

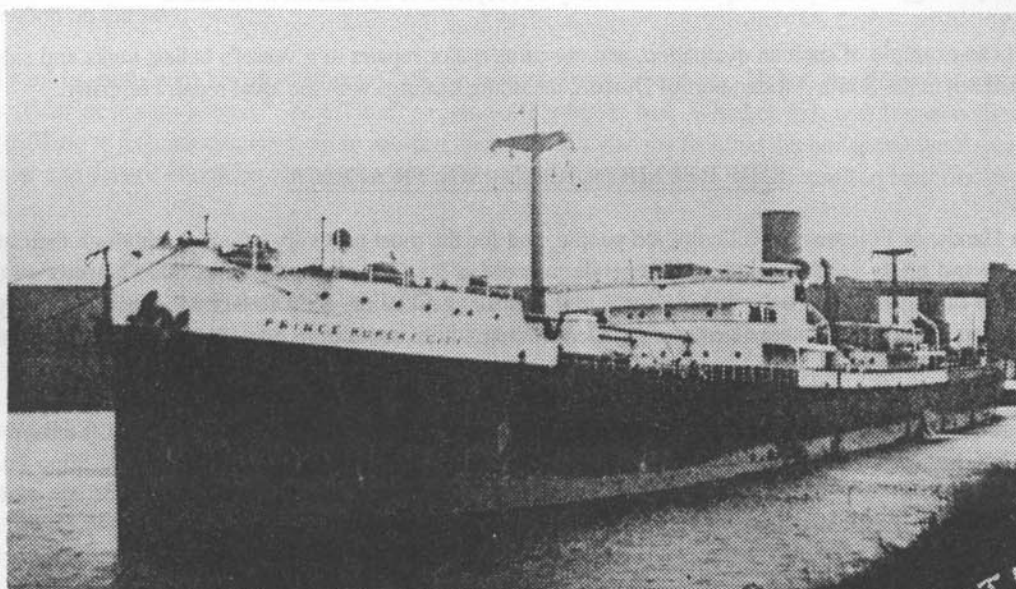


SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

Issue No.18 March 2001.

1939 Manchester Canal Master:- Captain Dixon



S.S."Prince Rupert City"(1)

In 1929 the Reardon Smith Line took delivery of six new ships, one being the motor vessel "Fresno City" of 4,955 GRT built by William Doxford & Sons Ltd., of Sunderland and five steamers, sisterships, of 4749 GRT, each built by William Gray & Co.,Ltd., West Hartlepool, one of which was "Prince Rupert City"(1).

These six vessels were built to Reardon Smith's specification and ideally suitable for world wide tramping or for filling into the RSL liner service which had been inaugurated in 1928 to provide a twice monthly sailing from the Pacific Coast ports of North America to the United Kingdom.

The "Prince Rupert City" fitted into a fleet of approximately 40 vessels and for the ten years before the out break of World War 2 she traded successfully world wide. She had the reputation for long voyages, but so did most of the Reardon Smith Fleet. For many years she sailed under the command of Captain T. Dixon, who will be remembered by many of our senior Shipmate readers.

Unfortunately on the 2nd June 1941. the "Prince Rupert City"(1) was bombed and sunk by German aircraft North East of Cape Wrath, in position 58° 46'N 04° 41'W. Four of the crew members lost their lives.

More about Ships on Pages Nos. 8 & 9.

A Story from Singapore.

QA Procedure
Page 1

It is now a Quality Assurance requirement that the Technical Department of a Shipmanagement Company maintain a performance assessment file on Shipyards. Upon return from a dry docking or major repair the Superintendent is to evaluate and record the Yard's performance and efficiency.

Possibly this information should be extended to encompass "local conditions", as obtaining the best performance from local people is all part of the job. Thus a reliable "background picture" of any local difficulties which the hard worked, unsuspecting, and innocent Superintendent may be subjected to are known in advance.

Following, is an example of such an evaluation, and concerns major repairs to a vessel's ballast tanks and side shell plating carried out in the South African port of Durban, including dealings with the local repair company.

SHIP REPAIR DURBAN - SOUTH AFRICA

The Charge Hands, or Foremen are all coloured people, and for the most part very efficient, although their attitude towards health and safety in the workplace is generally somewhat lax. The names by which the Foremen are called, seemed to be a little bizarre, so one morning early in the repair, I asked the Ship Repair Manager to identify each man, hoping that being on first name terms, and understanding a little about each man would improve relations and hence speed the work.

The Repair Manager explained to me, that the Mother bestowed the name upon her child, and that the name given related to some significant event either at the child's conception, or birth. For instance, the Plating Shop Foreman was named "Mountain", not because of his physical size, but because he was actually born on the side of a mountain. "So", I said " what are the names of our four people".

"Inky, Short Time, Psycho, and Boiler" he replied.

I pondered this information for a moment, but the implications were really too much to grasp, and we moved on to other subjects. It was certain however, that these names were always used, and the Repair Manager assured me that no other names were known for these people.

Over the following days, I became on very good terms with them all, but I never dared broach the subject of their "given" names.

"Short Time", who seemed to be in overall charge next to the Repair Manager, was a very jovial Zulu, who had been in ship repair for a long time, he stood about 5'9" tall, and around 50 years of age. He had a peculiar deformity to his lower legs between the knee and ankle. In this area his legs bowed outwards to such an extent that his overall height must have been reduced by 3". I was later to learn to what use he put this odd deflection in his lower limbs.

I came across "Short Time" one morning, standing on the main deck bawling obscenities down the opening of the tank we had under repair. "What's the problem Short Time?" I asked.

"These black bastards don't know shit" he replied "the welding along the stringer plate below here hasn't been done properly".

I looked at him in some amazement. "It may have escaped your notice Short Time, but you are as black as the ace of spades yourself". He turned to me and grinned, and then started to laugh. The great hoots of laughter slowly evolved into deep lung wracking coughs, which culminated in one great hawking sound, at which point he brought up something nasty into his mouth, which he chewed meditatively for a while, before spitting whatever it was over the ship's side with a great PHUTT of sound (by this time I was a little pale, and wondering if I could hang onto my morning boiled egg).

"Yes" he said in a very phlegmy voice " but I think better than they do".

Later in the day the Classification Society Surveyor had just left after carrying out a satisfactory inspection of the tank lower sections. It seemed that, according to "Short Time", Surveyors didn't know shit either, so he suggested that he and I should re-inspect the areas so as to confirm the tanks integrity.

We moved to the lower hold, and prepared to enter the tank through an access way cut in the tank vertical side. "Short Time" suggested we go into the tank, move quickly to the far end, and then return slowly to the access making our inspection on the way.

"Short Time" bawled (with his usual finesse) into the tank opening, whereupon "Inky" and "Psycho" appeared, and like two Aides de Camp helped "Short Time" to remove his boiler suit. Whether this was because "Short Time" found it difficult to execute this manoeuvre unaided, or whether it was the fact that the boiler suit itself was in such a fragile state and wasted condition, that any undue stresses on its rotting seams would result in total disintegration, is not clear.

Apart from a pair of boots, which looked as if they had been used to walk twice around the world, transit a burning lava flow, and finally to wade through a shallow lake of IFO 380, "Short Time" now stood naked. He then received from "Psycho", much in the manner an initiate Earl might receive his ceremonial robes for the first time, a large piece of filthy rag, which he arranged around his waist in the manner of a loin cloth.

We entered the tank, and it was then I discovered the use "Short Time" put to the bend in his shins. He could move through the tank frame lightening holes with amazing speed, able to loop his leading leg across the frame plate with only a small interruption in his stride. I was gasping and panting behind trying to keep up, cursing each time I barked my shins on the plate edges. At the forward most frame he abruptly stopped, and pushed his head through to examine the watertight bulkhead in front. I came blundering behind, and narrowly avoided colliding with an abundant part of "Short Times" anatomy which was moving pendulum like clear of the 'loin cloth' after the man's sudden cessation of forward motion.

In the evening, it is possible to find many inexpensive restaurants, but there remains in Durban, possibly one of the last Merchant Navy Officers Clubs. As a visiting Superintendent it is possible - for a ridiculously low sum - to become a temporary member. Here the company is excellent, and food extremely cheap but of good quality.

The Club occupies three floors. The ground floor being a reception area, the first floor a "Ladies Bar", restaurant, and games room. The second floor a Men Only Bar.

I was much intrigued by the "Ladies Bar". Originally I thought that Ladies were confined to the first floor, and men to the second, but it seems the term "Ladies Bar" means a mixed bar.

One evening, returning late from the ship I decided to try the "Men Only Bar". This turned out to be a large "L" shaped room with a long bar facing the entrance door. Across the back of the bar hung many shields and name plates from ships and shipping companies now defunct: Prince Line, Baron Murray, Union Castle, B&C etc. It is quite sad to see these items, plus the various photographs and trophies; and one can only imagine the activity and celebrations that must have taken place in this now somewhat shabby room in past years.

The room has the usual chairs and tables strewn about. Along the centre of the room section which forms the longest section of the "L", are situated three stout concrete pillars which presumably support the roof structure of the building. Around these pillars at elbow height is fitted a narrow shelf, and a high stool sits opposite each face of the square pillar. These stools are attached to the base of the pillar by an elaborate lever mechanism, the purpose of which would seem to be the prevention of removal of the stool to either the bar or other parts of the room. The stools are restricted to a small "envelope" of movement approximately one metre square.

On entering the room for the first time, I was just in time to see a slightly built man wearing a khaki Safari Suit collapse senseless to the floor in front of the bar. The two men in the near vicinity gave the horizontal safari suit a casual glance, then re-focused attention upon their beer. The bartender leaned over the bar, also to glance at the comatose form, and remarked " Dennis must be having trouble with his Missus again".

The heavier set of the two men beside Dennis, lifted him easily to his feet, and dragged/carried him to a central pillar, where he positioned Dennis on the nearest stool, he then adjusted the stool (and Dennis) in such a way that Dennis was seated on the stool with forehead resting against the pillar and elbows on the shelf. In this position Dennis appeared to be in a state of equilibrium, air whistled gently through his compressed nose, and saliva dribbled slowly down his chin.

Much encouraged by this sight, the result of which I assumed must be due to the superior strength of the refreshments served in this establishment, I moved eagerly forward into the room, and was soon engaged in conversation with Dennis' two vertical companions. A word of warning here, as veterans of such encounters will bear out, time and sensibility pass rapidly when seafaring (or ex-seafaring) persons engage in conversation, and drinks. The rate of beer consumption was awesome. In conversation the mysteries of the universe, world political situation, and religious persuasions were quickly dealt with, in order to pursue more important subjects, such as sex, beer quality world-wide, and the various "entertainment" centres found in major ports. At some point in the evening a meal was served, which was accompanied by numerous small bottles of wine each containing a single measure, which seemed to be the local custom. This serving of small bottles of wine should be approached with caution, much as a pint drinker approaches a school of half pint drinkers. It has two disadvantages, one, total consumption is difficult to monitor, and two, the numerous empties obstruct access to the food.

G. Griffiths . Singapore..

Armistice Day 2000

A service was held on the 11th November at the Merchant Memorial Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, and a wreath was laid by Mr. Tony Lewis, Chairman of the United Services Mess, and himself an ex Deck Apprentice of Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd., on behalf of Commodore Oliver Lindsay. To the memory of all seamen serving on Reardon Smith Line ship who lost their lives in W.W. 1 and W.W.2. Mr. Tony Lewis is a member of "Shipmates".

The Editor and Treasurer wish to thank all members who sent Christmas Cards and messages to " Shipmates".

Reference the sinking of the S.S. "Quebec City" this was the last ship sunk by U-boat 156 on that mission. U-boat 156 returned to Lorient and on her next mission was sunk on the 8th March 1943 off the West Indies by a United States aircraft patrol. All the crew of U-boat 156 were lost.

Letters to the Editor.

Capt John Cann from Nottingham writes to tell more about the "New Westminster City" (4) after the vessel going aground at Cardiff and during the drydock period at Antwerp. He mentions a modification done in the cargo holds at the drydock for the stowage of Pulp Bales. If anyone used these hinge stowage brackets when they sailed on the vessel I would be grateful if they would write to "Shipmates" and let us know the results. Captain Cann's letter reads as follow:-

m.v. "New Westminster City" Re; Issue 15. June 2000

Further to Mr Majors extremely interesting account of the repercussions in the wake of the grounding of the above vessel at Cardiff in November 1972.

I took command of the vessel in Antwerp on completion of discharge and where she subsequently drydocked to assess the damage and to obtain quotations from various shipyards. I well remember the problem with Lloyds refusal to issue a Seaworthy Certificate to enable us to proceed to Amsterdam. (68 miles distant!) However, as we now know, this issue was dealt with elsewhere, which resulted in an about turn by Lloyds!

The vessel proceeded without incident and finally entered Amsterdam Drydocks floating dock on December 3rd 1972.

Superintendants John Wheaton and Bill Gill were in attendance and there was some urgency to compile a comprehensive repair list. A draft was prepared and my wife, who accompanied me, agreed to type it up for them. I enclose a copy of this document which might be of interest.

I have also tried to reproduce some photos from the Drydock's Newsletter but I'm afraid, not very successfully!

The main distortion occurred in way of the bulkhead between Nos.4 & 5 holds which set up the deck in way of No.4 crane. The crane was removed and spent a month sitting in No.2 hold during the course of repairs.

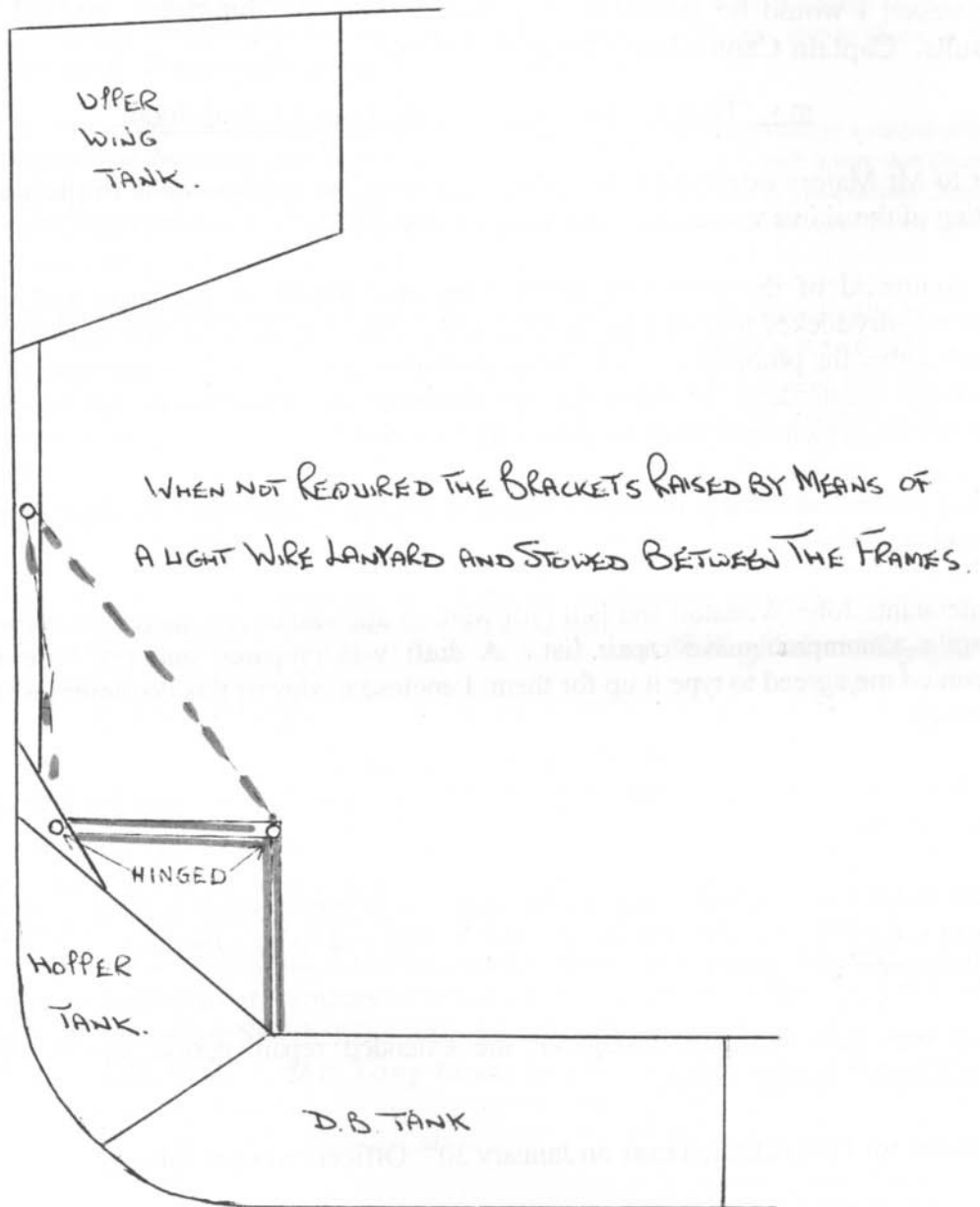
The ship was fully manned throughout the extended repair period which was finally completed on 29th January 1973..

Vessel sailed for Port Arthur, Texas on January 30th. Officers were as follows:

Master	J. Cann	Chief Engineer	Brian Lewis
Ch.Off	R.A.H.Vanner	2 nd Engineer	Fred Clarke
2 nd .Off	Graham Maplebeck	3 rd Engineer	Colin Gateshill
3 rd Off	A. Jutsum	4 th Engineer	R. Pring
Rad.Off	H.M.S.Williams	Eng. Cadet	A. Hobin
Dk.Cadet	P. Bullard	Dk.Cadet	N. Jerrum
Dk.Cadet	J. Riordan		

During the period in dock, Superintendent J.C.Lee attended and, I recall, it had been decided that, in order to facilitate the better stowage of Pulp Bales, hinged brackets would be fabricated and fitted in the holds in order to bridge the Hopper Tanks, thus enabling a more satisfactory stow across the full width of the ship. These were positioned at intervals along the

ships side so that a Fore and Aft platform could be easily constructed. When not in use, they could be raised by means of a light wire lanyard and through a pulley on the ships side and stowed between the frames. Much thought was given to calculating how many and what weight of Bales could be stowed up to the underside of the Upper Wing Tanks in order to ascertain the size of these brackets. I enclose a rough sketch.



Although these were not utilised during my tenure of the vessel, I often wondered how successful this innovation was !.

Mrs. Marion Cann was onboard the vessel during the repair period, Marion typed the many pages of the specification for the repairs to the ship. To give you some idea of the extent of the damaged parts to be renewed, overleaf is a copy of page 2 of the repair specification.

13. The corrugated bulkhead between No. 4 & 5 holds to be renewed (NOTE:- it is estimated that approximately 50% of the centre section can be reused). Sounding pipes, ladders, electric cables, water ballast pipes and cargo lights to be removed for access and replaced on completion.
14. Transverse box girder above bulkhead and between wing tanks to be renewed complete.
15. Main deck plating between No.4 & 5 hatches to be renewed for full width of hatch plus a small area on the port and starboard sides. The above to be complete with deck beams, brackets, etc.
16. For access to Item 15 it will be necessary to remove No.5 hold forward hatch coaming, No.4 hold after hatch coaming, No.4 crane, CO2 pipes, air vents, fire main piping, emergency hatch operating pulleys, compressed air lines, sounding pipe connections, floodable hold gauge lines, Nos.4 & 5 hold hatch hydraulic operating rams and the access trunkings to No.4 & 5 holds. After completion of the deck renewals all the above are to be faired, refitted and tested.
17. No.4 hold aft section of hatch covers to be removed for access and subsequently refitted and tested for operation and water tightness.
18. No.5 hold forward section of hatch covers to be removed for access and subsequently refitted and tested for operation and water tightness.
19. After refitting No.4 crane it is to be tested to the requirements for a 15 ton working load with the maker's representative in attendance and a certificate issued.
20. Deck, tank top and bottom sights to be taken and recorded initially and at each and every removal or fitting of steel units to ensure the alignment is maintained and the results recorded and handed to the Owner's Superintendent.
21. Port upper wing tank bulkhead between No.4 & 5 tanks to be renewed complete with framing and brackets and short vertical stiffener in No.4 tank is also to be renewed.
22. Starboard upper wing tank bulkhead between No.4 & 5 tanks to be renewed complete with framing and brackets and a short vertical stiffener and approximately 1½ meters of sloping tank bottom in way of bulkhead is also to be renewed.
23. All four upper wing tank doors to be opened and tanks to be cleaned for access and tested on completion of all repairs.
24. One 5 inch and one 4 inch Saunders automatic valve bodies in the starboard pipe tunnel are to be renewed (Owner's supply) using the existing internals.
25. Two pipes of approximately one metre in length and 6 inches diameter each with three bends on three planes are to be renewed in the starboard pipe passage.
26. All pipe work, electric cabling, electric fittings, cable trays, pipe clips, valves, pipe lagging in the Port and Starboard pipe tunnels to be removed as required in way of repairs and on completion reinstalled, fitted, tested and lagged to approval of Owner's Superintendent.

M.V. "Prince Rupert City" (2)



The "Prince Rupert City" (2) was the second of the Cardiff Class ships built at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Govan, (ship No.841) of 16,639 Gross Tons. She sailed from Grennock on 19th July 1970 bound for New Orleans under the command of Commodore Mark Higgins. The Chief Engineer was Mr. John Dutton. Like most of the 840 class ship she was finished when a holiday was due, this one being the UCS workers summer holiday. Some small thing were unfinished and some parts not painted. All done in a hurry. The Cardiff Class were the first ships to be fitted with the new model B & W KEF74 engine built at Kincaid, Engine Works, Grennock. Because the first ship the "Vancouver City" was so far behind in building, the first engine was put in store. This KEF 74 engine was then fitted in the "Prince Rupert City".

In 1982 the vessel was sold to Maritima Astarte S.A. Panama (parent company T.M.M) and renamed "Yaqui" which was managed by the Sir Reardon Smith Sons, Ltd. Movements thereafter unknown.

The Launch of the "Prince Rupert City"

S.S "Quebec City" (1)

The vessel was built in 1911 in the port of Fiensburg, Prussia, to the order of the Roland Line, a well known German company. At the launch she was named "Federiko Glavie" and she was 4,936 Gross tons.

Nothing is known of her movements during the hostilities 1914-1918. In 1919 she was allocated to Great Britain as a part of war reparations.

In 1920 she was purchased from the British Shipping Controller by the St. Just Steamship Company, Ltd., (Reardon Smith Line) and renamed "Quebec City". For seven years she traded successfully, however in 1927 she was sold out of the company to sail again under the German flag. Finally ending her days being broken up in 1935.

S.S. "Quebec City" (2)

One of eleven ships built between 1927 and 1930 by William Gray & Co. Ltd., of

West Hartlepool to the order of the Reardon Smith Line. They were "sister ships" nine of which were fitted with triple and two with quadruple expansion steam engines. The steam was supplied by boilers fitted with furnaces capable of burning oil or coal, as the economics of the voyage demanded, the conversion being done by the ships engineers when underway approaching bunker port. The S.S. "**Quebec City**" (2) was delivered to owners, RSL in 1927 and joined an expanding fleet trading world wide.

On the 19th September 1942 she was sunk by torpedo and gun fire in position Lat. 2° 12' S, long., 17° 36' W (to the north of the Ascension Islands) a victim of U156. Unfortunately one of the crew lost his life when the lifeboat was being lowered.

When the "**Quebec City**" was lost she was under the command of Captain Caradog Thomas and his Chief Officer was Mr. J. Sloan (Todd). I sailed with Mr. Sloan in 1945/1946 when he was Chief Officer of the M.V. "**Vancouver City**" (2), and with Captain Caradog Thomas in 1948 when he was in command of the M.V. "**Great City**" (2). Its over 50 years ago but I still recall some of the details of that final voyage as related by these two gentlemen.

A full cargo of cotton had been loaded in Alexandria and vessel bunkered in Cape Town in early September- en route to Freetown a convoy assembly harbour. Vessel was sailing independently on a route advised by the British Admiralty. She was armed with the usual 4" anti submarine gun mounted on a platform over the poop, on the bridge were mounted Oeralikon guns.

During the afternoon watch of 19th September 1942 in good weather conditions the vessel was torpedoed, the torpedo striking in the vicinity of the cross bunker.

The master gave the order for the two lifeboats to be lowered for the liferafts to be launched and for the boats to be manned by half the crew, the boats to remain in the close proximity to the ship and the supplies and small gear on the rafts to be shared out between the two lifeboats. The Captain and the remaining crew remained on the ship for about two hours, a submarine periscope was sighted closing the ship and Captain Thomas ordered the remaining crew into the Lifeboat, before leaving the ship himself.

The U156 surfaced and closed the lifeboats the Captain of which ordered the boats to keep well clear of the ship, he was courteous and enquired about the survivors, he invited Captain Thomas aboard the submarine to view charts and discuss which way the lifeboats intended to sail. Once the lifeboats were well clear the U-boat commenced shelling the "**Quebec City**" until she finally sank, after which the U156 submerged.

The two lifeboats set off together, one in charge of Captain Thomas and the other in charge of the Chief Office Mr. J. Sloan, it had to be agreed that both boats would head for the coast of Liberia. However, the boats were to loose touch with each other, the Master's boat was sighted twelve days later by a Royal Naval frigate and the survivors rescued, whilst the Chief Officer's boat made a remote area of the Liberian Coast fourteen days after the sinking.

The Liberian natives who found the survivors on the beach were friendly and helpful. A message-S.O.S. was made on the beach and was sighted by a British patrol plane flying out of Freetown and a few days later a British patrol vessel arrived to pick up the survivors. On arrival Freetown the survivors from the both lifeboats were united.

Note:- The U156 sank another Reardon Smith vessel the S.S. "**Barrdale**" on the 17th February 1942.

Commodore Oliver Lindsay.

Notice to all Members.

"Shipmates" is getting short of stories and tales of members experiences at sea. To improve the newsletter it would be appreciated if members could please make an effort to submit an article. Half a page would be sufficient, but 1, or 2 pages would be better. You can send your article in long hand or print by hand, I can get it typed to suit the Newsletter. If members have a computer the story should be laid out similar to our previous Newsletter. You don't have to put your name to the story it can be anonymous, or use a fictitious name- the Editor is the only one who needs to know the identity of the author. Please Send the story to :-

Mr. A. F. Osborne 24 E Heol Hir Llanishen Cardiff CF14 5AE.

New Members.

We welcome aboard Vince Cullen who met up with Captain John Pagler and Richard Davies in Southampton and was given the information about "Shipmates". Vince was an Electronics Officer with the Reardon Smith Line and Cardiff Ship Management. He was made redundant in October 1995, he then joined the China Navigation Company and is still sailing on their ships to New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea and various South Pacific Ports. Vince left Ireland in 1996 and is now living in Singapore. Our member Captain Tony Baker is also sailing with the same company

Our Member Chief Engineer Tom Jowett was in Kobe recently and visited the Mariner's Centre where he met up with Father Renou who remembers many Reardon Smith Personnel who used the Mariner's Centre to post letters etc., and have a quiet glass of beer. Fr. Renou is still in contact with a few of the RSL people. Tom mentioned about "Shipmates" and Fr. Renou was interested in receiving a newsletter. He is now a member and we welcome him aboard.

The Worry of Fuel Oil

Last year we had a man made petrol crisis which upset most citizens in the U.K.. Car owners, who, when they went out driving worried themselves by looking carefully at the fuel gauge to see if they could complete their journeys or would be stranded if the fuel ran out. This is what Masters and Chief Engineer's have been doing most of their lives checking how much fuel oil is onboard their ship and worrying that there is sufficient fuel oil to get them to their destination.

It is amazing what problems arise from fuel oil. In 1956 the Suez Canal crisis happened when the Suez Canal was closed to all traffic, this caused a major fuel crisis for countries in Europe. Oil tankers had to sail from the Persian Gulf via the Cape of Good Hope to reach ports in the Mediterranean Sea and Europe. This caused extra transportation cost for the oil cargoes, and prices had to rise. At that time many of our members will remember bringing cargoes from Australia to the U.K and Continent via the Cape of Good Hope thus putting the cost of the shipment of goods and raw material up. These vessels had to bunker at Durban, or Cape Town and Dakar on the homeward passage. The journey was 1750

miles longer from Geraldton to London, instead of going via the Suez Canal.

In 1973 the oil producing states of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Abu Dhabi and Libya cut back oil deliveries to countries declared pro-Israel. What with the coal miners strike in 1974 and high oil prices this caused the economics of the country to slow down. A threat of petrol rationing was in the pipeline in 1974 and a speed limit of 50 miles per hour was imposed on all motorways. To jog your memory about the petrol rationing threat below are examples of the petrol coupons which were issued but never came into force and were never used.

NH4535839 NH4535839

Motor Fuel Ration Book

MOTOR CAR

1501 - 2200
C.C.

14 - 19
H.P.

The coupons in this book authorise the furnishing and acquisition of the number of units of motor fuel specified on the coupons.

Registered No. of Vehicle	Registered No. of Vehicle
Date and Office of issue	Date and Office of Issue

This book is the property of Her Majesty's Government

Instructions to Issuing Clerk:
See that the issue of this Ration Book is recorded on the applicant's registration book.

This portion, after completion, to be detached and forwarded to the Regional Petroleum Officer with Form P 221B



Fuel oils are still a thorn in a Master's and Chief Engineer's side. If a litre of oil is spilt in the dock there's a hell of a to do with all sorts of port officials knocking on their doors, and a threat of a jail sentence for doing such a thing. If the ship is to carry maximum cargos, too much oil onboard would shut out cargo and the shipowner would not be pleased about that.

The steam ships fitted with a reciprocating steam engine were the worst for wasting fuel when in heavy weather. I can remember in 1951 when I was on the war time built S.S. "Indian City", on a winter passage from Moji, Japan, to Vancouver B.C. because of the under powered engine, one day the vessel did 24 miles astern. The weather was so bad, with a head hurricane wind and mountainous seas, every time the wind got on the port bow the ship would swing around beam on, she would roll like hell, and then a full turn had to be made to try to get her back on course again. The ship's hull was dirty this did not help matters she had not drydocked for 18 months. So, a full day's fuel oil was lost that day and the ship had 24 miles to make up. A big worry to the master and Chief Engineer, as a careful watch got to be kept on the amount of fuel oil onboard.

To account for bad weather Reardon Smith's policy was to allow one day's extra fuel oil for 4 days steaming, i.e. if the ship was to do a 40 day passage 10 days extra oil was placed onboard. Now, some chief Engineers used to keep a bit up their sleeve, in case of mishaps. This oil up the sleeve business got a bit out of hand and in February 1963 when I was Chief Engineer on the m.v. "Great City"(2) I received the following letter (overleaf) from head office, so the Master and the Chief Engineer get the flak from both ways, shore officials and management.

SIR WILLIAM REARDON SMITH & SONS
LIMITED.

TELEGRAMS: SMITHCRAFT, CARDIFF
TELEPHONE: 28077. TELEX: 49242

DIRECTORS:

ALAN J. REARDON-SMITH (CHAIRMAN)
S. T. R. RANDALL W. A. J. REARDON-SMITH
J. P. REARDON-SMITH
H. A. E. CASWELL L. E. HOWELLS R. S. RANDELL
H. F. ROLFE T. K. WATSON

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE,
GREYFRIARS ROAD,
CARDIFF.

AND AT 58/59 FENCHURCH STREET, LONDON, E.C.3.

YOURS

OURS

13th February, 1963.
(Wednesday)

Mr. A.F. Osborne,
Chief Engineer,
m.v. "GREAT CITY",
DUBLIN.

Dear Sir,

In the last few days a vessel going on Time Charter has revealed it was carrying about 50 tons of surplus oil undeclared. If this can be found in a vessel giving delivery on Time Charter, it can be found at other times.

Should there be a recurrence of this, the Master and the Chief Engineer concerned will automatically lose their bonus.

All vessels are allowed an adequate safety margin when bunkering and we take a very serious view of the loss in freight suffered when vessels are shutting out cargo by carrying excessive fuel. In these times of very low freight rates, it is vitally necessary to ensure that vessels are run at the highest degree of efficiency in order to enable us to keep them trading and we rely upon the fullest co-operation between Master and Chief Engineer to ensure that an accurate check on the fuel is maintained at all times, so that the necessary fuel only is carried and the surplus figures, as declared to us, are accurate.

Yours faithfully,

A. J. Reardon-Smith

Director.

After this letter was issued it was the visiting Superintendent's duty to confirm how much oil was in the vessel and telex the amount to head office. Some may ask how can anyone get too much fuel onboard. well I can give you one reason. If the ship was trading in the Persian Gulf they bunkered at Abadan. Now, why, was it always in the middle of the night that the ship arrived at the bunker berth? The oil representative would come aboard and confirm the amount to be bunkered, when nearing completion the rep would tell the Chief Engineer he was going to stop the oil. He goes away to telephone the man at the tank to stop pumping but he gets no answer, the man at the pump is gone to sleep. By the time the oil rep gets to the pumping station 50 extra tons of oil is on the ship. The rep comes onboard puffing and blowing and ask the Chief to sign for the amount ordered and don't say a

thing about the extra oil. He leave in a great hurry muttering under his breath, he wants to get to his bed. So the shipping company got 50 tons of free fuel oil and the Chief Engineer got another fuel oil worry on his mind how to burn up the extra oil, also concerned about his bonus This is what went on in 1960's, measuring equipment is so efficient today the pump shut off to the nearest litre. *The Editor.*

It was November 1948, the S.S "Orient City" was in Readhead's Drydock, South Shields, under going repairs and modifications. One of the repairs being the renewal of the boat deck forward of the after end of the saddle hatch coaming. To facilitate the renewal the funnel had to be unshipped and landed, when reshipped it was resplendent with a fresh coat of red paint and on either side of the funnel a steel plate in the shape of a "S" was attached to studs welded on the funnel. This "S" was painted black.

The attending Superintendent was standing on the portside pocket hatch gazing up fondly at the gleaming funnel in the weak sunshine, his eyes full of emotion, he turned to the second Mate who was nearby and said " that in future will be the Reardon Smith standard "S", I invented that myself".

The Second Mate congratulated him.

A SCHOOLGIRLS IMPRESSION

In 1977 I had the opportunity, with my parents and my sister, of going aboard the "Tacoma City". When the "Tacoma City" was alongside a repair berth in Falmouth Docks, I was living not far away, and having know the Superintendent for all my life the opportunity arose.

Arriving at Falmouth Dock in my parents car,we were given permission to pass through the gates and directed to the berth of the "Tacoma City" where we met the Superintendent Alec Osborne. My first and lasting impression of the ship was how large it was- from my home and local beaches I had often seen ships sailing out to sea, near the coast and sailing along the horizon, but I was not prepared for the vastness of this ship towering above the dock wall.

Until now my only real knowledge of life onboard was from cinema films, which was completely thrown out of the window once on board the "Tacoma City". Firstly we were shown around the officers cabins- which had real beds! not hammocks and then we went through the dining room and galley, where the Indian staff, much to my amusement, All stood to attention when we went through with Alec (wow!). After this we were taken down to the engine room, which I was a little worried about as in the cinema films they were all dark and dirty, but this could not be further from the truth. We were given a cloth to wipe our hands if they got dirty, but the place was spotless. The engines were vast, all the chrome and brass was shining and the floors were spotless-well impressed.

Before leaving the ship we were invited to take tea with the Captain, Commodore Higgins, who supplied my sister and I with soft drinks and my parents and Alec with tea. I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon out, but I am afraid it did not give me an incentive to want a career at sea. I did not think, and I know, I am not brave enough to be out in the middle of the ocean bobbing about in a storm. *The Typist.*

The Night of The Big Bang.

It was July 1973, the "Cornish City" was being re-engined in IHI (Ishikawajima Harima Heavy Industries) shipyard Aioi, Japan, the two Ruston AO engines were being replaced by a 16 cylinder Pielstick made by the IHI Engine Works. The rainy season had passed and the hot summer weather was building up. Aioi is a small town, situated up a creek in the Japanese Inland Sea, surprisingly there is a Shinkansen railway station there for the bullet train, IHI must have had quite a bit of influence on that decision. Aioi is circled with hills and mountains and in the summer time is a sun trap, there is hardly a breeze at any time and in the afternoons on a July day the temperature would reach 100°F (38°C) this gets a bit hotter in the month of August.

The vessel had been moved into the drydock for the propeller to be removed to be taken away to Nakashima Propeller Works for repair and modification to the propeller blades to suit the new engine, also to paint the ship's hull. This drydock was a modern dock, it was one of IHI's smaller drydocks suitable for the "Cornish City". It was situated between the new building berths and the dock offices. At the head of the dock passed the main and busy roadway to the dock office and beyond this to the engine works, fitting out quays, and the larger drydocks. To make this roadway at the head of the drydock where the "Cornish City" lay, a part of the mountain alongside it had been cut away, so the side of the mountain was quite sheer, more like a cliff.

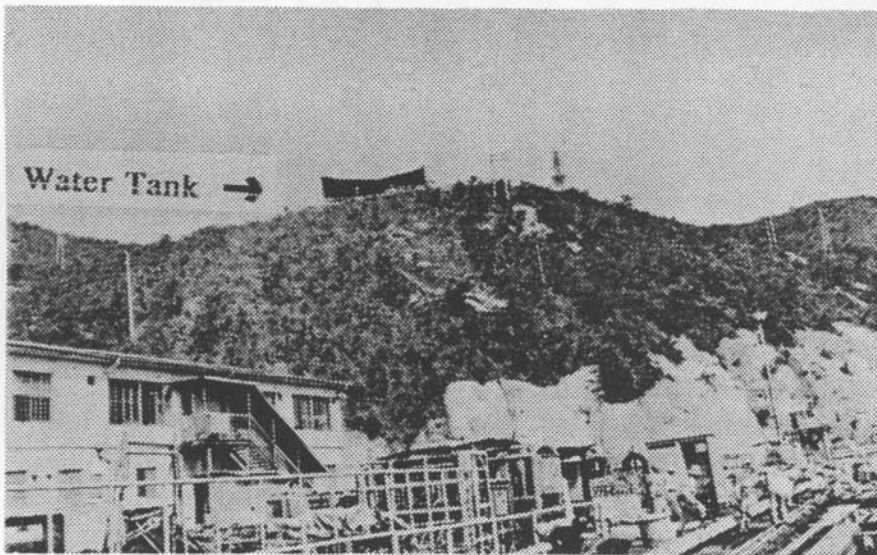
Every summer IHI, Aioi suffers from a shortage of fresh water. To help to keep the shipyard and engine works supplied, water was pumped from across the other side of the sea inlet, through a temporary pipeline that ran across the foot and cycle bridge which was at the entrance to the shipyard and then the pipeline ran alongside the roadway inside to the shipyard and finally to storage tanks. Shipyards use a large amount of fresh water hosing down ship's hulls, etc.. The engine works at Aioi required a tremendous amount of water for cooling the engines and for the water brake to test the engines running on the test beds. IHI engine works built two makes of engines the Sulzer's and Pielstick's which went to many shipyards all over Japan, beside the ones that were built for their new tonnage. An engine or two would be on test nearly every day so the cooling water demand was very large.

On top of the mountain, at the head of the drydock where the "Cornish City" was lying, was one of the very large water storage tanks which supplied the engine works and shipyard services.

The ship docked in the late afternoon and the drydock was dry about 19.00 hrs. the ship was on shore power and a water supply connected to the air conditioning plant and refrigerator plant so it was very quiet with the diesel generator stopped. It was 10.00 p.m. a hot, mild night, the only workmen working overtime were the heavy gang on staging in the drydock dismantling the ship's propeller so it could be taken away to the Nakashima Propeller Works so the repair could start first thing in the morning and help to save time because the propeller repair would take longer to complete than the hull painting. Except for the sound of the ring of spanners and a knock of a hammer the only thing that could be heard was the sound from the crickets in the undergrowth around the drydock area. I was on the staging at the forward end of the propeller with some workmen, others were on staging at the aft end. All of a sudden the silence was broken with a tremendous loud bang, and in the

still of the night it was a deafing bang. A few moments later the flow of water could be heard, then water was entering the drydock from the forward end, there was water, tree branches and all sorts of rubbish rushing past under the staging and this started to build up at the drydock gate. Shortly after there was a minor bang and all the lights went out in the drydock. In the dock area and on the ship, there was complete darkness. The ship's engineers on the ship were on the ball within a few minutes after the shore power failed, I heard the ship's diesel emergency generator started up. This gave them some light inside the ship but was no help to us in the drydock. The workmen and myself, who were trapped on the stagings, decided to clamber along the drydock blocks and feel our way, the best we could, and finally waded through the water to a ladder at the drydock wall, all that could be seen in the drydock was the workmen's hand torches flashing about.

Once ashore we were told by some workmen, who were dashing about on the drydock wall, that the water storage tank on top of the hill had burst. The tank side had been carried away and about 8,000 tons of water had poured down the mountain side, washing debris onto the main roadway, flooding all the electric switches and electric circuit boxes at the head of the dock, which blew up. The water then rushed into the drydock carrying anything that moved with it. The roadway at the end of the dock was blocked so nothing could get to the offices engine shop or fitting out quays. With no management about all work stopped that night. The ship remained on emergency lighting during the night and most of the next day.

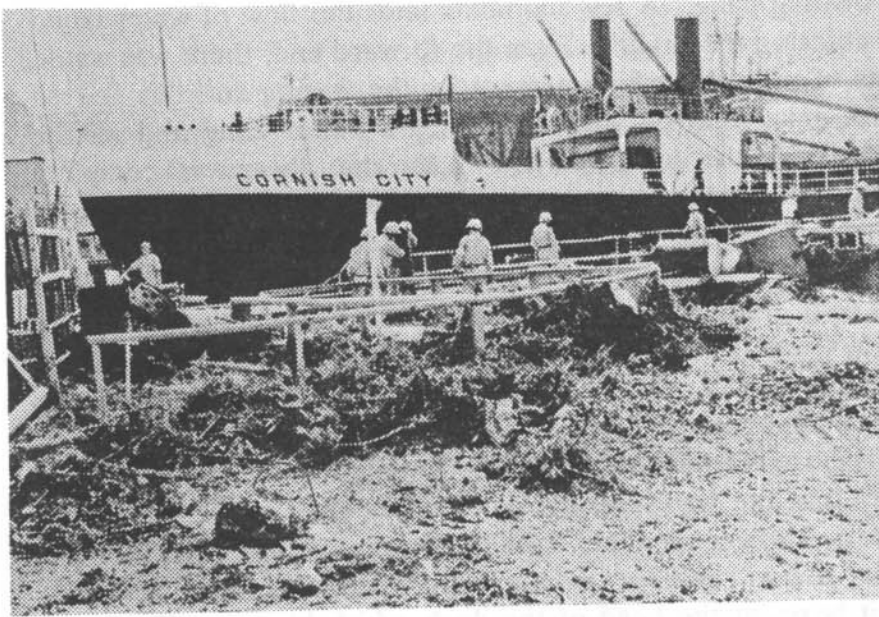


The storage water tank

It was a square concrete tank with flat sides.

The side of the mountain had been cut away to make the roadway at the bottom. The drydock side can be seen at the bottom right hand corner of the photograph

The next morning I was sitting in the Superintendents office waiting for Mr. Hamanaka (Hamanaka San) the Business manager for the "Cornish City" to come and give me a full report on the events and the next plan of action. He came into the the office looking very sad and reported that all the electricity services to the drydock pumps, and the drydock would be out of action for three days. This stopped all work in the engineroom because there was only emergency lights there. I told Hamanaka San that a portable electric supply must be provided as soon as possible to operate the ship's air conditioning machine, the refrigerators and galleys. Also for the safety of the people living onboard. This was arranged and by late afternoon the ship had electricity from a shore supply. The A.C. cooling water supply was maintained.



M.V. "Cornish City"

In drydock at Aioi July 1973. The next day after the water tank burst. Note the debris that had been washed down from the mountain and lying around on the dock. Also the large number of men involved in the clean up operation.

Shortly after having arranged things, Hamanaka San came to the Superintendent's Office and handed me a letter which read something as follows:-

Memorandum of Delivery.

To Owners of m.v. "Cornish City" Reardon Smith Line Limited, Cardiff, and owners representative. Due to unforeseen circumstances, which is beyond our control, an accident occurred at drydock where your vessel is lying. It will take 3 days to rectify so the vessel will be three days late in our delivery date.

Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy
Industries Co., Ltd.

By: _____

A. Sugimoto

Manager of Ship Repairs Workshop

It was three days before work started in the drydock and things got fully underway again. Regarding the tank mounted on the mountain, it was a square built concrete tank, there could have been more than 8,000 tons of fresh water in it. I gave Hamanaka San a lot of ear bashing for days about the Japanese tanks. It went on like this, in the UK you would never see anyone build a square tank of that capacity, they always build them round. Can you imagine the pressure on one side of the tank it must be tremendous. In the UK tanks of that size are built round to spread the load on the wall surface, any engineer knows that. Hamanaka was reminded of this incident many times during the stay in Aioi.

The whole shipyard was disrupted the next day after the disaster with the main roadway blocked, no motor transport could get to the fitting out quays, the engine workshops nor other drydocks. The mountain had to be cleared and made safe to prevent any further debris falling onto the roadway. The only passage to these other works beyond the drydock was by foot or bicycle path across the drydock gate. The bicycle was the main form of transport at IHI, Aioi.

Alec Osborne.