



# SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

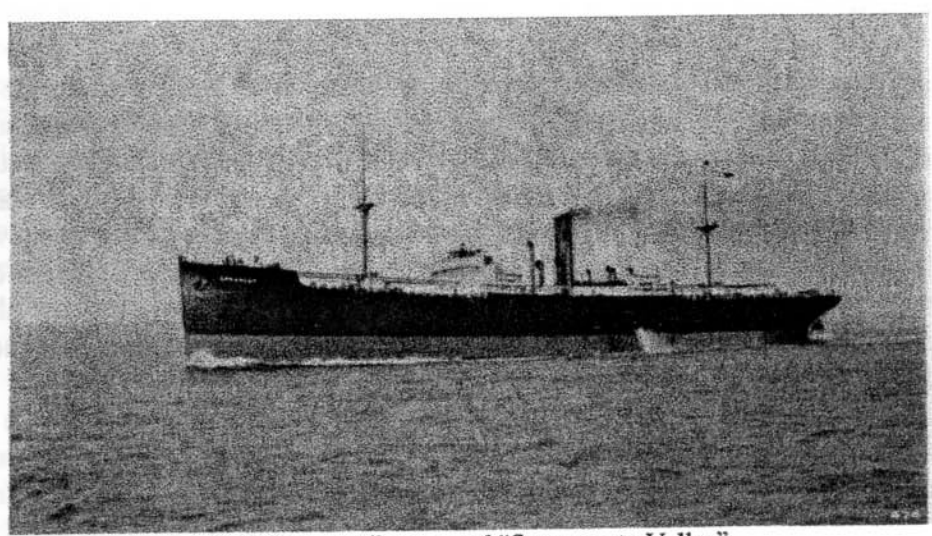
Issue No. 32 2004

**This the 32<sup>nd</sup> Edition of "Shipmates" is dedicated to:-**

## **The "VALLEYS" OF THE REARDON SMITH LINE.**

During 1931, Sir William Reardon Smith and Sons Ltd., decided that in view of the increasing business with the West Coast of the U.S.A. that it would be appropriate to show commitment to the trade by renaming four ships of the Reardon Smith Line after Valleys in California and Oregon. The ships so renamed to take part in the R.S.L. liner service from the West Coast of North America to United Kingdom ports.

The fast motor ships "East Lynn" (4,685 GT) and "West Lynn" (4,702 GT) built in 1928 were renamed the "Santa Clara Valley" and "Willamette Valley" respectively. Two steam ships, the "Buchanness" (4,573 GT) and the "Skegness" (4,573 GT) built in 1924 were renamed "Imperial Valley" and "Sacramento Valley" respectively.



S.S. "Skegness" re-named "Sacramento Valley"

It was in 1929 that Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd decided that it would be beneficial to the liner service to open a branch office in San Francisco. In the summer of 1933 the company decided to transfer their West Coast Office from San Francisco to Vancouver, B.C. However, in 1937 Sir William Reardon Smith and Sons Ltd. decided to close their liner service from the Pacific Coast of U.S.A and Canada to U.K. ports and the ships which were so employed on the service reverted to tramping. In 1939 the company office at Vancouver B.C. closed. Even so, the friendly and well founded trading connections established with shippers and agents, etc. built up in the region over the years prior to the outbreak of W.W.2 in September of 1939 remained.

When peacetime trading was restored in 1945, Reardon Smith Line. returned to the USA /B.C. coast, just five weeks after VJ day was declared, the first ship to do so was the M.V. "Vancouver City" in late September of 1945, under the command of Captain H. Sharp. The ship loaded at Portland , Oregon and Vancouver, B.C. a full cargo of bagged barley for the New Zealand Ports of Lyttelton, Timaru and Dunedin. Amongst the officers were Ch. Engineer Steven Willis, Ch. Officer John Sloan and 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer A.H. Svenson.

The fortunes of the four "Valleys" were:-

**M.V. "Santa Clara Valley"** Bombed and sunk by enemy aircraft whilst at anchor in Nauplia Bay, Greece on the 23rd April 1941, one of her crew was unfortunately killed. She was discharging a military cargo, including mules, for the British Army which she had loaded in Alexandria. At the time of sinking her Master was Captain Lennie and the Ch. Officer was S. Wheaton.. During 1952 she was salvaged by Greek interests and towed to a breakers yard in Treste for demolition.

**M.V. "Willamette Valley"** In 1939 her services were required by the Royal Navy for special services and she was renamed "Edge Hill". She was fitted out as a "Q" ship and armed with four 4.7 inch guns, torpedo tubes, depth charge throwers and lighter arms. Her crew amounted to 150 and comprised of Royal Navy and Merchant Navy personnel. In 1940 she became the RFA "X39". Her first employment was to search for enemy "Q" ships, this took her first to the Western approaches, thence to the areas around the Azores and Bermuda and later to the South Atlantic she then returned via Gibraltar to the Western Approaches. However, she never fired a shot in anger and was torpedoed and sunk in the South West Approaches in the June of 1940 by the German submarine "U51"

**S.S."Sacramento Valley"** On the 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1941 she was torpedoed by a German submarine operating to the Westward of the Cape Verde Islands and sank in position Latitude 17 10'N., Longitude 30 10'W. Sadly 3 members of her crew were killed.

**S.S. "Imperial Valley"** Whilst proceeding in ballast from the River Tyne to Oban she suffered a serious grounding on rocks off the East Coast of Scotland in December of 1940 and sustained substantial hull damage. Eventually she was refloated and after drydocking and when the extent of the damage sighted it was considered that she was a constructive total loss and she was delivered to the breakers yard of T.W. Ward at Inverkeithing for demolition. However, she was given a last minute reprieve due to the heavy British shipping war losses being suffered. Once the decision to repair the vessel was made the repairs commenced immediately, twelve months later she re-entered service. The attending R.S.L. Marine Superintendent at the refloating and the subsequent repairs was Captain Lionel Ford.

She survived the war and served the Line satisfactorily for a further three years before she was sold to another British Company for further trading and renamed "Memphis Town". Eventually, and this time finally, in 1959, she was delivered to ship-breakers in Spezia and broken up, ending a life of 35 years.

In the years immediately before the company went into liquidation in 1985, the firm was slowly reduced to four bulk carriers, of which three were registered in Singapore and were the "Eastern Valley", "Western Valley" and "Northern Valley" which were the renamed M.V. "Cardiff City"(2) GRT 17,203., M.V."Devon City"(4) GRT 17,203 and the M.V. "Port Albernie City" GRT 16,694, respectively.

### THE LIQUIDATION OF THE REARDON SMITH LINE PLC.

Sadly, on the 30th May, 1985 the Reardon Smith Line announced that it was to cease trading, brought about by the severe market forces over the previous few years.

The final meetings of Members and Creditors was held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August 1993 at 1200 hours at the offices of Cork Gully, Churchill House, Cardiff, the Liquidator being Mr. R.A.Smart. The meeting was a formality required by law and there was no specific requirement for Members or Creditors to attend.

However, the meeting was attended by two shareholders, Mr. T. W. Major retired Technical Director of R.S.L. and Commodore O.J.T. Lindsay retired Master R.S.L.

At the end of the Meeting Reardon Smith Line Plc. ceased to exist, bringing to an end eight decades of a well known respected company in the Worlds shipping fraternity and which was part of Cardiff's great maritime history.

### Transportacion Maritima Mexicana S.A. (TMM)

Private investors founded the above company in 1955, and in 1962 the Mexican Government was invited to participate as minority shareholder in its capital stock.

In 1955 services were begun with a single vessel, the M.V. "Anahuac 1". Thirty years later it had grown to an important, fine diversified fleet of 30 modern vessels. ranging in size from 8,694 to 122,433 DWT, comprising of Multi-purpose, Geared Bulk Carrier, Bulk Carrier, General Cargo, Container/Bulk Carrier and Car Carrier vessels. In addition there were 2 day cruisers of 98 DWT and 200 DWT. TMM had become a group of companies comprising not only maritime services in trades around the world but also in port agencies, air cargo, rail and tank storage services.

The Liner services, which in 1985 were the stronghold of the groups business, began with the establishment of a regular service from Mexico to the U.S.A. in 1960; then to the Pacific Coast of South America in 1961; to North Europe and the U.K. in 1963; to Japan and the Far East in 1968; to the European Mediterranean ports in 1971; to Brazil and Argentina in 1974 and a Transpacific line from the U.S. West Coast tp Japan. Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong which was inaugurated in 1982.

Bulk and specialized transportation developed at a fast pace and its contribution to the total revenue of the group became quite substantial, carrying various cargoes ranging from bulk grains and minerals to assembled cars and heavy lift project cargo. Any cargo to any destination.

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Between the years 1972 and 1985 TMM entrusted the management of a number of their vessels to Sir William Reardon Smith and Sons Ltd., starting in 1972 with the Management of two vessels. In 1985, at the time the Reardon Smith Line ceased trading there were eight TMM vessels being managed. They were the Motor Vessels "Amparo", "Bibi", "Lacandon", "Lerma", "Olmecca", "Silvia Sofia" and "Yaqui". Many "Shipmates" who will be reading this, served aboard the managed TMM ships, they were popular and happy ships.

In 1985 at the time R.S.L. ceased trading, TMM formed a management company viz. Cardiff Ship Management Co.,Ltd., with offices in Cardiff, however that is outside the perimeter of this article.

O.J.T.L.

## MY FIRST VOYAGE TO SEA

M.V. "LEEDS CITY", SEPTEMBER 28, 1960  
TO SEPTEMBER 14, 1961

I left the Reardon Smith Nautical College in Cardiff in late July 1960 and two months later was on my way to my first ship.

But before that happened we all had a nice pay raise due to the seaman's strike of that summer. I had already signed my apprentice indenture, which had my first six months at £ 55, the new indentures raised that to £ 80.

The orders I received had me joining the ship in Hamburg. I was sent train tickets/vouchers to get me to Hamburg via Harwich and the hook of Holland. Flying was still 6 years away.

I traveled from Taunton to Paddington and then fought my way with all my luggage by underground to Liverpool St. Station. Here I ran into Mr. Bill Fozard who had been with me at RSN College in Cardiff. We had reserved seats but as soon as the train got going we were led to the bar by the junior officers!!!

The crossing at night was uneventful and in the morning we were on the train for Hamburg, with boarder crossings stamped in our discharge books.

We arrived onboard as the ship was nearing completion of discharging grain from Bunberry, W.A. Our first night ashore was with two RSL legends, Dickie Vanner and Jack Barnes. Where did they take us? The Zillertal Beer Hall followed by a look in the "Herbertstrasse".

After drydocking and engine trials we offloaded crates of war office material as we were heading to Cuba to load sugar for China.

On departure, I was put on watch with the 2<sup>nd</sup> officer Peter Beckett (never heard of him again) and I had Captain Fred Dodran instructing me on how to locate the buoys in a mixture of fog/hazy mist. In the English Channel we had an engine breakdown during a 7-8 storm. I heard the engineers cussing the drydock workers for not doing this or that properly. Over the next 20 years or so I heard many similar complaints after drydocking/engine repairs.

After the English Channel the Chief Officer Jakie Vaughn gave us a choice of daywork or watches. The senior apprentice Geoff Walker, Bill Fozard and myself went on days and Michael Sullivan chose watchkeeping.

We had a nice passage to Cuba and anchored overnight at Cabo Cruz for pilot and daylight and then anchored by Manzanillo for entry. Then back to a small



ship pier at Cieba Hueca to load bagged sugar. Here on our first night they had a street party. Some locals were heard saying 'Cuba si, Yankee no', on being told we were British, all was okay and did we have cigarettes to sell. We loaded about 2500 tons there in about one week, then another short move to an anchorage at Media Luna for another 2500 tons also in a week.

We then moved a distance to offshore Tunas De Zaza, this was out of sight of land. After another 2500 tons we finally sailed or tried to sail. An hour after weighing anchor we were in the saloon for dinner when we heard and felt the vessel scraping what was very soon discovered was the seafloor. No sooner had it stopped and restarted than the ship ground to a halt.

Jakie Vaughn had us apprentices out with a sounding line, when we got to the bow on the portside, there for all to see was the unlit channel buoy hard against the ships hull. It was estimated we would have been in deep enough water only half the ships breadth to starboard.

The following day a Cuban military boat came out to take the pilot and his helper away. Captain Dodman was worried for his safety and so said he would stay onboard until we were safely away.

We waited nearly a week for barges to come out to offload us. We ran a stream anchor from the starboard stern using the motor lifeboat. We were refloated and pulled off into deeper water and reloaded but with the cargo better restowed for a better trim. During our time there we went out in the pilots launch and caught barracuda which Bob Beasley the chief steward put in the freezer.

Until now I have not mentioned that we had five females onboard. Mrs. Dodman as it was the Captains last voyage. Sonya Vaughan newly married to Jakie Vaughan (I believe his nurse whilst in the hospital) and Audrey Watson, Libby Watson (12?) and Penny Watson (10 or 11?) related to somebody in the Devonshire House. Also whilst aground two RSL superintendents flew down to us in Cuba.

We finally sailed from Cuba late November and had a fair crossing to Gibraltar. A few days later, on a Sunday, we were on the Algerian coast with heavy beam seas and swells. About four of us apprentices were on our deck watching these seas get bigger when we suddenly slid down one side of wave. We all ran up to the boat deck but the next wave crashed over us and came back from the funnel casing washing us under the portside lifeboats. I grabbed the becketed line with one hand and engineer apprentice John Howells clothes with the other hand. It gave me a good wrench. This had Mrs. Sonya Vaughan along to check me out. Dick Vanner said afterward he got water on the bridge.

We finally arrived at Port Said and had "SANDY MCNAB" and the bumboat men onboard. But we were also able to get our mail, stores and I am sure fuel and water as well. After our Canal passage we headed for Aden and Bunkering. I remember Geoff Walker our Senior apprentice was allowed ashore as his sister was stationed there with the RAF.

Soon after Aden the pantry Topaz told us the ship was not going from China to Australia, but was going to India. We passed the Minicoy Islands around Christmas and the lighthouse was called with the aldis lamp (five more years to VHF) as most of our Indian crew were from these islands. Paint drums etc loaded with mail, money etc. was put in the water for fishing boats to pick up. I never did hear if it was safely recovered.

Somewhere in the days before the New Year the ship was advised to offload the Watson family in Japan for another RSL ship to take them to Australia as the "LEEDS CITY" was going to the USA to load grain for India.

In the Malacca Straits we were called on the lamp by a passenger ship that had Chairman (?) Douglas Reardon-Smith onboard on his retirement cruise. After Singapore on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. 1961 we had a fairly rough passage up to the Gulf of Po (?) (names have changed since then) where we anchored in ice for nine days. It was so cold paintwork inside the apprentice's bathroom started to crack and come away in chunks. John Howell went up in the funnel and took a photo of the anchorage through the slats (he can confirm or deny this himself) as we were told not to take photos.

Finally in port we used the Seaman's Centre and played an East German ship at football. We did lead 1-0 at half time but being unfit we finally lost 8-1 (I think). They had loudspeakers all over the docks spouting propaganda a lot of the time.

Next stop in February was Moji Japan for bunkers and to offload the Watson family. The North Pacific Crossing still ranks as about my worst weather ever. No sleep, jammed into our bunks with lifejackets, blankets etc. and rumors that some of our rolls were above 30 degrees. We also had to find time to clean the molasses from the holds and strum boxes and erect the shifting boards. In those days in No. 1 hold they went half way down the lower hold on the center line.

We crossed the Columbia River Bar in mid February and sailed up the beautiful Columbia River to Vancouver, Washington. ON our first night Dick Vanner, Geoff Walker and a few others went across to Portland, Oregon.

Sonya Vaughan left to fly home to the UK as she was pregnant. So now we were down to one female, the Captains wife, and an old salt speculated that our bad luck would start to end.

From Vancouver, Washington we proceeded to Pulau Bukom for bunkers and on to Madras, India and then Calcutta to offload our grain. The main memories of Calcutta was of our days in the Calcutta Swimming Club and our time there as the mate let us start work early so that we could get off early afternoon to go to the Club.

Next call was Durban, South Africa. The playhouse of Smith Street was a place I came to know and like over the years. Gone now I was told ten years ago. A load of grain to Japan but our bad luck was still with us because approaching Pulau Bukom, just before 0400 hours we ran down an unlit fishing junk. Out in the motor lifeboat in a torrential tropical downpour. We finally found the Captain on his junks reed type roof beating the water, but no sign of any others. I believe three men were lost.

For Dickie Vanner and Geoff Walker this was not new as years before they had been on the "QUEEN CITY" when an Indian crewman jumped overboard at Singapore and when they went after him he kept ducking and weaving away from the boat. Dickie Vanner and Geoff Walker dived in and got him plus a blasting from Captain Picton Davies. The electrician took a photo and gave it to a UK paper when they arrived in Liverpool, I think. I saw the article and it said "Give these guys their gongs".

Next stop was Moji and Nagoya, Japan and then down to Freemantle, Australia to load grain again for Madras and Calcutta. Mrs. Dodman stayed in Australia to visit relatives as our orders had us returning to west Australia after India.

During our stay we visited the beautiful city of Perth on a Sunday. We had had our shifting boards put up in Nagoya as Australian regulations did not allow them to be put up at sea, too unsafe. They thought that would hand the jobs to Australians and their useless heavy weight Jarra wood boards. The famous Captain Bruce was the surveyor in Freemantle and we must have checked each hold daily for any last pieces of loose grain etc. We were pleased when he found no faults and passed us first time, a rare occurrence.

The other officers got in with the local nurses and went to a couple of parties. Yours truly distinguished himself with dishonor at one party after I was picked up en route back to the ship from a port pub, already well loaded.

Whilst waiting to load a Clan line cadet training ship docked near us and when it was near time for them to sail Geoff Walker entertained the Cadet Captain whilst Bill Fozard and myself went along the timbers under the dock and painted "SMITHS FOREVER" on the side. When she sailed with everyone on the dock laughing, they put a stage over the side to paint out our handiwork.

On leaving Freemantle in June 1961 Dickie Vanner was pleased to let everyone know that the PO Liner "CANBEERA" on its maiden voyage to Australia had to alter course for him. We had a similar visit to Madras and Calcutta as before on our way back from India we stopped in Pulao Bukom and Singapore for shifting boards to be erected and for officers to attend the junk sinking inquiry, I never heard anymore about it??

We finally arrived at what I was to learn was a favorite RSL port, Geraldton. The Wiltshire (?) family entertained Senior Officers and when we sailed for the UK, one of the family came with us. We crossed to Cape Town for bunkers and then the trip to "LEFO" was all paint, paint and more paint.

Geoff Walker mentioned on the way home that Captain Dodman was selling his sextant so right after lunch I rushed to his cabin and I bought his old sextant for £ 5 plus his Edison radio for another £ 5. Geoff walker was livid. We berthed in Birkenhead after exactly 50 weeks away and I went home for a few weeks leave, rejoining in a Belfast drydock with a new first trip apprentice, Evan Walmsley, but that is another story.

Captain Dodman died six months later.

### CREW

Captain Fred Dodman	Chief Engineer	Sukenik
Chief Officer Jakie Vaughan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Engineer	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Officer Peter Beckett	3 <sup>rd</sup> Engineer	Jack Barnes
3 <sup>rd</sup> Officer Dickie Vanner	4 <sup>th</sup> Engineer	
Sr. Deck App. Geoff Walker	Electrician	
Deck App. Michael Sullivan	Jr. Jim Davidson	
Deck App. Peter Bloomfield	Jr.	
Deck App. Bill Fozard	Jr.	
Steward Bob Beasley	Eng. App. John Howell	
	Eng. App. Jim Wort	

(If you can get hold of John Howell we should be able to fill in the Engineers names)

If you need to edit this, feel free as it's a lot longer than I originally thought it would be. Plus I left out some or most of the party aspects and the many nights of cards, poker and blackjack where I lost for the first 11 months and won £28 on the way home. So I came out ahead to the disgust of Jack Barnes and Dick Vanner.

*Peter Bloomfield, Waller, Texas.*



## Apology.

I apologize to Brian Hill from Tauntan for not putting his name to his story entitled "One Last Trip" published in the last newsletter No.31 sorry about that Brian. Thank you very much Brian for your contribution to "Shipmates".

At the moment our members seem to have run out of stories, please send in an article.

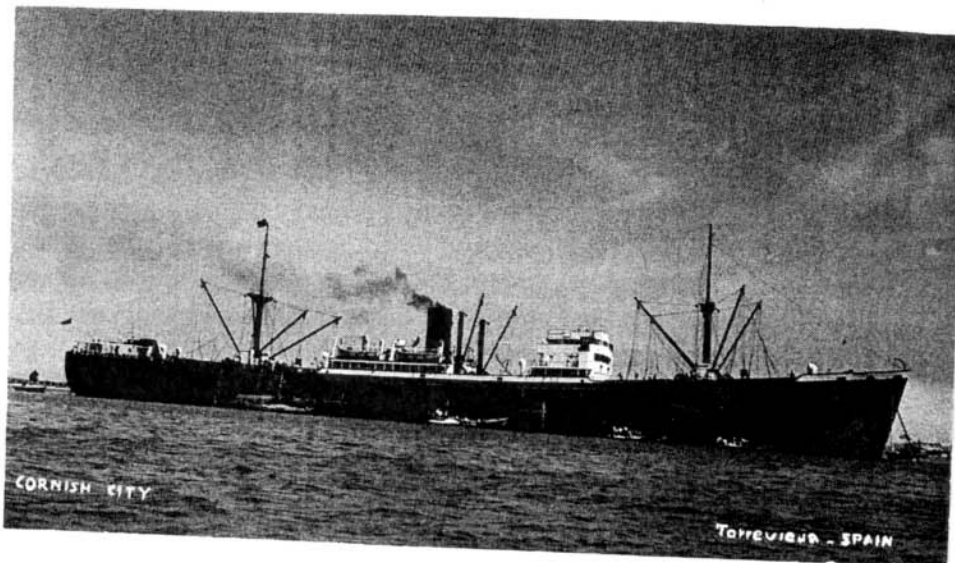
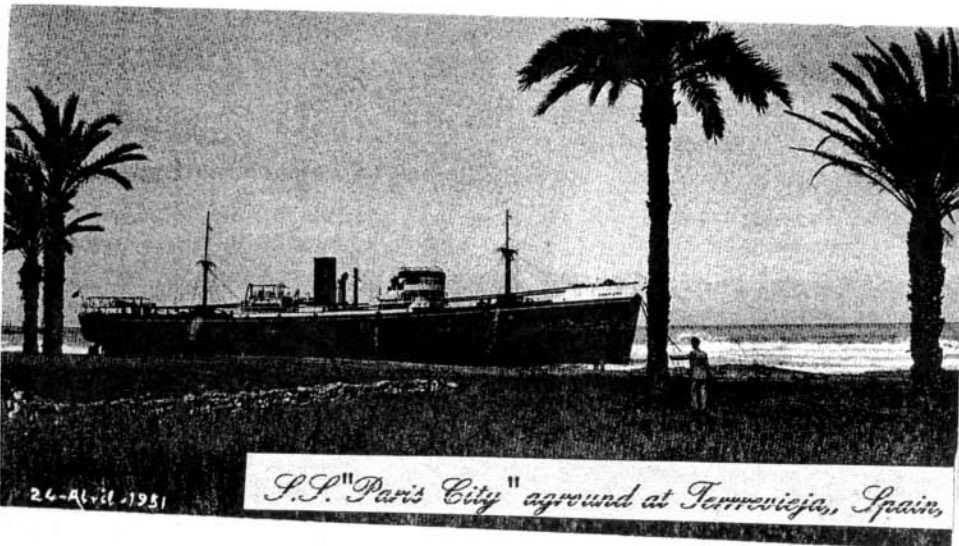
## Big Bloomer

Colin White from Nailsea sent me his story entitled "Salt in the Wound" to go in the last Newsletter No.31 I only published part of the article showing the photographs of the ships connected with the story and did not include the text. Below is his story of the "Paris City" and the "Cornish City". Sorry Colin.

The "Paris City" was grounded at Torrevieja, Spain, from April 24th to October 15th 1951, she was salvaged, repaired and remained in RSL service until 1954.

The story "Salvaging the S.S."Paris City" by Kenneth F. Wade was published in "Shipmates" issue No.5 December 1997. .

## Salt in the Wound"



### “SALT IN THE WOUND!”

The photographs which accompany these few lines were not taken by the author, (who, at the time could not afford more than a humble Kodak Brownie), and who, at any event, could not be in two places at the same time! Credit for the remarkable photography goes to a Spanish photo firm called Foto Barblabe in Torreveija, Spain, and I bought the copies when I visited Torreveija aboard the m/v Cornish City (4) shortly after the events depicted. How I came to be there give rise to my title.

This was my second voyage aboard the Cornish, and at the conclusion of the first I was within a few months of finishing my indentures. On leave at the end of that first voyage, I telephoned HO at Cardiff to remind them of the impending date, and to enquire if a transfer to another vessel with perhaps a shorter voyage projection could be arranged, - or, perhaps even going on stand-by? Back came the reply, - “Don’t worry Mr. White, - you need have no concern, - just rejoin the Cornish, as she’s only going on a short trip down round the Med, - you’ll be back in plenty of time, - just about suit you perfect!” So back I went. That was October 1950 when I signed on again.

Off we went, I can’t remember where, but January ’51 came and went, and with it the completion of my indenture. I was signed on as quartermaster, compensated for by a huge rise in earnings to a glittering £13 per month. My financial cup ranneth over, and at last, we found ourselves through the Suez, in the Med, and homeward bound, light ship, allegedly to a continental port to load for the States. Things were looking up, and release was imminent, even without any time off for good behaviour, so to speak. I would only be three or four months overdue, - not so bad. And then, fate bowled the googly!

The signal received was that, arising from a severe depression in the Western Mediterranean, fierce gales had caused our sister ship, Paris City, to drag her moorings off the eastern Spanish seaboard, where she was awaiting loading, where she was now aground, and would we kindly go and pick up her charter, please. Where was her destination? – JAPAN! – and what was the cargo? – (wait for it), SALT!!!

And so it came to pass,....” As the good book says. Fully laden, round on our heels we turned, and headed east again. There were not enough expletives (and I had learned quite a few in the preceding four point two years), to express my disappointment. I cannot even remember where we went after Japan, - I suspect the final journey home may have been from Australia with grain, but I can say without fear of contradiction that my indenture was eventually signed as having been completed to the Company’s entire satisfaction, on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1951.

I had been a little late in going to sea in the first place, being seventeen years and three months at that time. Getting apprenticeships was notoriously difficult in those early post-war years, and my father had been lobbying and writing letters on my behalf for at least six months during 1946. So, I was late going, and very late coming home. Sometimes, whilst studying for my ticket, I looked around my companions faces, and secretly felt like Methuselah. ‘Twas the curse of the Cornish City!

*Colin White, Nailsea*

The following is a letter received by a major US bank recently - and yes, it's for real - it was printed by the New York Times!

Dear Bank Manager,

I am writing to thank you for bouncing the cheque with which I endeavored to pay my plumber last month. By my calculations some three nanoseconds must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque, and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honor it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my entire salary, an arrangement which, I admit, has only been in place for eight years.

You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, for debiting my account with \$50 by way of penalty, and for the way this incident has caused me to re-think my errant financial ways.

You have set me on the path of fiscal righteousness. No more will our relationship be blighted by these unpleasant incidents, for I am restructuring my affairs in 1999, taking as my model the procedures, attitudes and conduct of your very own bank. I can think of no greater compliment, and I know you will be excited and proud to hear it.

To this end, please be advised about the following changes. First, I have noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you I am confronted by the impersonal, ever-changing, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become. From now on I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh and blood person. My mortgage and loan repayments will, therefore no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank, by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee of your branch, whom you must nominate. You will be aware that it is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope. Please find attached an Application For Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative. Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Justice of the Peace, and that the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof.

In due course I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in all dealing with me. I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Let me level the playing field even further by introducing you to my new telephone system, which you will notice, is very much like yours.

My Authorized Contact at your bank, the only person with whom I will have any dealing, may call me at any time and will be answered by an automated voice. By pressing buttons on the phone, he/she will be guided through an extensive set of menus:

1. To make an appointment to see me;
2. To query a missing repayment;
3. To make a general complaint or inquiry;
4. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there. Extension of living room to be communicated at the time the call is received;
5. To transfer the call to my bed room case I am still sleeping. Extension of bed room to be communicated at the time the call is received;
6. To transfer the call to my toilet case I am attending to nature. Extension of toilet to be communicated at the time the call is received.
7. To transfer the call to my mobile phone in case I am not at home.
8. To leave a message on my computer. To leave a message a password to access my computer is required. Pass word will be communicated at a later date to the contact.
9. To return to the main menu and listen carefully to options 1 through 8.

The contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service. While this may on occasion involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration.

This month I've chosen a refrain from The Best Of Woody Guthrie:

Oh, the banks are made of marble  
 With a guard at every door  
 And the vaults are filled with silver  
 That the miners sweated for!

After twenty minutes of that, our mutual contact will probably know it off by heart.

On a more serious note, we come to the matter of cost. As your bank has often pointed out, the

ongoing drive for greater efficiency comes at a cost - a cost which you have always been quick to pass on to me. Let me repay your kindness by passing some costs back.

First, there is the matter of advertising material you send me. This I will read for a fee of \$20 per A4 page.

Inquiries from your nominated contact will be billed at \$5 per minute of my time spent in response.

Any debits to my account, as, for example, in the matter of the penalty for the dishonored cheque, will be passed back to you. My new phone service runs at 75 cents a minutes (even Woody Guthrie doesn't come for free), so you would be well advised to keep your inquiries brief and to the point.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever-so-slightly less prosperous, New Year.

Your humble client.

### Disappointed

Our lady member Avril Trehwella wrote me a rather distressing letter about a paragraph written in the article "Life after R.S.L." by Ian Stewart published in the last newsletter letter No.31. She writes quote":-

"When I was reading Ian Stewart's letter I felt annoyed at the bit put in about Capt. Oliver Lindsay always putting in bits about the company fleet in 1926 (4th paragraph from the end starting Two points to summarize)- he would like to read about what people who used to work for RSL are doing now.

I must point out that the content of "Shipmates" relies solely on articles sent in by members. You can only print what has been sent in and if they do not send it in you cannot print it and have to rely on you and Ollie to fill up the newsletter. It gets so annoying when people criticize other people for the hard work they put in." unquote.

*Avril Trehwella.*

To remind readers how the paragraph read:-

"Two points to summarise and finish off with- the first is , that the reunion last year it was great to meet up with so many old friends and colleagues and to find out what they've been since RSL. No disrespect Ollie, but I would prefer to hear more of like this in Shipmates, rather than what ships were in the company fleet in 1926."

Thank you Avril for your letter, Capt. Oliver Lindsay puts in a lot of his time researching the history of the Reardon Smith Line and he remembers the names of the older officers who served in the company and events that took place in the 40's until the company went into liquidation in 1985.

Thank you Oliver for your hard work and help in keeping "Shipmates" going.

**Please send in a story about while you serving  
serving on RSL or TMM Vessels.**

*Editor*



This e-mail was sent to our member Bill Davies from Jamie Chard

**STAFF APPRAISALS.**

These individual quotes were reportedly taken from actual employee performance evaluations.

1. "Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and has started to dig."
2. "His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity."
3. "I would not allow this employee to breed."
4. "This employee is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definite won't be."
5. "Works well under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap."
6. "When she open her mouth, it seems that is only to change feet."
7. "He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle."
8. "This young lady has delusions of adequacy."
9. "He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them."
10. "This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot."
11. "This employee should go far, and the sooner he starts the better."
12. "Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plastic thing to hold it all together."
13. "A gross ignoramus-144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus."
14. "He certainly takes a long time to make his pointless."
15. "He doesn't have ulcers, but he's a carrier."
16. "I would like to go hunting with him sometime."
17. "He's been working with glue too much."
18. "He would argue with a signpost."
19. "He has a knack for making strangers immediately."
20. "He brings a lot of joy whenever he leaves the room."
21. "When his IQ reaches 50, he should sell."
22. "If you see two people talking and one looks bored, he's the other one."
23. "A photographic memory but with the lens cap glued on."
24. "A prime candidate for natural de-selection."
25. "Donated his brain to science before he was done using it."
26. "Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming."
27. "Has two brains: one is lost and the others looking for it."
28. "If he were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week."
29. "If you give him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change."
30. "If you stand close enough to him, you can hear the oceans."
31. "It's hard to believe that he beat 1 million other sperm."
32. "One neurone short of a synapse."
33. "Some drink from the fountain of knowledge, he only gargled."
34. "Takes him 2 hours to watch 60 minutes."
35. "The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead."

Extracted from "The Lifeboat" January 1<sup>st</sup> 1870

"Old" Cox was my Great Great Grandfather

"Younger" Cox was my Great Grandfather

APPLEDORE DEVON

About 1pm on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1868, Joseph Cox, the Coxswain of the "HOPE" lifeboat stationed at Appledore was informed by the Coastguard that two vessels were embayed and would probably go ashore. He instantly assembled his crew, obtained horses and dragged out the lifeboat on her carriage, ready for action. The vessel most in danger was the Austrian barque "PACE" (probably pronounced PACHY) and as she tried to work out of the Bay, the lifeboat and her crew kept along the shore, directly under her lee moving along with her. At length she grounded. The lifeboat was launched without delay over the Pebble Ridge and dashed into a terrific surf. The crew behaved most nobly- the boat was, at times, as upright as a ladder against a wall and seas swept through her from stem to stern; but they stuck to it, reached the Barque and managed to make fast to her. The crew were all assembled under the shelter of the cuddy and not one would give a stern rope to the boat or move from his position excepting one boy, who ran to the side and dropped into the boat all safe. More than five minutes elapsed without a soul stirring on board; at length eight of them made a rush together for the lifeboat, jumped helter skelter over the side- missed the boat and fell into the water but were all picked up but one. A tremendous sea now struck the boat and drove her under the counter where the rudder was carried away, and old Cox, much bruised as he was jammed up against the counter but his lifebelt saved him, it being broken by the collision. In vain did the lifeboat crew appeal to the remainder of the men on board the barque to come to the boat; they would not stir; so the lifeboat, seriously damaged and with the loss of her rudder was obliged to return to shore where she landed safely her crew and nine of the "PACE'S" men. Old Cox, notwithstanding the severe nip he had received and the damaged state of the boat, called for another crew of volunteers and once more manned the "HOPE", he and his son and one other of the old crew going in her, and, to prove the readiness of the brave volunteers of North Devon, the boat was launched with one man too many on board. On the second trip, young Cox steered with an oar in place of a rudder, the stern of the boat having been damaged. In this state they had nearly again reached the ship when a wave broke over the bow, swept over the crew and carried young Cox right over the stern. The loss of the steering oar made the boat broach to and the next wave found her broadside on and rolled her over, throwing all the crew into the surf. As she righted, the younger Cox managed to get into her again and one by one the brave fellows all got on board excepting old Cox. He had drifted some distance and they had only three oars left; with these however, they managed to turn the boats head round and at last the brave old coxswain was enabled to clutch the blade of an oar when all but done for and was got into the boat. The lifeboat again reached the shore and was dragged up the Pebble Ridge. For a third time, volunteers came forward to man the boat but a difficulty now arose. Besides the rudderless state of the "HOPE", unfitting her for service, the oars save three were all lost. Instantly a lot of horsemen galloped off, with Mr Yeo at their head for spare oars and in due time each horseman returned bearing an oar. Preparations were now made to relaunch but it was discovered that the tide had turned and had already dropped two feet. The danger was now rapidly passing away. The remainder of the crew of the barque had climbed up to the mizzen top and moreover, the third lifeboat crew was not composed entirely of sailors. Those on the spot most wisely interfered and would not allow the boat to be launched again although there were four distinct crews of volunteers - two of which went off and the third and fourth forcibly and wisely stopped. Eventually, three men including the Captain were brought ashore by men who waded out to the barque as the tide fell. Three others perished in addition to one who was lost in getting into the lifeboat. Thirteen in all were saved. All might have got into the boat and been saved when she first went alongside and all in the rigging might have been saved had the men lashed themselves there. It appears that the Austrian Captain would not allow his crew to go into the lifeboat when she got alongside. nor suffer them to throw a rope to her. If the bold and self

devoted conduct of the North Devon volunteers failed to achieve complete success in dealing with this wreck, it is a satisfaction to know that they did what they could and did it nobly. Ordinary lifeboat service in a partially disabled boat is necessarily still more hazardous.

For this service performed with almost incredible perseverance and bravery in terrifying conditions, Coxswain Joseph Cox was awarded second and third clasps to his 1831 Silver medal and the RNLi gave silver medals to young Cox and John Moulton Kelly. The Emperor of Austria also presented awards- silver cross of merit to the Cox'n and his son and John Kelly and the cross of a Knight of the Order of Franz Joseph to the committee member in charge on shore, William Yeo. William Nichols of H.M. Customs also received an award and many other helpers were thanked by the Emperor.

The rescue of the men of the "PACE" has become a local legend - the most famous of many performed by the renowned "Bar-men" of Appledore. It is almost unique for a man to receive TWO clasps to a Silver medal for the same service as did Joseph Cox

FOOTNOTE:- Visitors to Appledore might be interested to note that No.28 Market Street was the home of my Grandparents, aptly named HOPE COTTAGE. The name over the front door exists to this day. As a boy, I spent many happy holidays here. The medals (both RNLi and Austrian) are on permanent loan to and can be viewed at the N.Devon Maritime Museum located at Odun House. Well worth a visit!



### New Members

We welcome aboard Miss Pam Ward, many will remember Pam who ran the "Link" the Reardon Smith Pensioners Newsletter. Pam worked for RSL in the Superintendent Department for several years and many will remember her initial on the letters reference i.e SD/W/W or SD/B/W. She became Mr. Chatterton's (the chairman's) secretary and remained there until the company went into liquidation. Pam's family had long connections with Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd., her father worked the Pacific Coast regular liner service and was stationed on the West Coast of America and Vancouver B.C., until this service discontinued in 1937. In 1951 he was made a director of the Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd., in 1954 a director of the Reardon Smith Line, and in 1956 a director of the Leeds Shipping Co. Ltd.. Pam's brother Peter was an engineer who also served in the company. Her uncle Captain Alfred Ward served in RSL all his working life he was promoted master in 1937 and in 1958 served as Superintendent.

Joe Wagner who was a Chief Cook and Chief Steward with Reardon Smith visited our member Roy Burston this summer and Roy told him about "Shipmates", Joe is now one of our members.

## The Engineer and The Mate at the Pearly Gate

Oil soaked shoes all covered with grime  
 Polished shoes with a brilliant shine  
 Sweated clothes all stained with grease  
 Shirt and ties and pants well creased  
 Oily scarred and calloused hands  
 Manicured fingers, looking grand  
 Thus they approached the Pearly Gates  
 The Engineer and the Mate  
 Saint Peter gazed at this strange sight  
 He knew one was wrong, and the other was right.  
 To be sure, he then did look  
 In his gigantic Judgement Book:  
 Then looking up he said so clear  
 I'll now pass judgement on the engineer.  
 You've sweated blood, you've breather some gas  
 The scars and bruises and burns still last;  
 So come me son and take your place,  
 Like a king, in all his grace  
 My son you've stood it very well  
 You've surely had your share of Hell!  
 The Engineer passed through the Pearly Gates  
 St. Peter then turned onto the Mate  
 You've filled your lungs with cool, clean air,  
 You've known the breezes and the sun up there,  
 Pushing a pencil, you've traveled in Class  
 You've been a passenger before the mast  
 There is no Question yes or no  
 Now its your turn to go below.



Ken Atkinson from Seghill wrote to me saying that recently while holidaying and driving around California he took photographs of the welcome sign posts on entering King City and Fresno City. Neither City being near the sea one wonders why Reardon Smith called the ships after these cities ?

To my knowledge some of the names of these cities were in the fruit growing districts where the liner trade cargos came from, i.e Sacramento Valley, Santa Clara and Willamette Valley, this may had been done to please the growers who may had invested money in the company at that time. Any member who knows the history of the names of the RSL ships please write to the editor.