



# SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

Issue No.5 December 1997.

"SHIPMATES" has been going for its first year now and its only fitting to mention Sir William Reardon Smith's first ship the "S.S. City Of Cardiff" which was wrecked on March 12th, 1912 off Lands End. She was six years old. A picture of the ship is overleaf and below is the picture of the Sennen Life Saving Brigade saving the crew members. Note the cork Lifejackets.



A Happy Christmas

&

A Prosperous New Year

To all readers and their families



All notes, articles, or short stories should be forwarded to Royale House, 2 Palmyra Place, Newport, Gwent NP9 4EJ

"S.S. City Of Cardiff" wrecked 12th, March 1912 at Nanjizal, two miles southwest of Lands End. Note the steam escaping from the funnel, the Chief Engineer must had lifted the boiler safety valves.

The City Of Cardiff was pounded to pieces in a heavy gale within a few hours. Her crew of twentyseven were saved by the crew of the Sennen life saving apparatus.



*Sir William Reardon Smith's first steamship*

## SALVAGING THE S.S. "PARIS CITY"

By KENNETH F. WADE.

Marine salvage at the best of times, spells hard work, many disappointments and long hours frequently under hazardous conditions. It can also mean a severe test on men's patience as I believe the following episode will portray. I feel that there are two reasons why this story should be told, first from the point of view that it makes interesting reading to those interested in the sea, and secondly as a small tribute to as gallant a crew as ever my fortune to be shipmates with.

When this particular case occurred I was serving on board the salvage vessel "Hercules", then based in Gibraltar on a 24 hour salvage call. Her crew consisted of a British master and officers and Spanish seamen and leading hands, some 28 members all told. Quite sometime had passed since we had taken part in a good salvage job, and time had been occupied testing gear, pumps, diving equipment, burning plant etc, as is customary aboard such vessels in port, on stand by.

However on the afternoon of April 24 1951, we dropped everything, and put to sea in answer to a distress call which turned out different from the usual run of casualties. We contacted her by radio and found that she was the British cargo steamer "Paris City" aground some 270 miles along the east Spanish coast, near the small town of Torre Vieja. Apparently she was in light condition, aground fore and aft, on a sandy bottom with slight bottom damage. Owing to her light condition she had dragged her anchors and grounded in the very heavy weather which prevailed. The ship had used her engines, hove on her anchors, taken all prudent precautions, but the elements got the better of her. Indeed the weather was heavy, as we found out when we arrived some 28 hours later and anchored as close by her as we could, but the heavy breaking seas prevented us from boarding her from seaward. Nevertheless, having gone through the usual formalities of entering ship, customs etc, I accompanied the master by road to the place of stranding and we managed to board her after getting thoroughly soaked in the operation. We made a preliminary examination and the master drew up his plan of operation. The "Paris City" lay broadside on to the beach, with little or no water on her inshore side, and on her weather side an angry sea hammering at her with spray everywhere.

We agreed to lay out anchors and warp wires for hauling off gear as soon as we could establish contact with the ship. Owing to the confused sea around her it was difficult to find out just how much water she had outside her, but we commenced forthwith. The blocks, wires and stoppers to form the deck purchase to warp wires were transported in our salvage launch to the jetty in the small harbour. From here we loaded them into a lorry and took them to the stranding place. Assisted by the crew of the stranded vessel we manhandled it all across the beach and so onboard by derrick.

The heavy warp wires (6 in.) we managed to get onboard by first contacting them with a rocket fired messenger from our salvage launch. How well I recall the incident, when complete with rocket gear and small messenger ropes we got as close to her as we dare, for the sea close to the ship was confused, and to handle a 20 h.p. launch in it was difficult. Our "skipper" fired the rocket, and, in his anxiety to get away from her side as soon as possible, all but missed her, giving rise to ribald comment which I leave to the imagination. Twenty-four hours later we had the gear layed out, heavy anchors and a tow connected to the "Hercules" as well.

And so the first of many fruitless attempts was made. We were joined the next day by another sister salvage vessel the "Herakles", and together made further attempts. Full power efforts on all our resources were made, but the "Paris City" refused to move an inch. By this time the weather had begun to ease, and with it the water level dropped and no hope of assistance from the tide, which in that area are considered so small as not to merit prediction.

Thus we entered the next stage of the affair, which was a dismantling programme. To lighten her further we stripped her of removal heavy weights which we could lay our hands on, without damaging the vessel at all. All timber, most of her derricks, lifeboats and davits-- except one kept for emergency-- and as many steel beams as we dare remove without further impairing her. The launches

from the two salvage vessels were busy day and night towing lighters which we had hired locally, back and forth to the salvage vessels and loading all this gear to be safely stored. This completed, we set to again with every hope to see her leave her bed, but no such luck; a month gone by already. The situation had certainly deteriorated, the casualty had run out of fuel and was low on water. Consequently we reduced her crew to a bare working minimum and the remainder were sent home. The "Herakles" was called away on another urgent job and hope of bad weather assisting us to refloat her by accompanying rise in water, was gone until September.

We settled down to what we could now see was going to be a long draw out job. With the fine weather we were able to make a finer survey of the ground around her. By sounding and diver's reports we found there was a considerable amount of rock outside her; some with as little as four and a half feet over it and we estimated that she need at least 9ft. 6ins. of water to float. Obviously explosives were needed, and plenty of them. In order to keep the casualty alive as it were, we stripped down two tanks for her, and by carrying them in our salvage launch were able to keep them sufficiently supplied with fuel and water from our own stocks. Food they had, and the 15 remaining crew, though not in love with the idea, settled down to helping with what appeared to be a hopeless task.

Then we headed for Gibraltar, stored and took on all the blasting material we needed and two days later returned to tackle the job from a new angle. The brunt of this work fell on the diver, who was well practised in the use of rock drills and explosives under water. He had one failing, with his attendant, the carpenter, he would talk far too much, but bolt him into his suit give him tools and some air- a good days work was the result. We converted one of the casualty's lifeboats into a divers workboat, and had to rig long lengths of compressed air hose down to the hauling off wires so as to get the drills out to where we wanted to work. Gradually however we overcame our difficulties. With fine weather the diver worked into the night using underwater lamps, and our frequent explosions became a common topic locally.

Perhaps it would be as well to dwell for a moment on local conditions. Torrevieja was some two miles away, and by June, with the locals and the summer holiday folk, we had become part of the community. We had been accepted as local members of the Casino, and in there, over various glasses of good Spanish wine the job was discussed. Local seafarers would shake their heads, and say that while they enjoyed the company of the Englishman, they had better had gone off home, for the "Paris City" was there to stay. The stage was reached when organised coach trips arrived on the scene to the ship that would not come off. From a nearby farm, fresh milk was exchanged daily for white bread baked onboard, and to cap it all one of our crew got married there. But with the occasional frivolity, wine parties etc., and the tedious work, it was telling. I could see it among the crew, and feel it myself. The monotonous daily round of pumping air to the diver, making up charges, blasting and recovering rock to dump ashore in the scorching sun, with no apparent result, was leading the men into more drinking bouts than was usual. June, July, August and still no visible result. There she lay, in the brilliant sun by day, and by night silhouetted against the plain trees and local small farms.

Eventually in September we exhausted all our stores and blasting material, and steamed back to Gibraltar to re-store, and it was then things began to move. Ironically enough, after all that work a freak storm sprang up in our absence and she showed her first signs of movement. They were slight, but it gave that long for hope. Here again it was visible among the crew; it was like a rejuvenation, they could not wait to get on the job again. The "Herakles" arrived with us and renewed efforts were made. With tows connected up and all warps working, we got some movement out of her. When the sea cleared after that attempt one could see clearly, through the water, the bed she had made for herself.

Down went the drills, more charges, more excavating and in the course of September, with occasional poor weather we got further promising moves out of her. I shall always remember the sensation of those initial moves; it was like the gift of a new sense, to feel the bumping, and feel her respond slightly to the movement of the seas. It was our first real reward for the work of five months. The men were happy; they worked with new vigour for they could see now that all their effort had not been in vain. They were even betting on the day that she would be ours, a pleasant thing to witness when one had to work them.

We knew that we could not leave here for a moment, and for the last five weeks that we were there- all shore leave was cancelled. I worked around her during the day, and at night slept in the room which had been occupied by the second mate before he was sent home. At nights, I would sit and yarn with the red-haired Irish mate, who had been a great help to us, and who vowed that when he was master and unfortunate enough to get ashore, no salvage company would get him off. He would do it himself with all the practice that he had had over recent months. From my bunk I could hear her creaking, feel her gently roll and bump as her bilge keel touched the bottom, and I was happy. Rats had infested her and were even seen on occasions during the day. Because I was superstitious it was a healthy sign. The first signs of bad weather were manifesting themselves, and each time we took advantage, moving her stern slowly but surly nearer to the deep water. Diving hours were increased and the hands became weary at the pumps, but they had tasted victory and pressed on.

The beginning of final victory came on the night of October 14; it was a Sunday night and with heavy skies and an increasing wind, a swell worked up from the north-east. At 7 p.m. we boarded the "Paris City" with as many hands as we could spare and manned all winches connected to hauling off gear. Both tugs began pulling at 9 p.m. and gradually the weather increased. Rain set in, but it mattered little to me as I watch the warp wires inch their way aboard and meanwhile praying that the anchors would not drag. I saw grins on the faces of our men as it became more apparent that she was to be ours at last. They cared little for the danger that was ever present around them-- that a deck purchase all singing tight, and straining should part a wire.

Dawn broke, and with it came a market increase in the weather. we had been working almost 12 hours, and I kept watching those wires with my fingers crossed, for if they parted, she could be thrown back into a worst position than she had been originally. Back and forth she veered, tightening and slackening the wires, and grinding over the ground we had so meticulously broken up for her passage out. As she opened up to seaward, so the protection that her inshore side afforded our launches was lessened. It was decided to send them away to try and make the small harbour for a lee. This I watched with uneasy mind, for the seas were coming in a series of three big rollers, as the heavy swell from the deep water broke over the shallows.

Our struggling launch made it and escaped into the harbour, but the "Herakles" launch had her tiller smashed, and helplessly she was driven onto the rocks at the top of the beach. her timbers were stove in, propeller damaged, but I heaved a sigh, as out of the wrecked boat stepped the coxswain, shaken and drenched, but alive. We managed to get him over the bow of the "Paris City" by a jacob's ladder, just as she was leaving the beach. Five minutes later, at 9 a.m. she was afloat. It was definitely one of my greatest moments in the salvage game, to feel that vessel roll and pitch, and to see her in some other position to that we had been gazing at for nearly six months. All warp wires were cast off and the tugs stood out to sea with her to get her well off the coast, before a sea tow was spread to take her down to Gibraltar for docking.

Due to weather we had to leave our salvage launch behind, as it was impossible to recover it in that seas. The "Herakles" stayed also to recover all anchors and wires, and to bring our boat and five men that were left too. When they got back to base about a week after us they told us how the whole town had come down to the tiny water front to witness the final episode. It was October 15, 1951, and we had won. Of that gallant crew, of which I think there was none better, I would like to end by saying, that they were, every mother's son a sailor.

*This article was published in "Sea Breezes" many years ago. We have no record of the date.*

The red haired Chief Officer was Commodore Mark Higgins, who we are sure will remember this unfortunate occasion. The master of the "Paris City" was Captain Duffy, and the Chief Engineer was Trevor Griffiths. The "Paris City" continued service with R.S.L. until 1954 when she was sold. The vessel was scraped in 1962.

## MEMORIES ?

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The editor had to visit Sunderland,during the year and noted that not only had the shipyards gone,but also 'ROKER PARK'where he spent all his youth watching not only the Sunderland first team,but the reserve team,the youth team and the schoolboy team

So in deference to the lost skills of all the shipyard workers he can also add the football team to that and repeat a poem that appeared years ago in the 'Sunderland Echo' where he,the editor used to work as a schoolboy on Saturdays in the sub-editors department,due to having a God-father as editor,a mother as a reporter,a cousin in the advertising department - so one wonders why he went to sea :-

"The captain on the bridge surveyed the yard his ship was leaving,  
Trials had come,and trials had gone,  
The launching ceremony drab and long,  
had passed without a thing gone wrong.

The captain on the bridge surveyed,the shipyard dull and grey,  
another ship on another quay,  
Would soon be many miles away,  
To the town it would be forgotten.

The chairman stood on the quay,he watched the ship go on her way,  
The last of an era,now in the past,  
A credit for the yard that forever would last.

But back to work,and toil,and sweat,everyone must go,  
It's not as the newspapers say,Drink and Fags,they think it's play,  
The strain and stress of every day,they critically write

Very few know away deep down,the problems to keep a yard's name sound,the tension that can lead to death,  
the worry and strain,the strain and stress,but to the town they seem much less.

A yard where they sometimes build vessels,few seem to think it's a life,someone's world,  
But when the troubles are unfurled,amazement is shown at the dilemma,  
Very few know away deep down,the problems to keep a yard's name SOUND.

The above poem was written by a 10 year old girl - little did she know she was writing about the death of the shipyards on the River Wear - wonder what she would write today....

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# The Affluence of Incohol

I had eighteen bottles of whisky and was told by my wife to empty the contents down the sink or else...I said I would, and proceeded with this unpleasant task.

I withdrew the cork from the first bottle and poured it down the sink with the exception of one glass which I drank. I withdrew the cork from the second bottle and did likewise, with the exception of one glass which I drank.

I extracted the cork from the third bottle and poured the glass down the sink, which I drank. I pulled the cork from the fourth bottle down the sink and poured the bottle down the glass which I drank.

I pulled the bottle from the cork of the next and drank sink out of it and threw the rest down the glass which I drank. I pulled the sink out of the next glass and poured the cork down the bottle. Then I corked the sink with the glass, bottled the sink and drank the pour.

When I had everything emptied I steadied the house with one hand, counted the glasses, corks, bottles and sinks with the other, which was 29 and as the house came by I counted them again.

Finally I had the house in one bottle, which I drank. I'm not half as think as you might drunk I am. I fool so feelish, I don't know is me, and the drunker I stand here the longer I get.

I'm not under the affluence of incohol as some tinkle peep I am.

UNCONFIRMED T.T.

R.G. Clingan M.Diag.E. (No 8258), Saudi Arabia

A Lady's Lament

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Remember us old folks are worth a fortune,  
with silver in our hair, and gold in our teeth,  
stones in our kidneys, lead in our feet  
and gas in our stomachs  
While I may be a little older than when I last saw you,  
in the meantime I have become a frivolous old girl.  
I now have two gentlemen with me every day -  
Will Power helps me out of bed  
and Arthur Rittis never leaves me alone.  
The Preacher called the other day and told me  
I should be thinking of the hereafter.  
"Oh I do that all the time" I replied, "No matter  
where I am - in the kitchen, the bedroom or the lounge -  
I always ask myself what am I here after"

\* \* \* \* \*

One hath some friendships folded put away,  
Passed into memories leaves like withered flowers,  
Which though we know, their bloom hath all departed,  
We give more love to, than we often say,  
And still rejoice ! that we have called them ours,  
And feel because of them "The Stronger Hearted"

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MEMORIES - SHIPS OF THE FLEET

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E A S T E R N C I T Y ( No:1 )

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1913 Built by Ropner and Sons Ltd.Stockton for the St Just Steams Co.

1916 Sunk by gunfire from submarine 18 miles North by West from Ushant on the 9th.April,1916.

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E A S T E R N C I T Y ( No:2 )

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1917 Built by Joseph L.Thompson and Sons Ltd.,Sunderland for St Just Steamship Co.Ltd.

1928 Company restyled as Reardon Smith Line Ltd.

1933 Transferred to Nereus Steamship Co.Ltd.(E.E.Hadjilias) Greece and renamed DORIS

1949 Arrived at Antwerp,September,1949 for breaking up.

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E A S T E R N C I T Y ( No:3 )

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1941 Built by William Doxford & Sons Ltd for the Leeds Shipping Co.Ltd.

1962 Transferred to Helmos Cia. Nav.S.A.,Lebanon and renamed HELMOS

1969 Renamed NICOPAULI

1970 Arrived Japan to be broken up

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E A S T E R N C I T Y ( No:4 )

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1965 Built by Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co.Ltd for Reardon Smith Line Ltd.

1970 Renamed CHIYODA after being fitted with car decks for the carriage of cars in addition to other cargoes

1975 Transferred to Glyfsky Cia De Nav.S.A.(Greece)

1982 Transferred to Panartic Transport Corp.Monrovia,(Greek Flag)and arrived on the 25th.December,1982 at Styliis where she was laid up.

1984 Transferred to Philippine President Lines and renamed PRESIDENT AGUINALDO

1986 Renamed LUCKY TWENTY and immediately sold to Chinese Shipbreakers,arriving dalian 12th.August,1986.

E A S T E R N C I T Y ( No:5 )  
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1976 Built by Burmeister and Wain, Copenhagen

Left berth for sea trials, 17th. June, 1976 and completed sea trials on 18th, June, 1976.

Vessel handed over to Reardon Smith Line on the 2nd. July 1976 and sailed away from yard on the same day.

1979 Transferred to Clarmon Corporation, Monrovia and renamed JAPANA

1981 Renamed PIONEER JAPAN

1983 Renamed JAPANA and continued in service for some years  
Do any readers know what after that - all replies to the Editor, please.

For all the readers, we give below the crewlist of the EASTERN CITY on her maiden voyage :-

Master	- Commodore M.J. Higgins	Ch. Engr	- D.M. Parsons
Ch. Officer	- F. Scott	2nd. Engr	- G.J. Griffiths
2nd. Off.	- J.R. Ashley	Jun. 2nd. Engr	- K. Rowney
3rd. Off.	- A. Abel	4th. Engr	- R.S. Allen
Electr. Off.	- A.J.L. Cottle	Jun. 4th. Engr	- M.G. Williams-Jones
2nd. Radio Off	- P.J. Barker	Jun. 4th. Engr	- K.R. Negele
Catering Off	- D.C.M. Trinick	Jun. Engr	- P.J. Rigby
Deck Cadet	- T.J. Tudball	Electrician	- P. Tyerman
Deck Cadet	- A. Williamson		

Ship breaking News:-  
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V I C T O R I A C I T Y ( No:3 )  
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Built 1970 was sold to Indian Shipbreakers as the 'MONOLIMA' under which name she had traded since 1993 and arrived under the Maltese Flag at Kakinada 19th. February, 1996.

V A N C O U V E R C I T Y ( No:3 )  
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Built 1970 was sold to Indian Shipbreakers as the 'MALE 11' and arrived under the Panama Flag at Alang 25th. July, 1997.

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Management Consultants  
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People who borrow your watch to tell you what time it is - and then walk off with it!

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LIST OF MEMBERS - 1997

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Mr.T.H.Ahmun	Mr.C.C.Anderson	Capt.J.P.Andrews
Capt.R.E.Baker	Mrs S.Baker	Mr J.Barnes
Mr.M.C.Barral	Mr K.F.Bean	Mr R.U.Bell
Capt.M.J.Bellamy	Mr.E.M.Bennington	Capt.J.Birrell
Capt B.A.G.Boyer	Mr C.Boyd	Mr E.Bromhan
Capt.J.C.P.Brown	Mr F.K.Brown	Mr D.Brosnan
Mr R.Burston	Mr C.Burton	Capt J.Cann
Mr W.Carr	Mr R.Chambers	Mr R.D.Christmas
Mr C.Clark	Mr M.J.Clarke	Mr K.R.Clissett
Mr J.M.Coleman	Mr H.Convery	Mr S.Clough
Capt D.H.Cobley	Mr M.Cox	Capt.R.I.Crawford
Mr T.Dacey	Mr T.Davis	Mr W.D.Davies
Mr R.Day	Mr P.G.Deschamps	Capt.R.V.Duncan
Capt.J.Dunk	Mr J.S.Dutton	Mr A.Edwards
Mr P.H.Evans	Mr P.W.Evans	Mr G.Eyles
Capt.A.J.Field	Mr L.Fletcher	Mr T.J.Fuller
Mr H.Gale	Mr W.J.Gill	Capt J.Gordon
Mr D.G.Grant	Mr G.T.Griffiths	Capt T.Haxell
Capt D.C.Griffith-Jones	Mr R.Hall	Mr K.W.Hampton
Capt.G.Handbury-Grassick	Capt E.B.Harrison	Mr.D.Harrison
Mr J.Hewson	Capt B.T.Hernaman	Capt M.J.Higgins
Mr G.Hodgson	Capt B.Hopper	Mr C.Hughes
Mr P.Hunt	Mr M.Jenkins	Mr C.Jones
Mr D.B.Jones	Mr I.Jones	Mr K.Jones
Capt M.E.Jones	Capt W.D.Jones	Capt.A.M.Kalnins
Capt J.C.Lee	Capt K.Lee	Mr A.C.Lewis
Mr R.G.Lewis	Capt A.D.Lightfoot	Capt O.J.T.Lindsay
Mr D.W.Litson	Mr P.Mabbett	Mr T.W.Major
Mr R.C.Masters	Mr J.R.Mathews	Mr C.McCarthy
Mr J.J.Moore	Mr K.D.Morgan	Mr N.Nesbitt
Capt R.L.Newbury	Mr T.J.Newell	Mr D.J.A.Nicholl
Mr A.F.Osborne	Mr K O'Donoghue	Mr M.Paddock
Capt J.S.Pearsall	Mr R.G.Pierce	Mr E.Poingdestre
Capt J.Porteous	Capt V.W.Pitcher	Mr M.Rayner
Mr J.P.Reardon Smith	Mr R.W.A.Reardon Smith	
Mr J.Scott	Mr R.Shannon	Mr P.D.Smith
Mr R.Smith	Capt M.Slayman	Capt I.Stewart
Mr P.Tate	Mr F.G.Taylor	Mr G.Taylor
Mr L.G.I.Taylor	Mr K.Terauchi	Mr Y.Teshiba
Capt.D.C.Toon	Capt M.G.B.Thomas	Mr G.Walker
Mr A.Westall	Mr D.S.Williams	Capt W.G.Wood
Mrs B.Johns	Mrs N.Shilstone	Mrs V.Thornhill

If any shipmate wishes to contact another shipmate, then please write in c/o the editor who will forward the letter onwards

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## MIXED NATIONALITY CREWS

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The other day a master mentioned that he wished to change the cook onboard due to his unsuitability which brought a wry smile from the editor as he remembered the following ditto:-

HEAVEN is where the police are BRITISH, the cooks are FRENCH, the mechanics are GERMAN, the lovers are ITALIAN and it is all organised by the SWISS.

HELL is where the cooks are BRITISH, the mechanics FRENCH, the lovers SWISS, the police GERMAN and it is all organised by the ITALIANS !

## S O U N D S F A M I L I A R

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Sea Staff Appointments

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JACK BARNES is enjoying his retirement - on retirement he was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to the Oil and Gas industry.

FRANK POULLOIN is presently working for Lloyd's Register handling Load Line applications.

## THE PLAIN TRUTH

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A CAPTAIN is said to be a man who knows a great deal about very little, and who goes along knowing more and more about less and less.....until finally he knows practically everything about nothing.

AN ENGINEER on the other hand, is a man who knows very little about great deal & keeps knowing less and less about more and more.....until he knows practically nothing about everything.

SURVEYORS starts out knowing everything about everything...but ends up knowing nothing about anything due to his association with CAPTAINS and ENGINEERS

## O B I T U A R I E S

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We are sorry to advise that Mrs Alice Cross, wife of the late Captain 'Willie' Cross, crossed the bar on the 5th. november at a grand age of 87

On behalf of all the readers of "S H I P M A T E S" lets wish each other a very merry xmas and a prosperous new year and the editor looks forward to any article, short or long that may be included in the editions for 1998, so start writing now over the holiday period