

in Lachlan MacPhail of Tiree retires from the sea...

AS A MOURNER AT GRAVE OF 'MAN WHO NEVER WAS'

ONE day in 1943 Captain Lachlan MacPhail, of the Baron Forbes, left his ship at Huelva, Spain, to join the British Vice-Consul in paying last respects to an unknown British officer whose body had been washed ashore.

Years later, Captain MacPhail realised he had been one of the mourners at the funeral of "The Man Who Never Was," a man whose body was used to mislead the Germans.

Attendance at this strange burial service is one of the memories which this well-known Clyde seafarer takes to retirement with him to-day.

Smoking his pipe last night in his home at 33 Ormiston Avenue, Scotstoun, Glasgow, he recalled the part he played, unwittingly, in a carefully laid plot to mislead the enemy.

Amazement

"When the Vice-Consul asked me to accompany him to the burial I thought I was attending the funeral of a drowned man—and so did the Vice-Consul," he said.

"You can imagine my amazement when I read years afterwards how a body had been dressed in the uniform of a British officer, and apparently vital British war papers planted in the pockets.

"When the body was washed

By
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up near Huelva, after being ejected from a submarine, it was handed over to the British for burial—but the information in the pockets duly found its way to the Germans, as intended."

Recollections of this war-time adventure stirred the shy, modest commodore of the Baron Line to animated talk, but he turned quiet—though smiling—as his wife recalled the sentimental sailor of other voyages.

Like his father, this handsome son of Tiree has a strong bardic streak, and home thoughts from abroad—in the form of Gaelic poems—were among the treasures he brought back to Mrs MacPhail.

Lovely poems

"I always looked forward to my poem when Lachie came back from a long voyage," said Mrs MacPhail. "He wrote some lovely things which I am still proud to have in my poems in honour of his children, and his native island."

The muse has deserted the captain of late, but from his last voyage he has brought home many things to make his wife proud of him—leatherwork from Spain, magnificent plates from Portugal, and other tokens of the regard in which he has been held during his long life in ships.

But Captain MacPhail, whose Highland blood has also given him a great love for the pipe music, is proudest of a gift that cost nothing.

His title

An old piping friend, Mr Peter MacFarquhar, has just composed a tune in his honour, and "Captain Lachlan MacPhail of Tiree" has been duly registered and officially adopted by the Glasgow Tiree Association.

Captain MacPhail has held his title for a long time—since 1926, and always with the Baron Line. He started his sailing career after serving his apprenticeship as a joiner in Port Glasgow.

And now, as the captain retires from his last command, the Baron Cawdor, his ship is also due to retire—she sails soon on her last voyage with a cargo of scrap, and will then be scrapped herself.



Captain MacPhail

Travel rush

air, rail, and sea of Scots are on the move for Christmas and New Year holidays. British European Airways reported that the demand for flight bookings was very great. Every aircraft available would be in use.

The rush North by Scots in England is expected to start this afternoon and to-night.

30 strike after two are sacked

More than 30 workers came out on strike at Coatbridge yesterday following the dismissal of a shop steward and a former shop steward by their employers, P. and W. McLellan, Ltd., Coatbridge Iron Works.

It is understood that the trouble started over working conditions and a wage grievance.

A meeting of the strikers and their union officials is to be held outside the works gates this afternoon.

POLICE AT PALACE

Detectives went to Buckingham Palace on Tuesday night to investigate the disappearance of clothing valued at about £2 from the servants' quarters.

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