

Remembering Mark Shackleton



When The Last Hand Comes Aboard

No more a Watch to stand, Old Sailor.
You are outward bound on an ebbing tide.
Eight Bells has rung. And last Watch done.
A new berth awaits you on the other side.

Your Ship is anchored in God's harbor.
And although his sailors are of equal rank.
There will be Shipmates on the deck to greet you.
And Pipe, as you ascend the Plank.

Her boilers with full head of steam.
Cargo stowed and Galley stored.
Just waiting to get underway.
When the last Hand comes aboard.

Look sharp! That Hand is you, Old Sailor.
And you'll be sailing out on Heavenly Seas.
May the wind be ever at your back.
Fair weather, and God speed!

Richard John Scarr

Remembering Mark Shackleton

Mark touched the lives of hundreds or even thousands of sailors and sea-farers during his time at Doc Fictoria/ Victoria Dock, Caernarfon. Many were just passing through, casual beneficiaries of Mark's calm competence, but some are regulars that came to depend on, and delight in, Mark's cheerful and dependable presence.

The following gathers together a few thoughts from us, members of the Victoria Dock Berth-holders Association (VDBHA), North Wales Cruising Club (NWCC), North West Venturers Yacht Club (NWVYC), the Royal Welsh Yacht Club (RWYC) and the Caernarfon Harbour Trust (CHT).



Members of the NWCC and others turn out on 29th August 2020 to remember Mark (Photo Paul Trematick).

Writing after many years' experience connected with our maritime world, I have no hesitation in describing Mark Shackleton as an outstanding seaman who, as the Harbour Trust's Dock Master gave splendid service, was a much valued employee and will be sadly missed by his colleagues and customers alike.

Let us look very briefly at Mark's career:

Originally from Yorkshire, Mark's introduction to the Menai Strait came when, at about fifteen years of age, he joined "Indefatigable" at Plas Llanfair for a two-year course of pre-sea training. Therefore, among about two hundred boys, he learned to row, sail and handle power boats in all weathers, amid the Strait's difficult tidal streams. Knots and splices, classroom studies, sport and, of course, discipline and teamwork were all part of his daily routines.

He then went to sea as a Junior Deck Rating aboard the S.S. Oriana, (41,920 tons gross), a large and very fine passenger vessel and, having become a Seaman Grade II, he completed eight voyages to Australia and New Zealand in Oriana. In due course, Mark became a fully qualified Able Seaman and, at this stage of his career, he chose to move into coastal shipping, working for the RFA and a variety of ferry companies, but mainly Sealink. By 1995 he calculated that he had served in excess of ten years on ships' articles and

had covered more than 300,000 miles during his voyages!
Time for a change.

Seeking employment ashore, in 1997 he became a Berthing Master at the 500 berth Conwy Marina, a position he held for more than six years before joining the Caernarfon Harbour Trust as Dockmaster in 2004. Mark was never one to boast about his abilities and achievements but, to use his own words when he applied for the Victoria Dock position: “Communication among shipmates and people in general is very important to me. My interaction and interpersonal skills are of a high standard and, over the years, I have learned and understand that the safety of people within my care is of the utmost importance”.

These words summarise his attitude to his responsibilities at Victoria Dock. He was entirely reliable and responsible, had a wonderful sense of humour and I can only add that I valued his friendship. A really good Shipmate who will not be forgotten.

All the Caernarfon Harbour Trustees and Employees



From our first acquaintance, the passion Mark held for his role as Dock Master was evident. The professionalism and command he displayed in his role when supervising vessels to their allocated berth was a welcome reassurance and was always followed by some friendly banter once lines had been secured. In all the many marinas, harbours and major ports in over 25 nation states that we visited during our travels around the world it was always the Dock Master, as first point of contact, who set the tone, quality and enjoyment of our subsequent stay. In this regard Mark was second to none, he will be sadly missed and hard to replace but, if it's any consolation, at least he knew how much he was appreciated by berth holders when John told him about the Rest and Recuperation Fund to which so many had contributed. Let's hope that put a smile on his face and warmed the cockles of his failing heart. For once he was lost for words and said he was overwhelmed by the sentiment and the generosity of berth holders. Many of us will have fond and varied memories of him and he will be sadly missed by us all. I'm sure all berth holders will join me in expressing our sincere condolences to all his family, friends and work colleagues.

Chris Jones
Chair, VDBHA

So sorry that Mark has gone.
Always funny always full of wise words and guidance.
Diplomatic and a great friend.
Your past sailing friends will be pleased to see you and we
who are left will miss you greatly.
Farewell good fellow.

M R Davies



I remember the day Mark told us what fun he'd had
watching the lifeboat try to get stricken Swanrad onto one
of the visitor moorings opposite the Victoria Dock in fast
water. Then the next day after we hitched a tow to the shore
helping to manually tow our boat with long lines into the
dock where we could have our problem engine checked
over. He will be missed.

Piers Allott
Swanrad

We are so sorry to hear about the sad passing of Mark.
He was a true gentleman and friend.

Whenever we came to Victoria Doc he was always so helpful and nothing was too much trouble for him and he always did everything with a big smile.

We will miss you Mark.

Best wishes

Ian & Joanna Walley

Lady Jane



Happy memories of all the times over the years that we have had contact with Mark. Firstly as visitors and for the last eight years as berth holders.

Mark was always courteous and helpful a true friend to all Victoria Dock users.

We will miss him greatly.

Best wishes to all the family.

Geoff & Betty Lloyd

Quadriga

So sad for the loss of Mark. He'll be remembered by so many in the boating community.

David & Susan Coorey
Conwy Marina





Don't go in for counselling - My advice to Mark after his phone call.

'Hello Kathy, it's Mark. Your boat's sunk'

Knowing Mark I thought it was a joke as the boat had just been lifted in. The first day we arrived at the dock the banter started. Professional, funny and so dry - as my tale displays 'says it as it is '

He'll be sorely missed - May he rest in peace!!!

Kathy Jones

As an infrequent visitor to Victoria dock we were made very welcome by Mark who we found most helpful, giving advice on Caernarfon bar buoys and local amenities. He had a good sense of humour especially when watching us berth. He will be missed.

Sandra & Geoff Butterworth
Tumblehome
NWVYC

We first met Mark at Conwy Marina and subsequently at Victoria Dock.

A very friendly helpful man always with a smile and a sense of humour.

Mark will be sadly missed.

Anne & Ken Timmis
Cloud Nine
NWCC Conwy

I was very sad when I was given the news about Mark. He had been very kind to me over the last 10 years when my boat was in Victoria Dock. Mark was helpful, resourceful, always willing to advise and very welcoming when I called for advice or a chat at the dock office. He will be very sadly missed.

Tim Knowles

I was sad to hear the news of Mark. He was always pleasant and helpful to everyone he met. He had a good sense of humour and enjoyed a lighthearted chat among us all. He was a very good Dock Master, very respectful, helpful and patient with us all. He really will be missed.
Rest in Peace

Peter Rowland
S/Y OCCY



On hearing the news about Mark we are so very sad. Please accept our sincere condolences for your loss. Mark was a colleague at Conwy Marina and from there, a great, long-lasting friendship grew. Our memories of Mark will linger long - his humour, the banter, his calm and reassuring manner at the Dock, no matter what the situation - along with his kindness and thoughtfulness - and we will remember him with much affection.

Fair winds and following seas Shack

"I'll ride the wave where it takes me".

Mark & Claire Roberts and family

Possessed of never failing good humour, and always ready to help out, Mark was a first-class dock master. His death leaves a huge empty space in the life of Victoria Dock, and of course, in that of his family and friends. Un o'r gorau!

Eddie Williams

Cymeriad croesawgar, cynnes, cymdeithasol,
cynhwysfawr a cofleidiog.
Mawr bydd ei golled a llai fydd tŵr y Doc Feistr.

Alun Pari Huws
Glaslyn

I would just like to say how sad it was to hear about Mark
I have known Mark from when I came to Victoria Dock 15
years ago

He was always there to help & advise, I always looked
forward to having a chat with him.

Especially the banter we had about football he was a loyal
Huddersfield supporter & me Man Utd he used to give some
stick all in good fun

God Bless

All our love

Graham & Carole Weedall



Mark will be so missed - a big man with a warm heart and wicked sense of humour. We felt in safe, happy hands and its hard to imagine the Doc without him. He was truly unique; a character in the kindest sense, who always seemed to be there when you needed him.

Julie & Dave Evans
Folie Douce



It is with great sorrow that I'm writing this condolence for Mark, I still can't believe he's not with us. He will be missed greatly by all who new him. My thoughts go out to his family at this very sad time and I count myself lucky to have known him as a friend, RIP Mark.

Carl Elton
Turumti

Can't believe we'll never see our great friend again up in his ivory tower. Had such fun teasing him - he was such a good sport and a superb Dockmaster - we shall always remember him.

He always called our boat BASMATI.

With love,

Paula, Rog
Basmati



At the start of a cruise Mark's cheery wave and warm smile would send us on our way.

As Kate returned to Victoria Dock his greeting would welcome us home. As winter storms lashed the dock I always knew that Mark was keeping an eye on her, checking lines and fenders, making sure all was well but I'll miss him for much more than the exceptional way he did his job. I'll miss him because he was a thoroughly good bloke and a dear friend.

David Rainsbury

Kate



A really genuine human. I have known Mark for 10 years. He has always been dedicated to his role and in particular to customer service. It's no wonder that he was referred to as Saint Mark in at least two berth holders surveys.

He was always available even when not on duty. I spend many an enjoyable long hour in conversation with this great man and will never forget him

John O'Sullivan





Turn left for Ireland. Mark's advice was always accurate, always timely, and usually given with a generous dose of humour. I learned a lot about sailing the local area from Mark, and his tutoring about how to tame prop walk was invaluable when we moved up from *Redstar* to *Pardela*. I slept soundly during stormy nights knowing that Mark's watchful eye, and his "green ropes of shame" were at the ready to keep *Pardela* safe.

We miss your voice, we miss your wisdom, but we cherish your memory.

Mark & Natalia
Pardela

Dear Uncle Mark,
It was always lovely to see you wave from your Docmeister's tower, hear you say 'Hello, children', and have a chat and some banter. So sorry you're gone. We will always remember you. You were the best.

Neil & Anne

Had contact as a boat owner with Mark in his capacity as Dock Master for several years. Always cheerful and helpful. So sad to hear of his passing.

Wynford Lloyd-Davies

A good man, a friend to all and will be very much missed by the members and visitors to Doc Fictoria.

Paul Hayden

I have known Mark for a few years but did not get to know him very well as we only occasionally met at the Caernarfon Sailing Club and at his place of work. Mark was always very obliging and a nice guy. Always ready to help and offer advice.

It was a shock when I heard the news.

Please offer my sincere condolences to his family.

David Owen
Secretary
Caernarfon Sailing Club

Mark was a good friend of mine during the late 70s and early 80s

I remember him joining the merchant navy which was around the time of the Falklands war, I have fond memories of pillion rides up to Llyn Ogwen on his RD 350, I also remember drives out in his Triumph Dolomite with loud music blaring .

I had not seen Mark For almost 30 years although recently we were in touch on Facebook, he still had his unique sense of humour, he will be greatly missed and will always have a place in my heart.

Owen Thomas



The last time we saw Mark was August Bank Holiday in 2019. We were leaving the Dock and after a quick vhf call to check it was safe to exit and thank him for his hospitality, he surprised us by opening the window of the Dock office and shouting down as we passed "the only reason I came into work today was to make sure that you two left"!!

Great man with a fabulous sense of humour and nothing was ever too much trouble. We knew Mark for many years as visitors to Victoria Dock and he will be sadly missed in the future. Our sincere condolences to all his family and friends.

Mark and Julie Pearson
Magic Hawk
Conwy

Mark will be remembered for his helpfulness, kindness and always being ready for a chat to put the world to rights. He'll be sorely missed.

John Peglar

From our first meeting, it was clear that Mark was a caring, compassionate and consummate professional in his role as Dockmaster. It was a privilege knowing him and he will be sadly missed.

Nick & Chris Leftley
Steorra

A Great Guy greatly missed.
We were shocked and stunned at the news of Mark's death, especially because the last time Maura texted him he seemed hopeful of a good recovery.

Mark was always very professional in his dealing with boat owners and the running of the dock, and myself and everyone who came across him, held him in great esteem. We have known Mark ever since he took the position of Dockmaster at Victoria dock and will miss the laughs and ribbing, both given and taken. He had a great sense of humour.

We will miss him greatly.

Dave and Maura
Elise
Victoria Dock



The world is a sadder place. Folk like Mark are far between, always there, willing to give that little extra. He will be a hard act to follow.

John & Ann Nightingale

Trist iawn clywed y newyddion am Mark. Roedd Mark bob amser mor groesawus a pharchus o bawb, ac wrth law i helpu neu i roi cyngor. Pleser oedd ei adnabod. Colled mawr. Pob cydymdeimlad i'w deulu.

Menna Jones a Pete Harris



I have known Mark for many years, from when he worked at Conwy marina. He was always so professional in his work, and always very helpful to us amateur boaters. Mark was popular with everyone who knew him and always made time to talk to us sailors and share a laugh and a joke with his amazing sense of humour.

He will be missed but certainly not forgotten.

Andrew Baker,
Siga Siga

It was with great sadness to hear of Mark's death. Mark was the face of Caernarfon Harbour Trust, always on hand to ensure our vessels were safe before and after stormy weather, such conscientiousness is rare these days.

Beyond that, he was a very personable man, friendly, and ready to give advice and help when needed.

Mark will be sadly missed, RIP.

Colin & Frances Turner
CAMAR

We knew Mark from our time in Caernarfon Marina, he was a great guy, always friendly, helpful and so knowledgeable about the sailing area. We remember he was always cheerful, laughing, chatting, what a truly great guy.

We will miss him when we next visit and will always remember him.

With our very deepest sympathy,

Ian and Jackie Byrne
Rivalady

We'll miss Mark very much. He was always welcoming, ready for a chat and a laugh. He was a great advocate for Caernarfon.

Mark was the first person that sailors from all four corners of the world, arriving in Caernarfon, would meet. And what a person to represent and promote Caernarfon, even though he was born in Yorkshire!! The service he provided will need an exceptional person to take over and meet the standards he set and maintained. He had obviously had a good training with the RFA. We remember a conversation we had with him was that he didn't go on holidays because there was nowhere that could match where he'd been whilst in service. We know he was very touched by the Rest and Recuperation Fund, we can only imagine how delighted and amazed he would be by today's sail past.

RIP Mark.

Phil and Fi
Mwingo

Er cof am un annwyl iawn
Fe fydd colled mawr ar ei ol.
Gyda chariad.

Derek a Nest



I first met Mark in the last decade of the twentieth century and we instantly 'got on' and that was how Mark was with everyone he came into contact with.

All his friends at Conwy marina will miss him greatly, his banter, his witty comments and grand sense of humour - A legend has left us.

I would like to pass on to all his friends and family the great affection we all have for Mark from all his many friends at Conwy Marina he will be remembered for a very long time

Eric Crowther Vice Chairman.

Ocean Yachtmaster Instructor (retired)

Liquid Asset of Conwy

On behalf of Conwy Marina Berth Holders Association



Mark just loved his work, he loved Victoria Dock , its berth holders and all its visitors to whom he always gave his tremendous professional service, welcome and duty of care.

I hold dearly the special memories of sharing laughs and lots of irreverent banter together.

Mark always managed to have time to make each one of us feel special.

He would go out of his way to contact you to make sure that you were aware when your boat could suffer some damage and tell you that it might be a good idea to put on an extra warp and then by the time you arrived it would already have been done.

Going through the dock gate will not be the same without his cheerful wave and I will miss calling in for a radio check on Channel 80 and not hearing his unmistakable voice in reply.

All who had the pleasure of knowing Mark will be devastated by the loss of such a likeable, caring and jovial character.

I fortunately had the opportunity of speaking to him to let him know about his Rest and Recuperation fund to which for once he was lost for words with emotion and said he was overwhelmed by the sentiments and generosity.

I am pleased that he was able to see the comments and level of support because at least there is some consolation that he passed on knowing just how much we all loved and cared about him.

John Whittaker
Moonwinds
VDBHA

On 19th September 2020, dozens of boats from across North Wales converged on Caernarfon to commemorate Mark with a high water sail past of Doc Fictoria. The event dominated the Menai Straits that day, and even those that did not have the good fortune to know Mark must have been impressed by the spectacular turnout. The photos in this book, courtesy of Peter King and Richard Hanlon, give a small sense of the occasion. A day to remember to mark the passing of a man to remember.



I Am Standing Upon The Seashore

I am standing upon the seashore.
A ship at my side spreads her white
sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.

*She is an object of beauty and strength.
I stand and watch her until at length
she hangs like a speck of white cloud
just where the sea and sky come
to mingle with each other.*

*Then, someone at my side says;
"There, she is gone!"
"Gone where?"
Gone from my sight. That is all.
She is just as large in mast and hull
and spar as she was when she left my side
and she is just as able to bear her
load of living freight to her destined port.
Her diminished size is in me, not in her.*

*And just at the moment when someone
at my side says, "There, he is gone!"
There are other eyes watching him coming,
and other voices ready to take up the glad shout;
"Here he comes!"
And that is dying.*

Henry Van Dyke