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The Bluff

portsider

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2020 Scholarship
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SOUTH PORT'S PEOPLE

Bluff Focus On:
Cruise Ships

**Sporting
Moments**



Vale

CAPTAIN LENNOX (LEN) MOUNSEY

The New Zealand maritime community will be saddened to learn that long-serving Bluff Pilot and Harbourmaster Len Mounsey has died.

Len was a 'Geordie' born in Newcastle upon Tyne in November 1932 and undertook his pre-sea training at H.M.S. Conway, one of Britain's most prestigious training schools, being awarded an 'Extra' Leaving Certificate upon completion. In 1950 he joined the equally prestigious Shaw Savill and Albion Line as an apprentice. In 1952 Len made his first visit to Bluff aboard the Akaroa, never imagining that this was the port in which he was to spend the majority of his working life. Having obtained his Master Foreign-Going Certificate in 1959 Len continued with Shaw Savill, a career highlight being his appointment as Chief Officer to the *Dominion Monarch*, the largest passenger-cargo ship ever built for the New Zealand trade and a ship to which only the most highly regarded officers were sent. In 1965 Len applied for the position of Tugmaster with the Southland Harbour Board, an application which was successful and in 1966 Len, his wife Angela and their four children, settled in Bluff.

After a year as Tugmaster Len was promoted to junior Pilot and on 1 August 1968 to full Pilot. As a Pilot Len was without peer, his superb ship-handling ability prompting one ship's master to write to the Board commending the 'exceptional skill' of the Pilot who had handled his ship.

After a brief period as Deputy Harbourmaster Len was appointed Harbourmaster at Bluff on 1 August 1968 upon the retirement



Late Bluff Harbourmaster
Len Mounsey

of Captain Bird. Becoming Harbourmaster did not preclude carrying out pilotage duties and on 20 January 1984 Len conducted his 2,000th pilotage, at that time a record for the Port. He also held a coastal pilot's licence covering Fiordland and Stewart Island long before these

became the Mecca for cruise ships they are today. In addition to the few cruise ships that visited Fiordland in those days Len piloted ships up to Deep Cove at the head of Doubtful Sound through which most of the heavy equipment and oil products for the Manapouri Power Scheme were imported.

Under Len's watch many improvements were made to the Port, perhaps the most important from a pilot's viewpoint being the change in the navigation beacons, which eventually became solar powered, and the replacement of the elderly steam tug with two modern Voith tractor tugs.

Away from work Len was a leading figure at the Bluff Golf Club, enjoyed yachting on the Harbour, the company of his friends and the splendid view from his home overlooking the Port.

On 31 December 1990 Len retired after 24 years of service to the Port. He and Angela then moved to Pleasant Point, near Timaru, but recently returned south to be nearer their children. Len passed away peacefully on 27 January 2020, aged 87.

To Angela and family from all of us at South Port, our sincerest condolences on your sad loss.