



SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

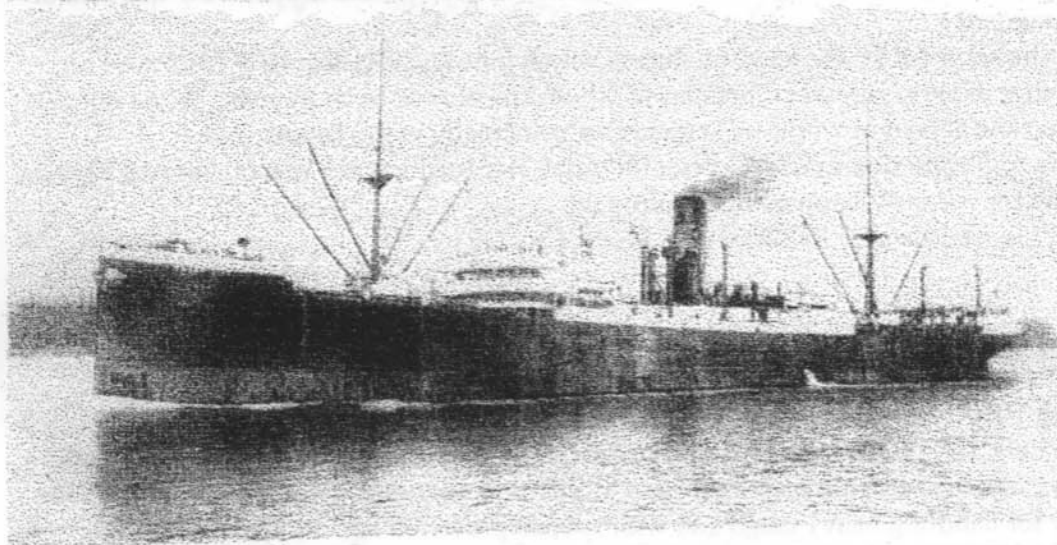
Issue No.26 March 2003.

It is 81 years since the name "WELSH CITY" first appeared in the R.S.L. fleet lists. This issue is dedicated to the four ships which bore the name, all of which were registered in Bideford, Devon.

S.S. "Welsh City"(1) Gross Tons 6,303.

Built to the order of the St. Just Steamship Co, Ltd (R.S.L.) by Ropner Shipbuilding and Repairing Company Ltd of Stockton. After successful trials she was delivered to owners in 1922 and entered a fleet of 39 vessels engaged in world wide tramping. During 1928 the Company was restyled as the Reardon Smith Line Ltd. She served in the fleet for 16 years after which she was sold to G.N.Stathatos of Greece and was renamed "Maria Stathatos. In April of 1941 she became a war causality, sunk at Miles by enemy air attack.

During her service in the R.S.L. fleet she was to be frequently found loading in British Columbian waters. The photograph below was taken in Vancouver, B.C. on the 16th March 1930 by Mr. N. Gidney



Mr. John Reardon-Smith kindly submitted the performance records of the S.S. "Welsh City" (1), which one of his relatives held.

Date.	Passage	Light (Inc. Part loaded) or Loaded.	Days on Passage Daily Cons.	Average Daily Speed	Average Daily Cons. Coal &/or Oil Tons
Jan. 1922	Tyne/Bahia Blanca	Light	27	10.30 K	34.0 Coal (Tyne)
April 1922	Santos/ Cape Henry	Light	17	11.95K	33.8 Coal (Welsh)
May 1922	New York/Port Arthur	Loaded	7	11.00K	37.0 Coal (USA)
June 1922	Port Arthur/Manila	Loaded	46	10.00K	25.0 Oil Fuel

M.V. "Welsh City" (2) Gross Tons 8,136.

This vessel was the last of four almost identical sister ships built for the Reardon Smith Line by William Doxford and Sons, Ltd. at their Pallion Yard in Sunderland, two were delivered in 1955 and the remainder in 1956. The first to be delivered was the open shelter deck "Victoria City" the remainder were delivered as closed shelter deck vessels. The first two did not have the advantage of a jumbo derrick, however on the second two a jumbo derrick was fitted so enhancing their appeal to liner companies if they required to Time Charter a vessel.

The main engine was a four cylinder opposed piston Doxford giving a service speed of 13 knots on a consumption of IFO 12 tons plus Diesel 1 tons per 24 hours. All engine and deck auxiliaries were electric.

The accommodation for the officers and apprentices was of a superior standard, each cabin having en-suite facilities. The accommodation for the Indian crew was also of a high standard.

She served RSL for 12 years during which time she was regularly employed on time charter to various liner companies to whom she proved to be popular. When not so employed she served in world wide tramping, principally to the far east.

In 1968 she was sold to Cypriot interests. Her final voyage was in April 1979 when she arrived at Whampoa for breaking up.

Please see page 6 for more on "Welsh City" (2)

M.V. "Welsh City" (3) Gross Tons 10,790.

In 1967 an order was placed by the Reardon Smith Line with Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Ltd., (Govan Division) Glasgow, for the building of two tween deck multi purpose cargo vessels with machinery and all accommodation aft. The vessels to have the capacity for handling heavy cargo and with special provision and equipment for the stowage of 20 foot and 40 foot containers on and below deck. The tween decks to be flush to facilitate fork lift operations with steel hydraulically operated hatch covers. The

first of which, to be named "Welsh City", to be delivered in 1968 and the second to be delivered in 1969.

The propulsion was by a pair of recently developed medium speed Ruston AO engines driving a central shaft to give a service speed of 16 knots on a consumption of 30 tons of IFO (1200 secs.) plus about 2 tons Diesel for the Diesel Generators. Alternatively, vessel could run on one engine at a speed of 12 knots. All auxiliaries were electric.

The cargo handling gear consisted of ten conventional derricks of 5/10Tons serving holds Nos.1 to 5; four 22 Ton Valle derricks serving holds Nos. 2, 3, 4 & 5 and a heavy lift derrick of 50 Tons at No.4

The accommodation for officers and ratings, was excellent. All officers enjoying en-suite facilities.

In service and under sea conditions it was unfortunately found that the Ruston engines fitted were extremely heavy on lubricating oils and also needed an inordinate amount of maintenance by the engineering staff. Consequently, the vessel often had to run on one engine whilst the engineers performed maintenance on the other. One must praise the RSL engineers who served aboard the "Welsh City" and her sister ship for their dedication and professionalism in their endeavors to overcome the difficulties experienced with these new engines and make them successful.

However, in due course the RSL Management, guided by the RSL Technical department, decided that it would be prudent to re-engine the vessels. The chosen replacement engines being Pielstick engines. This major engineering took place in Aioi, Japan in the early summer of 1973 under the watchful eye of RSL engineer superintendents.

The "Welsh City" and her sister ship the "Cornish City" was to remain in the company in profitable employment for a further 4 years when they were sold to Panamanian interests and renamed "Jade Star" and "Neptune Star". The latter was still trading in 1997.

Please see page 7 for more on M.V. "Welsh City" (3)

M.V. Welsh City" (4) Gross Tons 39,236

To be reported on in the next issue of "SHIPMATES"

O.J.L.

Stanley Demming 4th Engineer "New Westminster City".

I had to leave the "AVILA STAR" after taking a weeks leave to cure an attack of Dhobi itch caused by Stewards not washing my overalls correctly (leaving soft soap), and having to report to the Shipping Office in Liverpool.

On that day I was told to join a ship in harbour called the "New Westminster City", and I remember sitting in the Pilot boat alongside what I would have called a real rust bucked, expecting a new ship, and being told "look lively Sir! this is your ship". I was unpleasantly surprised as 4th engineer by the very different conditions in the accommodation and mess room compared to the saloon and accommodation in the larger refrigerator ships.

The Engineers themselves were very different, rough diamonds when compared to

those with whom I had previously served - but a happy ship. Apparently we were members of a small convoy bound for Archangel, but with a very strong Navy presence with an aircraft carrier and destroyers.

It was a very uneventful journey and quite strange at this time to arrive safely at Tilbury in October 1941. I was very lucky!

We just missed the tide, late afternoon with a few of us bemoaning our fate outside our accommodation amidships, and very cold miserable weather, when the Chief Steward said "I'll bet nobody would dive over the side for a fiver". Like a fool I said you're on. Since we were light ship the height also was a deterrent. However I put a rope ladder over the side and after stripping to a costume, taking another look at the flotsam drifting past, I dived in, God it was freezing! Coming up I swam for the rope ladder, but was slightly further away, I swam then as hard as I could, but slowly going further away. Luckily one of the firemen (one with brains) climbed over the stacked timber ran aft and threw me a rope which I was just able to catch. With help they pulled me back amidships to the ladder and safety. I was informed then that the undertow was approximately 7 knots. A relief to me and even more particularly the Chief Steward.

Next morning I was called to the Bridge where the old man gave me a verbal lashing - he said it could have meant having to launch the lifeboat. A fine chance since it was in my charge, and usually the only one able to start the engine.

MY SECOND TRIP ON "NEW WESTMINSTER CITY"

We were preparing in Hull for another trip to Russia and this meant Murmansk the only port open. During my leave my younger brother, aged 19, prevailed on me to find him a berth at sea, since he was also in a reserved occupation. I was not too happy after Sir W R Smith agreed to take him as a Junior Engineer and I regretted my actions when my mother and father insisted on telling me how much responsibility I had to accept! They only had two sons! I impressed upon them how safe we would be after the last trip, but how I suffered! From the second day we were attacked constantly by Submarines, Planes, German Destroyers and Torpedo Boats. After each watch I would learn of our losses, and regularly I would see myself, ships in the convoy being torpedoed, as well as being attacked by planes only a short flight from their own bases. On two occasions I saw planes in the bad weather misjudging and diving straight into the sea, and I do not think it was due to anti-aircraft fire.

This was the convoy in which HMS "Trinidad" fired a torpedo which unfortunately through some fate turned and struck the ship killing about 23 sailors. There was a book called "The ship that torpedoed itself". At some stage the convoy dispersed and we did get alongside in Murmansk safely. A few of us went ashore but because of the Air Raids we were eventually turned back only to find that the ship had been hit and I believe most of the "dems" gunners killed. Our accommodation was in a bad way but all the Engineers safe! The Chief Engineer, Mr Charlie A Coart asked for a volunteer to go down with him to sink the ship since we were loaded with

half cwt) I smashed several of the pump crankcases to flood the engine room. We soon left after this "demolition". Sometime afterwards I heard that the Chief got a "George Cross" and I got a mention in despatches. Strangely a short time after I received a cheque from some insurance company for £15 for my efforts!

Trying to get organised I was sent round with about 30 of the crew to a hotel "The Bear Hotel", with a 7 foot tall stuffed bear in the foyer. I asked for food and drink for us all, trying to explain the circumstances and after a long wait was given a glass and a carafe of water! They were not very welcoming but they seemed impervious to death in any form, and for all I know they had very little to give. I think they would have treated the Germans as well.

After sorting ourselves out and knowing that it would be some time before we could get home groups of us were given comfort and every help from the ships in Murmansk, whatever nationality. Every kindness. I well remember the ship that gave me a cabin and the crew who were Chinese, - the steward who knocked on my door each morning with a big smile and welcome "Wakey, Wakey, Blekfast".

Eventually all the Officers were put aboard the "**River Afton**" and the firemen and crew taken on the "**Empire Cowper**" and the "**Harpalion**". After enduring the same problems every day on the way home with constant air attacks we arrived safely in Loch Ewe N W Scotland. I believe that the other two ships with our crew aboard did not get safely home!

We were delighted to get on "terra firma" and were taken on a small coach with a motor cyclist outrider for safety through countryside to the commencement of a small narrow gauge railway at "Auchna sheen" before reaching civilisation at Inverness, then London, and finally home to Birmingham.

My brother and I were both safe, and after my marriage in May and a short survivors leave we joined the "**Leeds City**", still with the Reardon Smith Line !!

After the ship was bombed in Murmansk, the Admiralty sent my mother and father a cable "THE SHIP ON WHICH YOUR SONS ARE SERVING HAS BEEN IN ENEMY ACTION AND THERE IS NO FURTHER NEWS!"

Luckily after a few days I discovered a barbers shop and he sent a cable saying "BOTH SAFE" for 3 cigarets. Nothing ever further from the Admiralty.

Stanley Deeming

Stanley is an Alderman and he also holds the M.B.E.

The "Shipmates Newsletter Team" wish to thank the members who sent Christmas Cards and for the kind messages. "Shipmates" is still short of short stories and we would be grateful if you could sit down and write a page to go in the newsletter.

Editor.

"Welsh City"(2)"

On the 27th June 1961 approximately 1000 miles after leaving Balboa while on passage to Japan, the "Welsh City" Doxford (4 cyls.) main engine crankshaft broke between the No.1 aft side rod crank and the No. 2 main bearing journal. 34 wireless messages were sent from the time of the accident until the vessel arrived at San Pedro 15th July 1961. Below are the messages in Mr. Arthur Thomson's, "Superintendent's Notes" when he attended the vessel at San Pedro, U.S.A. to supervise the repairs.

Radio from vessel Tuckerton, revd. on am 27th June. (From **Welsh City** via ship Tuckerton)

MAIN CRANKSHAFT FRACTURED WAY OF NUMBER TWO MAIN BEARING THROUGH NUMBER ONE UNIT AFT SIDE ROD WEB FRACTURED OPEM 1-½ INCHES STOP POSITION 0946N 9146W EXAMINATION FURTHER.

Radio from Master, Portishead, revd. am 27th June. FUTHER EXAMINATION REVEALS FRACTURE EXTENDS TO WITHIN 3 INCHES OF FULL WIDTH OF AFTER FACE OF WEB COMPLETELY THROUGH WEB AND 4 INCHES DIAGONALLY INTO CRANKPIN STOP CRANK PIN SET UP OVER FRACTURE CONSIDER TEMPARY REPAIRS NOT POSSIBLE THRU UNABLE TO USE ENGINE.

Wireless message from Vessel Portishead, revd. pm 27th June.

3PM 27TH :- 10.20N 92.07S SET 322 DRIFT 39 MILES IN 24 HOURS

Wireless message to Master, sent am 28th June:

HAVE ARRANGED TUG SEARANGER SANFRANCISCO PROCEED IMMEDIATLY.

Wireless message to Master, sent pm 29th June.

NAME MAIN BEARING AFFECTED AND CONFIRM DAMAGE HERE CONFINED TO STUDS AND NUTS STOP WILL APPRECIATE ALL POSSIBLE EFFORTS YOUR REMOVAL DETUNER AND NUMBER ONE ENGINE PARTS STOP SUGGEST YOU CONTACT STARCRESENT THRU INTERMEDIARY SHIP OR COAST STATION.

Wireless to Master, sent pm 30th June.

INSTRUCTED STARCRESENT TAKE YOU TO SANPEDRO WHERE SUPERINTENDENT THOMPSON ATTENDING

Radio from vessel, Portishead, recd. am 1st July. REFERENCE SANPEDRO REPAIR PORT SUMMER MARKS WILL APPLY BLADINGS HAVE ENDORSED TRANSHIPMENT NOT PERMITTED PLEASE ADVISE

Wireless to Master, sent am 3rd July. CONFIRM YOU IN CONTACT STARCRESENT

Radio from Master, Portishead recd. pm 5th July. CONTACT MADE VIA LOSANGELES/KOK OUR POSITION GIVEN DAILY STOP STARCRESEBNT ONLY HAD R/T HE ALSO INFORMS UNABLE DF ANY HOMING SIGNALS ON OUR FREQUENCY STOP INDICATES ETA EARLY WEDNESDAY.

Radio from vessel, portishead ,recd. pm 5th July.

STARCRESENT ARRIVED 0045 GMT FIFTH POSITION 11.33N 94.59W ON TOW 0100

Cable to Master 8.7.61 ADVISE PROGRESS ENGINE PARTS DISMANTLEED AND BOILER CONSUMPTION USING EVAPORATOR FOR DAILY REQUIREMENTS STOP ADVISE POSITION DAILY

Radio from Master Portishead, red pm 9th July. NUMBER ONE ENGINE PISTON SIDE ROD BEARINGS AND WATER SERVICE OUT LINER READY FOR LIFTING STOP ALL PIPEWORK WAY NUMBER ONE AND TWO ENGINES REMOVED DETURNER SLACKED OFF HELD IN PLACE FORWARD HALF CAMSHAFT REMOVED STOP NOW WORKING NOMBOR TWO PISTONS STOP BOILER CONSUMPTION ONEPOINTONE TONS POSITION 1900 EIGHT 1834 10417 TOWAGE PRECEEDING SMOOTHLY.

On arrival the Bethelhem Steel Company, carried out repairs. In the U.K. Doxford Engines men worked out calculations to give to Lloyds Classification Society, after which they agreed that the engine could be run on 3 cylinders without doing damage to the engine. The No. 1 engine was completely dismantled also No.1 scavenge pump which was driven by the No. 1 crank. The Detuner was taken ashore and dismantled to see if any springs were broken but this was found in good order. No.2 main journal was dressed up bearings were remetalled and crankshaft realigned to Mr. Jim Bailey Doxford's representative satisfaction, who was in attendance. The scavenge air trunk, air to the start valve, fuel oil, and lubricating oil supply for the No. 1 cylinder were blanked off. The vessel sailed from San Pedro on 27th July, Mr. Thompson sailed with her to U.K.. The "Welsh City" ran on 3 cylinders speed 10 knots on 7.5 tons/day, engine 72 RPM. She called Honolulu for bunkers, then to Yokohama and Kobe to discharge the cargo. Went to Australia, loaded a cargo of grain, called Cape Town for bunkers, on to Belfast and London to discharge cargo. Then to Greenwells Drydock, Sunderland arriving 15th Dec. to fit the new crankshaft.

Alec Osborne

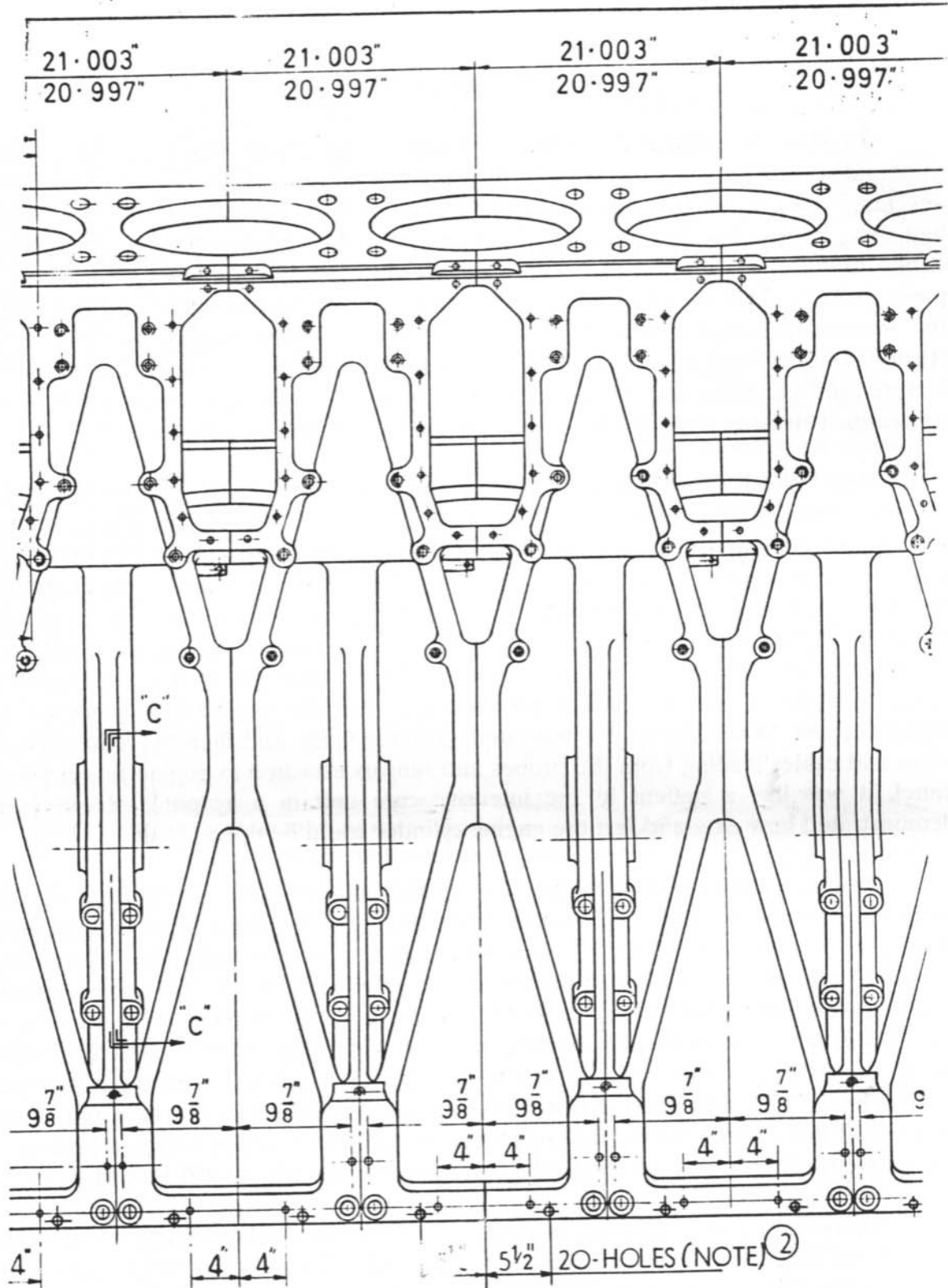
M.V. "Welsh City" (3).

In the late 1960's when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, to help the shipbuilding industry the labour government decided to put some money into new developments. Ruston & Hornsby Ltd., of Lincoln, was one of the companies that had support from the MOD and then the Ministry of Technology to developing a two stroke diesel engine called the "AO Engine" which would produce sufficient horse power suitable for driving large ships. The two main men who designed and developed the Ruston AO engine were Dr. Watson (later to become Managing Director of Ruston Diesels) and Dr. Bradshaw. The engine frame work was one of the main features and the struts etc., were designed so that no strut would be under 3 tons per square inch stress at any time when the engines was running at full power.

The "Welsh City" was ordered to be built by Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd., Glasgow, and the shipbuilder offered to fit in the ship twin 9 cylinder in line Ruston AO engines, driving the propeller shaft through a German built Renk gearbox. This was offered at a reasonable cost with many guarantees. On the 18th February 1968, Mr. Major, R.S.L. Technical Director, Mr. Arthur Thompson, and myself went on a two day visit to Ruston & Hornsby Engine Works, Lincoln, to see the test engine a 4 cylinder AO on test. Also to see the the cylinders opened out, to view the condition of the cylinder heads, liners and pistons etc., after the engine had been on an endurance test. When the engine was running it was noisy, and there were all sorts of wires and cables leading from the probes and sensors attached to engine to a monitor panel, it was like a patient in the intensive care unit in a hospital. It was also demonstrated how easy and fast the engine cylinder could be opened out.

Production of the AO engines was started and the first two engines off the production line were fitted in "Welsh City". The two 9 cylinder engines, bore 362 m.m. were to produce 4,500 Brake Horsepower each, when the engines were running at 450 revolutions per minute, giving a total of 9,000 B.H.P.. A "Metalflex" flexible coupling was fitted between the engine drive shafts and the German made Renk gear box. There was a hydraulic operated clutch for each engine drive shaft contained inside the gearbox consisting of carbon steel plates and the discs were bronzed friction lined. The main shaft thrust block was also contained in the gear box. Each engine had three Brown Boveri turbocharges one blower to supply three cylinders. The propeller shaft turned at 93 R.P.M. when the engines ran at 450 R.R.M.

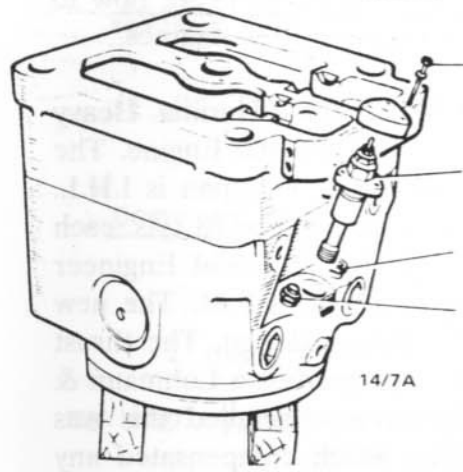
There are many Engineer members of "Shipmates" who worked on the AO engines and they can tell better stories about them than I can. When the vessel was in Japan or the United Kingdom a Superintendent Engineer was usually in attendance. A squad of Ruston and Hornsby men worked on the vessel when in the U.K.. Tokai Marine Engineers fitters from Kobe worked on the engines when the vessel called Japan. These squads worked all hours on the engines when in port, changing cylinder liners, over hauling pistons to keep the engines going. It was an endless job for the ships Engineers grinding in exhaust valves. Chief Engineer Danny Trigg told me that it was useless to grind the valves in while at sea because of the vibration from the main engines this had to be done in port to get a perfect valve seat. The manpower was tied while in port grinding in valves, instead of doing other import engine work.



The "Welsh City" AO Engine Frame.

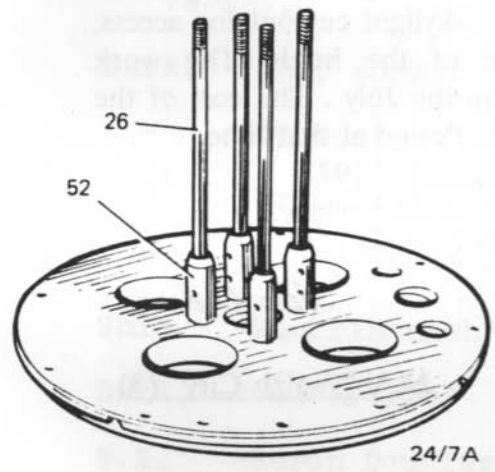
I believe that Dr. Watson got an Industrial Award for his engine frame design. He thought highly of the Reardon Smith Line Engineers, for all the feed back they gave him and his team to run the engines. Dr. Harry Watson OBE, CEng, FIMarE, crossed the bar on 11th January 1998 at the age of 68.

Below are drawings of some parts of the Ruston AO Engine



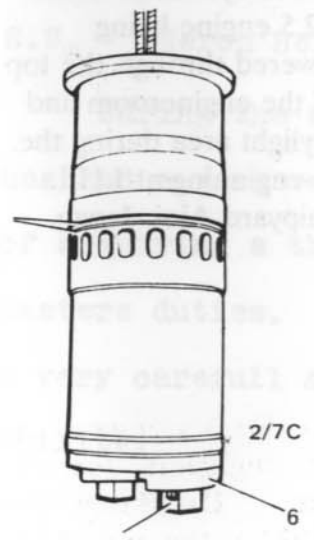
14/7A

Cylinder Head



24/7A

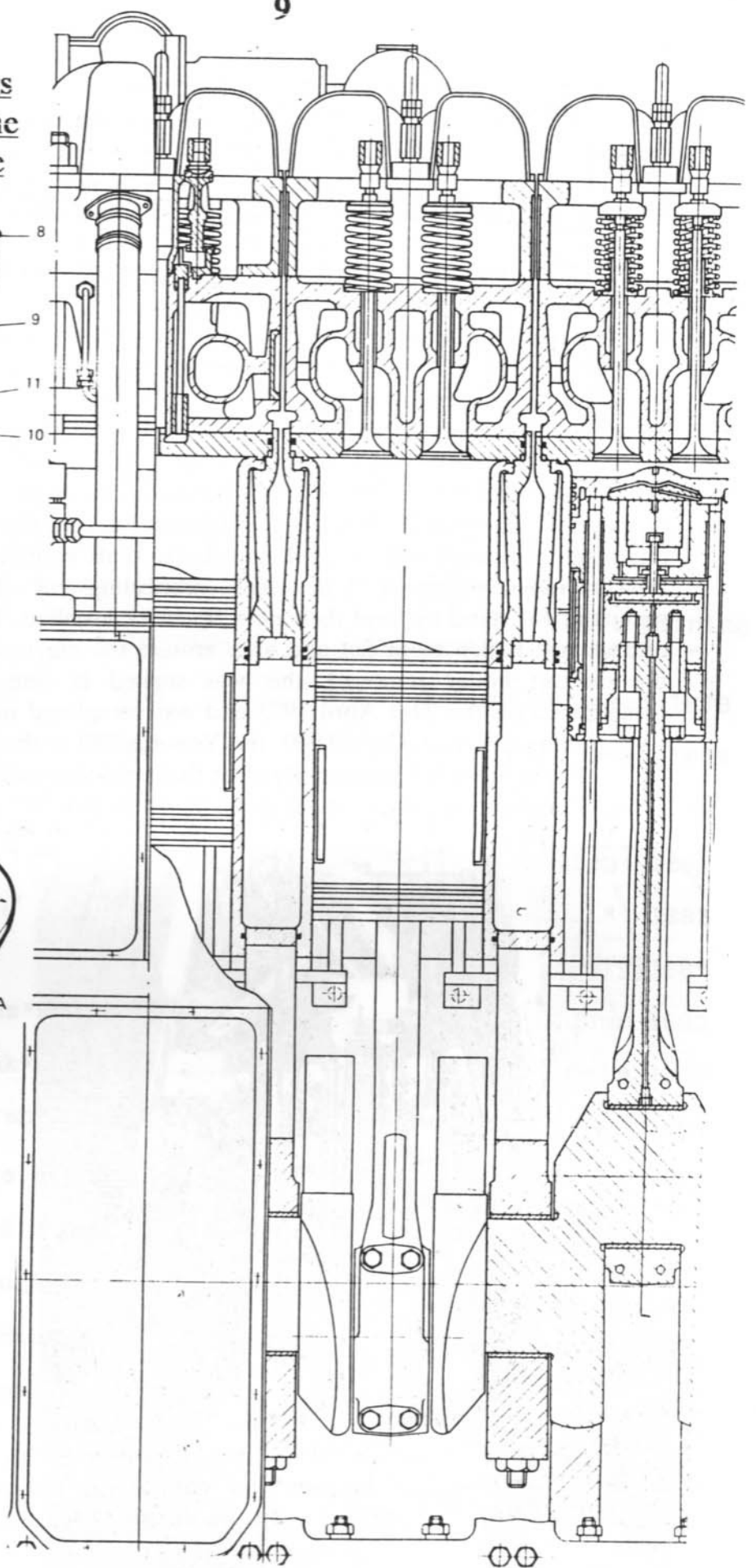
Cyl. Head Flame plate



2/7C

6

Cylinder Liner



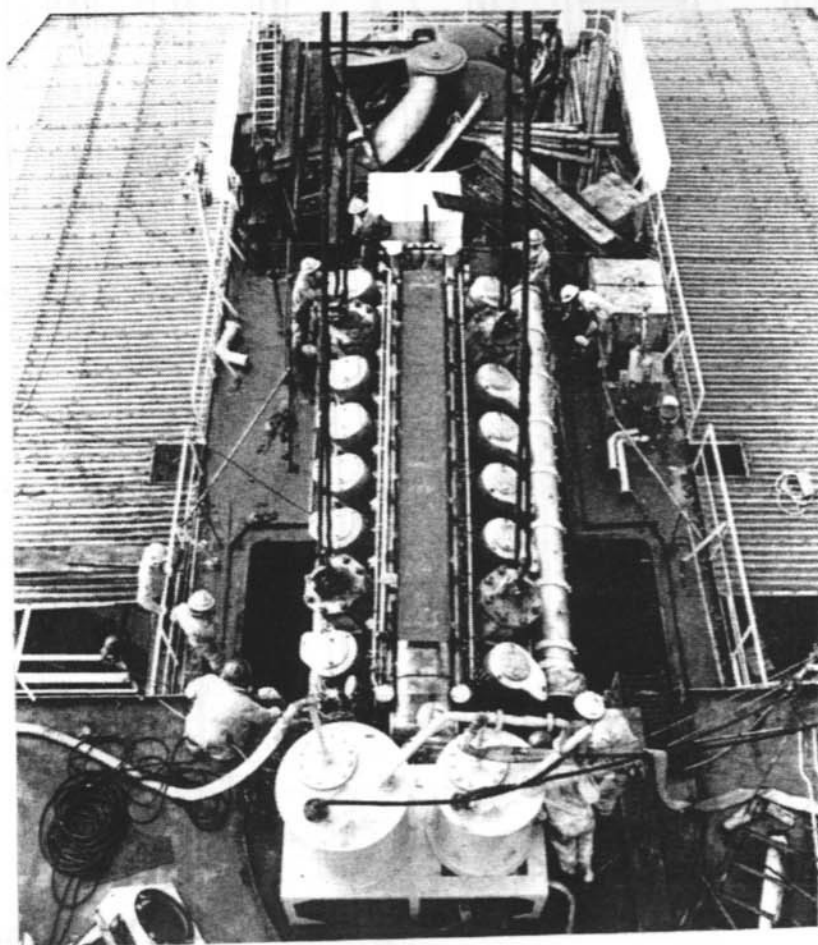
Longitudinal arrangement of AO Engine

The AO engine was a failure. The unreliability of the engines causing delays and loss of earnings, also the lubrication consumption being very heavy, on some occasions there would be a loss of 500 gallons of lub. oil a day, a nightmare for the Chief Engineers. With the continuous supply of spare parts and these being flown to all parts of the world at a great cost, the company decided to replace the engines.

The two AO engines were replaced at Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries Co., Ltd., Shipyard, Aioi, Japan, with a single S.E.M.T Pielstic Engine. The Pielstic Engine is a French design engine and one of the licensees in Japan is I.H.I. The "Welsh City" engine, a Pielstic K162.5F engine, 4 stroke vee engine (8 cyls. each side). This was manufactured at I.H.I Engine Works, Aioi, the Technical Engineer there was Mr. Fugita. The engine developed 9,600 B.H.P. at 500 R.P.M. The new gearbox was made by I.H.I works in Tokyo, this was of a British design. The thrust block was installed inside the gearbox. Between the engine and gearbox a Lohmann & Stolterfoht "Pneumaflex KA" highly Elastic Friction Clutch was installed this was pneumatic operated with a torsional elastic shaft coupling which compensated any axial or radial alignment. 2 new M.E. lubricating and 2 new jacket water cooling pumps (1 for stand by) and their new pipework installed. The ship's funnel was taken off, exhaust boiler room flat and area around the engine skylight cut out for access, the exhaust boiler removed, this was stowed in one of the holds. The work commenced on the 24th April 1973 and was completed in the July. The cost of the re-engining was Yen 324,550,000 the Yen was 780 to the Pound at that time.

The ship traded successfully after that until she was sold in 1977.

The ship's speed was about 16 knots on 30 tons of fuel oil per day.



Alec Osborne

M.V. "Welsh City" (3)

Photograph showing the 16 cylinder Pielstic K2.5 engine being lowered through the top of the engine room and skylight area during the re-engining at I.H.I. Shipyard Aioi, Japan.

Mr. John Reardon Smith has kindly given me a copy of the sea service reference of Sir William Reardon Smith (Baronet) during his service with the Hogarth Shipping Co..

Copy of Reference

Hugh Hogarth.

Private

I certify that Mr William Reardon Smith was exclusively in my employment from March 1878 until March 1896 in the different capacities and vessels as undernoted:-

Vessel.	G R Tonnage.	Capacity.	Date joining March -
Bark, "Mary Hogarth"	625	Chief Officer	March 1878
" "Cyprus"	520	"	June 1879
" "Drumadoon"	900	"	June 1880
" " "	"	Master	Sept 1881
Ship. "Machrihanish"	1758	"	" 1883
Bark. "Ochertyre"	1354	"	July 1885
S.S. "Baron Douglas"	2700	"	June 1890
S.S. "Baron Elebank"	1772	"	Octr 1892
S.S. "Baron Belhaven"	2356	"	" 1894

During the above eighteen years in my service Captain Smith has had a very varied experience and has had unusual opportunities of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the various features of a ship-masters duties. He is of strictly trustworthy and sober habits, a very carefull & capable shipmaster and possesses keen Business ability.

(sgd) Hugh Hogarth.

Managing Owner.

Mr John Reardon Smith has kindly submitted the following statement that was written by one of the Reardon Smith Line office staff when the office was at Merthyr House in 1923. The statement has been retyped from the original statement.

REARDON SMITH 1923

The firm was known as Sir W.R. Smith & Sons Ltd and had their office at Merthyr House, James St, Cardiff (second floor)

The Directors were: - Sir W.R. Smith, Bart., Mr Willie Smith, Mr Douglas Smith, Mr A J Popham (Secretary), Mr W G Liley (Superintendent) and Mr D A Low (Stores). The last three named all married daughters of Sir William. Mr Liley and Mr Low were previously in New York and South Africa respectively.

Mr Dug was the driving force as unfortunately Mr Willie suffered from ill health and spent the greater part of the winter in Switzerland.

Sir William lived in Cornborough, Ty Gwyn Rd and also had a bungalow of the same name in Porthcawl. Mr Willie lived in Barry, Mr Dug and Mr Popham in Ty Draw Rd but I forget where Mr Liley and Mr Low lived.

Mr Dug's principal assistant was Bertie Dyer and also in his room was Frank Ward. I think Miss Joyce Gedrych was his secretary. Miss Shilson was secretary to Sir William and she also paid us on Fridays.

As I said Mr Liley was in charge of the Superintendents and a resident Super was Captain A E Tamlyn and the travelling Supers were Mr T Major, Mr ? Lee and Mr T K Watson. Also in the Supers department were Jake Morgan and Joe Niolett.

Under Mr Low in the Stores was Harry Caswell and later on Phil Phillips.

The Chartering Clerk was ? Groves.

Madge Shiach, Winnie Hillier and one of the Wood girls were typists and the other Wood girl was Comptometer Operator.

Minnie Niblett (sister of Joe) and Phyllis Evans were the Cashiers.

Freda Sage was telephone operator - there were three lines 5117/8/9 and later on there was a direct line to London office which was in Billiter St and under the charge of T Hall and H F Rolfe.

Miss Caines was in charge of the Shares department.

The biggest department was the Accounts Department. This was in charge of John Henry Wilkins who was quite portly and wore a winged collar and bow tie. He had a cigarette holder (we were allowed to smoke after 5.30 pm, office hours were 9 to 6).

The rest of the staff in accounts consisted of: -

Steve Randall (a relative of Sir William and who came from Appledore).

Reg Randell whose sister married Mr Dug.

Spencer Kemp, who did the "Portage Bills"

W C Pimm

C J Bass

? Jones (he was known as Pan Yan for he was always in such a pickle!)

Reg Watkins

Fred Ward (brother of Frank)

Jimmy James

Myself

Later were joined by Cecil Devereux and Leslie Howells and then by Douglas Stuart who came from San Francisco.

There was an office in San Francisco in charge of J C Moore.

Our Agents in Liverpool were A Coker & Co., in Glasgow, Hogarth; Newcastle F C Strick, Genoe Harry Coe & Clerici; South Africa, Parry, Leon & Hayhoe; South America, Strauss or whoever the charteres demanded; Japan Mitsui,Bishe, Shoji Kaisha.

In Australia I think it was a firm called Bunge.

Most of the ships were chartered for a voyage, the favourite one being of course coal to the Argentine, grain back. But they ranged far and wide to the Pacific Ocean, China Seas, East Indies and latterly a trade was developed between Vancouver and the UK/Cont. Some ships were on Time Charter and Sir W R S & Sons had n o control over their movements, except as limited by the terms of the Charter.

The Auditors were W J Pallot and one or other of their staff were in the Reardon Smith office practically all the year.

S.S. "Vernon City"

In the June 2002 issue No. 23 of "Shipmates" was Captain Louttit's report of the sinking of the S.S."Vernon" which was sunk by one torpedo from U boat 172 in the South Atlantic on 28th June 1943. To remind you of the report I quote a part of Captain Malcolm Louttit's report Paragraph 7 and Paragraph 17 about the survivors in the lifeboat which read:-

Paragraph 7.

I impressed upon my crew that if the submarine came along they were to say that the Captain had gone down with the ship. Within a few minutes the submarine surfaced on the starboard side of the ship and closed my lifeboat. We were addressed by what appeared to be the 2nd in Command, who spoke to us in perfect English, and asked for the Captain. My crew, in a very convincing manner, shouted that he had gone down with the ship. At this, the German Officer asked for one of the sailors to go on board. Cadet Hodges, a young apprentice, who was sitting in the bow of the boat, immediately volunteered and was pulled on board. There were two ratings standing on deck, one with a Tommy Gun. The following conversation took place:-

German Officer	Are you English or American?
Cadet Hodges	English
German Officer	What was the name of your Ship?
Cadet Hodges	"Santa Clara Valley" (a ship that was sunk a little while back belonging to the same company)
German Officer	What was your cargo?
Cadet Hodges	Coal and Coke
German Officer	Where did you come from?
Cadet Hodges	The North East Coast of England.
German Officer	Newcastle? Where were you bound.
Cadet Hodges	Round the Cape Horn to the West Coast of South America

German Officer	What course were you steering?
Cadet Hodges	S.E.
German Officer	I saw you altering course, are you sure there are no Officers there? (meaning the lifeboat)
Cadet Hodges	Positive. You can go and have a look if you like.

Cadet Hodges was then taken to the conning tower and on the way was told that he might be taken Prisoner Of War. The Commander was informed of what the Cadet had said, and made him write down the name of the ship on a piece of paper. The Cadet was also asked some personal questions, such as, "What is your rank", "Where do you live, where were you educated, name, age, etc." On being asked his opinion of the war, Hodges said quite frankly that he thought that although Germany had the best of it at first, the Allies now had the upper hand. The German Officer asked if the boat had sufficient food and water, and told the Cadet to steer West. Cadet Hodges was then put back into the lifeboat, after the German Officer had shaken hands with him and wished him the best of luck. He expressed his regrets at the Captain going down with the ship, and said he was sorry that he had to leave us so far from land, but hoped that we would make land safely. All this took about half hour.

Paragraph 17. All my crew behaved well, but I think Cadet Hodges was particularly outstanding. Although aged only 17-18, he showed great courage in promptly volunteering to board the submarine, fully knowing there was a possibility of being kept Prisoner-of-War. Despite the shock he had, after being torpedoed, he displayed great initiative and quick wit in misleading the Submarine Commander by giving false answers to his questions.

Captain Brian Hodges from Abergele, Nr. Colwyn Bay, who has been a member of "Shipmates" since it began in 1996, writes and points out to me that he was the brave Cadet Hodges who went aboard the U boat 172 and was interrogated by the German Officer. Cadet Brian Hodges received a Mention in Despatches from Winston Churchill for the episode with the German Submarine.

Captain Hodges left the Reardon Smith Line in about 1946 and joined the Elder & Fyffes Shipping Line rising in rank to Command at the age of 32 and serving with that company until his retirement with 26 years in Command. He also obtained an Honorary Panama Canal Pilots Licence, transmitting the Canal in excess of 120 times. He thinks he is the only person in the U.K. to hold this Licence.

He is now enjoying his retirement in Abergele, and involved with Charity Work for the Glen Clwyd Hospital. Him and his wife are very active with the local Rambling Club.

His lifelong friend Captain David Jones from Swansea who was introduced to "Shipmates" by Captain Brian Hodges and who's survival story about the crew from the S.S."Quebec City" was in the last newsletter, issue No. 25, did mention this in his letter to me, but I did not have sufficient space in the last newsletter to include it, for which I apologize.

Editor.

New Members.

Roy Burston has introduced Ken Colvin from Cardiff to "Shipmates" Mr. Colvin was an electrician with the Reardon Smith Line in the early days sailing with Captain Brice Thomas, Captain Doughty and Captain Ginger Harries. He knew and worked with Willy Speight who was the Electrical Superintendent who died in 1968. Ken was sailing on the M.V. "Welsh City" (2) in 1958 Mr. Archie Bryan was the Chief Engineer.

I have dug out a letter written on Saturday 12 April 1958 by Mr. Tom Watson Technical Director to Superintendent Arthur Thompson who was attending the M.V. "Welsh City" (2) at Glasgow, two paragraphs reads:-

"Regarding Electrician K.P. Colvin, we understand that winches will not be worked in Glasgow and, therefore, Mr. Colvin would like leave from Glasgow to rejoin at Birkenhead. We leave you to arrange this. Meantime, Mr. Colvin has asked if there is an increase in his salary on account of vessel carrying a Second Electrician. We shall be glad if you will advise Mr. Colvin that the "Welsh City" is a single handed and Mr. Hurford is only there for the voyage for the purpose of gaining sea experience and his presence will not make her a two handed vessel.

We note that he has so far been paid at the Third Year (maximum) rate for a single handed ship, namely, £52. 3. 6. per month. We have now established himself with us and we are quite prepared for him to come on our own scale which will give him £53. 17. 6. per month, as from the commencement of the fourth coming voyage and his wages will be increased to £55. 17. 6 once he has a total of six years sea service. Will you please advise him of this, also advise Captain B.D. Thomas, so that he can adjust his wages in the Articles."

John Reardon Smith has introduced Peter McKenna from Belfast to "Shipmates" as a Christmas present. Peter and John sailed together on the "King City" in 1958 and they met up again, in February 2002, after 43 years.

Mike Barrall has returned to become a member of "Shipmates". Mike lives in Newport, Gwent, and is an independent Surveyor and is kept very busy attending ships in the South Wales area.

Chief Engineer Tony Edwards from Blackwood, Gwent, is back with ^{C/S} again, he used to visit Tim Lawson Office, regularly when he was alive and was a member of "Shipmates", but lost touch after Tim's death. He is working as Chief Engineer for The Great Fleet.

We welcome aboard David Wedlake who lives in Bristol. David was a Reardon Smith Line Engineer Apprentices rising through the ranks and was Chief Engineer in the company

Malcom Bennington has written to say that any shipmates who wishes to can contact him at :- 28 Murry Avenue, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 9SF.

e mail address:- Manoolito@btopenworld.com

The Mexican Connection

At the recent reunion, I think one of the most frequent phrases I heard used was "Do you remember that time when...?" Ian Stutt reminded me of one such occasion aboard the TMM vessel "Elena"

Things never went quite as one was brought up to expect when serving aboard the Mexican ships; not least, from a Masters point of view, in having agents respond to the normal requests of ships' business. We had sailed from Yokohama, with the usual mixture of general cargo, bound for Ensenada. Of late, that had proved to be one of the more organised ports since "Pancho", the agent, had recently moved there from Tampico, where many of us had appreciated his efforts at "getting things done".

During the ocean passage, the Chief Engineer suffered an injury to his hand that would require medical attention on arrival. Soon afterwards, three of the deck crew started to exhibit signs of jaundice, and they too would require attention.

So, along with the 48 hour eta cable to the agency at Ensenada, I included the necessary cash required, the attendance of the ships chandler etc and added that the Chief Engineer would require hospital treatment and that I also had on board three cases of Hepatitis.

I was somewhat surprised on arrival to find that "Pancho" had moved back to the east coast and that his place had been taken by a lady agent who had transferred to Ensenada from Mazatlan. Along with her assistant, they entered my cabin with the usual entourage of port officials. They both looked a little apprehensive, but it was the assistant who soon said to me "Captain, we have the money you requested, the Chandler will be aboard soon, and the ambulance is at the gangway for the Chief Engineer. But we have a big problem. We have been through all the manifests many times but we cannot find the 3 cases of Hepatitis for Ensenada"!! *Captain M. E. Jones.*

Obituary

I have had the sad news that our member Charles Boyd from Woolton, Liverpool, crossed the bar on the 27th July 2002. In 1950 Charles sailed on the S.S. "Leeds City" and wrote a couple of articles in "Shipmates" about his experiences about the time he served on that vessel. Charles was the Honorary Secretary of the Liverpool Branch of the T.S. Vindicatrix Association.

We send our deepest sympathy to his wife Jeanette and her family.

Captain Jack Smith, Reardon Smith Stores Superintendent crossed the bar on the 2nd January 2003 at the age of 90 years old. The Funeral Service was held at Thornhill Crematorium, Cardiff, on 9th January 2003. Our members John Reardon Smith, Roy Burston, Captain Oliver Lindsay and myself attended the funeral Service. Jack Smith was the son of Captain John Harry Smith a nephew to Sir William Reardon Smith (Baronet), Jack Smith, has everyone called him, worked for the Reardon Smith Line most of his life except for the time when he served in the Royal Navy Reserve. After the war he worked at RSL head office as Stores Superintendent.

Our deepest Sympathy goes to his wife, his daughter Rosemary and Family.