

# newsletter



NO. 120

JANUARY, 1980

## SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

We mentioned in the December issue of the Newsletter that the history of the Company would be serialised in "SEA BREEZES", commencing this month. From the comments already to hand, Part I has been well received and appears to have created a lot of interest and we are looking forward to Part II in February's edition. Any comments from readers would be welcomed and those who recall the disastrous fire which occurred at our late offices in Merthyr House on 17th March 1946 would also know that all our records were destroyed and this history has taken very many years to compile, much of it from people's memories.

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### STAFF NEWS

Mr. G.J. Lyons, Catering Officer, retired on 25th December 1979. Mr. Lyons joined the Company in 1973 and we wish him every health and happiness in the future and trust that his retirement will be long and contented.

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BIRTHS: Congratulations to Second Engineer J. King and Mrs. King on the birth of a son, Joseph John, on 11th January 1980.

Our congratulations also to Electrician K. Hampton and Mrs. Hampton on the safe arrival of a daughter, Elizabeth Anne, on 19th December 1979.

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### EXAMINATION RESULTS

P.J. Walker	-	First Class Motor	W.M. Powell	-	Part "A" First Class Motor
S.C. Ward	-	Second Class Motor	B.J. Pexton	-	Second Class Motor
S.J. Staines	-	-do-	G. McKenzie	-	1st Prize O.N.D.
M.P. Henry	-	2nd Prize METAC -	Endorsement	-	Glasgow. Engineer Cadet.
Engineer Cadet	-	Glasgow.	G.D. Evans	-	Class 2 (1st Mate) Deck
N. Davies	-	Class 2 (1st Mate) Deck.			

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DONATIONS TO CHARITY

The Sailors' Children's Society, Hull, has received a donation of £50 from the m.v. "DEVON CITY", as a Christmas Donation. The Society have expressed their grateful thanks, to which we add our own, for the Officers' generosity, which is much appreciated.

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OUT OF THE MOUTHS.....

Our thanks to Mr. A.H. Fox, Catering Officer, for telling us of a conversation which took place shortly after two Engineer Cadets had joined the "NEW WESTMINSTER CITY" last Autumn. They had joined in time for a Bar-B-Que, which was in full swing. After dinner the following day, the two young men found their way into the Bar, and one, being a "go-ahead" type, asked the Junior Second Engineer who looked after the "genies" making sure the lights did not go out. It was explained to him there was a man below keeping an eye on things. Turning to the Catering Officer (Mr. Fox) he then asked "What do you do all day while everyone else is working?". "Replies (which are printable, please) to the Newsletter and a cheque for the R.N.L.I.", requests Mr. Fox.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF CANALS

We are pleased to include Part 2 of this interesting history with this edition of the Newsletter.

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"KING COAL"

Our thanks to Radio Officer J.R. Mathews for his interesting article on "King Coal", which is attached to this edition. We are always grateful for contributions and will include them, even if a little time elapses before this is possible.

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We also wish to thank Mrs. C. Swindells, wife of Second Officer Swindells, for her interesting account of the "MIKOSHI CARRYING FESTIVAL" at Yokohama. We also attach this article.

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A SOBERING THOUGHT?

That last little "one for the road" may be a grave mistake! (with thanks to Alberta Wheat Pool "Budget")

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## SHIPS POSITIONS

As at 24th January, 1980

m.v. "CARDIFF CITY" This vessel is operating under Time Charter account M.T.O. Vessel anchored Basrah pilot station 2nd January. Owing to congestion at that port definite dates cannot be advised, but vessel could complete and redeliver about mid February.

m.v. "DEVON CITY" This vessel, operating under Time Charter account Safmarine, arrived Durban 18th January, and after completion, around 31st January, arrangements have been made for vessel to drydock prior to sailing to Mississippi River to discharge.

m.v. "FRESNO CITY" This vessel, operating under Time Charter account Cast, sailed from Durban on 18th January and discharges at Antwerp. ETA/D 7/8th February and Fiskaaverk (South Norway) ETA/D 9/12th February.

m.v. "NEW WESTMINSTER CITY" This vessel was redelivered from Shell Coal Time Charter on 19th January. She is proceeding at economic speed towards Key West. ETD 4th February. Her future business is not yet known.

m.v. "PORT ALBERNI CITY" This vessel operating under Time Charter account Hamlet arrived Port Said 30th December and is discharging Bagged Flour. She is expected to sail on 3rd February and redeliver two days later. Further than this, her future business is unknown.

m.v. "PRINCE RUPERT CITY" This vessel, on Berth Service BS.110, sailed from Vancouver BC on 20th January and should transit the Panama Canal on 2/3rd February to discharge cargo of Forest Products Dublin ETA/D 17/26th February, Belfast 27/29th and Rotterdam 2/4th March.

m.v. "TACOMA CITY" This vessel operating under Time Charter account Cast, and since 4th January has been anchored at Shatt-al-Arab. Due to congestion she is not expected to berth at Basrah until about 10th March with possible completion 25th March.

m.v. "VICTORIA CITY" This vessel is expected to complete Berth Service 109 today (24th), after which she commences Service EC.12 with the following itinerary:- ETA/D Antwerp 26/31st January, Providence 10/11th February, Bridgeport 12/13th, Camden 14/15th, Baltimore 16/18th and Houston 24/26th.

m.v. "WELSH CITY" This vessel sailed from Ghent on 16th January to arrive at Mississippi on 30th, to load Grain. On this basis she should be in Holland to discharge about 20th February.

m.v. "AMPARO" This vessel arrived at Tampico on 23rd January, and expects to sail on 26th. Her itinerary is then as follows:-  
ETA/D New Orleans 28/29th, Le Havre 11/12th February, Rotterdam 14/15th, Antwerp 16/18th, Bremen 19/20th, Hamburg 21/23rd, Le Havre 25/26th, Liverpool 28/29th.

m.v. "BIBI" This vessel sailed Yokosuka 24th January which is followed by Kobe ETA/D 25/29th, Kure 30/30th, Nagasaki 31/1st February, Busan 2/4th, Los Angeles 16/18th, Ensenada 19/21st, Guaymas (optional port) 23/24th, Manzanillo 26/3rd March and Acapulco 4/8th.

m.v. "JOSEFA" This vessel is expected to arrive at Vera Cruz on 26th January and sail on 31st with the following itinerary:-  
Tampico 1/3rd February, Coatzacoalcos 4/5th, Progreso 7/8th, Mobile 10/12th, arriving in Rotterdam 26th.

m.v. "MARIA ELISA" This vessel is due to sail from Naples on 25th January after which she visits the following Mediterranean ports - Leghorn 26/30th, Genoa 31/4th February, Marseilles 5/6th, and Barcelona 7/10th, sailing for Vera Cruz with an ETA of 26th February.

m.v. "SAMIA" This vessel is expected to arrive at Rotterdam on 31st January from Mobile. She is expected to sail the next day for Antwerp ETA/D 1/3rd February, Bremen 5/6th, Hamburg 7/9th, Le Havre 11/12th, Liverpool 14/18th arriving Vera Cruz 1st March.

m.v. "SARA LUPE" Vessel arrived Mobile on 23rd January and expects to sail on 30th bound for Barcelona (optional port) ETA/D 14/17th February, Naples 19/22nd, Leghorn 23/26th and Genoa 27/2nd March.

m.v. "SILVIA SOFIA" This vessel arrived Manzanillo 24th January and is due to sail on 28th for Guaymas ETA/D 30/6th February, Ensenada 8/11th, followed by Japanese ports, Yokohama, Nagoya/Yokkaichi, Osaka and Kobe.

VESSEL	CARDIFF CITY	DEVON CITY	FRESNO CITY	NEW WESTMINSTER CITY
Master	J.J. Birrell	R.A.H.Vanner	B.A.C.Boyer	D.C.Griffith-Jones
Chief Officer	T.Haxell	T.J.Hunter	I.R.Boulton	D.J.A.Nicholl
Second "	T.L.Lawrence	I.Cowan	J.R.Ashley	G.D.Evans
Third "	C.A.Prescott	J.J.Moore	R.K.Villars	H.D.Johnson
Radio "	J.A.Heslop	E.G.Bromham	S.G.W.Whitmore	R.W.McInnes
Radio "		G.L.Gorford (Jnr)		
Chief Engineer	E.R.Morgan	M.E.Rayner	W.Gill	D.R.Inglis
Second "	M.Murrell	M.R.Green	R.A.Rees	R.E.Diamond
Third "	M.B.Perrott	A.J.Budge	J.L.Magill	D.E.Simons
Fourth "	W.A.Stone	A.M.Baxter	K.R.Negele	B.L.Ahern
Junior "	K.J.Ayres J/4	R.H.Reed	S.G.Morris	D.Wright
Junior "	R.B.Hodgson	A.P.Brandram-Jones	A.Keast	
Electrician	P.D.Kyle	G.Shaddock	J.L.Lorraine	E.M.Bennington
Catering Off.	D.Gowsell	A.A.Gouldie	J.A.Patrick	A.H.Fox
Cadets	M.J.Titley		C.M.Kirton	M.J.C.Lockwood
			D.W.Gorman	

VESSEL	PORT ALBERNI CITY	PRINCE RUPERT CITY	TACOMA CITY	WELSH CITY
Master	J.S.Murray	M.E.Jones	J.Vaughan	A.D.Lightfoot
Chief Officer	K.Milburn	I.C.Stutt	P.M.Baverstock	J.S.Pearsall
Second "	T.H.Jowett	P.J.Godding	A.A.Field	I.A.Smith
Third "	I.C.Miller	P.D.Codd	A.Abel	A.C.Prosser
Radio "	B.B.Everett	P.D.Hartwell	R.H.Smith	M.W.Savory
Radio "				W.E.Davies (Jnr)
Chief Engineer	L.M.Williamson	P.W.Evans	M.G.Seaman	D.N.Henry
Second "	J.B.Hocking	K.Rowney	N.Nesbitt	W.A.Bruce
Third "	A.Douber	K.A.Velda	M.Causser	P.D.Slade
Fourth "	S.J.Staines	A.J.White	G.Gaywood	R.M.Stead
Junior "	H.D.McLundie	N.C.Williams	K.R.Tonks	G.Tucker
Junior "		M.P.Henry	M.I.Hurst	J.W.Cable
Electrician	K.W.B.Hampton	G.S.Marshall	D.G.Jarvis	D.Osborne
Catering Off.	J.Bonner	R.A.Peach	P.P.Delaney	L.B.Surrey
Cadets	M.P.Owens			G.Sharp
	D.A.Littler			G.Railton
	R.Johnson			G.J.McKenzie
	J.L.Cotton			
	D.B.Williams			

VESSEL	VICTORIA CITY	AMPARO	SAMIA	JOSEFA
Master	G.S.Garlick	R.Skinner	A.L.G.Gosset	M.C.Hurst
Chief Officer	J.E.S.York	D.C.Toon	J.R.Thomas	M.W.Slayman
Second "	I.M.Stewart	A.L.Bruce-Smith	W.P.Barnes	N.Jerrum
Third "	R.J.Elliott	W.E.Summers	T.J.Fuller	G.P.Eyles
Radio "	R.G.Miller	J.R.Mathews	P.J.Barker	B.J.Carter
Chief Engineer	D.Archbold	D.N.Amey	H.L.Fletcher	D.Harrison
Second "	J.N.Haugh	A.Edwards	T.J.Newell	G.D.Morgan
Third "	W.H.Tucker	N.G.Whitby	T.E.J.Sperrin	D.C.Lewis
Fourth "	C.L.Taylor	M.G.Evans	P.Price	S.R.W.Jenkins
Junior "	J.R.Sampson	P.M.Deschamps	K.Wiltshire	P.H.Munro
Junior "	J.E.Richardson	G.Biggs	S.H.Hocking	
Electrician	N.J.Doyle	P.Tyerman	J.Fernandez	B.Dinning
Catering Off.	L.R.Seabrooke	D.R.Hartshorne	P.D.Smith	C.J.Harry
Cadets			A.P.Miller	
			R.J.Taylor	

VESSEL	MARIA ELISA	SARA LUPE	BIBI	SILVIA SOFIA
Master	D.L.Bell	R.K.Stuart	W.D.Jones	J.Porteous
Chief Officer	A.M.W.Mitchell	R.E.Baker	W.G.Wood	R.V.Duncan
Second "	S.R.Breedon	R.G.Hayton	T.W.Price	C.Swindells
Third "	G.M.Kivell	G.R.J.Faulkener	A.P.Morris	A.Williamson
Radio "	R.J.Preece	K.H.Sellar	W.P.Budden	I.F.Bullock
Chief Engineer	R.Chambers	G.M.Cuthbertson	N.B.Shilstone	J.C.Cullen
Second "	M.J.Yates	D.E.Horne	K.D.Morgan	G.J.Griffiths
Third "	M.J.Hugill	K.D.Aust	A.Hobin	R.Taylor
Fourth "	M.G.Smith	A.Price	R.H.Moore	S.C.Ward
Junior "	P.L.Mahoney	M.Richards	D.S.Sheppard J/4	P.J.Cole
Junior "	A.Hamilton	S.D.Barron	W.N.Crossley	M.R.Preece
Electrician	D.D.Smaile	P.G.Stoker	A.A.Williams	D.G.Grant
Catering Off.	D.D.Hill	A.P.Hughes	D.Kelly	L.Slawinski
Gadets	G.J.Provis	M.Tully	C.G.Everett	P.Martin
	S.A.Hembury	J.Cox	M.R.Hart	C.E.Broad
	C.Taylor	J.G.Townsend		
	D.J.F.Carter			

Below are listed Officers at home on voyage leave as at 23.1.80. Every endeavour is made to ensure that the list is as accurate as possible at the time of printing.

Masters:	J.J.Kalnins, O.J.T.Lindsay, L.R.Staines, R.I.Crawford, J.Cann, T.R.McNulty, T.W.D.John, J.C.Lee, D.B.Jack, P.J.Boroughs, K.B.Whitting.
Chief Officers:	E.W.Walmsley, P.P.Lewis, A.P.Jaggers, I.Woolllard, R.P.Graham, M.J.Bellamy, S.P.Gorford, R.T.Alford.
Second Officers:	M.C.Ingram, K.Jones, J.Henderson, J.P.Andrews, A.Thomson, N.R.Jackman, J.C.Pagler, P.C.Roberts, M.J.Clarke, M.F.Marco, E.Bingley, P.C.Coles.
Third Officers:	M.R.Lovibond, J.C.Neale, A.Tay, N.Davies, P.C.Harding, P.A.Bullard, J.M.Smith, P.A.G.Pullen, M.Sealey.
Chief Engineers:	B.M.Draper, R.M.Paddock, G.Hughes, R.J.Trigg, J.Fitzsimmons, J.Cormack, J.Scott, M.McQueen, L.G.I.Taylor.
Second Engineers:	D.G.Wedlake, J.King, P.J.Prendergast, J.Foots, R.U.Bell, T.Graham-Russell, H.C.Convery, P.R.Bryant, C.J.Burton, P.J.Walker.
Third Engineers:	A.C.Vincent, R.M.B.Jenkins, A.C.Coombs, J.E.Spiller, W.M.Powell, I.S.Exton, R.C.Butcher, D.A.Roberts, J.H.Davies, W.R.Shannon.
Fourth Engineers:	G.E.Ashton, D.J.Coombes, K.R.Warner, K.W.Newton, B.J.Pexton, D.E.Wright, D.C.Pulley, D.E.Evans, C.J.Brown.
Junior Engineers:	B.C.Wappler, G.R.Evans, K.D.Hill, D.T.Owen, A.J.F.Tuck, P.W.Knibbs, T.A.Savage, M.Williamson, D.Caffyn, J.A.Akhurst, C.G.Fletcher, M.Jones, K.J.O'Brien, M.Taylor, J.J.Jones, M.Morgan, T.C.Landsell, E.L.Lloyd, R.A.James, R.Godsall, M.G.Hardy, D.C.Davies, M.S.Duke.
Electricians:	J.A.Grainger, D.E.Rees, F.Bean, I.Hughes, B.R.Batey, J.P.Crawford, K.Baines, J.F.Bowman, T.Willoughby, P.Willmott.
Catering Off:	R.G.Pierce, L.Hayward, R.C.Moylon, R.C.White, P.J.Keogh, F.W.Lever, P.F.Akers, J.Buckmaster, G.R.Pasmore, N.H.Frost.
Radio Officers:	D.R.Wilkinson, D.P.Bidmead, M.Wilkinson, R.G.Chugg, W.P.Cameron, C.P.S.Watts, D.S.H.Thomson, D.C.Short, N.C.Sanders, P.Bradley, E.A.Willocks.

Officers on sick or study leave as at 23.1.80:- P.John, A.K.Smith, J.W.Gurton, D.P.Kirley, M.L.Frazer, B.T.Hernaman, K.J.Cribbin, K.T.O'Higgins, C.G.Macey, J.M.A.Clark, R.E.Russell, V.F.Cullen, T.P.Young, R.Thomas, P.N.McCormick, A.D.Cowling, W.J.Lait, J.Rettalick, C.R.Brennan, D.A.Hayden, P.H.Evans.

Cadets on sick or study leave as at 23.1.80:- S.J.Laws, J.J.Hudson, R.Hughes-Jenkins, C.K.Lee, M.R.Dunstall, R.W.Price, R.W.Davies, R.A.Holloway, A.M.Russell, M.A.Evans, P.C.Weychan, D.J.Knox, M.S.Morgan, J.M.Vincent, G.D.Randell, P.D.Cocker, S.C.Paskell, I.J.Thomas, T.J.Wood, N.G.Herod, M.I.V.Holman, S.Rawlings, S.N.Beckett, M.J.Hopewell, W.P.Heyman, C.D.Broughton, P.Collins, M.G.Adams, A.R.Parker, C.B.C.Jones, D.R.James, W.E.Wilkins, J.C.Thomas, A.J.Salter, M.R.Penny, I.J.Morgan, D.R.Aldus, B.F.Collings, P.R.Cook, S.F.Lowry, S.F.Broderick, P.A.Vaughan, J.C.Brown, M.Cox, J.D.Bateman, S.J.Voss, D.T.Shorthouse, P.Borley, N.J.Milward, R.L.Manson, R.W.Eacott, R.E.Parsons, A.M.Francis, J.M.Coleman, L.P.Jasper, P.G.Connick, E.J.Naughton, J.A.Thomas, G.A.Brooks, M.P.Spurrell, M.J.Cummins, T.D.Bennett, N.Boyce, R.A.Hall.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CANALS (CONTINUED)

(PART 2)

The early part of the 19th Century and the Industrial Revolution led to an explosion of Canal construction. New locks and waterways created thousands of miles of interconnected systems.

In England and Wales, a spate of feverish canal digging activity in the late 18th Century increased the distance of navigable waterways to nearly 4000 kilometres. The American President Benjamin Franklin on a visit to London in 1772 wrote "Rivers are ungovernable things, especially in hilly countries. Canals are quiet and very manageable".

The United States were soon actively engaged in building canals. There were few roads and what had been constructed were unpaved tracks. Also a horse could pull a barge with 50 tons of goods in it with comparative ease, ten times as much as it could carry on it's back and much more than could be loaded into a wagon for the horse to pull.

From a bare 150 kilometres of canal in 1800, today there are 50,000 kilometres of navigable waterways in the United States.

The New York State Barge Canal or Erie Canal connecting New York with Lake Erie at Buffalo is over 500 kilometres long, and with branches is 845 kilometres, has a depth of 3.7 metres and 82 locks. It was a tremendous commercial success and gave New York the lead over such ports as Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore in foreign trade. New York still ranks as one of the world's greatest seaports. Although the coming of railways and the improvements in road transport have brought to an end the dominance of canals, one sixth of all U.S. inland freight is still transported by water.

When the United States gained it's independence from Great Britain in 1812, Canada felt it was too subject to the political whims of it's neighbour to depend on New York for access to the interior. It required a route from Montreal to Kingston on Lake Ontario which was easily defended. The Ottawa River, a tributary of the St. Lawrence provided that route for about 200 kilometres North West of Montreal to a point where the River Rideau joins and from here the Rideau Canal was built to run south along rivers and lakes to Kingston. It was officially opened in 1832, and where the Rideau Canal meets the Ottawa River, the city of Ottawa, the Capital of Canada, grew. The original locks of the Rideau Canal are still in use and although little used for trade at the present, it is busier than ever it was, giving amusement to hundreds of visitors on pleasure craft.

Access by water further to the interior was more difficult because of the Niagara Falls. They blocked very securely waterborne transport between Lake Ontario and the other four remaining Great Lakes. The first Welland Canal, by-passing the Falls, was opened in 1829. It lifted traffic 99 metres to reach Lake Erie.

## THE MIKOSHI CARRYING FESTIVAL AT YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

While in Japan recently on the M.V. Bibi, we were lucky enough to be alongside in Yokohama, Japan, for a bank holiday weekend. During a shopping expedition on the Saturday, I noticed a crowd of people around a tent set up in the shopping street called the Isasachi-Cho. On investigation, I discovered that there was to be a traditional procession the following day called the Carrying of the Mikoshi, to celebrate the holiday. The Mikoshi are portable shrines which are normally kept at temples but which, on special occasions, are paraded through the streets to bless the people.

There was a Mikoshi on show by the tent, which housed the procession organisers, so I was able to get a close-up look. It was basically a large wooden chest, beautifully carved and decorated with gold chains and bells and topped by a large golden pheonix. Huge wooden poles were lashed to the Mikoshi to enable it to be carried in the procession.

The next day, Colin, my husband and I arrived at the Isasachi-Cho at 9.45 a.m., as the procession was due to start at 10.00 a.m. We joined hundreds of people lining the street and found a good vantage point on some steps. People were converging on the street from every direction and most were dressed to take part. The men who were to do the carrying, wore loin cloths, happy coats (short kimono jackets) sweat towels tied round their heads and traditional two-toed socks. Some wore plaited rush sandals over the socks. The women wore kimonos and the children were dressed in tiny happy coats and shorts. The happy coats were all different colours, one colour for each team of Mikoshi carriers. At the end of the Isasachi-Cho the Mikoshi were also arriving and being placed on Otabishi (tressles), in the correct order for the procession.

At precisely 10.00 a.m., the procession started. It was headed by a team of girls dressed in kimonos and getas (wooden clogs). They carried long sticks with bells tied to them which they hit on the floor as they walked along. Next came a lorry carrying a group of musicians playing traditional instruments: taiko drums; fue (flutes) and sho, a kind of percussion instrument. The drums beat out a hollow, marching rhythm which was echoed by a number of drums at stages along the procession route. As part of the tradition, the drums had been beating since the previous day. Then came the Mikoshi carried high on the shoulders of groups of about thirty men. The carriers moved in a shuffling, hopping motion, to a rhythm being beaten out on blocks of wood or tin cans by the group's leader. It is another part of the tradition that the Mikoshi is kept constantly moving during the procession, and the shuffling movement caused the Shrine to rock and shake, which in turn set the chains and bells rattling and ringing. As they progressed up the street the carriers shouted out a chant in response to calls from the leader.

It was an extremely hot, humid day, and the Mikoshi are very heavy, so before they got very far they were sweating profusely. Each team had a group of girls with huge fans which they kept waving to cool the participants but some were soon exhausted and had to hand their place over to one of the 'extras' following behind, the forward movement of the Mikoshi, however, never stopped. Behind each Mikoshi was a trolley being pushed by a number of women, and containing barrels of water and sake (Japanese rice wine) which were used to revive the exhausted carriers. It didn't take them long to recover, however, and soon they were rushing up the street to take over their original position under the poles. The agony of the carriers still there, however, could easily be seen on their faces as they struggled to keep going.



In addition to the burden of the Mikoshi, some carriers had their children sitting astride their shoulders. Some of the children, tiny tots dressed in shorts and happy coats, looked completely bewildered, but others joined in enthusiastically, waving their arms and laughing all over their faces.

As the Mikoshi swayed by I was surprised to see a number of girls amongst the carriers and realised that Women's Liberation was even reaching Japanese Traditions. A lot of the girls had an easy job, however, because they weren't tall enough for the poles to rest on their shoulders! Occasionally one of the girls would be hoisted onto the poles. The other carriers grabbed onto her feet and she balanced there waving arms and fans being shaken about as much as the Mikoshi. As well as teams of adult carriers with full-sized Mikoshi, there were children carrying smaller versions. Some of them were so enthusiastic that they had to be held back by their leaders.

We expected to see about ten Mikoshi being carried but they kept coming, one after another, and by twelve o'clock we could still see swaying pheonix all the way down the street and there was no sign of the end of the procession, so we walked down the five blocks of the Isazachi-Cho. At the end there were carriers everywhere several collapsed on the ground being sprayed with water. The Mikoshi were placed safely back on the Otabishi. The atmosphere all the way down the street was electric and the noise of the chants and drums echoed all around. It was a fantastic experience.

After a while we left to visit the zoo, but on our way back to the ship around 1.00 p.m. we passed by the Isazachi-Cho again and saw the last of the Mikoshi set off on its long journey. We estimated that with one Mikoshi starting every five minutes, there were about one hundred and eighty carried in all.

There are many such festivals and processions, both religious and traditional, taking place in Japan throughout the year, but it is unusual to be in the right place at the right time to see them. We were thrilled to have had the opportunity of seeing the Mikoshi carrying and I shall never forget it.

## "KING COAL"

There can be no doubt that the great port-city of Cardiff would never have come into being had it not been for the enormous mineral wealth of the valleys lying to the north and west. Coal created Cardiff and, until 1939 this was the greatest coal exporting port in the World. King Coal ruled in South Wales. It brought extreme hardship, wealth, disaster, humour, music, rugby and perhaps above all comradeship into the lives of untold thousands of people, not only in Wales but throughout the World. It is perhaps sad to reflect that at the time of writing we are witnessing the end of an era. An era that made names like Powell Duffryn, Stevenson Clark, Ocean, Aeron Thomas, Bill Tateham and indeed last but by no means least Willie Smith, household words in my little corner of the World. Never again will we see forty ships at anchor at the Breaksea waiting for a turn on berth at Cardiff or Barry to load the black treasure of the valleys.

I can well remember as a small child watching coal trains being marshalled at Rhymney for the 24 mile journey to Cardiff docks. I used to be fascinated by the shunters loading the wagons behind a magnificent "GWR" steam engine for it's journey down our valley. Then just before departure I would look at my father and say "where is it going Dad?". He would glance at a check ticket on a truck and say "It's going to The Argentine Son". Later at home he would produce his magnificent atlas and show me where the Argentine was. This used to fascinate me. I would trace it out on the map, all the way from our little pit in Rhymney to the other side of the World.

Why then, do words like Rhondda and Rhymney mean so much to people around the World? But for geology Cardiff could still well be just another fishing village.

I am indebted to Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru (National Museum of Wales) for some of the historical facts quoted hereafter. The Department of Industry at our National Museum has a superb section on mining which would be well worth a visit during your next visit to our Capital City.

The main coal field in Wales extends nearly 90 miles from St. Brides Bay in the west to Pontypool in the east. The field produces the best anthracite and of course, the most famous steam coal every found in the Earth. Records show extensive mining at Neath in 1798. Winding was affected by a horse moving in a circle. Later on came the water balance pithead gear. If you visit the National Museum you will see outside, the water balance gear that was removed from "Roger's Pit" Rhymney, in 1934. "Roger's Pit" was sunk in Rhymney prior to 1850 and this method of winding was very common in South Wales during the first half of the nineteenth century.

It was in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the great "lodes" were struck.

/Continued

In 1864, David Davies of Llandinam, leased mineral property in the Rhondda Fawr and started sinking at Maindy and Cwmparc. Fifteen months later, after the expenditure of over £38,000, an enormous sum of money in those days, there was no sign of coal. Consequently David Davies called his men together one Saturday morning early in 1866. He paid the wages due and told them that he had no money left and could not go on. He was very upset because as he said himself he was sure "there is grand coal here and we are close to it". After he left, the men discussed the position and decided they would give him a week's work for nothing.

On the Friday of the following week, March 9th 1866, the greatest seam of steam coal in the World was struck at 645 feet. It was the two feet nine seam, later the six feet seam was struck at 759 feet, Bonanza !! By 1887 David Davies and Company had become the Ocean Coal Company which by 1893 was producing over two and a quarter million tons of coal a year.

Besides wealth of course the coal field has been responsible for tremendous economic hardship, disaster and grief. An explosion on the morning of Tuesday October 14th, 1913, killed 439 miners at Senghenydd near Caerphilly. Every reader has heard of the fate of a generation of Children at Aberfan. They were not miners but King Coal killed them all the same.

However looking back over the coal era it is not all sadness. Mining has produced some great characters. The mining communities can be justly proud of the great "help thy neighbour" spirit that prevails amongst them.

I am both proud and pleased the way Max Boyce has addressed mining in his now world famous recordings. Max has a birthright to speak of mining. Not only did this young man work underground himself for eight years, but a lot of readers may not know that Max's Dad was killed underground one month before his son was born.

The coal trains have gone from the valleys now. There is still a mighty harvest of energy still to be won in South Wales. It is in fact being won from Dyfed to Gwent in ultra modern mines using power loaders and self advancing roof supports. However the old days are gone. No fleet will ever again wait at Breaksea for the "Black Diamonds" of the hills. The coal tips are being transformed by the planting of green trees. The squirrel has returned to the Rhondda and the pithead baths is a supermarket now.

"In our little valley they've closed the Colliery Down  
and the pithead baths is a supermarket now,  
Empty journeys red with rust come to rest amongst the dust,  
but don't you worry butty bach, we're really very glad,  
'cos Duw' its hard, harder than you will ever know".

So we are witnessing the end of an era. However thanks to the tremendous efforts of The National Museum of Wales it shall not be forgotten. Credit also to the National Coal Board who have indicated they would like to restore and maintain one pit in the Rhondda for visitors. This would be a superb gesture on their part, a living example of our heritage.

Let us never forget the Welshmen who in 1913, hand cut fifty seven million tons of coal. Coal that powered His Majesty's Fleet to all corners of the Empire. Coal that took our Merchant Navy to every ocean on Earth.

"What will you give me say the sad bells of Rhymney, If, If, If, say the bright bells of Cardiff".

On the Friday of the following week, March 9th 1888, the Rhondda was struck at 647 feet. It was the two last years later the Rhondda seam was struck at 759 feet. Sometime in 1887 David Davies and company had become the Rhondda Coal Company which by 1893 was producing over two and a quarter million tons of coal a year.

Besides the fact of course the coal fields had been discovered by the tremendous economic hardship, disaster and grief. An expedition on the morning of Tuesday October 14th 1913, killed 439 miners at Dungeness near Dungeness, Devon. The reader has heard of the fatal explosion of the Rhondda at Aberdare. They were not miners but King Coal killed them all the same.

However looking back over the coal era it is not all sadness. Mining has produced some great characters. The mining communities can be justly proud of the great "pitties" which have provided that private money. I am both proud and pleased to say that the Rhondda has been addressed in his now world famous recordings. He was a delight to speak of things. Not only did this young man who underwent himself for eight years, not a lot of trouble and how the Rhondda had been killed underground the month before his son was born.

The coal mining industry has been the backbone of the Rhondda since the first days of the industrial revolution. It is in fact being won from the heart of energy which is the Rhondda. It is in fact being won from the heart of energy which is the Rhondda. It is in fact being won from the heart of energy which is the Rhondda. It is in fact being won from the heart of energy which is the Rhondda. It is in fact being won from the heart of energy which is the Rhondda.

In our little valley (pitties) closed the Colliery down and the Rhondda valley is a supernatural town. Right through the valley with some to coal workers. The dust, but don't you worry about that, we're really very light. You don't need to worry about that, we're really very light.

## UK COMPANY NEWS

# Reardon improves and sees return to profits

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FIRST HALF loss was cut from £1.77m to £1.01m at Reardon Smith Line and the directors hold out the possibility of the company showing a profit, after depreciation, in the second six months of the current year.

Because of forward commitments the group, which has been in loss for the past three years, was not able to take full advantage of the rise in freight rate levels during the half year to the end of September 1979.

Turnover for the half-year was up at £11.22m, against £10.39m, but trading profit slumped to £595,000 (£1.06m). However, the sale of a ship produced £187,000 this time and investment income rose to £177,000 (£74,000).

Interest costs were down from £1.41m to £1.05m and the depreciation provision £712,000 lower at £797,000 but there was an exchange loss of £120,000 (gain £13,000).

The results reflect the weakness of the dollar, increases in bunker costs, port charges, storing and in general running costs, the company says.

Forecasting a considerable improvement for the second half the directors say that, if there

is no material change in their assumptions, the group should show a profit after depreciation for that period.

For 1978-79 the pre-tax loss was £2.06m after a £0.29m deficit in the second six months.

Full benefit of the restructuring of assets over the past few years is now beginning to show a more stabilised position, and the Board says it can confidently look forward to the future with further development in Reardon's activities.

Secured lenders have agreed to a further deferment of loan capital repayments until the end of 1980. Repayments will be resumed in 1981.

In the meantime the company, has agreed to continue to pay only total dividend. Therefore, again there is no interim payment.

Operating cash flow has been enhanced by the sale of the group's rig, because the rate of loan repayments on it were higher than the rate of depreciation and the fact that interest costs had increased since 1978.

### ● comment

Although still in the red, Reardon Smith's future looks

much brighter now that freight rates are showing an upward trend and the Department of Trade has agreed to a further deferment of loan stock repayments. Cash flow has also improved since the disposal of the last oil rig, leaving the group with outstanding ship-building loans of around £16m. Although shareholders have had to forgo dividends (only token payments were made) for two years and the fleet has been decimated, the important point is that the company has survived. It would now seem that dividends will resume in 1981 at the earliest. Unfavourable currency movements and rising costs remain a headache, but the prospect of profits in the second half suggests that the group could very nearly break even over the year. Both the ordinary and "A" shares are unchanged at 87p and 70p respectively, giving a market capitalisation of £6.4m.

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# Reardon Smith Line, Limited

REGISTERED OFFICE

P.O. BOX 90, DEVONSHIRE HOUSE, GREYFRIARS ROAD, CARDIFF CF1 1RT

TELEGRAMS SMITHCRAFT, CARDIFF  
TELEPHONE 28077  
TELEX 49242

COMPANY REGISTERED IN ENGLAND  
NO. 123345

1st February, 1980

Dear Sir or Madam,

The unaudited results for the half-year ended 30th September, 1979, are shown below. Having disposed of our Drilling Rig interests, we thought it would be helpful if we also indicated the September 1978 figures, excluding the Rig operations. As a result of the sale of the Rig, most of the trading profit lost is made up by the savings in depreciation and interest, even before allowing for part repayment of other loans with the net proceeds. The rate of loan repayments on the Rig was higher than the depreciation rate and fluctuating interest costs have increased since 1978, so that operating cash flow has benefited as a result of this sale.

Because of forward commitments, we were not able to take full advantage of the rise in freight rate levels during the half-year to September 1979. Whilst we show an improvement over last year, the results also reflect the adverse effect of the weakness of the U.S. Dollar, increases in bunker costs, Port Charges, Storing and in general running costs. However, the second half of the financial year will show a considerable improvement and, providing there is no material change in our assumptions, should show a profit, after depreciation, for this period.

The full benefit of the re-structure of the Company's assets which has taken place over the last few years, is now beginning to show a more stabilised position. We can confidently look forward to the future, with further developments in our activities, although it must be appreciated that, due to the influences of political actions in the world, freight rates can fluctuate adversely.

We can also report that we have reached agreement with our Secured Lenders for a further deferment of loan capital repayments until the end of 1980. Thereafter, repayments will be resumed in 1981 at the rates agreed in the original loan documents. Further details will be shown in the next Report and Accounts.

During the loan deferment, we have agreed to continue to pay only token dividends and, consequently, no interim dividend is declared in respect of the half-year to 30th September, 1979.

INTERIM UNAUDITED GROUP RESULTS FOR THE HALF-YEAR ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER, 1979

	1979 £'000	1978 £'000	<i>Excluding Rigs</i> 1978 £'000
GROUP TURNOVER .. .. .	<u>11,221</u>	<u>10,385</u>	<u>9,616</u>
GROUP RESULTS derived from:			
TRADING—Bulk Carriers .. .. .	781	677	677
—Tankers .. .. .	(186)	(364)	(364)
—Rigs .. .. .	—	745	—
	<u>595</u>	<u>1,058</u>	<u>313</u>
Sale of Ship .. .. .	187	—	—
Investment Income .. .. .	177	74	54
	<u>959</u>	<u>1,132</u>	<u>367</u>
INTEREST PAYABLE .. .. .	1,054	1,408	1,144
	<u>(95)</u>	<u>(276)</u>	<u>(777)</u>
DEPRECIATION			
Charged .. .. .	797	1,509	1,176
Investment Grants credit .. .. .	—	—	—
Exchange rate changes .. .. .	120	(13)	11
	<u>917</u>	<u>1,496</u>	<u>1,187</u>
Loss for the half-year .. .. .	<u>(£1,012)</u>	<u>(£1,772)</u>	<u>(£1,964)</u>

By reason of Capital Allowances available, it is unlikely that any liability to Corporation Tax will arise in respect of the half-year.

Yours faithfully,

C. R. CHATTERTON, *Chairman.*

DIRECTORS: C. R. CHATTERTON (Chairman), R. S. BURSTON, A. J. CROCKETT, N. R. CUNNINGHAM, CAPT. J. B. LEMON, D. M. LLEWELLYN, T. W. MAJOR, J. P. REARDON SMITH, R. W. A. REARDON SMITH, W. A. J. REARDON SMITH, A. F. WESTALL, L. S. WILLIAMS.