



SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

Issue No.36 September 2005.

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Captain William Reardon Smith (Baronet) founded the Reardon Smith Shipping Company in 1905 when he was 46 years old. He was born in 1856 and died in 1935. He went to sea when he was 13 years old on the sailing ship "Unity". The last ship he was in command of was the new steamer "Shandon" where he served until 1900. He left the sea to become involved in shipping until he set up his own shipping company in 1905.

Editor



The "Ochtertyre"

During his employment with Hugh Hogarth of Glasgow in 1885 Sir William Reardon Smith supervised the building of the "Ochtertyre", he then took command of the ship and sailed on her for 5 years.

This edition of "Shipmates" is dedicated to Sir William Reardon Smith founder of the shipping company 100 years ago. The following story was published in a local newspaper years ago.

REARDON SHIPPING MAGNATES TRACE ORIGINS TO 1796

The collapse of the Reardon Smith line brings to the end in ship owning a family which traces its roots back to 1796, and a forefather who fought at the Battle of the Nile two years later. The grandfather of the shipping line's founder came from County Cork, Ireland.

One of the earliest records is of the arrival of a forefather, Captain Daniel O'Riordean, aboard HMS Weazel in 1796. Shortly after, records shipping historian P.M. Heaton, he married and "for reasons unknown added" the suffix 'Smith' to his surname. The name O'Riordan was sometimes given as Riordean and finally became Reardon. Thereafter sometimes the Reardon was dropped by the family, and sometimes the Smith.

The shipping line was founded by William Reardon-Smith, who came from Devon, where his forefathers were linked with the ship-building industry.

The line grew as Cardiff became the biggest coal shipping port in the world and extensive trade with South America, known as the River Plate trade, blossomed, taking coal out and mostly grain back.

The shipping line survived the depression, the losses endured during two world wars, and seemed, only a decade ago, to be launched on a bright new future.

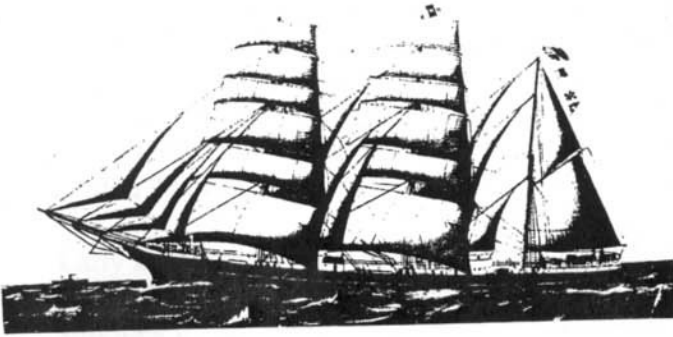
But in the end, with the British merchant fleet more than halved between 1975 and 1983, the odds were too great, however long the family's experience of sea-going matters.

Sir William's first ship wrecked off Nanjizel near Land End 1912.



S.S. "City of Cardiff"

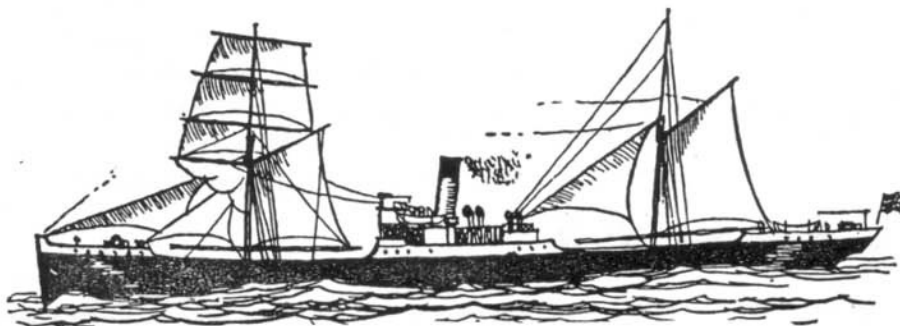
Editor



Hogarth's Sailing Ship "Machrihanish"

Sir William Reardon Smith's Sea Career 1868-1900

Date	Rank	Ship	Type
1868	Boy/cook	Unity	Sloop
1869	Boy/cook	Seraphina	Smack
1869	Boy/cook	Joe Abraham	Brig
1870-71	Ordinary Seaman	Unity	Brig
1871	Ordinary Seaman	Joe Abraham	Brig
1872	Ordinary Seaman	Jane	Barque
1872	Ordinary Seaman	Ocean Pearl	Ship
1872-73	Ordinary Seaman	Scout	Barque
1873-74	Able Seaman	Caroline	Schooner
1874	Able Seaman	Vicount Canning	Ship
1874	Able Seaman	Juno	Barque
1875	Able Seaman	Lucelle	Barque
1876	Able Seaman	Souvenir	Barque
1876-78	2nd Mate	Vermont	Ship
1887	Mate	Mary Hogarth	Barque
1879-80	Mate	Cyprus	Barque
1880-82	Mate/Master from 1881	Drumadoon	Barque
1881-84	Superintendent then Master	Machrihanish	Iron Ship
1884	Master	Colonsay	Steamer
1885	Superintendent building	Corryvreckan	Steel barque
1885-90	Superintendent then Master	Ochertyre	Barque
1892-94	Master	Baron Douglas	Steamer
1892-96	Master	Baron Elibank	Steamer
1894-96	Master	Baron Belhaven	Steamer
1896-97	Master	Starcross	Steamer
189-99	Master	Lady Lewis	Steamer
1899-1900	Master	Shandon	Steamer



Hogarth's S.S. "Baron Douglas"

Editor

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1 June, 2005.

Dear readers,

In 2007 the National Museum of Wales will celebrate the centenary of the granting of its Royal Charter. One of the museum's most generous benefactors was, of course, Sir William Reardon Smith, and it is my intention to publish a volume on Sir William in 2007 to celebrate his life and his generosity to the National Museum.

The core of the book will be made up of the autobiography that Sir William started to write in the early 1930s; unfortunately he never finished it, and it finishes in about 1894, when he was still at sea with Hogarth's. The typescript autobiography – apparently unlooked at for some fifty years! – was amongst the papers and photographs given to the museum by the late Robert Chatterton at the time of the company's demise in 1985.

It is my intention also to write a substantial sequel to the autobiography, telling the rest of Sir William's life story, looking at the founding of the company and his many charitable donations. If any readers knew Sir William or have heard stories and anecdotes about him, then I would be delighted to hear from them. I have already gleaned much useful information from the pages of *Shipmates*.

I'd also like to write a little about the men that Sir William employed on board his ships by taking two captains as examples: one a Welshman, Captain Dan Davies of New Quay, who was commodore master of the line in the 1920s; the other, one of Sir William's fellow Devonians, Captain Lionel Ford of Appledore, who I believe later became deck superintendent. If any of you knew either of these men, or know any anecdotes about them, again I would be most grateful to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,



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The Editors, *Shipmates*.



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LOSS OF THE S.S. "FORT MUMFORD" (Gross Tons 7,132)

Built in 1942 by the Prince Rupert Dockyard, Prince Rupert, B.C. for the Canadian Government and named "Fort Mumford", she was bareboat chartered to the British Ministry of War Transport and managed by Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd.

Early in January 1943, under the command of Captain Harry Smith and manned by a British crew, she sailed on her maiden voyage from Vancouver, B.C. loaded with 6,649 tons of war supplies for the Mediterranean. She was routed via Lyttleton, New Zealand, Colombo and Aden. Sailing independently the passage across the Pacific Ocean to Lyttleton, was without incident and the ship's crew settled down to the usual sailing routine. At Lyttleton several New Zealanders joined the crew to fill vacancies and on sailing she had on board a crew of 46 plus 5 gunners. Proceeding independently she called Colombo and sailed from that port on the 18th March, 1943 sailing independently towards Aden. Two days later, on the 20th March she was she was torpedoed and sunk by the Japanese submarine I-27 in a position approximately 500 miles North West of Ceylon. The weather and sea conditions were known to be good and the ship's crew abandoned the ship in the lifeboats.

At first there was nothing known of the fate of the ship and her crew but some time after the ship was reported missing an Arab dhow arrived at a East African port and landed one survivor from the "Fort Mumford", who turned out to be one of the ship's gunners, identified by the 'dog-tag' he was wearing.

It is now known that the Imperial Japanese Navy submarine under the command of Lt.Cdr.Fukumura complied with the Japanese Imperial "disposal" policy concerning POW's and ordered the slaughter of all the "Fort Mumford" crew. (He was apparently unaware that one survived)

Between the 20th March 1943 and the 12th February 1944, I-27 under the command of Lt.Cdr. Fukumura is reported to have torpedoed fourteen allied merchant ships, eleven of which sank, one of the latter was the S.S. "Sambridge" where it is known that Fukumura ordered his machine gunners to open fire on the survivors in the lifeboat and the rafts. He takes the second officer aboard and lands him at the submarine's base in Penang. On the 4th February 1944 the I-27 still under the command of Lt.Cdr. Fukumura sailed from Penang with orders to patrol in the region between the Maldive Islands and the Gulf of Aden. On the 12th February 1944, in the One and a Half Degree Channel in the Maldives he attacked a British convoy KR8 composing of five troopships, sinking the troop transport S.S. "Kededive Mail" which sank in less than one minute, with a loss of 1,383 passengers and crew. 201 men and 6 women were saved. The submarine was attacked by the convoy escorts and a surface and underwater action which resulted in the sinking of I-27, she sank with 99 of her crew including Cdr. Fukumura approximately 60 miles NW of Addu Atoll, there was one survivor who was saved by a British Royal Navy escort.

On the 15th May, Cdr. Fukumura was posthumously promoted by the Imperial Japanese Navy to the rank of Rear Admiral, on the 10th July 1944 his name was removed from the Navy List.

The Master of the S.S. "Fort Mumford" Captain Harry Smith, nephew of William Reardon Smith the founder of Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd. who survived the sinking of the S.S. "Botavon" ten months earlier whilst sailing in a Arctic convoy to Murmansk, only to be murdered in the Indian Ocean by the order of Cdr. Fukumura.

Sir William's photograph appears on page one of this issue.

60th Anniversary of the End of World War 2

This year being 60 years since the end of WW2, there have been celebrations taking place throughout the United Kingdom. Here in Cardiff on Sunday the 10th July the celebrations attended by a few of our members started early outside St. David's Hall and progressed through the march and the salute, to a Service of Commemoration in Cooper's Field, adjacent to Cardiff Castle. Lunch was in a marquee and followed by afternoon entertainment which included Big Band, Singers, Vintage Vehicles and the provision of large TV. screens to show events taking place elsewhere in the U.K. The Sunset Ceremony was carried out by representatives from H.M.S. "Cardiff", berthed in Cardiff Docks.

In London a Service of Prayer and Thanksgiving was held in Westminster Abbey. It was attended by H.M. The Queen and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh and nine other members of the Royal Family. Also present were leading members of the Armed Forces and Politicians along with their spouses. The congregation, however, was largely formed of WW2 veterans and their spouses or carers which included two "Shipmates" subscribers and their spouses, Oliver Lindsay and Ray Newbury. The proceedings included a reading by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, an address by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the hymn such a favourite in Wales, Cwm Rhondda (Guide me , O thou Great Redeemer). All attending Westminster Abby were given a copy of "Thanks for our Future" the official WW2 commemoration brochure.

At Buckingham Palace there was a luncheon given by HM The Queen for Veterans and their spouses.

During the afternoon in London there were celebratory displays at Horse-Guards Parade and then the procession following The Queen up the Mall to Buckingham Palace. This was followed by the spectacular flypast by the Red Arrows and WW2 aircraft. HM The Queen was present throughout the days events, much of which was shown on television for those unable to be present

Fortunately, the U.K. enjoyed glorious weather for the events, blue sky and warm .

Ray Newbury

Their Past Your Future

Two Shipmates Subscribers, WW2 veterans have been on visits to the battlefields overseas under the "Heroes Return" arrangements have been to Chepstow to speak to groups of school children. The talks were arranged by the Chepstow Museum which was hosting a special mobile exhibition of wartime materials and events on tour from the Imperial War Museum. Three visits were made altogether, the first two which were about a fortnight apart were for the purpose of speaking to groups of school children from the schools, whilst the third visit was to mark the success of the exhibition and proceedings, to which all the speakers were invited.

R.N.

Help Available For Veterans

Members are reminded that in addition to help available to them through various seafarers charitable organisations, some armed forces charities will give assistance in the case of MN veterans who have seen service in hostile waters.

R.N.

Seafarers Advice Centre

The Seaman's Hospital Society (Dreadnought) provides a Citizens Advice Bureau telephone advice line. It is expressly for those or their partners who have served in the Merchant Navy or Fishing Fleets. All calls are charged at the "local call" rate (On land line telephones) on 0845- 7413318. Calls should be made between 1000 and 1230 hours Monday to Friday. Callers outside those times may leave a recorded message. This is a free, independent impartial and confidential service for seafarers families.

R.N..

Unusual Rescue 64 years ago

Attention has been drawn to the rescue of survivors from the S.S. "Guelma" of Swansea, sunk on the 17th July 1941 by the Italian submarine "Malaysian". The survivors were picked up after two days adrift in lifeboats by the British Submarine H.M.S. "Thunderbolt" (making very cramped conditions in the submarine) and landed at Gibraltar. Apart from it being very unusual for a submarine to carry out the rescue operation, the submarine herself was no stranger to being a shipping casualty. During June of 1939, when named "Thetis" this submarine sank whilst on trials in Liverpool Bay with the loss of 99 souls. She was subsequently raised and after extensive repair and renewals entered service as H.M.S. "Thunderbolt".

H.M.S. "Thunderbolt" had a number of successes against the enemy until on the 13th March, 1943 when on patrol in the Mediterranean she was sunk whilst engaging the enemy. Her Captain and all her crew lost their lives.

Prior to joining the Royal Navy the Captain of the "Thunderbolt" attended the Reardon Smith Junior Nautical School and was an R.S.L. apprentice.

Ray Newbury.

Reardon Smith Line --- The beginning

This being the 100th anniversary of the founding of what was to become Cardiff's largest shipping company, owning at one time over forty ships, it appears to be appropriate to mention that Captain William Reardon Smith decided to enter ship owning in 1905 in partnership with his son Willie and so was founded the firm of W.R. Smith & Sons, they also established the Instow Steamship Co., Ltd., a public company. That same year they ordered from the well established ship building company of Ropner & Son of Stockton a steam vessel of 5,500 tons deadweight. The vessel was completed in May, 1906 and named "City of Cardiff" and entered into the Instow Steamship Company. On her maiden voyage she was commanded by William's brother Captain John Smith whose son **Harry was second mate.

On the 12th March, 1912 the "City of Cardiff" whilst on a passage from Le Havre to Cardiff in ballast encountered boisterous weather and was wrecked in a position two miles to the South East of Lands End. Fortunately her Master, Captain Storey and all the crew including the Captain and Chief Officer wives were saved by breaches buoy. The first time ever that ladies had been rescued by a breaches buoy.

** In 1943 Harry as Master of S.S. "Fort Mumford" was murdered by the Japanese. For details please refer in this issue to "Loss of the Fort Mumford".

O.J.L.

Continuation from SHIPMATES Issue No.34 "Present Events"

On the 12th April, 2005 I received a letter from the **Embassy of the Russian Federation, London**. Herewith an **extract** from the letter:-

Quote " Dear Capt. Lindsay, I am pleased to inform you that you are entitled to be awarded the Commemorative Medal ' The 60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic war 1941- 1945 ' "

It is with great Pleasure that I congratulate you with the award that comes to you as recognition of your contribution to our common fight against fascism during the last war.

I am happy to invite you to attend a special ceremony that will take place on Tuesday, 26th April 2005 at 11.00 am at the Residence of the Russian Ambassador (13, Kensington Palace Gardens, London.)" Unquote.

At the appointed time I arrived at the Residency accompanied by my wife and daughter, we were welcomed into the splendid home and shown into a large reception room overlooking Kensington Gardens. The room was set for the 27 Veterans who were to be presented with medals to be seated on one side and their accompanying kin or friends on the other. The Ambassador on entering the room made a welcoming speech and continued recalling the war and the contribution of the allies and the sacrifices made on the Arctic Convoys conveying war supplies to Russia. Each Veteran was called individually to be presented with a medal by the Ambassador, a stamped and signed certificate accompanied the medal and red carnations, then a few personal words and a handshake. After the medal presentation was over, doors were opened to a large conservatory with a selection of large plants. The reception continued with a generous supply of red and white wines and vodka whilst ladies conveyed platters of various delicious food amongst the Veterans and guests. On tables were pyramids of strawberries and grapes. Members of the Embassy staff circulated amongst the Veterans and a friendly and convivial few hours soon slipped away. It was 3pm after a memorable event that the Veterans said their good byes to their hosts.

I was also invited to attend a reception at the Embassy of the Russian Federation 6/7 Kensington Palace Gardens, at 6.30pm the evening of the 27th April, to an Art Exhibition of Soviet and Russian Art Dedicated to and Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. The exhibition included over thirty works by Soviet and Russian artists and several by Ukrainian artists. The idea was to show the Second World War both through the eyes of its contemporaries or participants, and young artists. The former perceiving the War as part of their lives; it represented for them the pain of losses and ardent joy of victory. The younger artists seeing the War in a more abstract way; as a symbol of unity and resolution, courage and suffering of the nation.

The reception was well attended, some of the guests having travelled from as far as Scotland and Southwest of England. All were individually welcomed to the Embassy and the hospitality therein was generous with as per the previous day there was vodka, white and red wine at hand and ladies conveyed platters of food to the guests. The Ambassador and other members of his staff were present during the evening. Of the veterans from the previous day's reception I, accompanied by my wife, was one of two who attended. The Ambassador recognized me and we talked together for about ten minutes regarding the time during the war that I spent in a Russian army camp near Murmansk, 7th May to 27th June of 1942.

At about 9.pm my wife and I thanked our hosts and made our departure.

The two receptions were enjoyable events that will always be remembered.

Our member Captain David Jones, who wrote his story about his survival after the **Quebec City** was torpedoed and sunk in a recent issue of "Shipmates", has sent in the following article which was published in the South Wales Evening Post. The story was written by Jill Forwood and I would like to thank them both for this article.

A QUESTION OF HUMANITY

It's just as well retired sea captain David Jones likes to keep busy. At the age of 81 he is enjoying a totally unexpected career as international figurehead, unofficial ambassador, lecturer and peace campaigner – all because of a question that haunted him for 55 years.

"Who was the German U-boat commander who saved his life?"

In 1942 David was a cadet officer on the freighter **Quebec City** when it was torpedoed by U-boat 156 off the west coast of Africa. Before destroying the vessel, however, the German captain got the survivors into lifeboats and gave them help and advice to reach safety.

It was 1997 before David discovered he was one of the few people still alive who had come face to face with one of Germany's great naval heroes, the legendary Werner Hartenstein, who sank Allied ships but rescued their crews and survivors.

"All those years I thought it was just us, the **Quebec City** crew that had been saved by him," said David. "Then I discovered he had done the same favour for 22 ships."

Today David himself is something of a hero in Hartenstein's home city of Plauen in Bavaria. In seeking the answer to the question that nagged him for more than half a century, he became a prime figure in reviving Hartenstein's story.

Now he is president of the international survivors' club, an honoured member of the Plauen branch of the German Naval Association, a lecturer in Germany and Britain, a goodwill ambassador for Swansea and Wales, and a TV personality whose latest subtitled appearance is in a film, which has been sold worldwide about the Battle of the Atlantic.

He and his wife Edwina have also become close personal friends with the Hartenstein family, especially Hartenstein's nephew, Dr Werner Schuppan, which pleased him immensely.

"Over the years I have often wished I had been in a position to talk to Hartenstein himself," he said, "This is the next best thing."

Hartenstein made an indelible impression on David when they came face to face in 1942. His U-boat was the largest in the German navy and the British seamen had heard all about Nazi atrocities.

"We were terrified," David said. "We thought we were staring death in the face."

"He was very efficient, totally in charge. But he was also extremely courteous and kind. He was sorry we had to meet under such circumstances, sorry to have to blow up our ship. He hoped we would all meet again in a more peaceful world."

"Many years later, when I was researching him, I was a little puzzled. He was known to have put his own vessel at considerable risk to save survivors. Although he saved our lives, he hadn't done a great deal more to help us. We were 1,200 miles from shore and we were lost at sea for 31 days before we made landfall."

"Then I discovered that only days before sinking **Quebec City**, Hartenstein had sunk the British troopship *Laconia*. He himself took 200 survivors on board and took five lifeboats carrying another 200 in tow."

"He sent out the international distress call on an open radio frequency, identified himself, and promised not to fire on any ship or aircraft that came to the rescue. But a US Liberator aircraft was ordered to attack and there were fatalities among the survivors. After that Hitler intervened and U-boats were ordered not to help any more survivors. When he sank our ship, Hartenstein couldn't disobey orders, but he did everything else that he could."

"The important thing was that Hartenstein and other German navy men were not Nazis. This came out clearly in the Nuremberg trials, but Hartenstein particularly was a man of exceptional humanity and integrity."

For a long time David didn't know that **Quebec City** was the last ship sunk by Hartenstein. Not long afterwards his U-boat was attacked and he was killed at the age of 34.

When the war ended, Hartenstein quickly became a forgotten figure. The Russians took over East Germany and for 44 years suppressed Bavarian history. Hartenstein's family secretly buried his many medals to stop them falling into Soviet hands.

In retirement, David started researching U-boats. But only when the Berlin Wall came down was he able to track the gallant captain to his home city of Plauen, where he had come from a family of wealthy industrialists and lived in a mansion larger than Kensington Palace.

The result was David's book, "The Enemy We Killed, My Friend" (Gomer) which has since been published successfully in German, and a lasting bond between Wales and Bavaria.

"The whole thing has just grown and grown," said David. "I'm the only known British survivor and altogether there are only a few of us left, including two former members of Hartenstein's crew. But all the relatives all over the world belong to the survivors' club, the International Submarine Connection U156."

David's next visit to Plauen will include a visit to Hartenstein's old boarding school where he will speak to sixth formers.

"It's always a pleasure to talk about this enemy who was my friend," said David. "We will always need heroes and examples of humanity."

Anyone who would like to buy a copy of Captain Jones's book "The Enemy we Killed, My Friend" can contact him by telephone on 01792 234588.

HORATIO

I came unto this battle
 With a heart so brave and true
 And I know there lay my destiny
 With my ships and gallant crew
 I'd lost one arm before hand
 And I'd also lost one eye
 But I am Horatio Nelson
 Glorious victory now is nigh
 Yet in my greatest triumph
 I find,now my spine shot through
 Thank God they missed my medals
 Yet my coat's a mending duel

So kiss me Hardy, kiss me
 For a hero's death die I
 And amidst my greatest triumph
 Point my one eye to the sky
 And tell my dearest Emma
 Who must now be so bereft
 That I'm marching into history
 Whilst I've still got two legs left
 Yet I'll not be gone forever
 So good people don't despair
 You'll catch me posing anytime
 Down in Trafalgar Square

The National Memorial Arboretum
Alrewas. Staffs.

I have recently had cause to visit the above where a memorial is to be dedicated to those lost in HMS Neptune and HMS Kandahar in 1941. My cousin perished in Kandahar aged 19.

The complex consists of 150 acres and commemorates most wartime and present day organisations.

Of particular interest is the comprehensive Merchant Navy area. Here, 2536 oak trees are planted representing one tree for every British Flag merchant vessel sunk during World War Two. Many have individual dedications - of particular note HMT "Lancastria". The Red Ensign flies in a spot where there is a large map of the world (presented by the Hon. Company of Master Mariners) and which, on sunny days can be used as a human sundial.

The Chapel is of particular interest where there are wonderful displays of wood carvings and each chair bears a brass plate commemorating individuals who gave their lives. A large book is housed here, recording every vessel sunk together with Company particulars, name of Master, position of sinking and by what means.

At 1100 hours daily, a two minute silence is observed accompanied by the Last Post and Reveille.

A visitor centre together with restaurant, shop and meeting room with many very interesting Shipping Company plaques displayed are exceptionally well designed and maintained.

To date, over 50,000 trees have been planted and over 100 dedicated plots created. A section of the Burma railroad is presently being constructed with original salvaged sleepers and rail.

I found this visit a very sobering experience and feel that the Arboretum has not received sufficient national publicity, no doubt because it is not located close to London.

John Carr

MY VOYAGE ON THE LEEDS CITY (3) IN 1946

By Cyril Hudson

If I had intended to write about my trip on the LEEDS CITY nearly 60 years later, I no doubt would have written a mini-log about it at the time. However I did not, so I will try and recollect the events which had happened.

First a few relevant facts about the LEEDS CITY (3) according to Lloyd's Register.

Official Number 148831 Code Letters GDXQ Rigging: steel single screw steamer.

1 deck & shelter deck: fitted with direction finder; water ballast

Tonnage: 4,758 tons, 4,432 under deck and 2,884 net.

Dimensions: 400.5 feet long, 54.3 beam and holds, 25.6 deep. Forecastle 41 feet

Construction: Launched 11 September, 1927 by William Gray & Co., in Sunderland, Yard No. 990.

Propulsion: Triple expansion engine with 3 cylinders of 25, 42, & 70 inches diameter respectively: 48 inches stroke: fitted for oil fuel.

Engine by Central Marine Engine Works in West Hartlepool.

Owners: Leeds Shipping Co., Ltd., (Sir William Reardon-Smith & Sons Ltd., Managers)

Port of registry: Bideford.

The Reardon Smith Line had previously owned two other ships named LEEDS CITY, the LEEDS CITY (1) 1908-1918) and the LEEDS CITY (2) 1918-1925).

When one first goes to sea your first ship is always the most memorable and always remains with you. You enter the nautical world of new words used aboard ships, decks not floors, deck heads not ceilings, bulkheads not walls, weather side, lee side, forward, aft, amidships, stern, companionway, and periods of work are watches. The LEEDS CITY was not my first trip to sea so the crew members and events which occurred have not so vividly remained with me after all these years. I signed on as Catering boy though I was a cabin boy, as this Catering rate could also include being a galley boy on 7th August, 1946 at the Middlesbrough Marine Office. My wages were ten pounds a month, which included five pounds war bonus for which I worked a ten hour day, seven days a week. The war bonus for senior deck and engine room ratings, was ten pounds monthly, all the war bonus payments was abolished in mid-1947, and were added to the regular rates of pay. The Master of the ship was J.D. Lloyd, aged about 34 who had joined the company in 1930, and was given his first command, the LEEDS CITY in April, 1945.

The LEEDS CITY was discharging a cargo of iron ore brought from Pepel, Sierra Leone at the now non-existent Gjers, Mills & Co., Ayresome Ironworks wharf in the Middlesbrough Ironmaster's district. The ore loading dock at Pepel is situated two hours upriver from Freetown, and the ore is not the usual red-brown rock type, but instead the ore is a sand-like heavy finely ground black coloured concentrate, loaded at the rate of 5,000 tons a day.

The next day after signing on I reported aboard to the Chief Steward and I was pleasantly surprised to find out that the other cabin boy was Jimmy Umpleby, one of my

former school class pals. The Catering department consisted of the Chief Steward, 2nd steward, two cabin boys, Chief cook and the 2nd. cook and baker. The deck ratings were all from Teesside, the firemen were Aden Arabs from South Shields who all lived in the fo'c'sle. During the five-six days we were unloading I had noticed a man in a British Army uniform who appeared to be friends with the deck crowd. Uniforms in those days were a common sight, even lots of the dockers wore parts of surplus army clothing at work, so not much attention was paid to the soldier.

After the iron ore was discharged the LEEDS CITY was bound for Galveston, Texas to load a sulphur cargo for Garston on Merseyside. We sailed through the English Channel and about two days after leaving the last sight of land a stowaway showed up, it was the British soldier from the Durham Light Infantry named 'Ginger' McGrogan from South Bank on Tees. The 'Old Man' was naturally upset about the situation, "Who hid him, who knew about it"?, but it was to no avail. The situation was "no one saw anything, no one heard anything, and no one said anything" However one redeeming factor was that 'Ginger' was an ex-deckhand who knew the ropes and was promptly put on the day work watch helping out cleaning the holds. How he had ever been called up was never made clear because the Essential Work Order (EWOMN) for the Merchant Navy in May, 1941 made it illegal for anyone to leave the service. However 'Ginger' had done it, perhaps he had received a couple of 'Decline to Report' discharges, and had been called up. His action of stowing away was very short sighted, he must have been aware of the consequences of his army desertion. The voyage across the Atlantic towards the Gulf of Mexico during that time of the year was a pleasant one, blue skies, calm seas and warm breezes, and one of my jobs was to take a cup of tea to the second mate on the bridge at 3pm every afternoon. He was a pretty friendly guy whose name I've forgotten, and he had no objection when I asked if I could have a try at steering the ship which I had never done before. So every afternoon, circumstances permitting, I had a ten minute session from the man on the wheel teaching me how to keep the ship on course. I enjoyed the learning experience, which was to prove beneficial later on.

There was one problem on the ship and it was the rats, they were everywhere, and it was the daily routine for the ship's Chippy to empty all the rat cages that were set on the decks, the 3 or 4 ship's cats seemed unable to cope with large amount of rats.. Jimmy and I shared a cabin, which was austere fitted out, a bunk and locker each, a set of four drawers. We also had a cupboard-wash basin which for some reason had never been fitted with a waste water pipe, so we had a bucket underneath which we had to empty every other day. We shared the routine of emptying the bucket and you can imagine the 'panic stations' when one day we discovered a rat swimming around in the half filled bucket. Needless to say the swimming rat was promptly dispatched to the Atlantic to continue the swim.

On arrival at our destination of Galveston, the ship rode at anchor in the Bolivar Roads, the merging area for the Gulf of Mexico and Galveston Bay, which is considered the main entrance to the bay from the Gulf. The name Galveston Bay, honouring Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish Viceroy in Mexico City, dates back to 1786. Galveston port is on Galveston Island which is only seventeen feet above sea level, about twenty miles in length and five miles wide. The city of Galveston, population of about 45,000 is at the east of the island and the port ships out mainly wheat, cotton also sulphur, which we were to load. On arrival a launch came out with members of the local sheriff's department, and

'Ginger' was quickly taken into custody and placed in the local jail until we sailed again to return to Liverpool. After a few days at anchor which included constant attacks by the huge mosquito population, we came alongside to load at the sulphur berth, which is not an enjoyable experience. The cargo was loaded in bulk from chutes, extremely dusty and at that time of the year Galveston is hot and very humid, everyone had red sore eyes. On our first night ashore we met a union picket line at the dock entrance, the local maritime union was on strike, and we were told we would have to have clearance from their union before we could return to our ship that evening. We were escorted to the union hall and on the front of our British Seamen's identity cards, they were all stamped 'A.J. Hall, Chairman of the Local Strike Committee'. Strangely enough, a couple of times in my later years going to sea and signing on a ship, I was admonished by officials who noticed the union stamp at the Shipping office saying to me "You have no business letting anyone stamping your identity card". Though at the time we had no alternative, unless we wanted trouble from those militant Texan seamen on returning through their picket line to our ship.

On the LEEDS CITY next to the amidships saloon pantry the ship's four apprentices had their one room cabin, just four bunks, table and lockers also a table to sit around. I cannot remember any names, except one of them was named Rose, and we both had something in common. Earlier in 1946 we both had been in Hong Kong, he was on the SAMHOPE (managed by Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd. 1944-1947 for the M.O.W.T.) which was engaged in returning Japanese P.O.W. to their homeland from Hong Kong. Though there was a couple of hundred who remained to work for the British forces stationed there. At the same time I was on the WAVE SOVEREIGN an R.F.A. British Pacific Fleet tanker based in Hong Kong at anchor off Kowloon as the port duty oil bunkering tanker. We had British, U.S. French, and Portuguese Naval warships also mostly British merchant ships along side, providing a continuous 24 hours a day service for bunkers, and Rose said SAMHOPE had been one of them. At that time there was no shore bunkering facilities in service, the U.S. Navy had bombed Hong Kong pretty severely, and they were all destroyed.

To the best of my recollection we must have taken about six days to complete loading the sulphur cargo which was bound for the Bryant & May Match Co., in the UK and with the return of our stowaway back aboard, we began the return voyage to Merseyside. On the ship's arrival at the lock entrance of Garston docks during the early hours there was a welcoming party awaiting our stowaway 'Ginger', a British Military Police Officer with two over six foot Military Policemen who had shoulders to match. What ever happened to him is a mystery, I've never heard another word about the affair. When the hatches were stripped ready for the dockers, the view down the hatches was amazing, there was not one square inch of the sulphur cargo which was not covered by the marks of the rat's feet. It was impossible to begin to count them, and how so many rats could exist is extraordinary, what they did eat I do not know. The LEEDS CITY paid off her crew, 15th October, 1946. After my discharge I returned home for my five days leave before I was due to report to the M.N Reserve Pool in Middlesbrough.

In the M.N. Reserve Pool office there were three windows, one each for deck, engine room, and catering ratings, so I decided to join the queue at the deck ratings window and ask for a deck boy's job. The first reaction was "No, you've been a cabin boy, you can't steer a ship". When I replied I could, he gave me a look of "I don't think so." Unknown to me there was good fortune stood behind me when a voice said "Yes he can, I taught him,"

it was one of the AB seamen who had given me lessons. So, after some discussion I was given a slip to sign on the FORT STAGER as a deck boy, however that is another story.

I've lived in Canada for more than 40 years now with my wife and our family, in 1979 my wife Ena and I did pay a visit for a day to Galveston on our two week car trip around the Southern USA. After over a 30 year lapse I could not really remember too much about the place. I retired in 1993 from Dow Chemical, and in the winter months of 1996-97-98 we drove down, renting a condo for two months in Galveston where I managed to keep up with my hobby of photographing ships, around the docks, also at the entrance to the busy Houston Ship Channel. I did discover at Galveston that sulphur cargoes were now shipped in liquid form in special tanker vessels, a far better safer and environmental method than 'in the good old days'.

"Shipmates" locker is almost empty of stories, again, I am sure that you members can sit down and write a page or two about a trip or incident which happened while you were at sea. We have had no TMM stories for a long while. Please help to keep the newsletter going.

Stories can be typed, printed or hand written please send to Alec Osborne 24E Heol Hir, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5AE.

Thanking you in advance.

The Editor.

Obituary Captain Tony Lightfoot from Inverness wrote to say that he received the news that Jim Sambridge of B.C. Canada, crossed the bar on the 16th February 2005. This news was sent to him from Jim,s wife Gladys. Jim was very well known by RSL personnel who worked with him when they were on the berth service B.C./U.K. ships. Our deepest sympathy goes to Gladys and her family.

It is funny how a simple question can lead to a really funny experience:-

I was on board the Cardiff City, in 1971 at Easter time. We were sailing down from Ensenada to Acapulco (I think), and I was in the 4th Engineer's cabin just after dinner and before we went on watch at 20.00. In the cabin was myself (Engineer Cadet), Keith Aust (4/E), also 8-12 watch, Ken Green (3/E) and his junior – whose name escapes me, but he was from Scotland! The Deck cadet came in, nice lad, but first trip to sea and very naïve! We were talking about Easter, and the cadet said did anything special happen at Easter!!!

Keith said that there was a special dinner and maybe a party as we would still be at sea. Ken then pitched in saying there was sometimes also a service to celebrate the second coming – the meaning of which was lost on the cadet. Ken told the cadet to go to the bridge to ask the mate if there was going to be a service and if so, did he have the ship's bible.

Off went the cadet, and we relaxed expecting him to come back with a flea in his ear, as the mate was not well known for his sense of humour.

Ten minutes later he did return, not with a flea in his ear as suspected, but with a message from the mate – “I don't know if there is going to be a service and I don't have the bible – the Old Man does, but he is turned in at the moment as it is foggy and expecting to be called during the night and not to be disturbed otherwise.”

The cadet asked what was the duration of the service and where was it held to which by now everyone's imagination started to run riot!

After a lot of improvisation, it was decided that it would take place at 10.00 hrs the next day, on No. 3 hatch if dry and in the Messroom if wet and it was traditional for the cadet to organise the service – at which point he got rather worried – but we all assured him, we would help!.

The next day dawned, and the cadet, who was already turned to, came down the Engine room to discuss the format of the service with Keith as the 3/E, Ken, was turned in. Keith said that normally there were a couple of hymn's and a reading from the Bible by the Captain. The Captain, by this time had got wind of what was going on, and had given a Bible to the cadet and told him to get on with it.

As a final touch, Keith said it was also traditional for the cadet to go on to the hatch (It was a bit misty, but not raining) and start singing the Psalm The lord is my Shepherd, until the officers and crew arrived.

By 10 minutes to 10, there was not a vacant porthole or window in the accommodation with everyone looking out to see if the cadet had twigged we were pulling his leg – but no, at the allotted time he came out in full rig (his own idea), climbed on to the hatch, pulled himself erect and started to sing

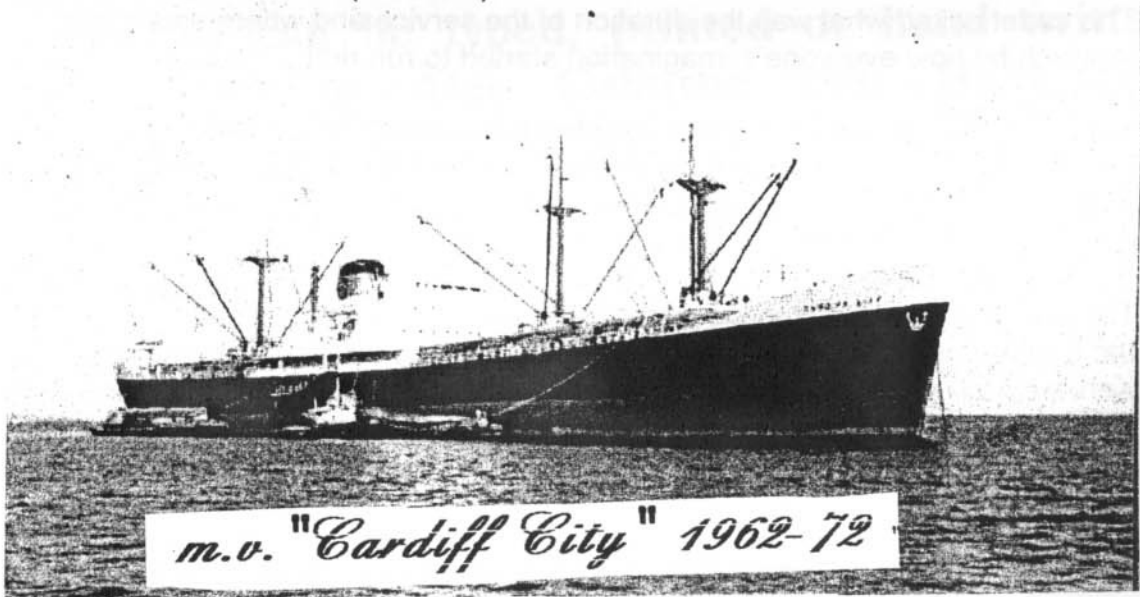
As we had just left Ensenada after discharging, the crew had been turned to, to complete clearing up the rubbish on deck and were walking back to the accommodation for Smoko, not one of them batted an eyelid, and just kept on walking. The cadet finished the psalm and looked around – but of course no-one had arrived. Looking at his watch, he took a deep breath and started to sing again.

At this point the Mate took pity on him and went on deck to tell him what was going on – and as he turned around to face the accommodation he could see all the faces in the windows and even the Old Man was looking over the bridge wing.

The cadet went a bright red in colour and looked very embarrassed, but when he came back into the accommodation everyone made a big fuss of him and he took the joke in very good humour – mainly I think as he was no longer just – the junior cadet, but a little bit of a celebrity.

Also on board at the time were Brian Allsop – 2/E, Mike Burt – J/E and Stan the other deck cadet.

From
Glen Murray-Dickson
Reardon Smith Cadet 1967 to 1971
J4/E to J2/E 1971 to 1976
Still married to Pauline (Blodwen)



REARDON SMITH REUNION 2005

Remember the Reardon Smith Reunion is on the 14th September 2005, if you intend to go, and have not yet booked for the buffet lunch which will commence at 12 noon then write to :- Mike Jones, Sydcott, 5 Canal Cottages, Jacksonbridge, Pygons Hill Lane, Merseyside, L31 4HU.

Enclose a cheque to the value of £15 made payable to Capt.M.E.Jones.

20 Years Ago

Its twenty years ago since the company Reardon Smith went into voluntary liquidation. The article below was published in the Financial Times on Saturday June 1st 1985.

Reardon Smith Line, a Cardiff based shipping company beset by mounting losses, falling ship values and low freight rates, is to go into voluntary liquidation.

The company's shares were suspended on Thursday at prices which valued it at about £800,000. It has not paid a dividend for three years, and had losses of £2m in the half-year ended September 30 1984 on turnover of £2.36m.

Chairman Mr Bob Chatterton, 71, said the decision was prompted by a sharp fall in ship values and the persistent weakness of freight rates. One of the company's four bulk carriers was valued at about £1.75m, he said, compared with £2.5m at the beginning of the year.

The four vessels, all on time charters which have already expired or will expire this summer, will be used as security against the company's debts. These totalled a net £7.5m to banks and others at the March 31, 1984 balance sheet, but have been reduced by the £1m sale of the company's headquarters.

A cloud hung over Reardon's long-term prospects because of the failure of Celtic Bulk Carriers, its chartering joint venture with Irish Shipping, the Irish Government-owned company allowed to fold last November.

The venture's accumulated losses total about £13m, Mr Chatterton estimated. These have built-up in a memorandum account set up by agreement with Irish Shipping, and have not been consolidated into Reardon's accounts. From March 1986, half of Reardon's profits would have gone into the account to reduce the losses. Mr Chatterton said the half-dozen ships involved are assumed to have been returned to their Hong Kong owners by Irish Shipping's liquidator.

Sir William Reardon Smith and Sons, which owns the management company running Reardon Smith Line will continue in business as manager of seven Mexican ships and one Canadian.

WHISKY JOHNNY

Welcome friend? There's only one friend
Glowing in the glass.
From the breakfast boost to the bedtime bump
It sees you through the day.

Here's my young second, full of fire
to talk about jobs down below.
Look at him go. You'd think there was a
medal to be won.
Such a joy to see one so keen.

At least that's what I say. But jealousy
rings truer. Bright lad, that;
Understands every button and beep
From our fancy controls, arrayed in
air-conditioned splendour. No 110 degrees
On the plates for them. Mostly, they just
Confuse me.

But I know his route. Now it's
just one with lunch and a social few
in the evening. But wait: one before
Smoko becomes one before breakfast

And a few at night become many.
It's easy when you sweat it out;
110 on the plates sees to that.
and a Monday hammer, swinging free
Takes care of the rest.

Down in the pit, with machines all
Around, self-control comes easy.
But once you put on that fourth stripe,
Alone in a cabin all day.
One leads to another, with no reason to stop
And your little friend's message feels good.

So the question arises, why am I here?
With my bright young second to run her.
Well, one of these days I'll show you;
When the main engine falls silent

When really it oughtn't. Then my clever
young second appears at my door
Looking sick with worry.
"Think it's a main bearing, chief,
But the automatics shut her down

In time. Maybe no damage?"
Well, that's as maybe, but let's take
A look. Call all the squad
And I'll meet you down there.
Funny things, big diesels, and
My nose tells me different.

Twenty hours later, with cross-head nut
tightened,
We flash her up again. Sweet as a Rolls.
There you are, second, all yours.
I'm off to my cabin. Let the auto systems
take over. And the whisky? Never felt it.

110 on the plates saw to that.

**s.s. "Indian City" (3) sailing from Cape Town lightship bound for Durban 1950,
the photographs were taken by the Padre of the Seamen's Mission.
Table Mountain can be seen in the right photograph on the left side.**

