



# SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

Issue No.30 March 2004.

## *This edition is dedicated to the M.S. "CORNISH CITY"(3)*

A ship of 4,952 GRT., built to the order and specifications of the Reardon Smith Line by the Furness Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. of Haverton Hill. After satisfactory trials she was delivered to the Leeds Shipping Co Ltd in 1937 and named "**Cornish City**", the 3<sup>rd</sup> ship in the history of Reardon Smith's to have borne the name. This vessel was to be the last acquisition by the company before World War 2.

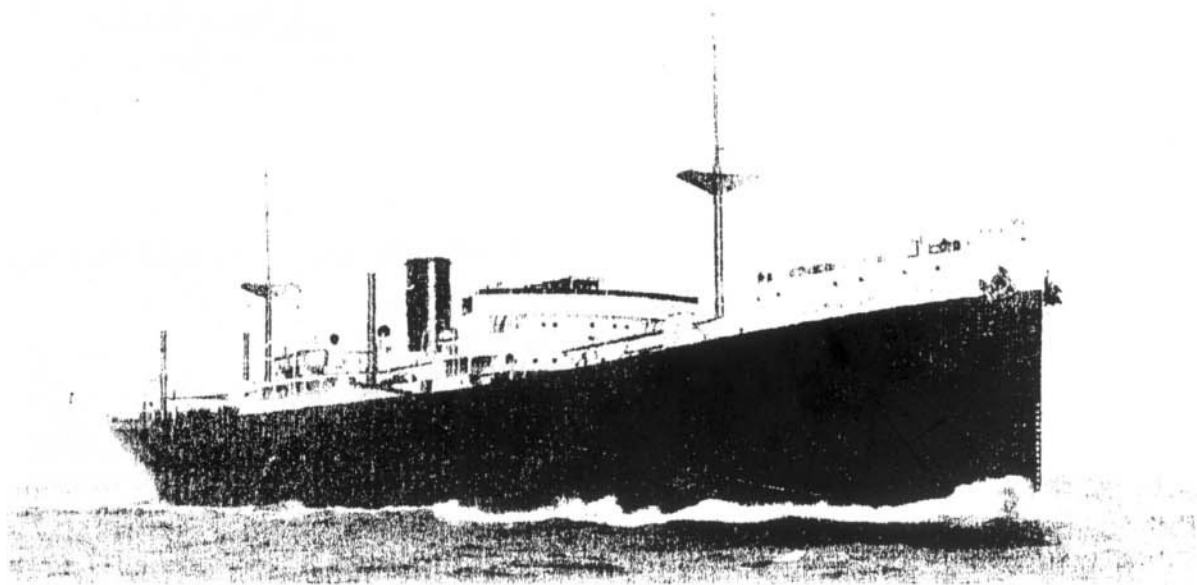


Photo taken in 1937 of the M.S. "Cornish City" under going predelivery speed trials off Tees Bay.

This vessel in the period prior to the commencement of hostilities served the company world wide. During the war her service speed of 12.5 knots with a maximum of 14 Knots allowed her to join the faster convoys.

She sailed from Sydney, Cape Breton, on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1940 under the command of Captain John O'Neill as Commodore ship of Convoy HX84. At the time this was to be the largest and fastest East bound North Atlantic convoy of the war. In that perilous period, such were the many requirements of the Royal Navy that the convoy's sole escort was the AMC **HMS "Jervis Bay"**, ex Aberdeen and Commonwealth liner of 1922 vintage under the command of Captain E. Fogarty Fagan R.N. She was capable of steaming at 15 knots and was armed with seven vintage 5.9 inch guns. The convoy was joined at a pre determined position by ships which had sailed from other U.S. Eastern Seaboard ports and from ports in the Caribbean, enlarging the Convoy to a total of 38 ships,

This was the convoy that on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 1940 encountered the German Pocket Battleship "Admiral Sheer" under the command of Captain Krancke. The resulting battle which ensued has been recorded in various publications. The gallant action, bravery and heroic sacrifice of Captain Fogarty Fagan and his crew of the AMC HMS "Jervis Bay" gave the convoy vital time in which to scatter. The "Jervis Bay" and 5 Merchant ships were sunk the last of which was the older sister ship of the "Cornish City" the M.S. "Fresno City". 31 ships of the 38 in convoy HX84 reached U.K. ports safely. However, a great price was paid in the loss of life and suffering, 206 Merchant Seamen and 186 men the Royal Navy were killed. Lest we forget the price of war..

**Loss of the "Cornish City"** She sailed from Durban on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1943 loaded with a full cargo of coal for Aden. Her good fortune ran out at 1000 hours on the 29<sup>th</sup> July when sailing independently she was torpedoed and sunk by the German U177 SE of Madagascar. Tragically the Master, Captain Henry Issac, and 36 of his crew perished, there were only 6 survivors one of which was the Chief Officer K. Germany whose **Official Report follows.** (O.J.L.)

### M.V. "CORNISH CITY" 1943

Sunk by 1 torpedo from U-boat No.177 on the 29th July 1943. Sank in 2 minutes

Chief Officer Mr Germaney report to the Admiralty the following report..

1. We were bound from Durban to Aden, loaded with 9,600 tons of coal. The ship was armed with 1 - 4", 1 - 12 pdr., 2 Oerlikons, 2 Twin Marlins, 2 Twin Hotchkiss, 2 F.A.M.S., and 4 P.A.C. Rockets. The crew, including 4 Naval and 2 Army Gunners, numbered 43, of whom 37 are missing, (Master, 2nd and 3rd Officers, 3 Apprentices, 3 Radio Officers, Chief, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Engineers, 2 Assistant Engineers, 1 Electrician, 3 Naval and 2 Army Gunners, the rest crew). All Confidential Books and Wireless Codes were locked in a weighted box and bag respectively, and went down with the ship, Degaussing was on.

2. We left Durban at 1000 Local Time, on the 22nd July, in Convoy D.N.53, consisting of five ships, (two of which were recalled to Durban) with an escort of two Armed Trawlers. At 1800 on the 24th July the convoy dispersed, after which we proceeded independently for Aden. No warnings of submarines operating in the area were received, and nothing of incident occurred until the 29th July, when at 0935, in position 27° 22' S. - 52° 10' E., steering 002° at 9¼ knots, we were struck by one torpedo from a U-boat. The weather was fine, clear with good visibility; there was a moderate sea and swell, and N.N.E. Wind, Force 4.

3. No-one saw the track of the torpedo which struck with a violent explosion on the port side, in the vicinity of the bulkhead between the engine room and No.4 hold. Not a great amount of water was thrown up, but a sheet of flame shot into the air, to a height of about 150 ft., and there was a strong smell of burnt cordite. The vessel remained upright, but settled rapidly by the stern. The engine room flooded immediately, the port lifeboat and part of the boat deck were destroyed.

4. I was on the port side of the lower bridge at the time of the explosion,

talking to the Master, and as it was obvious that the vessel was sinking rapidly, I hurried to the boat deck, where I found some of the crew had already lowered the starboard lifeboat; it was alongside, still a few seconds later I felt the vessel shudder violently. Out of the corner of my eye I could see the Captain standing on the starboard side of the lower bridge; he shouted to me that the vessel was going, and as he did so the bows reared up, as if the ship's back was broken, whilst the boat deck remained level, and I just had time to put on my life jacket and tie one string when the vessel sank beneath me. As I went under I caught sight of the starboard lifeboat, which was still attached to the ship by the painter, being dragged back on board with six men in it. When I broke surface the ship and lifeboat had disappeared.

5. The Bo'sun had managed to release the starboard forward raft, which he jumped on to as the vessel sank, he subsequently picked an Assistant Engineer out of the water, and about half an hour later I was taken on board. As I was climbing on to the raft I caught sight of the submarine surfaced on the starboard side of where the ship had sunk. The Commander of the submarine was standing on the conning tower, so I hastily slipped off my jacket, hoping that he would not see I was an Officer. At this time there was the Bo'sun, Assistant Engineer and myself on the raft.

6. The Commander ordered us alongside the submarine, but as we were unable to pull across the submarine closed the raft. The submarine was a modified type of the German U-40 Class, with a 4" gun forward and an anti-aircraft gun abaft the conning tower. It was in perfect condition, with no sign of rust anywhere, and was camouflaged with light and dark grey horizontal stripes; the deck was painted stone colour. There were no emblems on the conning tower, and the submarine was not flying an ensign. The Commander was about 50 years of age, 5ft 10 ins in height with dark hair and a heavy dark beard. He wore a German Naval peaked cap with a heavy coat, and spoke very good English with a German accent. There was another man standing on the conning tower who did not speak at all; he wore a high buttoned-up jacket and everywhere the Commander went, this man waled behind him. In my opinion he was an agent of the Gestapo. There were four other men on the conning tower, who, during the interrogation, continually searched the sky through binoculars. The rest of the crew were all very young men and wore a khaki uniform similar to that of the American soldier, forage cap, open-neck shirt and shorts, patrol jackets, khaki socks and canvas shoes.

7. The Commander first enquired the name of our ship, and I asked him if it really mattered, to which he replied, "What is the name of your ship, that is what I want to know," so I told him. He then asked the port of registry, which I also refused to answer, but the Bo'sun called out "London", actually the vessel's port of registry was Bideford. The Commander then said, "Did you see a Liberty ship this morning, I believe they call them "Ugly Ducklings", to which I replied "No," and he said, "You could not have been keeping a very good look-out." Actually we had sighted a Liberty ship about ten minutes before being torpedoed. He asked where we were from and when I did not reply said,

"I know you are from Durban." Three times he asked where we were bound, on each occasion I did not answer, he then asked the cargo carried, and as the sea was covered with coal dust, it was useless to say I did not know. He again asked, "Where were you bound", and I replied I did not know; "why don't you know", he said, "if you are an officer of the ship," (he having seen me with my jacket on), so I replied that the Captain only gave us a 24 hours run in advance. He told us that he would send a wireless message giving our position, but at the time I did not really believe that he would do so. I asked him if he could give us some cigarettes, to which he replied "No", adding, "I don't know when I shall get back to Germany." He then wished us Good Luck, and at approximately 1030 steamed away on the surface, in a W.N.W. direction, without offering any assistance.

8. During the interrogation I had sighted another raft about 200 yards away, with three men on it, so after the departure of the submarine we rowed across to this raft, which was of the square type, ours being a new Dab raft. These three men transferred to our raft, together with all their provisions and water. About 1400 another "Dab" raft suddenly appeared in the water; no-one had noticed it before, so we lashed the two "Dab" rafts together. We had 29 gallons of water, and I considered that we would have enough food and water for more than 100 days. There was a N'ly wind blowing, and it was therefore useless to rig the sail, so I streamed the sea anchor and "lay to" for that night. The following morning, July 30th, we breakfasted on milk tablets, chocolates, biscuits, and I issued each man with 2 oz. of water. At 1130 one of the men called my attention to an object on the Southern horizon, and later we saw that it was a Catalina aircraft. I tried to light a red smoke float, without success, and one of the men thought they might work if kept on the raft, so he volunteered to hold the flare in his hand, but still it would not work. We then waved the orange screens and yellow flag, eventually being sighted by the aircraft, which was then about five miles away.

9. Until 1500 that day the 'plane circled overhead. At one time he dropped a parcel on a parachute, which unfortunately landed too far away and we were unable to reach it. Later he dropped some cigarettes tied to a "Mae West", which we recovered. Inside was a note saying that a 'plane was directing an H.M. Ship to our rescue. At about 1500 the 'plane departed. During the night of the 30/31st we set watches; everybody behaved very well, but they were rather depressed and wanted to sleep, so I took the 12 - 4 watch. At approximately 0320 on the 31st I saw flashing in the sky and later recognised the "V.E." signal, used by the Royal Navy when signalling Merchant Ships. I was doubtful about acknowledging the signal in case the submarine was still in the vicinity, but I decided that if she was anywhere near, she would have seen the flashing, so I lighted a flare, which was sighted by the Destroyer DENIZAN, under the command of Commander Brook. The Destroyer closed the rafts, and at approximately 0450 on the 31st, all survivors were taken on board. We were taken to Mauritius, where we landed on the 1st August, with no-one any the worse for the experience.

10. We were treated very well by the crew of the DENIZAN, being given food, hot drinks, cigarettes and a change of clothing, and on arrival at Mauritius we were accommodated in a camp belonging to the British shore staff.

11. I would like to mention Naval Gunner W.E. Fletcher, Able Seaman, D.E.M.S. C/JX 312656. Immediately after the ship was torpedoed he went aft to the 4" gun and although the gun-deck was then awash he loaded the gun and trained it on the conning tower of the submarine, which was visible; he then went to the Gunlayers' position, but before he was able to fire the vessel sank and he was washed overboard. As he broke surface he nearly knocked his head against a raft which had floated off. He stated that had the ship kept afloat for another 30 seconds he would have been able to fire at the submarine.

I would also mention Assistant Engineer Norman Bradley. Junior Engineer Plewes told me that immediately after the explosion he had tried to get out of his porthole but became jammed. Bradley happened to come along at that moment, on his way to jump overboard, and stopped to pull Plewes out of the porthole. Bradley is unfortunately missing, but Engineer Plewes stated that had it not been for his assistance, he (Plewes) would most certainly have lost his life.

12. On arrival at Mauritius I was informed that a wireless message had been received at Colombo, giving our position, and although the text of the message was clear, the course of origin was corrupt. As our Radio Operator did not have time to send a distress message, I can only conclude that the submarine Commander kept his promise and did send this message.

13. I consider that as the lifeboats are nearly always damaged or destroyed by explosion, a spare boat should be kept free on chocks on the poop, so that it will float off as the ship sinks.

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#### Boiler Repairs at Sea.

I had the unfortunate experience of having to renew tubes in a Thimble Tube Composite Boiler (boiler capacity 8 tons to water level) whilst at sea. It was in 1963 on the good ship "Great City", which was on passage from Limerick to the River Plate when the Clarkson Exhaust gas/oil fired boiler had water running from the furnace front. The boiler was 18 years old and for many years had no controlled chemical water treatment. The vessel was in the tropics so it was a very sweaty job.

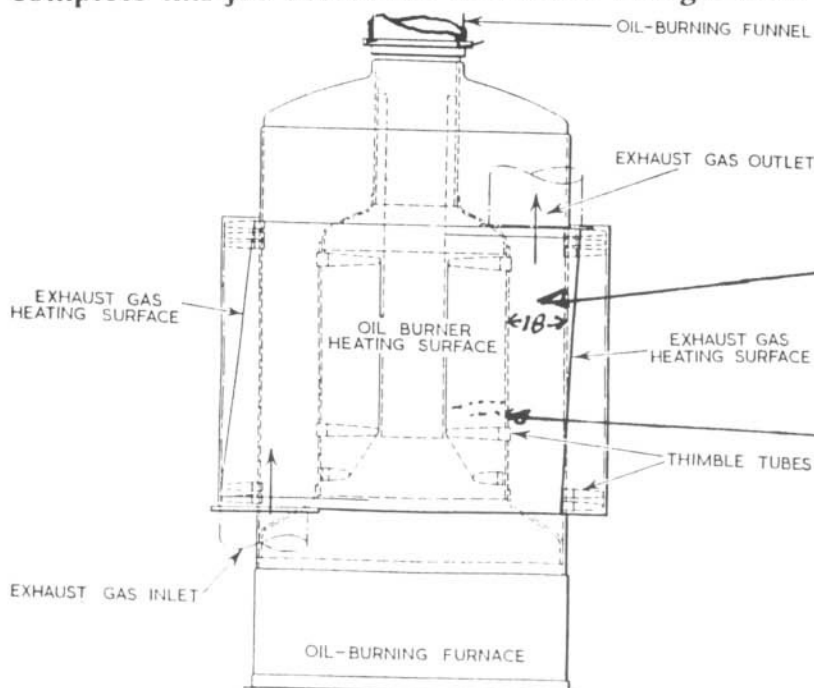
This boiler was the main supply of steam when the ship was at sea. The oil fired Riley boiler had to be flashed up and steam raised to supply the steam driven steering engine and feed pump, etc., and to supply the two steam generators if the 3 cylinder Ruston diesel generator should fail. This took nearly one day before the exhaust gas boiler could be shutdown and another

day for the boiler temperature to cool down enough to work inside. I had not worked on this type of boiler before.

With this type of boiler the main engine exhaust gases enter the boiler at the bottom of the outer casing and pass around the thimble tubes fitted in the outer shell. These tubes protrude into the gas space. The gas discharge to the funnel. The furnace tubes fit in the inner shell and protrude into the furnace these are heated by the oil fired burner. The tubes are shaped like sewing thimbles and are expanded in place in the curved boiler shells, so are attached at one end only.

On this occasion the water was leaking from the furnace, the boiler burning equipment was removed and on the first inspection inside the furnace, one tube was leaking with two other tubes showing signs of leakage. The exhaust gas tubes were alright. Hammer testing the ends of all the thimble tubes in the furnace 6 tubes were easily penetrated and required to be renewed, the remaining tubes were sound.

Now this was a hell of a job, (to give you some idea of the boiler arrangement see the sketch below). It can be seen that the working space inside the boiler was very confined, the distance between the outer shell and inner shell is only 18". A person had great difficulty turning around in this restricted space and it was very difficult to use a hammer and chisel. I think Mr. Clarkson or whoever designed the boiler should had given some thought about renewing tubes. The heat in the boiler was unbearable, the defective tubes were low down making things difficult. A crosscut chisel and hammer was used to close the expanded end of the tubes which released the tubes expansion in their holes. The tubes were finally punched into the furnace. Once the tubes were out the tube holes in the boiler shell were cleaned and their surfaces polished with emery cloth and new tubes expanded in place. It took about three days to complete this job before the boiler was brought back in service.



### Clarkson Composite Boiler

Capacity 8 tons of water  
at working level.

18 inches space to work in  
this area, and, with the  
curvature of the inner and  
outer shells made working  
conditions very difficult.

6 Furnace tubes  
were leaking.

Alec Osborne.

I was very interested in the article I read in the issue No. 29 of "Shipmates" which I had just received. The article, which I am referring to, is about the SS Barrwhin. This was the second ship that I joined as an apprentice in Barry Docks in the beginning of September 1941. We were only a skeleton crew comprising of Captain Dixon, Mr. Shilstone, Chief Officer, I think the Chief Engineer was Mr. Lindsey. The Chief Steward was an Indian and the Cook was an African, a carpenter and two apprentices, Hall and myself. Hall had been a survivor from Santa Clara Valley, which had been bombed and sunk off Crete in May 1941. The apprentices' cabin was situated on the starboard side, engineer's alleyway (inboard). We found this accommodation was too small and as there were no tables in the cabin we had got to eat our meals with the plates on our knees, which we found not amusing. We asked the Chief Officer for a half day off so that we could visit Cardiff. We called at Smiths' office because we decided to complain officially to the powers that be that our accommodation was dreadful. We were taken to see Mr. Lilley, the Director. We made our complaint and he looked at us very amusingly and informed us that the situation was well in hand and that we would have our meals in the Officers' saloon.

We eventually signed a full crew and sailed from Cardiff to Swansea. We loaded a full cargo of anthracite for Montreal. While we were in Swansea, Hall and myself were sent to the Doms Gunnery Training Centre for 3 days and we received ten shillings a day for our expenses which was a huge bonus compared with our 16/4d a month wages!

We duly sailed from Swansea joined the convoy and all seemed well until we got half way across the Atlantic, where our forced fan broke leaving us to steam approximately 3 knots, just enough to keep us head to wind. The Engineers duly commenced to repair this item which was broken and as there was no lathe on the ship (the only items they had to work with was a hacksaw, files and a drill) making the work extremely hard for the engineers. On about the third day I was on the 8-10 wheel in the morning when Captain Dixon, the Master, came in and said to me "I will take the wheel laddie, go down to the Chief Engineer and say Captain sends his compliments and ask him how long it will be before we have a full head of steam". I duly went down and saw the Chief Engineer at the bottom of the ladder filing away at this piece of brass and he looked at me wildly and before I could give him the message from the Master, he mouthed "tell him to get f\*\*\*\*\*". On my way back to the bridge I wondered what reply I could give the master. When he saw me he said "what did he say sir" and I replied "he said it won't be long now sir" and he said "Oh that's good"! Full steam was attained at 13 knots and we arrived at Montreal before the other ships in the convoy. (As we went through St. Lawrence on the way to Montreal the scenery was so beautiful in contrast to that which I saw in Freetown on my first and second voyages to Freetown.) We discharged anthracite and we then went down towards the city quays of Montreal where we loaded 10,000 tons of grain and 500 tons of cornflakes in the t-deck. We then sailed for Sydney, Cape Breton, to await convoy. A convoy was formed and we sailed for U.K. Half way through the voyage we encountered horrific weather and we were engulfed by a huge wave, which took our starboard lifeboat, davit and the deckhead to our accommodation. It meant

that Hall and myself had to sleep on the saloon settee until we managed to clear an accommodation which was on the after end of the boat deck (a wooden structure which was built for the Demos Gunners). We found that it was a better accommodation than ours. We continued the voyage with no other incident and we arrived at Newcastle on the 9<sup>th</sup> December, discharged our cargo and due to the damage that had taken place, the vessel went into dry dock at North Shields where they were going to build VIP accommodation in the number 3 t-deck. Captain Dixon called Hall and myself into his cabin and informed us that we would be sent on leave and allowed to have Christmas at home. Unfortunately for myself on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December I had a telegram from Smiths to join the Imperial Valley at Blyth Dry Docks where we then sailed for New York on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942. (I have often wondered whether Hall, the other apprentice survived the war). In April I met Mr. Lindsey, the Chief Engineer of the Barrwhin, in Alexandria where he had joined the SS Empire Snipe, which was gun running between Tobruk and Alexandria.

**Hugh Parry from Birkehead**



Hugh Parry sent me a photograph of the football team on the S.S. Leeds City which he sailed on when they played the Railway Football Club in Buenos Aires, Christmas 1946. Hugh is the goalkeeper in the white shirt back row. Leeds City won 2 to 1.

### Congratulations

Our member Mr. Edward (Ted) Powell from Barry was awarded the British Empire Medal (MBE) last year, for his services to the Royal National Lifeboat Institute. I sent a congratulations card to Ted on behalf of "Shipmate" members. He kindly wrote to give his career while at sea and on shore. See page No.9.



Edward (Ted) Powell M.B.E.

**Our member Ted Powell from Barry, who was awarded the " Member of the British Empire" medal for services to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution last year writes about his career.**

Many thanks for your letter and card of congratulations from 'Shipmate'. It was most kind of you.

I began my seafaring career at the RSNS in 1947. It was then situated in the Technical College, Cardiff. I believe the Headmaster at that time was Captain Johnston, followed by Captain J.H. Clough Smith. The masters were Comm. Woodsworth (Cadet year), Mr Steve Martin (2<sup>nd</sup> year) and Mr 'Tiger' Edwards (1st year). The Signals and Seamanship master was Mr Wightman.

I left the 'Academy' in July 1950 and, after a lot of letter writing to about a dozen or so Lines for an apprenticeship, I think all our year fell back on the old firm of RSL. Where have all those Shipping Lines gone, Stagline, Burries Marques, Ben Line, Heinze, Elleman, to name but a few.

I joined my first RSL ship in Victoria Dock, London on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1950, she was the 'Homer City'. That wonderful old man Alfie Ward was in command and I believe that O.J. Lindsay relieved Mr Arnold as Chief Officer. Mortician Davies was 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate, Bubbles Jones 3<sup>rd</sup> Mate and my fellow apprentices were Jim Murray, Dickie Corbett and Dave Chick.

We sailed light ship to Casablanca where we loaded phosphates for Durban calling at Dakar on the way for bunkers. From Durban we went to Laureco Marques to load coal for Melbourne. We arrived there on Christmas day 1950. After discharge we went around to Freemantle to load grain for the UK. On the way up to Aden I was informed that I would be transferred to the 'Indian City' to await the arrival of the 'Atlantic City' which was on her way down the Red Sea bound for Japan with salt. The reason for this transfer being that one David Saunders was out of his time.

I signed on the 'Atlantic City' in February 1951, the Master was Captain Dixon. The rest of the Officers' names have forgotten, though I seem to remember one of the Appledore Harrises being 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate. We went to Yokohama Bay for discharge then across the north Pacific to Vancouver where we loaded grain for Avonmouth, arriving late May 1951.

I was sent on leave then and joined the 'Indian City' on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1952, Captain Jack Lemon in command, Chief Officer was I believe Mr R. P. Davies. We did the usual RSL trading and I left in April '53 and joined the 'Madras City' in May '53, Captain Cox (Appledore) in command, Mr Johns (Helston) was Chief Officer. What I remember about the 'Madras City' was being chartered by Palm Line. Great fun loading those huge mahogany logs.

I finally completed my time with RSL in June '54.

I had reached the age of 21 and, whilst I had enjoyed my time with RSL, had to think seriously whether my future was going to be in seafaring. I thought the long passages at sea (six weeks Vancouver to Bombay) were a waste of life. As it turned out my private life intervened and I decided to try coast wise shipping. This meant that I was never far from home should I be needed. I liked coast wise trading, and obtained Master H.T. in 1957. I remained on the coast until I was appointed Cargo Superintendent for Bristol Steam/C.Shore Lovell in 1961.

I joined the Lifeboat Service in February '73 as a crewman. This was at the time when the RNL.I were advancing from slipway launched boats to 'fast afloat' 8kts to 15kts.

During the next thirty years I served as 2<sup>nd</sup> cox'n, cox'n, Deputy Launching Authority and finally as the last Hon. Sec. at Barry Dock. This Station will probably get a new 'Tamar' Class boat in 2005, speed in excess of 28kts and all the high tec young people want. I'm just glad to have reached 70 years and am quite content to leave the Service to young people.

**I shall continue to serve the Institute until I "cross the bar". I could not do without the comradeship of the lifeboat crew and people.**

*kindest Regards*

*Ted Powell*

## TRAFALGAR DAY

### Appledore men who served under Nelson.

#### Traditions maintained.

Yesterday was Trafalgar Day and Appledore, the ancient seaport town situated at the estuaries of the Taw and Torridge might well have celebrated the event, for it had the great honour of having supplied Lord Nelson with his Coxswain and also with one of his principal Signalmen.

The vicar of Appledore, Rev. H.C.A.S. Muller, M.A., R.N. a retired Naval Chaplain must be proud of the fact that he numbered among his parishioners today, the direct descendants of those two men. Mr John Jenkin, the Senior Trinity Pilot of The Quay, Appledore is head of the family of the old Signalman and Capt. William Cox of Richmond Terrace is the chief representative, together with his Uncle, Capt. William Cox of Market Street of the great Admiral's Coxswain.

Of course, a distinguished and brave Admiral like Nelson would only have about him on his personal staff, men of equal courage and undoubted efficiency and alacrity. Cox, who was his personal Coxswain must have embraced all these excellent qualities. He was nicknamed "THE WARRIOR". There was one occasion when he got tired of being for so many months constantly at sea waiting patiently for the French and Spanish fleets to put out that he deserted, but his liberty was short lived! The story goes that one day Nelson put into Milford, went ashore and happened to meet Cox, whom he immediately recognised.

Being partial to him, Nelson gave him the opportunity to return to the ship to carry on as his Coxswain OR being placed under arrest to face the punishment of those days- which would have been hanging at the yardarm. Cox naturally returned to his ship, the "VICTORY" and, no doubt, took part in the Battle of Trafalgar 128 years ago yesterday. After the battle, the "VICTORY" was so badly holed and her sails destroyed through having borne the brunt of the fighting, that she was towed to Gibraltar. Rev. Hugh Muller, whilst serving aboard the ill fated battleship HMS "FORMIDABLE" under the late Capt. D.S. Walker D.S.O. visited the graves of many who fell on board the "VICTORY" at Trafalgar.

Cox's descendants have well maintained the tradition of their gallant ancestor. Two were Coxswains of the earlier Appledore lifeboats. One commanded the gallant crew of the famous surf boat "HOPE" of which the last survivor, Mr James Braund, died recently and the late Mr Henry Cox, whose son is now in the Royal Navy, served for many years in H.M. Dockyard at Devonport. The two Coxswains received many medals for their gallantry at sea from Foreign as well as British Governments.

Mr David Jenkins was serving aboard a coaster when he was pressganged off the Longships and as he had wonderfully long sight and telescopes were in those

days, rare and precious and no doubt inefficient, he was immediately placed aboard the "VICTORY" for service. Tradition says that he soon became a popular member of the signal staff and his marvellous vision probably helped to spot the far off sails of the enemy whose hulls were well below the horizon. It is also said that he was one of those who had the privilege of hoisting Lord Nelson's famous signal on going into action at Trafalgar and which is flown regularly on the "VICTORY" on this historic anniversary.

The late Pilot, Wm Jenkins, an elder brother of Pilot John Jenkins inherited the remarkable long sight his distinguished ancestor possessed and was also an attractive character. Whilst temporary Coxswain of the Appledore lifeboat he helped save the crew of the sailing ship "PENNSYLVANIA" when she got ashore on the North side of Appledore- an action worthy of his Trafalgar ancestor Daniel Jenkins the "VICTORY" signalman.

When Rev. Muller was serving his Curacy at Appledore, he often accompanied Pilot Jenkins boarding the incoming ships and on one occasion, was nearly swamped when attempting to board the schooner "HENRIETTA" of Newquay. The Captain was afraid to back his yards but Pilot Jenkins got on board by hanging on to the shroud of the mainyard- the rest of the party being left to bail the water from the boat and cut the painter. Of these, only the Vicar and Capt, William Screech are still alive. Capt. Robert Batten, another member of the party having passed over. Strangely enough, the late Capt. James Cox, a descendant of Nelsons Coxswain of H.M. Trinity Service was endeavouring in a six oared manned gig, the "CIRO", to reach the HENRIETTA first and drove the smaller boat out into the broken water but failed to forstall it. Once more, two descendants of the "VICTORY" crew were competing.

In 1905 when the centenary of Trafalgar was celebrated by the Mediterranean fleet at Malta, the Vicar of Appledore, Rev. C.A.S. Muller was present as Chaplain of HMS FORMIDABLE. It was an historic day, and the crews of the various ships no doubt enjoyed the splicing of the mainbrace under that most popular of Admirals, the late Lord Beresford.

EXPRESS & ECHO Newspaper. October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1932

The above article was published in the "Express and Echo" in 1932 this being the local newspaper in Appledore, the place where Sir William Reardon Smith was born. Captain John Cann kindly sent the story to "Shipmates". John was born in Appledore the year this article was published and he says that the "Captain William Cox of Market Street" mentioned in the story was his Grandfather. The two "Cox's" who were Lifeboat Coxswains are also in his family tree.

## The Trial Of a Young Surveyor.

I was fortunate to win a two year sandwich course while serving my apprenticeship, which gave me a "pass" in all the theoretical parts of the engineering Certificates, so I got my Chiefs Certificate at twenty four, and after some relieving jobs around the coast, and due to the huge losses of men at sea, I was appointed Chief Engineer of the Imperial Valley at the age of 26.

After the war, I soon got a job as ship manager Grayson Rollo Liverpool, and after about a year, I saw an advertisement for Lloyds Surveyors, which I answered, and was given an interview with the Chief Surveyor in Liverpool. At the end of the interview he said I had all the experience Lloyds required but he regretted he would have to turn me down on account of my age, as surveyors were normally 15 to 20 years older than I was.. Imagine my surprise when I received a letter from Lloyds London calling me for an interview in London, after which I was appointed a Lloyds Surveyor in London.

Time plays a big part in one's experience and I was still lacking in both, which is why I have gone into the detail above.

Among my new duties were surveyor for the Port of London Authority fleet and after some minor duties in the Fleet I was called to do a boiler survey on one of their vessels. Well !!!,when I got inside the boiler I had never seen such extensive active and deep corrosion ever before. R.S.L. would have had a fit if any of their boilers had corrosion one quarter as bad. When I came out,their engineer said O.K., but I said I would have to see Lloyds previous reports on the boiler which all noted the corrosion, said that the severe corrosion would have to be ground out, coated with zinc paste, and zinc plates fitted, to neutralise boiler water condition. It was obvious none of this had ever been done. I went back to Lloyds Office consulted Sotherns bible, and worked out that the lower boiler plate would have to be renewed. also consulted a senior Surveyor, who just shrugged his shoulders and said, "if thats what you think, stay with it"???

I went back to the Portof London superintendent, told him I couldn't pass the boiler, and recommended that the lower boiler plate be renewed.

Later, I was called to see the Head Surveyor of the Port of London Authority who said they had made enquiries about me and found I was very young and inexperienced and had only recently been appointed, and that they had no choice but to call for a very senior Lloyds executive to come and overrule me. Soon the Head Surveyor called me , a man about 58 to 60 and together we went back to the boiler, he went in, came out, and said that he would agree with my recommendation, but said that renewal of the plate could not be done in place, which meant that with all the accommodation overhead the boiler would have to be taken out through the side of the ship, and in view of the time involved, it would be quicker and cheaper to build a new boiler, which could be immediatly be fitted. This was looked into, but it required a large drydock, the trestles moved to one side, so that there was sufficient space to fleet the boiler out through the side of the ship, and of course the shipside

has to be cut away cut to pass the boiler through. They couldn't find any drydock prepared to do this work, so the ship was scraped. It is unbelievable that for the lack of care of the boiler water, a ship is lost. Good R.S.I. they had imbued their staff with the highest standards in the marine industry.

*Tom Major*

Dear Editor;

Dave Mockett's recent letter published in Ship Mates brought back many varied memories of Jeddah.

I had been with RSL for only a few years as Mate, when redundancy arrived in 1981.

Eventually, I had served on 29 ships in five companies during my time at sea. I thought that the best ship of these by some distance, in terms of equipment and design, was the "Bibi". This apart from the minor irritation that there was no centre hawse pipe for mooring to buoys in the Far East.

When I came ashore at first there were jobs available with Gray Mackenzie who managed Jeddah Islamic Port on behalf of the Saudi Ports Authority and shortly afterwards I found myself in "Port Operations" there, under Dave Mockett who was already part of the furniture.

Later in my time in Jeddah, J.J. Kalnins also occupied a seat for a time in that Office.

After about six months in Port Ops I moved on to work as an independent Surveyor and found this a very interesting challenge, operating all over Saudi Arabia.

In Jeddah I boarded one or two ships previously operated by RSL, one of which was the ex "Gela", on which I had served a few years previously. The Greek Master, on learning this, offered a considerable sum for me to stay on board and help out!

I was lucky enough to be able to afford to have my family with me for the latter part of my time in Jeddah, but family visas were not always easy to maintain and after 4 years there we left and moved to Mombasa where I carried on surveying, this time for Lloyd's Agency, all over East Africa from Djibouti to Dar Es Salaam.

During my time there the "Irish Cedar" was arrested and spent a long time at the buoys and I believe this was around the time when RSL's end came.

After a further 3 years, children's schooling in Mombasa became an issue and we took an opportunity to transfer home.

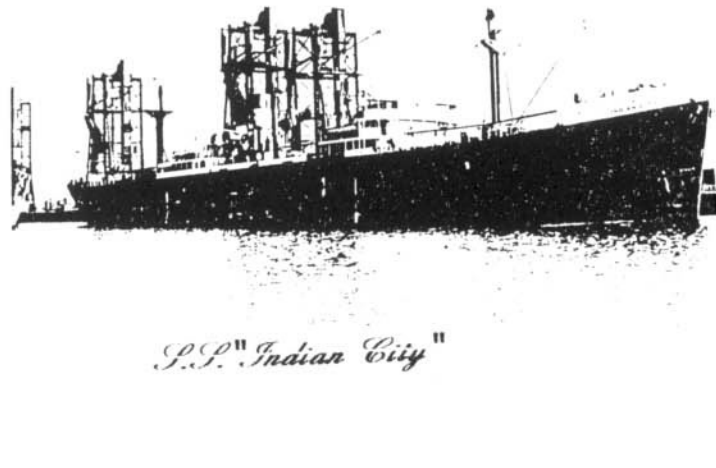
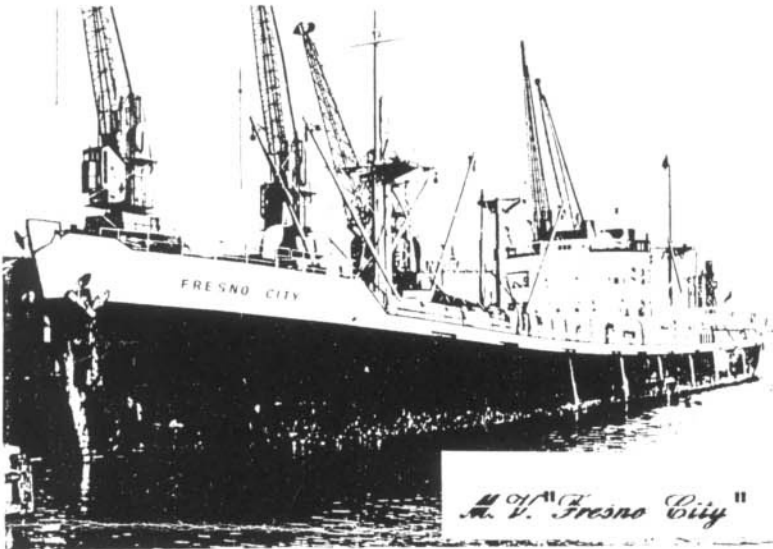
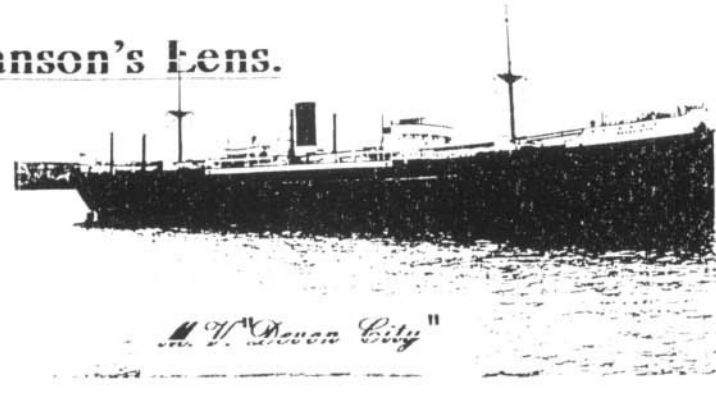
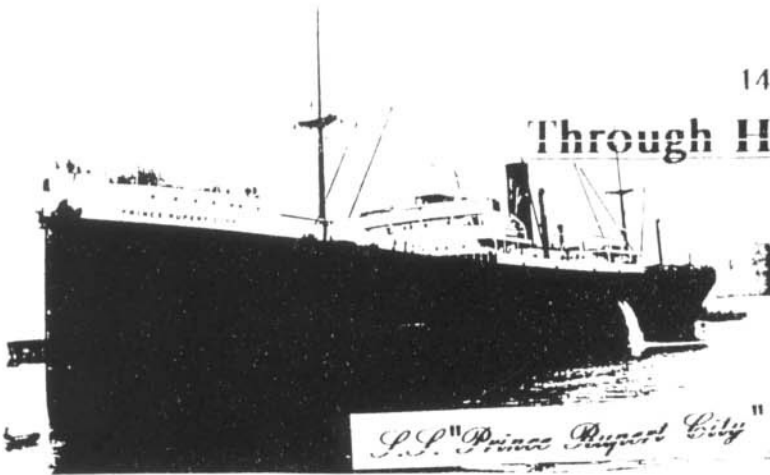
For the last 15 years I have been Harbour Manager at Bangor, working for Crest Nicholson Marinas, who operate several marinas around the country including, in Wales, sites at Conwy and Penarth.

Since being in Bangor I have been in contact a few times with Kieran O'Higgins who is a Marine Superintendent with the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

Yours sincerely,

*And Jim*

## Through Hanson's Lens.



I'm sure many of the older readers of "*Shipmates*" will remember Leslie Hanson's photography business, based at 3, Bute Place, Cardiff, near what was the entrance to the docks entrance. The building has long since disappeared, but fortunately, the 4,454 negatives of ships at Cardiff that were taken by Les Hanson, between 1925 and 1975, have been in the care of the Nation Museum since 1979. With Cardiff being the Reardon Smith Lines 'home port' (even if not the port of registry)", numerous shots of the company's ships appear in the Hanson Collection, and I append four such views which will hopefully be of interest readers.

1) The steamer Prince Rupert City was built by Gray's of West Hartlepool in 1929. Seen arriving at Cardiff in the mid 1930s, she was bomb and sunk off Cape Wrath on June, 1941.

2) The long serving motor vessel Devon City owned by Reardon Smith from her construction in 1933 by Furness Shipbuilding of Haverton Hill, until her sale in 1958.

3) A fine view of the motor vessel Fresno City, with a cargo of sawn timber. Built by Doxford in 1945, she is seen here moored on the Cold Storage Wharf in the Queen Alexandra dock on 15th July 1947.

4) The steamer Indian City, built in 1944 by Bartrams of Sunderland, taking bunkers in Queens Alexandra dock in the late 1940s.

*Dr. David Jenkins, Senior Curator  
National Museums & Galleries of Wales.*

We seafarers know its a small world such as the letter below which was written to me from Captain Dennis Jones who live in Witham, Essex,

13.01.2004

Dear Alec,

"A SHORT STORY"

In early May 2000 I attended the Springfield Hospital in Chelmsford for an operation. I was in about a week. The morning of the operation I was wheeled from my room with a nurse and a porter.

The operation was forecast a "bit serious" so I wasn't very talkative. Part of the way the nurse was relieved by the theatre sister, the porter was also changed. A few minutes went by when the sister said " I understand you were a ships captain", I said "yes". She said "my father was a ship captain I said "oh". She said " he was with Smith,s of Cardiff", I must have appeared interested because she said "his name is Lindsay", I immediately said "Oliver". She then said "Do you know him", to which I replied, "I not only know your father , I sailed with your Grandfather".

A couple of evenings later she came in to see me with her son "Tom", Oliver,s grandson. Tom had a bone disease and walked with sticks. It was quite a while later I heard that Tom had died.

Chief Steward Lindsay was quite a father figure tome me in the "Fresno City". but it wasn't until I met Oliver in Chelmsford, before the above story, a few years ago that I realised how much of a "Father figure" he really was to me. Oliver might tell you about it.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Dennis Jones*

The operating theatre sister was our treasurer's, Captain Oliver Lindsay daughter Christine Clark, there are many of our shipmates who have met or sailed with Christine and may had sailed with John Lindsay the Chief steward. We hope that Captain Dennis Jones have fully recovered from his operation and good luck for the future.

Obituary.

Our member Harry Williams of Whitchurch, Cardiff, crossed the bar on the 15th December 2003 he was 84 years old. He joined the Merchant Navy when he was 14 years old and served in the Reardon Smith Line for a few years. Harry was a member of the Merchant Navy Association, (Cardiff Branch) and Standard Bearers attended his funeral.