

newsletter

No. 99—APRIL, 1978

From the Archives

A LOOK INTO THE PAST



m.v. Homer City sailing after loading wheat Vancouver, December 1946. Eastern City astern prior to loading.



m.s. Queen City under 1st Narrows Bridge, Vancouver, August 1955 bound for South Africa with bulk wheat cargo.



s.s. Jersey City, oldest vessel in fleet (20 years) when sunk by enemy action in North Atlantic 31.7.40. Two lives lost, 43 saved.



m.v. Devon City after lengthy overhaul Cardiff following wartime service 1939-45.

PHILATELY

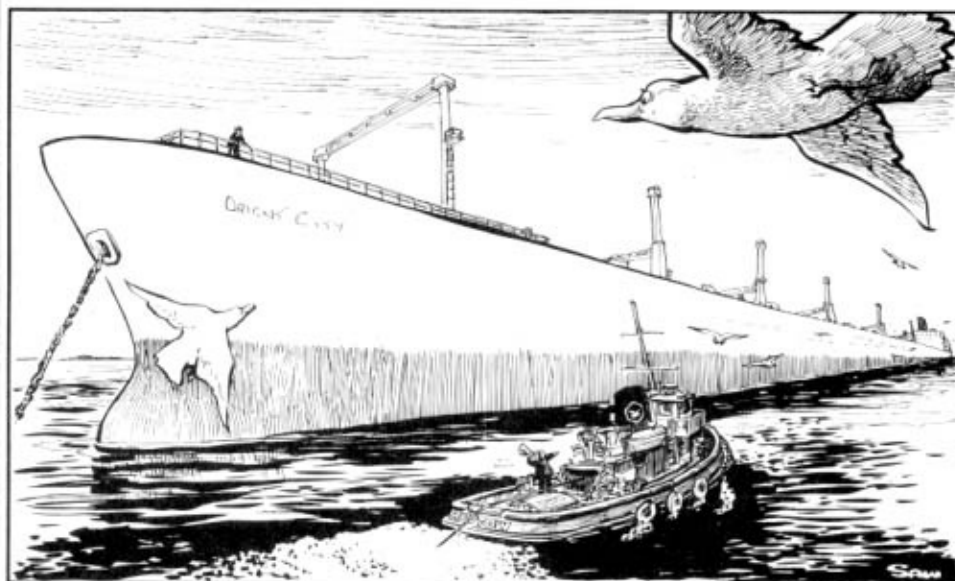
IT HAS BEEN suggested that Philatelic information would be welcomed by our readers.

Stanley Gibbons's publication "Collect British Stamps", present price 90p, is very useful, particularly to those collectors concentrating on Queen Elizabeth II stamps.

It is interesting to note that a $\frac{1}{2}$ p stamp, issued during the last few years—and which was contained in a £1 book of stamps—is now catalogued, both used and unused, at £12. This collector's piece is simply because the stamp only has one phosphor side band.

At the moment, the Post Office 10p books of stamps obtainable through their machines, contain stamps to the value of

(continued overleaf)



"Ahoy! Have you had a weather report from as far down as your other end?"

10p and the five stamps, namely $2 \times \frac{1}{2}p$; $2 \times 1p$ and $7p$, all have a phosphor centre band. Enthusiastic collectors will know that a $\frac{1}{2}p$ with a centre phosphor band is not yet catalogued, neither is a $1p$ stamp with a centre band.

The remaining stamp in the book, namely, a $7p$, also has a centre band, but a $7p$ centre band stamp had been issued previously. These centre bands may, dependent on sales, become collectors pieces!

Miss P. WARD

The Stinging Nettle

THE STINGING NETTLE is not generally looked upon with favour. The gardener, however, puts the stinging nettle at the head of the list of beneficial weeds for its uses are many fold. It breaks down into almost perfect humus and is invaluable as a mulch between rows of vegetables providing both humus and nutrients. Because of its high mineral content it is an essential addition to the compost heap. When added freshly cut, or only slightly wilted, it has the effect of raising the temperature of the heap almost at once, encouraging the nitrogen bacteria in the breaking down and decomposition of vegetable matter.

Nettles, if left to soak in rainwater for two or three weeks until they disintegrate, will produce a smelly liquid to become a very effective plant food which will be found especially good for tomatoes. The more nettle used, the stronger will be the plant food and you should bear in mind that there is more nitrogen in fresh, young nettles during the spring and summer.

The liquid can be used as an insect repellent and as a foliar feed.

An infusion can also be made by covering a handful of fresh nettles with a pint of water, bring to the boil, remove from heat and cover while cooling. Strain and dilute with four parts of water to one of liquid. This can be used as a spray against mildew, blackfly, aphids and plant lice in the greenhouse or outside. When used as a foliar feed a dessertspoonful of liquid soap can be added to the spray to help it to stick to the leaves, but this should be omitted if the liquid is to be used as a fertiliser.

The stinging nettle is also a plant rich in protein, vitamins and minerals, especially nitrogen, iron and calcium and not only is it of tremendous value in the garden, but it has long been recognised for its medicinal and culinary uses.

What about making nettle wine this spring!

L. P. ALLERTON

SAFETY IN THE CHANNEL

REPORT OF THE ANGLO-FRENCH SAFETY OF NAVIGATION GROUP (AFSONG)

MODERN TECHNOLOGY IS helping to overcome the hazards facing shipping in the Channel. This is made clear in a report of the Anglo-French Safety of Navigation Group issued 15.3.78 and announced by Mr. Clinton Davis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Companies, Aviation and Shipping in answer to a Parliamentary Question.

The Group, responsible for advice on improving safety in the Channel, believes that the installation of the latest data processing computers, to process radar information, will be a major asset in developing the UK Channel Navigation Information Service (CNIS), and its French equivalent, the SINM.

The report describes equipment already in service, including two high power radars which enable the CNIS to monitor the Dover Strait from Beachy Head to the NW Sandettie buoy, an area 75 miles long by 25 miles wide. Using these radars, HM Coastguard, who run the CNIS, detect vessels contravening the Traffic Separation Scheme introduced in 1967 and improved in 1972.

Introduction of the 1972 Collision Regulations

The new Collision Regulations, agreed in 1972, came into force in July 1977. Since then, ships of all signatory countries have been required to observe separation schemes, which, like the one in the Dover Strait, have been approved by IMCO, the UN maritime agency.

The UK and France have stepped up efforts to identify the rule breakers, by using naval and civilian ships and aircraft to patrol the Strait. Identified offenders are reported to their flag states for further action.

Effect of Safety Measures

The report notes the downward trend in the number of incidents in the Channel. Between 1963 and 1971 there were on average 12 collisions annually in the Dover Strait. Since the Traffic Separation Scheme was modified in 1972, the yearly total has never exceeded 6 and in 1977 only 3 occurred.

The number of vessels contravening the separation scheme fell by over a third between the first and last quarter of 1977, the collision regulations having come into force on 15 July. In the 22 weeks immediately before this date an average of nearly 30 contraventions was recorded daily; in the following 22 weeks the number was just over 20. AFSONG hopes

that the vigorous efforts of the United Kingdom and France to detect, and ensure prosecution of, offenders will cause this improvement to be sustained.

Contingency Planning and Joint Disaster exercises

AFSONG has sponsored the preparation of a joint contingency plan (MANCHE-PLAN) to deal with maritime disasters in the Channel from west of the Scillies to the Dover Strait. The plan covers search and rescue, oil pollution and other possible incidents. The communication channels and decision-making procedures of the plan were tested in 1977 and a simulated incident, using both air and surface craft, is planned for 1978. MANCHEPLAN, already serving as the basis for the UK's contingency planning with Norway to cover possible incidents around North Sea oil installations.

1. AFSONG was set up in 1973 to co-ordinate the surveillance and information services of the Dover Strait; its first report was published in 1974. In 1976 AFSONG's responsibilities were extended to include the whole Channel and the resolution of common problems in the fields of maritime accidents, search and rescue, pollution clearance and related contingency planning.

2. "Safety in the Channel: Report of the Anglo-French Safety of Navigation Group" is available from Department of Trade, Marine Library, Room G/7, Sunley House, 90, High Holborn, LONDON, WC1.

SHEER L

RUSSIANS ARE COMPLAINING that the new driving test is driving them crazy.

And no wonder! Here's what they have to do to pass:

A thorough medical examination is followed by 60 hours of studying theory and 16 hours of first-aid instruction.

Then comes 140 hours of "practicals"—how a car works and how to repair it.

And finally, 32 hours on the road behind the steering-wheel.

At the test, each candidate has first to answer Yes or No to 30 questions.

Two wrong answers mean that he or she has to take the whole course again.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CAPTAIN BRICE D. THOMAS, O.B.E. 1892—1978

TO ALL WHO were privileged to have known him, Captain Brice Thomas was truly a gentleman. He was a son of the sea; his Cardiganshire roots were deep in the tradition of his calling. Those who had sailed with him recognised him as a complete Master of his ship. On shore he was of a quiet retiring nature. He had a good word for everyone. The writer remembers the first occasion seeing a Captain in the office. It was during the middle thirties when Captain Thomas called at the office at Merthyr House. On entering the Accounts Department he greeted everyone, even down to shaking hands with the humble junior as well as the Chief Accountant—truly the mark of a gentleman whose greatness blossomed in his humility. That incident remained with the writer as an example of something worth emulating.

No greater tribute can be paid than to say Captain Thomas was a Christian gentleman, who practised the basics of his Welsh Non-conformist background.

We can surely say that his passing at the age of 85 will leave the world a poorer place for his departing. He will live long, however, in the memories of all who, down through the years, were privileged to have known him.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family.

Captain Thomas joined his first ship as a Deck boy in 1906. After serving "before the mast" for eight years he obtained his Second Mate's Certificate in Cardiff at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. He joined the Reardon Smith Line in January 1915.

January 1915 was to be the beginning of a long and devoted service to our Company which was to last until his retirement in 1953. He was appointed Second Officer in 1915 on the s.s. *Jersey City*, Chief Officer in 1917 on the s.s. *Atlantic City*, and was promoted to Master in 1919 on the same vessel.

Some of the Company's present staff, anxiously looking at the today's promotion ladder, will view such a rapid rise rather enviously, but war conditions are not a true picture of normal promotion prospects, and Captain Thomas's meteoric rise to Master was not unusual in those hectic days.

The following thirty-four years saw Captain Thomas in command of thirteen of the Company's vessels, finally retiring at the end of his career in February 1953 at the age of 60.

A quiet, rather retiring man under normal conditions, Captain Thomas had the reputation of always being in command of his vessel and beware anyone who ever had the audacity to question his authority. At the same time, he was always fair and just in his dealings with his ship's staff and was highly respected by those he met on shore, not least by the Head Office staff he would meet on his visits to the Cardiff Office.

As one would expect, his years as Master were not without their exciting moments and probably the early days of his command of the m.v. *Atlantic City* which lasted from January 1941 to August 1947 is a period he would have remembered as well as any.

The vessel loaded a part cargo of coal in January 1941 with equipment and munitions stowed over the coal, and sailed from the Clyde in convoy.

The following day, the vessel was torpedoed off the north coast of Ireland. The torpedo entered the ship under the bridge in No. 2 hold, burrowed itself in the coal and exploded. Severe damage was caused to the ship and she sank heavily by the head. That evening as darkness descended, the destroyer which was standing by, deemed it unsafe for anyone to stay on board and Captain Thomas and his crew were taken off. When dawn broke the next day, the *Atlantic City* was still afloat.

The Allied merchant fleet was suffering severely at this time from submarine attacks. The *Atlantic City* was an inviting target for any stray 'U' boat. Aid in the form of a tow was unlikely to materialise for some time if at all. The destroyer's Commander was in a quandary. He felt the only answer was to sink the *Atlantic City*, a floating hulk and a danger to any convoy passing that way, but Captain Thomas in his most indomitable manner persuaded the Commander, much against the latter's will, to allow him and a few volunteers to re-board the ship in the hope that she could be saved.

A quick check after re-boarding showed bulkheads intact and engine room dry. The engines were started very gently so as not to put undue strain onto bulkheads in way of the flooded compartments. Slowly she moved towards the Irish Coast and some twenty-four hours later she was beached in Buncrana Bay. The forward draft was more than forty-two feet and the water was washing in over the fore deck—not hard to imagine in a ship with a fully loaded draft of twenty-six feet!

A few weeks later the vessel was escorted to the Clyde and several months after that she sailed for the Middle East fully repaired and with Captain Thomas in command throughout.

For his devotion to duty and his bravery he was awarded the O.B.E., which was so richly deserved.

AWARD TO "ELINOR VIKING" HEROES DEPARTMENT OF TRADE RESCUE SHIELD FOR 1977

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE Rescue Shield for 1977 is to be awarded jointly to the members of HM Coastguard, Shetland District and the aircrew of a British Airways Helicopter for the rescue of all 8 of the crew of the Aberdeen trawler *Elinor Viking* off the notorious Vee Skerries, Shetland, on 9th December, 1977.

The *Elinor Viking* was holed on rocks on the Vee Skerries in very severe weather conditions on the afternoon of 9th December. The Aith lifeboat was launched within minutes of the request having been made to do so by Coastguards at Lerwick; on arrival at the scene it was unable to get alongside the *Elinor Viking* because of the position of the wreck. By this time the *Elinor Viking* was half full of water and both its liferafts had been swept away. Meanwhile, Coastguards had asked British Airways Helicopters at Sumburgh for assistance. It was fortunate that a helicopter, fuelled and winch-fitted, was available and a scratch crew immediately volunteered. They took off within minutes, reaching the scene of the wreck as the *Elinor Viking* was breaking up. After several attempts in appalling conditions

and darkness, all 8 crew of the vessel were winched aboard the helicopter in darkness, the winchman narrowly escaping serious injury when he was buffeted by the wind against the mast of the ship.

This rescue was the first ever from the Vee Skerries in gale conditions. In 1930 Coastguards and trawlermen watched helplessly as the crew of the Aberdeen trawler *Ben Doran* were washed overboard one by one with rescuers unable to get near because of the rocks and rough seas.

The *Elinor Viking* rescue was all the more remarkable because the volunteer helicopter crew were unused to this type of search and rescue operation. The Department of Trade is currently pursuing the question of having a declared search and rescue helicopter stationed at Sumburgh.

The rescue was also notable for the teamwork shown by all those involved in the rescue. Trawlers, notably the fishing vessel *Andree*, the Aith lifeboat, an RAF Nimrod and a second BAH helicopter all co-operated in the search, the Nimrod providing flares to light the rescue and the second helicopter providing a communications link between all the craft involved.

SOME GARDENING HINTS AND THOUGHTS

To many readers no doubt, gardening may be an irksome business, a job which has to be done if only to keep the place tidy. To others it is a job best left to others. There are some, however, who find in gardening a therapy for life, a welcome change from the strains and stresses of business—(or the wife perhaps!). Perhaps that aside needs putting right—many wives are excellent gardeners and good gardening companions.

One can let his or her imagination run riot, that is in the direction of the garden—small or big.

From now on there is so much to be done. The time will come soon to turn over the soil. This is most important. It breaks up the tired lumps, allows air to give fresh life to the soil particles. Another necessity it inculcates is drainage, so essential to maintaining a productive plot.

Cleaning up is a chore not popular. It must be done, however, to get rid of old stumps of brassicas, root crops left over, fallen leaves etc. etc. If possible, burn the rubbish and save the resultant potash to put back into the soil.

Gardening is a subject on which so much has been written. Volume upon volume has been published by experts in every field. It all makes very good reading. There is no denying the hints and advices are invaluable and one can keep on learning. Gardening is like working in a Shipping Office—you can go on learning every day, always something new.

One modern form of gardening is the use of the gro-bag. A plastic container or bag containing a growing medium of peat or similar. It is surprising what can be grown in this way. Ideal things to grow are lettuce, cress, radish and tomatoes. They need close attention however. Never let them go dry—it is essential to keep them watered, but not over-watered as this is just as ruinous as letting the bag go dry. One advantage of the gro-bag is that it is an easy way of growing plants in small areas, especially where no garden is possible.

Roses

Volumes have been written on this subject. In the end, it is common sense that prevails. Pruning of established bushes or standards is important. Be guided by an expert in this and you will be surprised how important it is. One thing is certain, they need to be fed well, they will always repay you with magnificent blooms of colour and scent. Don't cut your blooms too often. If you have to cut them, leave it

as late as possible—when the petals begin to shed. There is nothing lovelier in a rose garden than a bed of fallen petals of every hue and shade—they will soon wither and blow away.

Potatoes

Make certain you set out your early seed in a box to sprout. Keep them in a cool light place—free from frost—until they sprout strong shoots. Potatoes will grow in practically any type of soil—a newly turned soil is excellent. Farmyard manure is excellent in the drill and will assure the gardener a very good return.

Rhubarb

Take a good look at your rhubarb patch. It should be covered well with a good covering of horse manure and straw, or well rotted farmyard manure, Levington compost or like. When the crowns are just peeping through it encourages quick growth to cover with an old bucket, or such like cover. There is nothing like these early sticks of juicy rhubarb in a pie or stewed with good quality custard.

Shallots

These should now be in, planted in neat straight rows. They are good for salads in late Spring and when harvested make good pickling onions. The variety of onion called Lisbon is excellent for spring onions or gibbons. Try them, they are really succulent and delicious.

In General

From now on all types of plants and seeds will be sown. Get hold of a good gardening guide and be guided. There is nothing like your own vegetables, and fruits from your own patch. It may mean some work, but that never killed anybody.

Flowers are an integral part of gardening. They give endless joy and pleasure. It is a complete subject on its own and just like vegetable gardening requires a great deal of expertise. More of that again.

We would welcome your views and articles on any subject related to gardening in all its aspects. There must be experts amongst our readers.

Missions to Seamen, Kobe

CAPTAIN J. PORTEOUS reports that Officers of the *Amparo* donated the sum of £30 to the above Mission on the vessel's visit to Kobe at end of February, 1978.

If you are Singapore bound please take notice:—

A cutting welcome

SINGAPORE IS STILL out to make a name for itself in the world of international coiffure.

More than 600 men were refused entry into Singapore last year because of the length of their hair and another 800 were sheared on arrival.

BRITISH SPECIAL STAMP ISSUES

THE POST OFFICE has published a list of 1978 issues as follows:—

(For values see key at bottom of column)

25 JANUARY

Energy

- A Oil
- B Coal
- C Natural Gas
- D Electricity

1 MARCH

British Architecture—Historic Buildings

- A Tower of London
- B Holyrood House
- C Caernarfon Castle
- D Hampton Court

31 MAY

25th Anniversary of HM the Queen's Coronation

- A Coronation Coach
- B St. Edward's Crown
- C Orb
- D Imperial State Crown

5 JULY

Horses

- A Shire Horse
- B Shetland Pony
- C Welsh Pony
- D Thoroughbred

2 AUGUST

Cycling

- A Pennyfarthing
- B 1930s Tourer
- C Modern small wheel cycle
- D Modern road racing cycle

22 NOVEMBER

Christmas

(Details to be announced)

This list is subject to change

Value Key

- A Minimum first class inland rate
- B Minimum European rate
- C Minimum airmail Zone B
- D Minimum airmail Zone C

For current rates please refer to the Postal Rates Compendium.

STAFF NEWS

NEW STAFF

We extend a welcome to:

Miss T. Barber, Copy Typist, London Office.

GETTING BETTER

Mr. Evan Walmsley continues to make good progress after his recent illness.

BIRTH

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Brown on the arrival of Michael Andrew on 9th March, 1978.

MARRIAGE

Congratulations and best wishes to 3rd Officer D. P. Kirley on his marriage to Miss S. J. Whiting at Holy Trinity Church, Kingswood, Bristol on 4th March, 1978.

SUCSESSES

Congratulations to:—

Mr. N. C. Williams on obtaining an endorsement to OND Marine Engineering.

Mr. A. P. Brandram-Jones, Advanced M.E.T.C.

ROYAL MERCHANT NAVY SCHOOL

MANY FAMOUS INSTITUTIONS in our land have sprung from very humble beginnings. Their development has been one of struggle and hard work.

The Royal Merchant Navy School developed from humble beginnings. Many readers of the *Newsletter* have expressed great interest in the history of this particular institution and we hope others will find the following account of interest.

Following a meeting of people mainly concerned with the shipping industry held on 5th September, 1827 in the City of London, it was resolved that an orphan asylum should be started to look after the children of deceased seamen, and that a public meeting should be held to carry this into effect. The appropriate venue for such a public meeting was the City of London Tavern on a site in Bishopsgate Street and long since taken over by the Royal Bank of Scotland. It was here that the City did honour to Lord Nelson; that the National Life-boat Service was started; and it was here that "The Merchants' Seamen's Orphan Asylum" was instituted on 25th October, 1827. It seems somewhat strange that it should have been Lieutenant-General Neville, RA, who took the chair when there were four admirals among the vice-presidents. The school still has that chair. This young institution was administered by the Port of London and Bethel Union Society, now part of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, but started its independent life in 1833. The object of the Asylum was to look after the destitute orphan children of seamen in the Merchant Service. They had to be seven years of age and were looked after until they were 14. The institution sought to rescue them from vice and profligacy; to inculcate in them the tenets of the Church of England; and ultimately to place them in suitable positions.

In 1829 five girls were admitted and premises for them were acquired at No. 11 St. George's Place, New Road, St. George's in the East. By 1830 the Board had also acquired No. 3 Clark's Terrace, and were looking after 29 boys and girls. Life at the Asylum at this time was rather grim. There was little in the way of luxuries and the children were not allowed to forget that they were the objects of charity. Food was monotonous, though those who were in poor health were sometimes put on "luxurious living", which meant having some wine or porter. Other sick children were boarded out at Plaistow, Essex, for seven shillings a week. Those

(continued overleaf)

A few interesting notes made about the Meteorological Office, Bracknell, Berkshire

MOST OF THE cost of the operation at Bracknell is financed from the Exchequer but some money is received from farmers, BBC, shipowners, offshore installations etc. (Esso Exploration drilling in the Celtic Sea receive daily forecasts for 48 hour forward periods). Many oil rigs in the North Sea have similar arrangements. A regular customer is a Greek shipping company who pay £5 a time for a specific weather report of the weather existing in a specific position when they wish to check on the log extract of time chartered vessels i.e. the time chartered vessel is not being dishonest with entries submitted in the extracts of log which they receive.

A great deal of research is constantly being done at Bracknell. A change developed since the last war is the effect of the upper atmosphere on ground weather conditions and it is established that upper atmosphere air distribution controls or causes the weather formation at ground level. Until recently, upper atmosphere observations were limited to two or three levels because of the long mathematical calculations necessary to reach conclusions in a reasonable time. With the installation of the computer ten or more observations are taken, fed into the computer and ground forecasts made from the results obtained very quickly.

Bracknell is in direct contact by private telex with Washington, Paris, Germany, New Delhi, Moscow, Melbourne, Cairo and all weather ships. Merchant ships transmit local weather reports through

Portishead. Satellite observations are transmitted through facsimile machines.

The routing section at Bracknell consider routing to be preferable to weather facsimile receivers in that the latter receive the information after Bracknell has examined it and are well underway to forecasting the probable future weather. At the same time they would agree that weather-fax machines are a valuable addition to the vessel's navigational instrumentation. A point made by the routing section where they consider they have added a valuable aid to the navigation of the vessel is in being able to assess the situation immediately prior to sailing and advising the Master which direction to start his journey when the Master is at his busiest and probably has not had time to examine his route. They do find Masters who do not follow their advice but follow their own initiative. Almost invariably if the ship had followed Bracknell's advice they would have been better off.

Ships are routed in accordance with owners' directions which can be according to time or weather or both e.g. "avoid heavy weather", "quickest passage imperative", "vessel in ballast, forward draft 9 feet, avoid pounding", high deck cargo (containers), avoid head swell and sea".

1,200 people are employed at Bracknell. Information is supplied to Heathrow and the BBC, with the interchange of information and reports with the armed forces, R.N.L.I., Coastguard etc.

Captain J. B. LEMON

who suffered from "cutaneous eruptions" were sometimes sent to Margate for sea-bathing.

Right from the beginning, the institution depended entirely on voluntary subscriptions and contributions and was never in receipt of public funds. Money was always in short supply; staff were poorly paid and the children had to make do with the barest necessities. There was always another orphan seeking help, and larger premises had to be found. In 1834 the institution moved to New Grove, Bow Road, where there was accommodation for 120. At last the school could settle down, and it was during this next period, 1834-1862, that it discovered its true identity.

The aim of the Board of Management was to supply the bodily needs of the children and give them such an education as would allow them to earn their own living and improve their position in life. This they thought could best be achieved in a country atmosphere and under a disciplined regime. Of course, much would depend upon finances being available.

At Bow Road and Snaresbrook the school enjoyed rural surroundings as it has since at Bearwood, but towns have a knack of catching up with it. At Bow Road we read of the Board letting out the field for cows at £20 per annum, and the same cows seem to have had the habit of trespassing in the garden and the thatched summer house. The children attended Bromley Church and the Board ordered "the pew opener to be presented with 10 shillings for her trouble in cleaning the seats of the children."

Everyday conditions varied according to circumstances, and usually we only get a glimpse of what things were like when something went wrong. The ladies of the committee, for example, "asked for 12 more quarts of milk being of opinion that water is not sufficiently nourishing for the children's supper"—there were 101 children in 1840. And later on in that year three gentlemen inspected the Asylum and reported on the boys "that they found their everyday clothing in a deplorable state. Many of them without either jackets or waistcoats and their trousers and shoes in very bad order."

It is difficult to get a true picture of what life was really like for the children at this early period, and although it may have been tough it was probably worse outside. In 1834 the committee ordered "12 pewter plates; six iron table spoons; six doz. steel pen holders; 1 doz. slates." One intriguing committee resolution allowed the matron "to purchase a tin can". We long to ask the question: "what for?" And then one's sense of proportion is restored when the "matron complained greatly of the destruction caused by the boys. In one morning

after breakfast 50 spoons were missing of which they could give no account."

Arithmetic, reading, writing, geography, catechism and needlework seem to have been the regular subjects taught. The annual examination was quite an occasion. Some public figure, such as Vice-Admiral Lord Radstock, would preside, and "a large assemblage of ladies and gentlemen would meet on the occasion and listen to the correct answers given by the children."

Around 1850 the school consisted of 69 boys and 40 girls; two masters, a mistress, a matron and a nurse making up the teaching staff. An ex-soldier looked after the boys during out-of-school time and also carried out the duties of porter. Discipline was strict and at one time the house committee resolved "that a solitary box be ordered for the purpose of confining those boys whose conduct is disorderly". It was placed "at the corner of the dust bin in the front yard".

During the 60s quite a number of changes took place in the general routine. For example the house committee requested that the children might be allowed plates to use at breakfast and tea time, the current custom being not to allow any at those meals to the detriment of cleanliness and habits of order at the meals. It was also suggested that slippers should be provided as "for long past it had been a rule for the children to take off their boots in the school and go to and from their bedrooms without shoes." And it was resolved "that for the future the boys be provided with night-shirts."

Finance was always the problem, and one valuable source of supply was the anniversary dinner. This was probably held at the London Tavern and presided over by some well-known public figure: The Hon. Sidney Herbert; The First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Ellenborough; or The Earl of Hardwicke. A meal was enjoyed, and "the children, in the course of the evening, were introduced by the hon. sec., and passed, as is the rule on these occasions, between the tables." An appeal was made, and contributions were requested. The result was usually at least £500. On one occasion the treasurer, Duncan Dunbar, offered 100 guineas if nine other people did likewise. An additional round was started. In the end, 43 guests gave their 100 guineas. F. W. Rawlinson, Esq., CBE, also tells the story that when Duncan Dunbar presided on another occasion, he wound up his address by placing his cheque for £500 on the table and challenging anyone present to cover it with another of the same amount. There was no response. His comments were pungent: he declared that as nobody appeared willing to take up his challenge, he would himself, and thereupon drew another for £500 and laid it upon the first.

"That's better, Duncan," came a quiet voice near him, "and here's one to cover them both," as Richard Green passed one for £1,000 along to the chair. Duncan Dunbar had a fleet of small but very smart ships, and sometimes held fetes on board in aid of the institution. Firework displays were other popular social functions which were used for fund raising.

The "Illustrated London News" in 1851 reported that "the display was held in the grounds of the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum, Bow Road, in aid of the funds of the institution. The grounds were illuminated after the fashion adopted at Vauxhall and a band of music engaged. In the rear of the premises was a gibbet to which was suspended an effigy and around it were several barrels of tar which at the proper time were consumed in the most formidable blaze." The previous year the set-piece had been a wreck with "God protect our Orphans".

It was in 1840 that Captain Pelly, Deputy Master of Trinity House, presided at the anniversary dinner and it may have been as a result of this that it became the custom for the children to visit Trinity House every Trinity Monday to attend chapel with the Elder Brethren, headed by the Duke of Wellington. Another custom already well established was for the leaving children to be presented with a bible and prayer book.

Such was life at Bow Road until 1862 when the lease expired. The institution now looked after about 120 children and the Board of Management decided to acquire a site and build a school more in keeping with its national importance, and we get a shaft of light thrown on events by a young girl, Ellen Buxton of Snaresbrook, near London. Ellen wrote up her diary every day, and this is an extract from what she wrote for 28th June, 1861:

"This afternoon at four o'clock we rode to see Prince Consort (Albert) laying the foundation stone of a new 'Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum'; Papa went to see the stone laid with Uncle Barclay. So at four Johnny Geoff Taffy and I got on to our ponies and rode to Aunt Barclay's where we found Edith, Hugh, Ada and Alice going to ride with us, we went directly to the Whipps Cross corner and there on the grass we drew up our ponies all in a line and so waited for about a quarter of an hour, then at five minutes to five we saw all the people's heads turn towards London and Aunt Barclay called out to us that Prince Consort was coming first came two people on horseback then a carriage with four bay horses and postillions, in which was Prince Albert, with two gentlemen besides him so when he saw all us eight children drawn up in a line on our ponies, and the boys took off their hats, he took off his hat to us.

This was the last ceremony of this kind performed by the Prince Consort before his tragic death.

The builders of the new school had the usual difficulties: at one time the masons were on strike for 11 weeks, and the contractors supplied some 250,000 defective bricks, some of which had been made from the clay dug out of the site.

(To be continued.)

ROYAL MERCHANT NAVY SCHOOL APPEAL

MR. D. M. PARSONS, Chief Engineer m.v. *Eastern City* has received an acknowledgement in respect of £20 contributed by Officers of the vessel towards the above appeal.

Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrows; it only saps today of its strength.

A. J. Cronin

m.v. Tacoma City

CAPTAIN MURRAY REPORTS that during the vessel's stay at Coos Bay, February 1978 the Officers of the *Tacoma City* were invited to the "Station", a local inn, for a darts match. The intrepid darts team, comprising all Officers who were not working, sallied forth to the onslaught in transport kindly supplied by members of the local darts team.

Firstly they were plied with beer. This, it was thought, was a plot to put their keen eyes and steady hands out of true, but the boys had had this ploy tried on them before and were not daunted. The various matches were played and under very stiff opposition the *Tacoma City* team came out on top, winning by 9 points to 6. Ample solid and liquid refreshment was supplied and a very convivial evening was had by all concerned.

As a prize for their efforts, the *Tacoma City* was presented with a very sorely needed new dart board.

A return match was arranged for the following evening aboard the vessel, in the hope that the Coos Bay team could obtain their revenge. This, however, was not to be, with the ship's side again winning, this time 10 points to 6. However, a very good evening was had by all. Refreshments were provided, washed down in the traditional manner. Once again one of our vessels had a pleasant, though all too short, stay in Coos Bay, and on behalf of all the ship's staff, may I thank the Owners and staff of the "Station", the patrons, and the darts team for their wonderful hospitality and for the dart board which they very kindly gave us.

We all look forward to our next visit to Coos Bay.

SHIPS POSITIONS AT 22nd MARCH, 1978

Cardiff City. On Time Charter a/c Salen. Berthed Bandar Shahpour 13th March expected to complete 3rd April. Next business not yet fixed.

Devon City. On Time Charter a/c Motortank. Sailed from Casablanca with grain on 18th March for Agadir where arrived 19th, expecting to complete 22nd March. Next business not yet known.

Eastern City. On Time Charter a/c Showa. Arrived Fukuyama 21st March with coal and pet coke. Redelivers from Showa Time Charter on 23rd, and then fixed Time Charter a/c Shinwa for one Australian round ETA about 6th April for redelivery S. Japan 22nd April.

Fresno City. On steel service ST.56. Sailed Antwerp 21st March. ETA Cristobal 4th April. Discharges Long Beach, Oakland, Seattle and New Westminster completing about 25th April.

New Westminster City. On Time Charter a/c Alianca. Sailed from Buenos Aires 9th March for discharging grain at Rotterdam ETA 31st March, Aalborg ETA 7th April and Aarhus 12th April.

Orient City. Sailed from New Orleans 17th March with cargo of Soya Beans for discharge at Rotterdam ETA 1st April.

Port Alberni City. On steel service ST.55. Arrives at Oakland 22nd March, discharging Los Angeles ETA 26th March, Portland ETA 29th, Seattle ETA 31st, Nanaimo ETA 2nd April and New Westminster ETA 5th April.

Prince Rupert City. ETA Singapore 25th March for bunkers. Sailing the same day to discharge Potash at Osaka ETA 3rd April, Kawasaki ETA 6th April and Tomakomai ETA 10th April. Then drydocks Japan/Korea.

Tacoma City. On Berth Service BS.89. Transits Panama Canal 24th March and arrives in Dublin ETA 7th April to discharge Forest Products. Thence London ETA 11th, Boulogne ETA 16th, Rotterdam 19th and Brake 22nd April.

Vancouver City. On Berth Service BS.90. Arrived Vancouver 18th March to load Forest Products. Expected to sail 1st April transiting Panama Canal 13th April, arriving for discharge in Dublin 27th April, London 4th May and Rotterdam 10th May.

Victoria City. On Berth Service BS.91. Sailed from Moji 18th March ETA Eureka 3rd April to load Forest Products as at Coos Bay ETA 7th, New Westminster 11th, Crofton 12th, and Vancouver 14th. Transits Canal 1st May arriving Tilbury the first port of discharge about 15th May.

Welsh City. Expected to arrive in Richards Bay on 25th March to load coal. Expected to sail 27th for Le Havre where expected to arrive on 20th April and complete 3 days later.

Amparo. Sailed from Yokohama 14th March with General Cargo for Ensenada where expected to arrive 27th March. Then sailing 1st April for Manzanillo 3rd/5th, Acapulco 6/8th, Puntarenas 11/12th, Corinto 13/16th, Cutuco/Acajutla 17/20th, Champerico/San Jose 21st/24th, and Manzanillo 26/27th April.

Atlantic. Direct continuation Yulsan Time Charter Transpacific round United States West Coast (probably Seattle) to Inchon with cargo of corn. Redelivery probably Kobe about 45 days.

Elena. Sailed from Ensenada 17th March with General Cargo for Yokohama where arrives and sails 1st April. Then Nagoya 1st/2nd, Yokkaichi 3rd, Kobe/Osaka 4/7th, Keelung 10/11th, Hong Kong 12th, Kobe 16/18th, Nagoya 19/20th, Yokohama 21st/23rd.

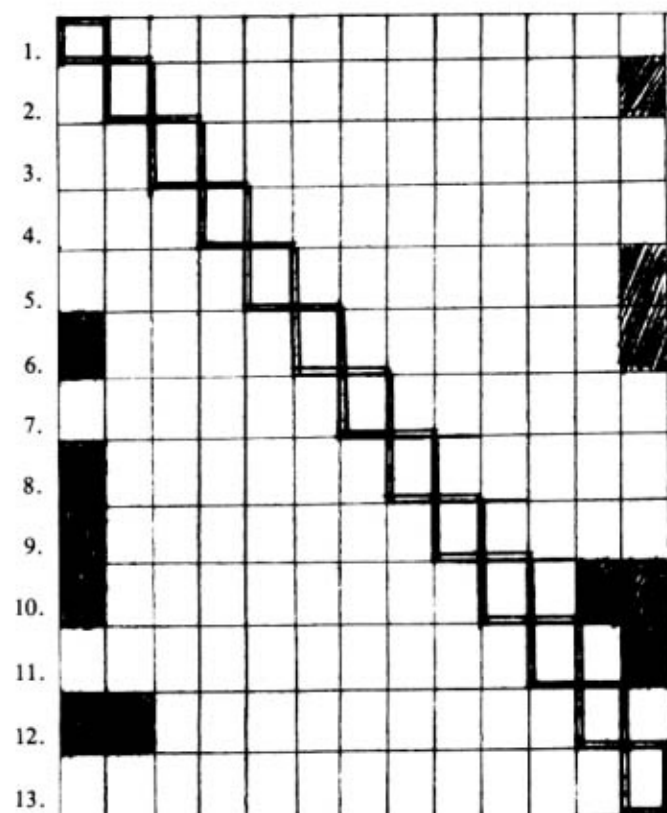
Gela. Expected to sail from Barcelona 23rd March with General Cargo for Vera Cruz where expected to arrive 7th April and sailing on 12th. Then Tampico 13/15th, Progreso 16/18th, Vera Cruz 19/20th, arriving in Hamburg on 5th May.

Maria Elisa. Sailed from Vera Cruz on 17th March, and expected to arrive in Hamburg 3rd April, sailing the next day for Bremen 5/6th, then Rotterdam 7/7th, Antwerp 10/11th, Le Havre 12/13th, Liverpool 17/18th and Vera Cruz 3rd/6th May.

Sara Lupe. Expected to arrive in Vera Cruz 24th March. Sailing on 27th for Progreso arriving on 29th. Then sails the next day for Tampico 2nd/4th April, San Domingo 9/11th, Porto Cortes 15/18th, and Las Palmas where expected to arrive about 30th April.

ANAGRAMS

This is a small game which should test your knowledge. Sort out the anagrams and fill them in on the master plan and you will discover a friend to all mankind in the diagonally marked boxes!



1. Tire Train Goon
2. Ioa Moon Peato
3. E Similar Lions
4. Riotal Snagnut
5. Quiet Scone Nn
6. Dad Jams Lute
7. Eat The Rawe Ben
8. Rave Punt Deer
9. Plover Ed Dune
10. Pud Meet Art
11. Teased In Cnen
12. Greet Runnim
13. Tea Fade Gin Lib

Every word used can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary.

Each anagram represents one word.

Solution in next edition.

PAUL ELIAS

Building Again

THERE IS NOTHING to stop you from building again when you find that your castles have crashed.

There is nothing to stop you from dreaming again when the things that you worked for are smashed.

There is no law to stop you from wearing a smile, though perhaps you are crying inside;

There is never a reason for losing a grip on your nerve and your faith and your pride.

There is nothing to gain by recounting your woes into every listening ear, for pity and sympathy won't get you far though it may be quite kind and sincere. Get on with the job of rebuilding your life—for it's useless to sigh and complain.

The best thing to do is to start out anew. Pluck up courage and try it again.

Mr. R. J. Davies, 2nd Officer, was impressed by the above poem composed by Patience Strong.

Investment Club Formed

AN INVESTMENT CLUB has recently been formed at Head Office. The primary objective of the Club is obviously to attempt to make money for its members, but hopefully as a result of joining the club, members will become more aware of the world of finance by the dissemination of ideas at club meetings and reading the financial press.

At present, the Club has some 26 members, which from an administrative point of view is about the optimum. Each member contributes a monthly sum of £5 c a multiple thereof, and the aim is to invest in stock exchange securities on a quarterly basis at which time about £500 should be available.

Members may submit their "hot tips" to an advisory panel who investigate the suggestions and make recommendations to the members as a body.

Meetings are held at the first floor of Devonshire House, so it's not too far to jump!

G. TAYLOR

Tact is changing the subject without changing your mind.

"WELL SAID"

HEAVEN is the place where the donkey at last catches up with the carrot.

R. K. VILLARS



MARDI GRAS AT NEW ORLEANS

TO SEE THE Mardi Gras in New Orleans is only possible if you make the effort. It holds something for everybody's interests.

The vessel m.v. *Gela*, arrived at Market Street Wharf, New Orleans, on Monday, 6th February, 1978, and the Mardi Gras had already begun to get into full swing.

That afternoon, a three hour parade was held along the main street, so several of the officers wandered there to watch it. We climbed up the stand as there was no other way in, and found a place in with the locals. During the course of the afternoon coins and necklaces were thrown to the crowds from mobile floats. The only way to get some of these was to join in the general free for all.

On the Tuesday we were invited to a party at the "World ship Stores" and everyone who went thoroughly enjoyed themselves during the course of the day, thanks to the efforts and charm of our hosts.

In New Orleans there is also a very famous street, "Bourbon Street", where many lively activities take place in the evenings. Oysters sold in the restaurants along the street are quite reasonable, and, of course, you have all the Dixieland Jazz Bands in the bars. Pat O'Briens bar holds the record for the largest turnover of cash during one year.