



Andrew Trasler (1941-2006) - In Memoriam

As many of you will already be aware, the editor of TT Talk, Andrew (Andy) Trasler passed away suddenly on the 28th September.

Andy joined the Managers of the TT Club, Thomas Miller, in 1986 after a successful and varied career in the freight forwarding industry. His second career with the TT Club lasted almost two decades: he retired in June 2004. Andy held the role of Continental European Claims Director - a role he relished, being able to use his near perfect French and German to negotiate on the finer points of Bills of Lading, the Hague-Visby Rules, the CMR convention and standard trading conditions. Under any amount of pressure he always maintained his high level of professionalism combined with a dry wit and an undimmed optimism. He was immensely popular throughout the Club's membership and claims network, and his funeral on 9th October was attended not only by many family members but a large number of current and former colleagues from Thomas Miller. The service included a reading of "Sea Fever", one of Andy's favourite poems, which epitomises his love of the sea and foreign climes viz.

Sea-Fever

**I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.**

**I must 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 sea-gulls crying.**

**I must 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 whetted 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.**

**By John Masefield (1878-1967)
(English Poet Laureate, 1930-1967)**

Andy also proved himself to be TT's most prolific and illustrious writer and raconteur - his vivid first hand account of the 9/11 WTC disaster is a fitting tribute to his skills, and is attached below for those who would like to remind yourselves of his talent and humanity. He cherished his role as editor of first House to House and then of TT Talk, the latter of which he assumed on his retirement - his contribution and friendship will be sorely missed.

Andy is survived by his wife, Margaret, and his three children, Simon, Helen (who is the TT Club Board Administrator at Thomas Miller) and Sarah, to whom we extend our deepest condolences.

Paul Neagle
Chief Executive, TT Club

The full TT Talk archive, much of which is directly attributable to Andy, is available from the following link to the TT website at:

<http://www.ttclub.com/TTClub/ttclub.nsf/HTML/TTTalkHome> 

September 11th 2001:

Tuesday broke a bright sunny morning. The local TV stations were promising temperatures in the lower 80s and talking of early morning traffic queues on the Triborough bridge. There were hopes that stock prices might stage a modest recovery. The candidates for the primary election in the city made their last pitches for votes. Hurricane Erin was somewhere out in the Atlantic, posing no threat but causing some strong winds in the New York area later in the day. I had a lunch meeting planned in Manhattan and thought idly that I might pop into the big Borders bookstore in the plaza under the World Trade Center on my way back. The TT Club team met for breakfast and then broke up to move out of the hotel. We checked out and looked forward to meeting in a few minutes time in the office a few blocks away. Gene Picciano from Miami was joining me and Simon Schnorr in my hire car; as I was loading the bags I heard an enormous bang, which sounded as though it came from the building site between the hotel and the Hudson river. So what? Loud bangs happen all the time on building sites. But as we drove to the office, Gene looked through the window and cried out "hey! look at the World Trade Centre!" Smoke was pouring out of one of the floors about a third of the way down the left hand of the two towers. We got the car into a parking lot round the corner from the office and walked down to the waterfront. Flame was clearly seen across the whole floor, with smoke pouring out enveloping the top half of the building. People were watching in horror from the waterfront. People said that a plane had crashed into the building. Some said it had been a Learjet, but it was difficult to understand how it could have happened.

As many of you will know, the Thomas Miller office in Jersey City has a prime site on the Hudson River front, with a spectacular view of the Manhattan skyline. Along with many other people we were standing on the embankment, in front of the office, watching the drama across the river. Then suddenly, a big jet came in low over the harbour, from the New Jersey side. Before we could even comprehend that it was much lower than the jets which are normally seen flying into JFK or Newark, it banked to the left towards Manhattan and seemed to be heading behind the towers, It didn't make it: suddenly, there was a huge fireball, followed seconds later by the noise of the explosion. The plane did not reappear behind the tower; instead tongues of flame spewed down the back of the building. The watchers on our side of the river screamed with horror: "Oh my God, did you see that? A second one!" Incomprehension, total incomprehension. How could the pilot of a big passenger jet possibly have done such a thing? On a bright clear day, with smoke pouring from one of the towers, how could he not see them? Had I really just seen two hundred, three hundred people die in a fireball? Fire immediately broke out in the second tower. We hurried into the office, seeking solace and companionship, and hoping to find out what on earth was happening. Those few people already in the office at that hour were looking out stunned over the river at the scene on the opposite bank. Apart from the smoke and flames, it looked a perfectly normal day. The ferry boats were criss-crossing the harbour, their wakes glinting silver in the sunlight. Helicopters buzzed overhead as they normally do, but no longer were they worried about gridlock on the bridges. Television spoke of terrorist attacks. Then came news of the attack on the Pentagon: everybody came hurrying to the board room to follow the latest news. Incomprehension, total incomprehension, mixed with anxiety about the people caught up in the fires just a thousand metres away across the river.

Others were getting to the office by now, joining those watching at the window. We made calls to London and to our homes, breaking the news to them and assuring family and colleagues that we were safe. Horror mounted on horror: people could be seen throwing themselves out of windows high up in the building. Then it just got a thousand times worse: the watchers shouted in horror as the left hand tower simply collapsed like a pack of cards. Thick clouds of smoke and dust spewed over the harbour. Now the cross-harbour ferries had a more urgent purpose. They emerged from the smoke, bearing the first casualties from Manhattan to the safety of the New Jersey shore. The air was filled with the sirens and horns of fire trucks and ambulances as they rushed to the shoreline. Smoke was seen emerging from the neighbouring station of the cross-harbour subway: the next station is straight underneath the trade center. For our American colleagues it was much worse: they all knew people who worked in one or other of the towers. And what about colleagues, coming from the Manhattan side? What had happened to them? Calling on mobile phones was useless: the circuits were already overloaded or knocked out completely by the loss of the communications tower on the top of the trade center.

The building superintendent came by to say that the building was being evacuated. We decided to decamp back to the hotel we had just left that morning, so we could gather our thoughts and work out what to do next. Getting the car out of the parking lot was a different matter. The road out was jammed solid. Then more horror: the second tower collapsed, just like the first. It was like one of those planned demolitions of a redundant power station or chimney stack: the whole building simply imploded. For us it was horrible, thinking of how many people might still have been making their way down the emergency staircases to safety. The parking lot attendant told us to leave our cars: "there's no charge, today, folks, just go!". We took the most important bags and walked the few blocks back to the relative safety of the Doubletree hotel. Its restaurant area was crammed: people from other offices had had much the same idea. The two big TV screens were tuned to CNN, relating the horror across the water. Then came more incredible news: more jets had been brought down. Pennsylvania, the Pentagon ... where else? Rumours flew: how many planes? An American behind me said "This is worse than Pearl Harbor; we lost twenty-two hundred people there. Today we have lost a lot more." Other voices spoke of retaliation. But against whom? Afghanistan? the whole Middle East? Iraq? Bin Laden? People just sat round, shocked, watching the incessant CNN coverage, talking in low voices. Queues formed quietly for food: the kitchen staff performed heroically turning out all the extra meals suddenly required. Gene managed to hire a car from the Avis desk in the lobby: it was the last one and was running on an emergency tyre, but no matter: it was transport. A few of us walked back to the parking lot in an attempt to retrieve the car. On the way, we passed one of the pierheads, normally used for the cross-harbour ferries. Today the fire crews were there, laying out empty body bags in neat lines. The police were co-operative, even allowing us to deviate from the official route to get back to the hotel. Every single police vehicle had been pressed into service, including the scooter-like vans used by parking attendants, to block junctions and maintain free routes for fire engines and ambulances.

Simon and I were scheduled to go with Harry Higham and Carl Werra to a meeting in Connecticut, but that was clearly out of the question as the bridges and tunnels to Manhattan were firmly closed. The others were headed for a TT planning meeting in Tarrytown. There was much consulting of maps and suggestions made about possible points where we might cross the Hudson. News was received that the bridge near Tarrytown was open; we decided to go that way in convoy. The phone companies had also made tremendous efforts and some communications were restored, enabling us to get messages through to families back home. Getting out of Jersey City was easy: police were at every intersection, waving us through red lights and stop signs. The bridge at Tarrytown was a different matter entirely: wall to wall traffic. From there we could still see the pall of smoke hanging in the sunlit distance over the glistening river. From time to time, fire trucks and emergency vehicles forced their way through the traffic.

Even in the secluded calm of the hotel at Tarrytown we are not immune from the horror we had left behind, with every TV set in the public areas spewing out news and speculation. It is time for bed now: I hope that I will be able to sleep but fear for the recurring nightmare of seeing that plane slam into the side of the trade tower. Our thoughts are with our colleagues and their friends and business contacts.

Andy Trasler 

TT Talk is a free electronic newsletter published as occasion demands, by the TT Club, International House, 26 Creechurch Lane, London EC3A 5BA, United Kingdom.

Please note that David Martin-Clark former CEO of TT Club and editor of TT Talk has agreed to once again take on the editorship of TT Talk on a temporary basis and we look forward to No92 in the near future.

You can also read this newsletter and past issues on our website: <http://www.ttclub.com>

If you do not wish to receive future editions, please reply to this message and include the word "REMOVE" in the subject line. If you have received this edition via someone else and you would like your own personal copy in future, please send your name, company name and e-mail address to: tt.talk@ttclub.com 