

newsletter

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FIRST OFFICIAL HISTORY OF H.M. COASTGUARD

Prince of Wales commends 150 years of "selfless service"

"COASTGUARD": published 11th June, is the first official history of H.M. Coastguard, the organisation responsible for co-ordinating civil marine search and rescue around the 2,500 miles of Britain's coastline.

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, who served as an auxiliary coastguard while at Gordonstoun School, has contributed a foreword to the book.

He writes "How many people realise what selfless service has been rendered by coastguards since their formation over 150 years ago? . . . Their job will always continue to be of vital importance to this country, and as an old and proud member of H.M. Coastguard I can certainly sympathise with and perhaps, to a certain extent, understand the task they carry out. I shall look forward to the 200th anniversary of the service with complete confidence in its continual professionalism and dedication."

"Coastguard!" has been written by William Webb, a senior information officer in the Department of Trade. It required extensive research into old naval records and other documents, for over the years the service has come under numerous different authorities, and no continuous records were kept.

The book traces the 150-year history of the service from its early days as an anti-smuggling organisation, through its period as a naval reserve force, until it was finally established as an organisation concerned primarily with search and rescue under the control of the Board of Trade.

Today the service employs 650 full-time and 7,000 auxiliary coastguards

and forms part of the Marine Division of the Department of Trade. Besides co-ordinating search and rescue operations through a network of stations around the coasts, coastguards operate the radar network for the Channel Navigation Information Service, and provide the communications service for trawler support ships off Iceland.

The Smugglers

The book begins by describing the period of "smuggling on a grand scale" which led to the formation of H.M. Coastguard in 1822.

During the eighteenth century smuggling was an extensive and profitable industry around the coast because of high import duties on tea, spirits and silk. The smugglers were also highly organised and very ready to fight for their profits. The action of the "Hawkhurst Gang" from Kent in storming Poole Customs House and killing two Customs men to recover a shipment of smuggled tea was not untypical of the period.

The forces of law and order were under the control of the Customs service and consisted of revenue cruisers at sea, a preventive force on shore, and so-called Riding officers who had the task of preventing smuggled goods being moved inland.

Despite a re-organisation of these forces in 1809 under the title of Preventive Water Guard, and the introduction of a new force known as the Coast Blockade some years later, smuggling continued. It was estimated that 50 per cent of the

spirits consumed in Britain at that time escaped duty.

A Committee was set up by the Prince Regent to look at the situation. It discovered that the forces engaged in anti-smuggling activities totalled nearly 7,000, and their annual salaries were £500,000. They recommended that in the face of the "flagrant degree of audacity and violence shown by the smugglers" that all the organisations should be combined under one authority, which should be called the Coast Guard (spelt then as two words).

The Treasury agreed to these proposals, and in a minute of 15th January, 1822, set up the new Coast Guard service with a strength of about 3,000 men, and responsible to the Board of Customs.

Their first published instructions dealt not only with smuggling and protection of the revenue, but also with life-saving where it was laid down that "every individual . . . is to use his utmost exertion to save the lives of persons" on wrecks.

The early Coastguards

The early members of the service did not have an easy life. Armed with pistols, muskets, bayonets and cutlasses they worked a 16-hour night. Coming on duty at dusk they were stationed to watch for smugglers at various spots along the coast. They were also issued with a "one-legged donkey", a stool with a single leg on which to rest. Dozing off meant a quick fall to the ground!

(Continued overleaf)

In addition to the discomforts of the service, there was always the danger of armed attack. In a churchyard at Bexhill, Sussex, there are two gravestones of coastguards who were killed by smugglers.

Nevertheless the service gradually got on top of the smugglers, and it was not long before the authorities decided the Coastguard could take on additional duties and become a reserve for the Royal Navy. Under regulations issued in 1831 the Admiralty was to be informed of seamen joining the Coastguard from the Navy and in 1845 new coastguard recruits were made to sign a written agreement to serve aboard ships of the Royal Navy if required to do so.

During the Crimean War, some 3,000 coastguards were drafted into the Navy in this way. In 1856 the Coastguard was formally placed under Admiralty control. Later a Coastguard Squadron was formed to train the service in naval gunnery and seamanship. Some of these Coastguard cutters were used for fishery protection duties.

During the First World War, many coastguards returned to full-time naval duties, and hundreds joined the three old cruisers, "H.M.S. Cressy", "H.M.S. Aboukir" and "H.M.S. Hogue". All three vessels were torpedoed in September 1914 by one submarine. Of the 2,200 men on board, more than 1,400 were drowned, the majority being coastguards.

In 1922 another committee of inquiry looked into the future of the Coastguard Service, and recommended that as in peacetime life-saving and coast watching were its principal duties, the Coastguard should now become the responsibility of the Board of Trade.

During the Second World War the service returned to Admiralty control. At the end of the war, the book relates how some naval officers would have liked to have kept the service on as a naval reserve. However, it was soon decided that the Coastguard should once more be a civilian service and the Coastguards became established civil servants, in the then Ministry of Transport.

Development of Life Saving Services

Although life saving was not originally the principal duty of the Coastguard, it was the 1925 Coastguard Act

which first gave the Service the duties of coastwatching and life saving, there are references to giving assistance to shipwrecked persons in the earliest regulations.

Under the 1854 Merchant Shipping Act, the Board of Trade had become responsible for issuing life saving apparatus to the coastguards. As the Service could not always muster up sufficient men to use it, volunteers had to be called on from coastal towns and villages.

The book records the formation of some 400 voluntary life saving brigades around the coast at a time when more than 1,000 ships were being wrecked on the coast every year in the peak years.

Today only three of these brigades remain, at Tynemouth, South Shields and Sunderland. The author, who has visited these brigades, describes some of the heroic rescues they carried out in the past 100 years.

The Coastguard service has always worked closely with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and frequently individual coastguards formed part of the volunteer lifeboat crews.

In the post-war history of the service, the book highlights the Great Storm of 1953 and the rescue work performed by coastguards in the East Coast floods, and then records how in 1964 the Coastguard was transferred back to the Board of Trade, the eighth Ministry it had served under in 140 years.

Some years later, the Chief Inspector, John Douglas, was writing: "No smugglers are caught, but each year more and more people are rescued from dangerous situations at sea or on the coastline. The number of incidents handled has risen from 684 in 1946 to over 4,000 in 1971".

Today's Coastguard

The book has separate chapters on bravery awards won by coastguards, and animal rescues before describing the Service as it is today, a small but highly trained and disciplined force, using increasingly sophisticated rescue and communications equipment.

Today's coastguard is a very different person from the lonely figure on the beach in 1822. He is able to call for assistance by telephone or radio from the R.N.L.I., the R.A.F., the Royal Navy, the Police, Fire Brigade, ships at

sea and pleasure yachts. The development of the helicopter for search and rescue work has greatly increased the chances of rescuing people off ships in distress.

At the same time the Coastguard Service has had to cope with all the extra work created by the "pleasure boat explosion" and the resulting calls for help from small boats in distress. To meet this problem, the service carries out a continuous programme of educating small boat users in the hazards of the sea through exhibitions, films, and lectures to clubs, as well as providing a safety service for yachtsmen through the CG 66 procedure, which aids identification of boats.

The book finally traces some of the latest duties which the Coastguard has been called on to undertake. They include plotting oil spills at sea, developing search and rescue facilities in the North Sea for oil and gas exploration, and developing the Channel Navigation Service. It works in close collaboration with many other countries.

The author concludes: "H.M. Coastguard has come a long way in the past 152 years. It has served many masters and its role has been changed on a number of occasions. It has suffered reductions in numbers, and at one time was even threatened with extinction.

"Throughout all these trials and tribulations the men and women of the service have continued to serve the community to the best of their ability. They do so today, and have amply fulfilled the opinion of their first Comptroller-General, Captain William Bowles, who said 'I have the firmest confidence that the Coastguard will preserve unimpaired the high character it has acquired and maintained'."

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Mr. William Webb joined the Information Division of the Board of Trade in 1966, and has specialised in Coastguard and marine affairs. A former journalist, foreign correspondent and news editor with the Exchange Telegraph News Agency, he has written extensively on Kent local history and cricket. He is a member of the Society of Authors.
2. The book is published by H.M.S.O., price £4.95 (postage extra).
3. In 1975 H.M. Coastguard handled nearly 13,000 incidents and rescued a record number of 7,363 people.
4. Further information is available from the Department of Trade Press Office in London—Tel.: 01-215 5061/5062 or from Coastguard district officers who hold copies of the new book.

From the Archives . . .

m.v. "Port Alberni City"

IN THE June edition reference was made to the above vessel's stay at Cardiff discharging forest products. Captain John Cann has written expressing his thanks to all who made his vessel's visit to Cardiff an enjoyable experience both for himself and his family.

He goes on to say, "Meeting so many wives, families and friends of one's Officers is an opportunity a Master so seldom is afforded and was extremely satisfying. It was pleasing to be able to meet so many Head Office staff who visited the vessel and it is hoped that we on board were able to make their visit interesting. In turn a visit to Head Office by my family was something they will treasure for some time to come.

It was nice to be able, at long last to put a name and a face to those ever cheerful voices that greet one on the telephone with "Reardon Smith—can I help you?"

HOW MANY remember the s.s. *Skegness* in Belfast Lough in 1924, proceeding on her maiden voyage? She was commanded by Captain Brice D. Thomas, who is still going strong.



s.s. "York City"

Leaving Busselton, West Australia, February 1926.



s.s. "York City" 1926

Loading Jarrah Wood, a very heavy and hard timber at Bunbury, West Australia. Large Coir spring moorings were used to securely hold vessel surging in ocean swell and undertow, at seaward end of almost mile long jetty.



Echoes from 25 years ago

HIGH COSTS—they were with us then, as this extract from the *Sunderland Echo*, 13th September, 1950, indicates:

Sunderland's 15th shipbuilding order of the year was announced by Short Brothers of Pallion, the vessel was to be a 10,000-ton motor cargo ship, making the tonnage ordered on the Wear so far in 1950 180,000.

The King City, an 8,800-ton motor ship launched by William Doxford and Sons, Sunderland, was to cost her owners four times as much as a similar ship before the war. Speaking at the launch, Mr. Arthur Popham, a senior director of the owners, Sir William Reardon-Smith and Sons Ltd., of Cardiff, said the ship owners were disturbed by the high cost of shipbuilding and the King City's sister-ship, Queen City, had cost only quarter of the price before the war.

A launching with a difference

Possibly the only vessel to create a sensation on launching day was the m.s. "Houston City" in November 1933.

She was known as "the ship that got stuck on the stocks"—she was launched a fortnight after the official function.

The same vessel proceeding on maiden voyage in January 1934. Master Captain Lionel Ford, Chief Officer, J. Maldwyn Hughes, 2nd Officer, S. Wheaton, 3rd Officer, S. Leebetter.



STAFF NEWS

HONOUR FOR 2nd OFFICER

Mr. W. D. Howell has been chosen to represent Eire in the International Sailing Championships. We send him our congratulations and best wishes.

SYMPATHY

We extend our deepest sympathy to Mr. Kerry Thomas (Purchasing Department) on the passing of his father.

MARRIAGE

Congratulations to Chief Officer, P. G. Deschamps on his marriage to Miss E. A. Boyle at Laleston, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, on 10th July last.

BEST WISHES

Our best wishes for the future go to Mr. Alan Powell of the Chartering Department, Head Office, who leaves for Australia.

Our best wishes for a speedy return to normal health go to Mrs. T. W. Major who has had an operation. We are pleased to hear she is now home and making good progress.

BIRTHS

Congratulations to 2nd Engineer, J. Foots and Mrs. Foots on the arrival of a son, Alec Joseph on 22nd June last.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Dunseith on the arrival of a daughter, Sarah on 29th June last.

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret we heard of the tragic accident to Colin, 24-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Sweetland. It appears he crashed on his motor cycle whilst scrambling and died in hospital.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family. Mr. Sweetland is one of Head Office Chauffeurs.

Contribution to R.N.L.I.

CAPTAIN MURRAY reports that £12 was recently donated by the Master and Officers *m.v. Victoria City*.

Letter . . .

m.v. Welsh City
At Nassau.

Wednesday, 23rd June, 1976.

I HAVE often read tales of the great Bahama Island Paradise, and glanced longingly at travel brochures and glossy magazines at home, describing the miles of sugar—white beaches, deep sea-fishing, fabulous gourmet meals to be found on the Bahama Islands.

It wasn't until we had the opportunity of doing a trip with our husbands on the *Welsh City* that we learnt one of the many ports to be visited in and around the Caribbean, was to include the holiday town of Nassau on New Providence Island.

On arrival, at 4 p.m. in the afternoon, it was slightly overcast, but the turquoise blue of the sea and the white sandy beaches in contrast, looked very inviting. On berthing, we found ourselves surrounded by four foreign passenger ships. The *Monarch Sun*, *Emerald Seas*, *Oceanic* and the *Flavia*.

From the ship we had a full view of the colourful street market selling a wide variety of fruit, unusual shells, beads

and basket work. It all looked very tempting—a panorama of native colour. So, as soon as we had received our welcome mail and had dinner, we all set off to sample the night-life in swinging Nassau. As we walked along the main shopping street, we noticed that part of it was cordoned off and was being patrolled by the Bahamian Police who were smartly dressed in red, white and black uniforms. They informed us there was soon to be a parade of police cadets and brass band, and sure enough they came marching towards us beneath the palm trees and coloured lanterns which were lining the road.

Later we went along to a night club which wasn't far from the ship, but, half-way through the evening, the place emptied of people, and twenty minutes later we could see why—two of the passenger liners had just sailed, much to the disappointment of some of the single lads!

The following day, we wives were determined to make the most of our time ashore as we were due to sail that night. The morning was spent wandering around the shops and market, sending postcards home and sampling thick slices of chocolate gâteau in the local Coffee Shop.

In the afternoon we took a boat trip along the coastline of Paradise Island,

which is a small island off the mainland. It certainly lived up to its name and consisted of luxury hotels whose beaches and swimming pools looked very inviting. There was also a large Yachting Marina where there were some very powerful cabin-cruisers moored.

When we reached a certain spot off the tip of the island, part of the deck of the boat was raised up, and underneath was a false glass bottom, through which we could see clearly beneath us in a turquoise sea, crystal clear, hundreds of different coloured fish, corals, shells, and multi-coloured sea fans. The rainbow fish were the most attractive with a mass of striking colours, almost luminous. Parts of the coral we saw had apparently been gnawed by the fish until it formed into a cup-shape and this is called, oddly enough, Cup-Coral. The scene we saw was just like an excerpt from a Jacques Cousteau under-water film. Many of these corals can be bought ashore, but their colour soon disappears when they are taken from the sea-water, therefore, they are dyed to preserve their attractive appearance. That boat trip was, indeed, an event to remember.

Whilst alongside at Nassau, one of the passenger liners which remained with us for most of our stay, was the *Monarch Sun*, which is part of Monarch Cruise Lines and cruises between Miami

and the Bahamas twice weekly. A couple from the ship appeared at the top of our gangway, and enquired of the seaman on watch whether we all spoke Welsh on board! Having seen the name of the ship, they presumed we were all "Natives", but they were soon to discover otherwise when they were greeted with the words "mensahib go topside see Chiefy Steward"!

Having eventually found one or two of us who could speak a word or two of

our native tongue, they explained they were part of a Group employed to entertain the passengers on the liner, and had to sing in Welsh, and wanted assistance in pronouncing some of the words of the song "Ar Hyd y Nôs". We managed to help them as best we could and they were very grateful, and left with the promise of a tour around their ship if we meet up again on our next round trip.

We watched her sail away majestically out into the ocean, headed home to

Miami. We all somehow, felt a little humble aboard our tiny cargo ship with its black hull and brown derricks, in contrast to their gleaming white superstructure, as it disappeared into the sun.

But, cruise liner or not, who else could have seen such glamorous sights as we have been privileged to do this trip on the *Welsh City*.

Mrs. E. Davies
Mrs. F. Anderson

m.v. "Welsh City"

IF MY memory serves me right I joined Reardon Smith Line in April 1953 as Chief Officer. After doing my spate on the White Crew vessels I was appointed Chief Officer of the m.v. *Welsh City*, the predecessor of the present m.v. *Welsh City*. I spent two happy years on that vessel, sailing under the commands of Captains Picton-Davies and Sydney Leebetter. Both these gentlemen are now enjoying their retirement.

In May 1971, I was appointed Master of the present m.v. *Welsh City*. After sailing from Glasgow to Canada and the USA, loading for South African ports completing at Durban, all went well, but little did we know what was to come.

We sailed from Durban with a full cargo of sugar for Japan and were about eighteen hours out, when that dreaded disease I had heard so much about struck us "Rustonitis". I will not go into detail but after a long and tedious voyage we eventually reached Japan.

After drydocking at Shimonoseki, all on board felt that this infectious disease had been cured, but it struck again, as on clearing the drydock I was informed

I could only use one engine; wait now—more to come—when approaching the bridge in the Moji Straits with a five knot current against us, a frantic call from the engine room informing me that it was imperative to stop, but was assured it would only be for three minutes. The following *four* minutes were the longest in my life, and when I heard the beat of the engines, I gave a sigh of relief, which I am sure could have been heard ashore, and I can assure you I needed no laxatives.

After these difficulties were overcome by the staunch fellows in the engine room and both engines on go, I went down to my room and sat down, and I recalled a similar incident I had been told about, involving the late Captain D. Beynon, who was reputed to have said: "If the engines are not O.K. in three minutes, we will all join in a circle and sing 'Oh hear us when we cry to Thee, For those in peril on the Sea,'" God rest his soul!

Since those bygone days m.v. *Welsh City* has undergone major surgery, and is fit for duty for many a year to come.

G. F. R. ELLERBY, Master
m.v. *Welsh City*

The Bay of Fonseca

Mornings are peaceful lying in the bay. Swinging round the anchor in an idle sort of way, Porpoises and flying fish are coming up to stare, Flying ants and insects their noise fills the air.

Looking through the glasses the land is to be seen, Brightly coloured blossom, trees and shrubs so green. The hills are high and rugged, volcanic I am told, "San Miguel" is active, the others are quite cold.

The day starts hot and humid, blue skies overhead, By noon the temperature's so high the locals rest in bed, At six the light is fading, thunder clouds roll in, Soon we see the lightning, next the pouring rain.

KAREN NICHOLL
m.v. *Amparo*

Those were the days!

m.s. "Fresno City" (1930)

Saloon showing port door entrance from Officers accommodation alleyway. Coal-burning stove with boiler providing water radiator heating throughout all Bridge accommodation.

Saloon table seating 8 persons with 5 swing chairs and settee under portholes. Viewed from starboard side after end.



SHIPS POSITIONS AT 21st JULY 1976

m.v. Cardiff City. On Time Charter a/c Salen. Arrived Santa Marta 14th July with expected sailing 24th for Baltimore. Loads Baltimore 29th July 6th August for Aqaba. Transits Suez Canal 21st/22nd August arriving Aqaba 23rd August, completing 30th.

m.v. Cornish City. On Time Charter a/c Safmarine. Sailed New York 17th July. Arrived St. John N.B. 18th July, completing loading and sailed for South Africa 20th July. Arrives Cape Town to commence discharge 8th August. Sails 12th for Port Elizabeth 14/16th August, East London 17th, Durban 18/28th, and Maputo 29th/31st August where completes and redelivers from Time Charter.

m.v. Devon City. On Time Charter a/c Motor-tank. Sailed Sydney 22nd June with cargo Barley. Sailed Port Said 20th July. Arrives Batumi (Black Sea) 24th July, completing discharge 31st. Proceeds to Skaramanga where drydocks for 21 days from 3rd September.

m.v. Eastern City. Sailed Copenhagen 2nd July. Diverted to Dakar for repairs and sailed 19th July. Arrives Port Elizabeth 1st August to load ore cargo, sailing 5th August. Proceeds to U.S. Gulf for discharge at undeclared port 30th August/31st September.

m.v. Fresno City. On Berth Service B.C./U.K. Cont. Sailed Vancouver 25th June. Arrived and sailed Panama Canal 8th July. Arrived Dublin 20th to commence discharge, sails 26th for Esbjerg to complete 29th July/3rd August. Thence loads grain U.S. Gulf. Arrives 19th and sails 23rd. Arrives and sails Panama Canal 28th, arrives Japan 23rd September and completes discharge 25/30th.

m.v. Indian City. On Time Charter a/c Yamashita Shinnihon. Sailed Norfolk 30th June with cargo of coal for discharge Japan. Sailed Panama Canal 7th July, arrives and completes discharge Sakaide 1st/5th August. Next business loads cars Yokohama and/or Yokosuka.

m.v. New Westminster City. Sailed Esbjerg 17th July for Port Elizabeth to load ore for discharge Japan. Arrives Port Elizabeth 7th August and sails 9th. Arrives and sails Singapore 25/26th August and arrives Japan 5th September, completing 8th.

m.v. Port Albani City. On Time Charter a/c Nidera. Arrived and sailed Nagoya 19/20th July. Arrived Mizushima 21st. Redelivers and sails 22nd for Watson Island. Loads under Berth Service B.C./U.K. Cont. at Watson Island 6/7th August, Crofton 9/11th, Vancouver (B.C.) 12/17th.

Arrives and sails Panama Canal 29th. Arrives Dublin 11th September, sails 16th for London where arrives 18th and completes discharge 22nd September.

m.v. Prince Rupert City. Arrived Kinuura 18th July to discharge cargo of Maize, sails 22nd. Arrives and sails Nagoya 22nd thence arrives Yokkaichi 23rd and completes discharge 26th. Delivers under Time Charter a/c Seaboard on sailing Yokkaichi thence arrives and sails Vancouver (B.C.) 7/16th August. Transits Panama Canal 28th, arrives and completes at undeclared port Tampa/Boston range 3rd/15-20th September.

m.v. Tacoma City. On Berth Service B.C./U.K. Cont. Arrived and sailed London 13/20th July. Arrives Antwerp 22nd and completes discharge 24th. Thence loads under Steel service at Antwerp, sailing 30th, and Middlesbrough or Immingham 1st/9th August. Transits Panama Canal 24th. Discharges Los Angeles 31st August/3rd September, Oakland 4/5th, Portland 7/8th, New Westminster 10/14th. Thence loads B.C./U.S.W.C. under Berth Service for discharge London and Esbjerg.

m.v. Vancouver City. Redelivered from Daiichi Time Charter and sailed Kobe 12th July. Delivered under Time Charter a/c Retla at Pohang 14th July and sailed 15th with part cargo of Steel Coils. Arrived Inchon 17th and sails 22nd for Busan, Sadakan (Borneo), Tanjung Mani (Sarawak), Singapore and completing Port Klang 15th August. Transits Suez Canal 31st August. Thence Le Havre, Tilbury, Holland, Antwerp and finally Esbjerg 25th September/5th October.

m.v. Victoria City. On Time Charter a/c Nidera. Arrived and sailed Buenos Aires with full cargo Sorghums 12/16th July. Calls Singapore 11/12th August en route Taiwan, arrives 17th and redelivers Taiwan option South Japan 23rd/25th. Next business unknown.

m.v. Welsh City. On Time Charter a/c K.N.S.M. Sailed Rotterdam 17th July. Arrived and sailed Hamburg 19/20th July. Arrived Bremen 21st July and continues loading Antwerp 22nd July, Rotterdam 24th, and Amsterdam 25th July for West Indies.

m.v. Amparo. Arrived Yokohama 8th July and commenced cargo operations calling Nagoya, Yokkaichi and Kobe. Drydocked Kobe 17th and undocks 23rd. Loads Kobe 24/27th and Yokohama 28th/31st July. Thence Ensenada

15/16th August, Manzanillo 19th/23rd, Acapulco 24/27th, Central American port 28/9th September, Guaymas 13/16th and finally Ensenada 19th/21st.

Returns Japan on completion and arrives 6th October.

m.v. Atlantic. Arrived and sailed Pohang 14/17th July. Arrived Pusan 18th and sails 25th. Thence Inchon 26/4th August. Arrives Jeddah 24th August.

m.v. Elena. Sailed Champerico 16th July. Arrived and sailed Manzanillo 18/19th. Arrives Ensenada 22nd, completes and sails 23rd for Yokohama 7/9th August, Nagoya/Yokkaichi 10/12th, Osaka/Kobe 13/16th, thence drydocks Kobe 17th/23rd. Commences further cargo operations Kobe 24th and sails 27th for Nagoya 28th/31st, Yokohama 1st/4th September. Thence arrives Ensenada 20th September and calls Manzanillo, Acapulco, Central American Port, Guaymas and finally sails Ensenada 25th October for Japan arriving 14th November and completing around 20th November.

m.v. Gela. Sailed Rotterdam 26th June. Arrived Tampico 10th July and sailed 14th. Arrived and sailed Vera Cruz 15/19th, arrived Progreso 21st and sails 23rd for Coatzacoalcas 24/25th, Philadelphia 31/1st August, Hamburg 12/16th, Gothenburg 18/19th, Bremen 21st/22nd, Rotterdam 23rd/25th, Antwerp 26/27th, Le Havre 28/30th, and thence finally arrives Vera Cruz 12th September.

m.v. Maria Elisa. Arrived San Juan 14th July, sailed 20th for Vera Cruz. Arrives 25th and sails 28th for Tampico 30/7th August. Arrives Houston 9th and sails 10th. Arrives and sails Port Arthur 11/12th. Thence Salvador 23rd/28th, Rio de Janeiro 28/29th, Santos 30/4th September, Itajai (Brazil) 5/7th, returns Santos 8/13th and Rio de Janeiro 14/15th. Finally arrives and sails Vitoria 16/18th for Vera Cruz 2nd/6th October and Tampico 7/8th.

m.v. Sara Lupe. Arrived and sailed Vera Cruz 2nd/6th July then arrived Tampico 6th and sailed 18th for 2nd call at Vera Cruz. Arrived 21st and sails 23rd for Recife 4/6th August. Rio de Janeiro 9/11th, Santos 12/17th, Buenos Aires 20th/22nd, option call port Brazil 24/25th, Santos 26th/31st. Arrives at unknown port Central America 13th September completing 15th, thence calls Vera Cruz 20/24th and Tampico 25/26th September.

CRICKET

THE RESURGENCE of cricket as a popular Summer sport was taken a step further recently when a Head Office XI played a match against Gibbs Ltd. of Newport (Shipowners and Agents).

The scores suggest that it was a fairly evenly contested game—until the appearance of a bowler in the Newport side

who soon demonstrated he was a player of league status.

It was a good performance by our bowlers to dismiss the opposition for 86. In reply, Head Office scored 69. Richard Reardon Smith opened the innings with Patrick Dunsieith. He scored a swash-buckling 21—there is talk of him being another Colin Milburn? Patrick contributed 3—not yet quite up to Barry

Richards standard—there are apparently great hopes.

The Captain deserves a special mention—John C. Williams used his unknown quantities very well. Bowlers Paul Beattie 2 for 8, P. Dunsieith and Richard Sewell one each, have potential. The other wicket taker Alan Powell is by now living in Australia—(nothing to do with the match).

Another Extinct Species?

READING WITH interest and amusement Commodore Higgin's tale of the Old Man's Cockatoo, in the Tacoma issue of the *Newsletter*, I am reminded that today, shipboard pets are a thing of the past. International laws and regulations, designed to protect world wildlife, now make it virtually impossible to carry even the smallest animal or bird as a pet, and recent panic and questionable moves made by the British Government to arrest the spread of rabies will, no doubt, remove all trace of that most traditional of all seagoing pets, the ship's cat.

This commonest and most self-sufficient of all man's pets is admirably suited for the sea life. Originally brought aboard vessels by mariners as a pet and a means of reducing rodents, it could carry out the latter with extreme efficiency: perhaps not with the same clinical expertise of some white coated pest control agent, but I have seen two ships cats, working together, kill over thirty rats in one night.

It was not uncommon to see more than one cat aboard a ship, and if they were of a different sex, the results could be most prolific. But this was never a problem. Many ships considered a cat to be part of the manning scale and should they find themselves without one they would soon be on the lookout for a replacement. I recall one ship that had two cats (to begin with). One was a large ginger and white she cat who spent most of her time amongst the Junior Officers and in their quarters though, in fact, her home was in one of the Apprentice's cabins. She had a marvellous temperament and was an excellent ratter. The other was a siamese she, that belonged to the Chief Officer, having received her as a gift at some far eastern port. Very much attached to her, he would seldom let her out of his sight and she was often seen on the bridge with him. Unfortunately, he would not allow "ginger" anywhere near his block of accommodation. Naturally, this caused a certain amount of ill feeling and during the ship's stay in Glasgow, when the Chief Officer was on leave, the Third Officer decided that the Siamese should carry out her maternal role in life. To this end, he acquired, by enticement, the services of a dock warehouse Tom, which had a considerable amount of dark Persian about him. He duly per-

formed one night but he proved to be a greedy cat, and perhaps as a bonus, he set about poor old "ginger" as well. Sure enough, later in the voyage, when the vessel was in the Red Sea, both cats gave birth within a couple of days of each other. The Chief Officer had been furious since the time he had discovered that his treasure had been "got at" and his anger was made even worse when her offspring appeared as four revolting looking black "rats". Three of them were runts and there wasn't an attractive feature amongst them. Perhaps to prevent further embarrassment, he gave away the Siamese (some said sold) to friends in Madras. Ginger, on the other hand, produced three very attractive kittens, one similar to herself, one almost white and a very handsome male tortoiseshell. Unfortunately the after effects of giving birth and the extreme heat took its toll on "ginger" and she was never the same cat again. She refused to look after herself and would become very fierce if we tried to wash her, which she had always allowed us to do before. Two of her kittens mysteriously disappeared in the night in the Indian Ocean and the other, the tortoiseshell, left on his own accord. Ginger, herself, became so depressed with life, that she jumped off a set of bits one afternoon, right over the bulwark, and into the Indian Ocean.

The four black "rats" survived, though only just. They spent all of their time in the Deck Officers flat, and perhaps as retribution by the second generation, they would carry out many of their natural functions in the Third Officer's cabin. That gentleman had never liked cats, or animals in general, and he would frequently either throw or kick them down his companionway. Two of them received injured limbs in this manner, and the last I saw of them, they were being carried down the gangway by a large matronly R.S.P.C.A. woman at the Port of Liverpool who had earlier threatened the Third Officer with prosecution for his alleged cruelty.

I remember another Siamese ship cat. This one was a very diminutive male that belonged to the Master and very much reflected his own stature. It was called, believe it or not, Tiddles. As an apprentice, I saw very little of the Captain, or his cat but on one occasion I incurred the everlasting wrath of one and the intense fear of the other. Calling at several

Red Sea ports en route to India, Autumn bird migration was in full swing. Many birds come to grief down this massive flyway, often as a result of sandstorms, but more frequently just through continuous flying. On this occasion, I was tending two male Peregrine Falcons and a female Merlin that had landed aboard in an exhausted state. I had been keeping them in my quarters and feeding them raw, but not fresh meat. They were making a slow but steady recovery. On a couple of days I had taken the Merlin outside with me. At one point, the Captain saw me with the bird and made a few enquiries about her. However, he warned me to keep it away from his cat, which, he informed me would kill the bird. One morning there was a very heavy southward passage of small land migrants, mostly swallows and martins. Many were exhausted and settled aboard the ship. I considered that this would be the ideal opportunity to see if the Falcons could tend for themselves, and I took all three out onto the boatdeck, just below the Captain's cabin. The two Peregrines hopped up to a rail and appeared very restless, having seen the swallows and I knew that they would soon go in pursuit and probably leave that day. The Merlin was still very fatigued and drooped on the deck next to me. At that moment, Tiddles appeared on the deck above and eyed the Merlin and he was soon followed by the Captain who repeated his earlier warning and told me to take the scraggy bird away before Tiddles had him for breakfast. Unfortunately, neither the cat nor the Captain had seen the Peregrines, but they had seen the cat, and in a flash, they both flew up to the deck above and attacked Tiddles. My first thoughts were to let them get on with it but when I saw the Captain's puce face I stepped up and pulled off both birds, receiving several cuts for my trouble. Tiddles was quite a mess, but as cats will, soon recovered. One of the Peregrines left that day whilst I kept the other for a couple of days more before releasing him. The Merlin eventually died off Madras. Tiddles thereafter remained indoors, being seen occasionally in a window box peering furtively out, but would soon jump down should the shadow of a Gull pass his vision. What little opinion the Captain had of apprentices before the attack, was reduced to below zero after it.

M. E. JONES
Master

The Legend of the Million Ton Tanker

A group of lines along the Tyne
Decided they would all combine
To pool their skills and then perhaps
United they would beat the Japs.

The early spring of "Sixty Eight"
Saw all the brains behind one gate
By August their endeavours won
A Tanker of a million Ton.

This order set the Tyne alight
The future now at last looked bright
And so they booked the City Hall
To hold a celebration ball.

The ball was quite a grand affair
For everyone of note was there
And members of the working class
Rubbed shoulders with the upper class.

A merry night was had by all
At Swans amalgamation ball
But all good things must end its true
And there was still a job to do.

Production soon got under way
And the Keel was down by Guy Fawkes Day
A mighty Keel of six inch plate
It stretched from Swans to Watergate.

The longy Butts were ten feet high
They made the strongest caulker cry
The platers laboured in the sheds
With the plates as big as Wing Bulk Heads.

The staggers all wear parachutes
And rubber suckers on their boots
One counter, name of Bobby Corbett
Fell off the mast – he's still in orbit.

The journey to the after peak
On foot took half a working week
And though the workers had to hike,
The gaffers all had motorbikes.

The centre tanks were such a height,
The upper deck was out of sight
And up among the beams and struts
Two helicopters checked the Butts.

Inside the bulbous bow one day,
Two Foremen Welders lost their way
I must report with deep regret,
For all I know, they're still there yet.

The human mind could scarcely grip,
The magnitude of this great ship
This miracle of Tyneside skill
Was for the Japs a bitter pill.

It was not just the Japanese
That Swan and Hunters failed to please,
Before the launching celebrations
The town would need some alterations.

No Architect could ever cure
The damage done to Shiremoor
And all agreed it was a pity
The Drag Chains wrecked the Spanish City.

The back wash when it hit the sea,
Drowned fifty pigs at Peterlee
The BBC reported panic
When monster crabs invaded Alnwick.

At last the giant super Tanker,
In sixty fathoms lay at anchor
A massive structure painted gray
It brooded over Whitley Bay.

Three shifts of fitters toiled like slaves,
As the great monster rode the waves
Completing in one busy year,
The Engine and the Steering gear.

The happy day arrived at last,
When pennants flying from the mast
The giant ship got under way
And left the shores of Whitley Bay.

But trouble seemed to dog this ship
For early in her maiden trip
She turned to starboard off Penzance,
And dislocated half of France.

De Gaulle who seemed a trifle vexed,
To Wilson said "Whatever next"
Your ship has caused grave complications,
I'm off to tell the United Nations.

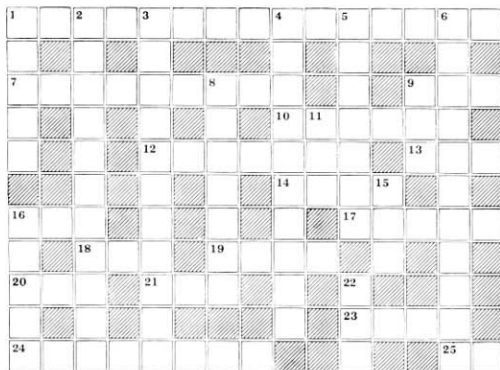
A block vote by the iron curtain,
And the Tanker's fate was sealed for certain.
In spite of Harold Wilson's pleas
They banned her from the Seven Seas.

Mid scenes of grief, and deep emotion,
They towed her to the Arctic Ocean
And there in that far Northern Clime,
She's doing penance for her crime.

Though politicians fought her case,
They couldn't save the Tanker's face
In spite of all their flowery words,
She's now a sanctuary for the birds.

Out there among the Arctic skies
A part of France's coast line lies
And traces too, you can be sure,
Of Bigg's Main and Shiremoor.

By A. Hamilton
Electrical Engineer, *Welsh City*



ACROSS

- 1 Prove Tim's tin accurate.
- 7 Sir Charles and a marine engineering outfit associated in order to develop machinery.
- 9 Reg is not as energetic as his friend watt!
- 10 Harvester, could be the sower proverbially speaking.
- 12 A downpour so to speak, more of an indictment?

- 13 At this stage, a support?
- 14 Husk material.
- 16 Take the letter out East, to join the club!
- 17 Keep left on the main arterial way of the body.
- 18 Spanish river.
- 19 The commonwealth carpenter Hugh, longs for this type of wood.
- 20 The dizzy ape left his gun at home.
- 21 Not professional, the minstrel's song.
- 23 See 16 down.
- 24 Unknown radiation of very short wave lengths, for penetrating him?
- 25 Oriental distance (633 yd.).

DOWN

- 1 It's quite a game identifying the sauce!
- 2 A sermon treat on Sunday causes protest?
- 3 It's beyond her, spectrum?
- 4 Miss Gardner in a hurry, to amass a fortune.
- 5 Oberon's mate.
- 6 The man, considered a trailer rest.
- 8 A prize, for wasting?
- 9 Water creature, on its way up to the heaven.
- 11 Geological student with no common sense, remaining mixed up and self centred!
- 15 An Arabian mythological bird, in soaring, produces a cockney expletive!
- 16 And 23 across. Galactic phenomenon, leaving a white dwarf?
- 22 Highly destructive derivative of toluene, which doesn't leave much to describe it!