehow was always retrieved in time for the next race, when he would be waved at *Asgard's* rival at the appropriate moment.

Morin's code was his own and rigorous. He did not suffer fools gladly or otherwise. As we all know, he would enjoy his glass of gin. He was also a seaman who followed the rules. We remember meeting him in Weymouth after he had sailed in the US Coast Guard sail training ship *Eagle* from the Azores. An American ship, she was of course also a dry ship. The Captain, Dave Wood, was an old friend and had said Morin was at liberty to keep what he liked in his locker. But Morin held to the rules of the ship and, for the first and only time, we drank Coca-Cola with him. He was not well afterwards and we did wonder if his system missed its regular libation.

We remember the good times, of which there were many, and also the sad times after Vicki died. And we all will always remember and give thanks for the last twelve years of happiness with Susan.

I think that Morin's life is best summed up for me by a quotation from Robert Browning's "The Grammarian's Funeral".

"This man aimed at a hundred, and one by one his target was soon

Hit. This man aimed at a million, and missed by a few hundred thousand."

That dear friend was Morin.

And now Hugh Illingworth's tribute, Hugh is a long standing member and Vice Commodore of the Square Rigger Club.

Were it not for Morin Scott, neither the Square Rigger Club nor TS Royalist would be in being!

I am penning these words in the knowledge that for some the pain of his passing will be harsh and that my words and memories may seem slightly irreverent. I can only express the love and affection that we have for Morin by recalling some aspects of his life when in his prime and when it had influence upon me.

My knowledge of Morin and TS Royalist started in the mid 1970s when I was looking for some adventure for my young son. Little did I know that instead of my son being involved in TS Royalist, it would be I who was hooked on the association and infrastructure of TS Royalist and the Square Rigger Club.

The early days of Morin's involvement with TS Royalist and the Sea Cadets has been documented elsewhere. I would like to comment on how his charisma, enthusiasm and sense of fun grabbed me in those days and I have some very warm and happy memories of being in the company of Morin and enjoying the fun that surrounded him.

My initial enquiry to the Square Rigger Club was answered by a very personal response and letter from Morin inviting me to a meeting on board HMS President moored on the River Thames. I soon found myself sailing on Square Rigger Club weekends cruising with TS Royalist to Alderney, Cherbourg, Fecamp in extremely social and slightly alcoholic circumstances. They were great fun but attending work on the next day was extremely arduous, more so than the voyage itself. There were only the small amounts of sleep during those cruises as we sailed and motor sailed through the night to reach our destination and then set sail again at around midnight on the following day after a heavy meal ashore, to return to Gosport.

Typically of my memory of Morin's influence on us at that time was an occasion when we were moored in the inner harbour at Cherbourg. Prior to supper ashore Morin would hold court in the cockpit spinning yarns of his wartime and more recent experiences in a most humorous, amusing and mischievous way. Thankfully he recorded some of these stories, which are to be found in a most amusing book entitled 'War is a Funny Business'. Anyone wishing to envisage Morin in his heyday should find and read a copy to gauge the fun-loving charisma of the man. Of course Morin had a serious side to his life and drive and persistence, as often alluded to by our previous President Sir Lancelot Bell Davies from the period when he was President of the Sea Cadet Association and subjected to demands for support for Royalist. Yet these characteristics, resulted in TS Royalist and the Square Rigger Club, the charity which was created to support TS Royalist in men, materiel and

money. Morin was always very diligent in encouraging youngsters to go to sea and he personally administered the bursary awards which have benefited and continue to benefit many legions of cadets.

I soon found myself on the committee of the Square Rigger Club and for many years both Morin and another old friend Gerry O'Halloran, also sadly passed on, held amusing if somewhat nepotistic committee meetings in a double act of Commodore and Vice Commodore. There were always bottles of claret on the table and those that might have wished to find the meetings focused, always had to put up with many anecdotes of life's experiences. These meetings rarely followed the intended agenda but nevertheless provided a very valuable service to Royalist. There were also other hilarious meetings and parties held annually at the Martini Terrace in London, various Rear Commodore's lunches and book launches at the Naval Club.

The affection, which I and other Club members experienced from knowing Morin spread through many years of my life. Both my wife and I owe it in part to Morin for helping us organise how to get married and it was during a Square Rigger Club weekend attended by Morin that we arranged to hold our wedding reception on board TS Royalist in 1990 and subsequently christened our first daughter on board TS Royalist three years later.

The passing of the Square Rigger Club's Life President is extremely sad for us all. The end of an era. Sincere condolences go to Frank and Kirsten, to close family and friends, from my wife Debby, myself and all those in the Square Rigger Club who had the privilege, honour and pleasure of knowing Morin. To this list I must add all those who have benefited from his legacy of a beautiful ship and a strong charitable supporting Club.

Our love to you all. May God Bless.

A Eulogy by close family friend Hugh Atkinson.

I'm proud to say that MORIN SCOTT was my dear friend for 15 years and I mourn his passing deeply. I'd been at his bedside at the Royal Clinic on the morning of his death and for the first time, I saw my old friend WITHOUT his wonderful beard. I'm pleased to assure you all that Morin passed away peacefully, without pain and with great dignity at 11.20 last Friday. He was 87.

Maintaining his dignity was important to Morin. I remember a conversation a few months ago when we talked about his deteriorating condition, and he said that when he finally passed on he wanted four things.

The first was - to be allowed to die with dignity. He didn't want to suffer a lingering death sustained by medication or machines. He died peacefully -his wish was fulfilled.

Secondly -he wanted to be buried on British soil in Dekalia. He was fiercely patriotic.

As regards his funeral, Morin wanted it to be a happy occasion - not a sad one. No one should wear black, he said. So, Morin Old Friend, I hope you approve of my tie!

Finally, Morin wanted people to appreciate how much Susan had done to care for him during the last 13 years, but more about that later.

Morin arrived in Cyprus in 1994. I remember he invited my wife Liz and I to dinner. Morin was a perfect host and cooked the excellent meal himself. It proved to be a fascinating evening. He regaled us with naval stories and one of his guests was the secretary of Jack Higgins the author.

So we were very pleased to receive another dinner invitation, this time to meet his financial advisor. You can imagine our surprise when Morin, with a smug grin and a twinkle in his eye, introduced Susan Munns! That was 1996. They were to be together from that moment on.

- Morin told us about -
- racing his Hispano Suiza sports cars at Brooklands and Silverstone,
 - his life at sea, during and after the war,
 - the book he'd written describing his wartime experiences entitled 'War is a Funny Business'.
 - His business of supplying sailing ships for the training of naval cadets around the world. (*Without knowing it, Liz & I had sailed on one of his sail training ships in Muscat Oman in 1989*). Morin was a world renowned authority on 18 and 19th C sailing ships. A rare qualification.
 - His involvement with the Square Rigger Club in Britain where he was a Founder Member and President - as described by his dear friend, Bernard Fox. We then learned about his MBE awarded by the Queen at Buckingham Palace in 1987 for his services to Sail Training.

This old sea dog was such a fascinating character that I wrote an article about him that was published in the Cyprus Weekly entitled 'The Other Captain Scott'

Morin had involvement in the Jubilee Sailing Trust which operates two other Tall sailing ships, the Lord Nelson and Tenacious, built to enable people of all physical abilities to sail side-by-side as equals.

In Cyprus the Trust funded and arranged for 12 disabled Cypriots and their buddies to sail on these ships, not as passengers but as crew members.

All were deeply affected by their unique experience. Some were hauled to the top of the mast in their wheelchairs, others took the helm despite their disabilities.

Among our congregation today I'm delighted to welcome Sofia Roussot, whose sons Chris, Jules and Harry sailed on the Lord Nelson. Sofia is also representing Chris Nyophitou who was the first Cypriot JST candidate. Thank you for coming this morning Sofia. These disabled young men have Morin and his team of volunteers in JST to thank for their exceptional opportunity.

With Morin's declining health, the Cyprus branch of the JST finally wound up in 2003.

Morin was also a Lion. He joined Paphos Adonis Lions Club in June 1996, becoming a valued and respected member.

He and Mummy Christmas used to dress up to appear at fundraising events or children's homes dressed in full costume (not that Morin needed much padding or a fake white beard)' This led to some funny incidents because Morin and Sue used a scooter rather than a sleigh or car to arrive. The police took double takes and other witnesses relating what they'd seen, were accused of drunkenness.

Morin resigned from Lions in Nov 2001 for health reasons and to concentrate his efforts on JST. Susan went on to become President of the Adonis Lions.

Morin loved parties. To celebrate- if that's the right word - the sinking of his ship, HMS AURICULA, in Madagascar in 1942. Morin always held his famous Sinking Parties every May. We rarely missed them. Out would come buckets of his famous grog, a deceptively potent brew composed mainly of gin, vodka, fruit juice, gin, vodka and I suspect, gallons of medicinal alcohol. Morin claimed that it took away all your troubles and you would NOT have a hangover the following morning. I can confirm the accuracy of this claim, because the NEXT morning, surviving partygoers did NOT have a hangover because they were still unconscious. It was on the SECOND morning that your head pounded!

I suspect that Morin was a bit disappointed with the manner of his shipwreck. I'm sure he would have been happier if his corvette had been attacked by Luftwaffe dive bombers, been fired on by the Bismarck or been torpedoed by a German u-boat. As it was, HMS Auricula struck a FRENCH MINE. He told me once -

'It was bloody friendly fire. The Frogs were on our side, at least I thought they were.'

To appreciate his humour and story-telling, you must read his books.

Morin was a great raconteur so I thought that at this point I would tell you one of his many jokes.

I searched my memory for something suitable and appropriate for this occasion and this is what I came up with 'Silence' That's right, nothing, because all Morin's jokes were colourful or rather – they were all one colour – NAVY BLUE! Oh Alright – maybe just one!

Morin told me he went to the beach with his old wartime Navy buddy, Capt. Jack Tarr.

They sat together in their wheelchairs, admiring the dozens of pretty girls cavorting in the sea, wearing one piece bikinis little larger than postage stamps.

Jack turned to Morin and said, 'do you remember in the war how they put bromide in our tea to stop us having naughty licentious thoughts about the fairer sex?'

'Yes'.

'Well Morin, I think it's beginning to work!

Now I'd like to talk about Morin's partner Susan, one of the most loyal and caring people I know. Susan was devoted to Morin for 13 years. During the last 6 years especially she cared for him night and day, 7 days a week, year in year out. She catered for all his needs and remember - Morin was a

big man who could hardly walk, with a host of medical problems. She was always very reluctant to leave him alone.

In fact during this period she had virtually no holidays at all, only occasional fleeting trips to visit her own family in England, but only after making arrangements for Morin's care.

Her devotion to Morin was truly incredible. Morin appreciated her sacrifice & was eternally grateful. We extend to you Susan our very deepest sympathy.

It's sad that Captain Francis Scott, Morin's only son, is not here today to bid farewell to his father. Morin was a highly respected man, a true gentleman and a dear friend. We mourn his demise, but we shall never forget the Old Sea Dog. Captain Morin Scott MBE RNR. We salute you.

Sadly, less than a year ago I stood at this same lectern and said a few words about another dear friend who was also a sailor, Captain John Parsloe. At his memorial service I read a poem. I've been asked to read it again today because it's so appropriate for Morin whose world WAS sailing ships and the sea

It's a short poem by John Masefield -SEA FEVER

I must go down to the seas again, o the lonely sea and sky ,

And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,

And the wheel is kick and the wind's song and the white sails shaking,

And a gray mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide »>

Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;

And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,

And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the seagulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,

To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a wetted knife

And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow rover,

And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

Now the moment has come to bid farewell to Morin, a fine man, a true gentleman

Time to say, goodbye.

A description of the funeral attended by Bernard Fox follows:

The Anglican Church Service in celebration of the life of Lieutenant Commander HENRY FRANCIS MORIN SCOTT MBE took place at The Church by St. Paul's Pillar (AYIA KVRIAKI CHRVSOPOLITISSA) Kato Paphos, Cyprus on Thursday, 20th August at 9100am.

The Reverend Tony Jeynes officiated.

The morning was extremely hot (35 C) with a clear blue sky, there were about thirty five mourners, friends and acquaintances from his last fifteen years in Cyprus present in the church when the coffin was brought in to church by the six pall bearers, the coffin was draped in the Union flag and his Commodores SRC burgee.

The service opened with the Victorian Navy hymn "Eternal Father strong to save, " most of us would know it as..."For those in peril on the sea " , this was Morin's special choice.

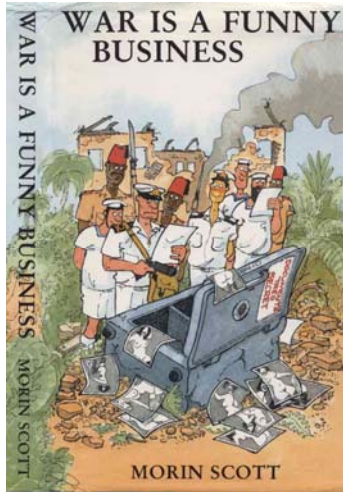
After prayers and a scripture reading Bernard Fox representing the SRC gave the eulogy which included Colin and Rosemary Mudie's tribute and Hugh Illingworth's eulogy.

The Rev. Tony Jeynes led the mourners in further prayers, and then a friend of Morin and Susan, Hugh Atkinson, gave his eulogy based on his friendship with them during the past 15 years of Morin's life in Cyprus.

The church service was brought to a close as the coffin was taken from the church by the pallbearers led by Reverend Jeynes, and as the mourners sang , " I am Sailing, I am Sailing ..." Morin had arranged some years ago to be buried in the British Military Cemetery at Dhekelia near Limmasol, which is quite some distance from Pathos: The burial party was met at the cemetery gates by the Army officer in charge, Major Brian Mellor (Rtd.) who then led us to the graveside.

The Reverend Tony Jeynes read the last short funeral prayers, as the coffin was lowered into the ground, there was silence and a period of quiet reflection, then the strains of The Last Post could be heard across the green sward and thus Lieutenant Commander Henry Francis Morin Scott MBE was laid to rest among all those comrades who had honourably served our country in desperate times.

A final epitaph on our Club's founder, Morin Scott would not be complete without returning to his humour, amusement and mischievousness. Morin's book 'War is a Funny Business' is out of print. However, Morin's son Francis has given us permission to publish this extract which is a lovely example of the wit of this fine raconteur. We hope you will enjoy:



During our passage between the coral reefs I had aired my knowledge of the French language while interpreting the French charts to such an extent that, when the Army ashore called for the assistance of a demolition party, I was sent along as interpreter. The fact that the patois spoken by the local natives was entirely incomprehensible to me was of no import.

The demolition party landed the following morning consisted of the Warrant Gunner (T) (the "T" standing for Torpedoman), plus myself and two seamen torpedomen with several large boxes containing standard Royal Naval demolition charges with associated fuses, detonators, primers and other necessities.

Guns was one of the old school who had served at least twenty years (not including time as a seaman boy) and he could - and did - recite long passages from various gunnery and torpedo manuals. In fact, in retrospect, his conversation seemed to consist of little else.

He was also full of convenient proverb-like sayings with which he would intersperse his instructional quotations, and his message for this day was,

" Explosives his not dangerous huntil you forget that they his. "

Guns had no doubt received and probably delivered numerous instructional lectures on the use of demolition charges, but I strongly suspected he had never actually seen or heard one explode - or should I say, " hexplode".

On arrival at the little jetty, we were met by one of the officers from the King's African Rifles, who had formed the invasion party, with a cheery,

" Hallo, there. I suppose you are the safebreaker wallahs. "

" We are the demolition party requested by the OC troops, " I retorted, " but we don't know anything about safebreaking. "

" Oh, jolly good show. Looks like you will have some fun finding out. Your objective is to blow the safe in the old froggie Governor's Residence. Collar all the secret codes and all that, what ? Earn yourself an OBE and the thanks of Parliament, et cetera, et cetera. Better pile your stuff on this one horsepower velocipede here. Sorry, chaps, but it's the best we've got, there being no jolly old petroleum on the island. "

Behind him stood a rather tired four-wheeled horse and cart, with the horse looking the older of the two.

" All right, lads, smartly now, git those boxes hup into the trans- port provided and for Gawd's sake take care of they detonators or we'll all have a non-stop trip to 'eaven or, more likely in your case,'ell. "

" Nobby " Clark and " Snowy " White, aided by the motor boat's crew, soon had the boxes loaded, and then we all climbed aboard for the short ride to the Residency. As it hove in sight, our guide explained,

" At the back of the study there's a mighty big safe which is locked tight, and none of the frogs will provide the combination, so the Colonel said' Let's get the Navy to blow it open, they're good at that sort of thing'. Follow me, I'll show you. "

While Nobby Clark and Snowy White unloaded the boxes from the cart, the subaltern led us into the house through the well - furnished rooms to a comfortable study and opened an ordinary door to reveal what was obviously a safe door some six feet high and three feet wide.

Guns surveyed it with a professional eye and then, desperately

trying to give the impression that he blew open safes of this sort twice a week, muttered,

" Ah, yerse. Well, I reckon a couple of bits of our tin opening compound 'ere, and we'll soon have this 'un open. "

He rapped out orders in quick succession. The Army was to clear the Residency and the grounds for at least a five-hundred yard radius and post sentries to prevent the unwary entering the danger area. The cart was unloaded at a safe distance and a native working party set to dig a trench stowage for the explosives - a task which taxed my limited French to the utmost - and another native party was set to filling sacks with earth.

Guns, meanwhile, paced around the Governor's study sucking his teeth and saying,

" Ah, well, yerse. Let me see, " and occasionally making calculations in a small notebook with a short stub of pencil which he licked from time to time in the hope perhaps of in this way making his writing legible.

Nobby, Snowy and I stood around watching the man of the moment, fearful of interrupting his train of thought. Eventually he ordered,

" All right, then, listen 'ere. " We listened.

" Away you go to the Magazine" - a rather high sounding name for the hastily dug trench -" You, Nobby and Snowy, bring back each of you one demolition charge one and a quarter pound. Right ? You, Mid, can bring back nine and a 'alf feet of black fuse hand the higniting pistol, complete with one cartridge. For safety's sake, Hi will deal with the detonators. "

We duly collected the items and reassembled in the study, and were sent off from time to time to collect pieces of timber and usher in natives with filled sandbags.

Slowly and methodically, as if building one of the great Pyramids, Guns

positioned the explosive charges and held them in place with filled sandbags, until the safe looked more like a machine gun emplacement or an atomic shelter.

After several hours' work, Guns pronounced himself reasonably satisfied and went to fetch the detonator, a small copper tube containing (if I remember rightly) a nasty, unstable explosive called fulminate of mercury, which was easily exploded by a fuse or by dropping. With exaggerated care, Guns inserted the detonator into one of the charges and clamped one end of the fuse into the end of it, explaining every detail.

" We now carefully inserts the detonator and crimps one end of the fuse like so. " (After all, you could hardly have put both ends of the fuse in the charge).

" The hother hend of the fuse we secures firmly hin the muzzle hof the higniting pistol hand then we loads the pistol. All right, now what do we do next ? " Fire the pistol, thinks I, but craftily I said nothing.

"Fire the pistol, sir?" says Nobby.

" Hah, yes, that's wot you would do, but not me. Wot I does is to look at me watch hand take the time. Hand wot do I do that for, Nobby ? "

"To see what time it is, sir?"

" Hand I surpose you fink the hobject of that is to see how long it is ter go till yer gets yer tot ? Well it ain't. Hits so you can calculate hat wot time the hexplosion will hoccure. If you recalls the instruc- tions wot I gave you afore we came ashore, this' ere fuse burns at the rate of ten inches per minute, and we, 'aving nine hand a 'alf feet, 'ave now got hexactly heleven minutes to get clear hof the danger area afore it all goes orf. Course hactually we' ave four inches hextra of fuse 'ere wot gives us a small margin for error hin the shape of some twenty-four seconds hextra.

"Right now, Nobby, you and Snowy set off for the hobservation trench and make sure that working party of wogs gets clear, and walk now, don't run. Mid, you go 'oist the Red Flag hup the Governor's flagstaff and rejoin me 'ere and we'll detonate the charge. "

On my return to the study Guns looked me in the eye and said, " All right then, take the time, " and as I did so, he held out the igniting pistol at arm's length and with great drama pulled the trigger.

It was really rather a let-down after all the build-up, since instead of a loud report, the pistol gave off a small " phutt ", and shortly afterwards the burning fuse fell away from the muzzle.

" Right now, Mid, we shall now take a walk. Slow and sedate now, cos we don't want to trip and we don't want no-one to think we is scared. "

So we walked. We walked out of the Residency across the garden, through a gate and along an overgrown path for a full ten minutes until we came to a shallow trench in which we crouched with our heads below ground level.

" 'Ow long ter go ? " Guns asked me.

" About a minute - it's difficult to tell really. My watch hasn't got a second hand. "

"Well, it's better 'an mine," said Guns gloomily, "mine's stopped. "

We sat and listened. Eventually we heard a small bang and the tinkling of broken glass.

" Right then, we best go and collect them codes and stuff the pongos want," and we set off to trudge back to the Residency. The tropical sun beat down on us, and the sweat trickled down our backs and legs.

In the study not much had changed. I laid the Red Flag on the desk and noticed that all the windows were blown out and the walls were speckled with earth from the dissipated sandbags. The only thing that appeared to be entirely undamaged or unmuddied was the safe door, which gleamed smugly at us from its alcove.

Guns rattled the handle, but it showed no signs of opening.

" Hah, well, we 'ad better give it a little bit more of the tin opener, " he said with confidence, only slightly tinged with disappointment.

The whole operation was repeated - rather more quickly this time as we all knew what to do - but the result was the same.

The third time I timidly suggested that we might double the amount of T .N .T. and use four charges instead of two. Guns looked at me suspiciously and said,

" Two bleeding hexplosions and now you're an expert at safe blowing, eh ? "

" It was only an idea, Guns, " I said.

Guns said nothing, but he surreptitiously increased the charge to four.

This time the noise, as heard from our observation post, was slightly louder and the damage done to the study slightly greater, but the door of the safe stood firm.

The charge was increased yet again, with proportional increases in noise and damage, but still that safe door remained firmly closed.

" Guns, I know you are the expert and all that, and that you have been doing this all your life, but I really think this safe is somewhat stronger than the ones you have practised on before. It is now late in the afternoon and will soon be dark, and we are both hungry and thirsty. " (His eyes lit up at the thought of the pink gins that would soon be served in *Griffin's* wardroom). "Furthermore, we don't want to tell the pongos that we can't open the bloody thing. So why don't we put all the charges we've got left against that bloody door and tamp it with a double dose of sandbags and then retreat to our trench and offer up a quick prayer to the God of Safe Blowers ? " Guns started muttering under his breath, " ...contrary to para. 9, sub-section (iv) of

the Demolition Manual, Chapter 4. ..." and made further muted references to the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, and even to the Articles of War, but eventually the thought of having to admit defeat to the pongos stirred him into staking our all on a last effort.

Nobby and Snowy toiled back and forth with demolition charges, and the native working party - sensing that a great moment was coming - redoubled their activity and encouraged their numerous relations to assist. A veritable Hadrian's Wall of sandbags half-filled the somewhat ruined study and held the mass of explosive against the safe door.

The working parties were dispersed. I ran up the Red Flag for what I hoped would be the last time and returned to the study to nod to Guns who, even more dramatically, if that were possible, fired the ignition pistol, stuffed it in his belt like a pirate, and took my arm saying,

" Shall we take hanother walk, then ? "

We wearily trudged the now familiar and tiresome path, which somehow seemed longer than ever and exceedingly pointless, since we always had ended up almost out of earshot rather than danger.

As we passed a larger overhanging rock which offered what seemed an ideal shelter from any blast, I dug my heels in and told Guns,

" You can keep going until you can't hear the bang if you like, but as for me, I am taking shelter here, " and with that I sat down, back to the rock and the coming explosion.

" You are not following the regulations, Mid. It says quite clear that all personnel should retreat to a minimum distance of five 'undred yards and take cover. "

" Yes, I dare say, Guns, but we went so far we nearly fell off the edge of the island. "

" It's not right, it ain't. "

Guns stood in front of me, shifting from one foot to the other. " 'Ow long till the detonation now then ? "

Automatically I looked at my watch, and then realisation dawned,

" Oh Christ, I forgot to take the time of ignition. " (He even had me talking like a manual) .

Guns started swearing and continued for what seemed like several minutes, and when at last I was able to get a word in edgeways, I reminded him,

" Maybe, Guns, but may I remind you that our bumper pile of T.N.T. is due to go up quite soon, even if we don't know when exacry. May I suggest that you contravene your beloved Manual of Demolition in one of two ways. Either come into the cover of this rock, improper though that may be, or run like hell, even if the book does say walk, but for God's sake, don't just stand there swearing. " Continuing the swearing in a lower voice, Guns sat down beside

me, occasionally adjusting his curses towards midshipmen in general, amateur demolition experts and me in particular.

The seconds ticked past slowly, and it seemed to be a quarter of an hour later that we both jumped at the sound of an ear-splitting explosion. Seconds later, pieces of wood and masonry started raining down through the trees around us as we cowered against our protecting rock -safe, but only just.

Eventually silence returned, and standing up I endeavoured to cheer Guns up with,

" Well, let's go and see what the safe looks like now. "

We trudged back to the Residency garden, and it was some minutes before we realised what was wrong. The Red Flag was not there, neither was the flagstaff. As we got closer, it transpired that the Residency was not there, either.

In the centre of the garden was an area of devastation where the Residency had once stood, and in the middle of this, sticking up unbowed like a telephone kiosk, was the Governor's safe.

On closer inspection it was found to be not entirely undamaged. The lock was actually broken and the door was open by about half an inch. With the aid of a crowbar it was forced open, and I was inside quicker than a flash, already seeing in my mind's eye the imposing ceremony at Buckingham Palace - Guns and I in our best uniforms stepping forward to meet our monarch and receive his words of thanks and the deserved award.

But now, as I searched the shelves of the safe, they were as bare as Mother Hubbard's larder, and the vision faded from my mind. Then my fingers closed on an envelope, and gathering it up I opened it and emerged into the daylight to examine the contents.

To my surprise the contents consisted of a selection of photographs of a number of ladies some white, some coloured, some dark-skinned, but all totally nude.

It later transpired that they were the Governor's " friends ", and I realised that sending these back to London would be unlikely to earn me an OBE. Instead it cost me a great deal in gin pacifying Guns over the next few days.

a) The Church by St. Paul's Pillar (AYIA KVRIAKI CHRVSOPOLITISSA) Kato Paphos, Cyprus



b) The British Military Cemetery at Dhekelia near Limmasol,

