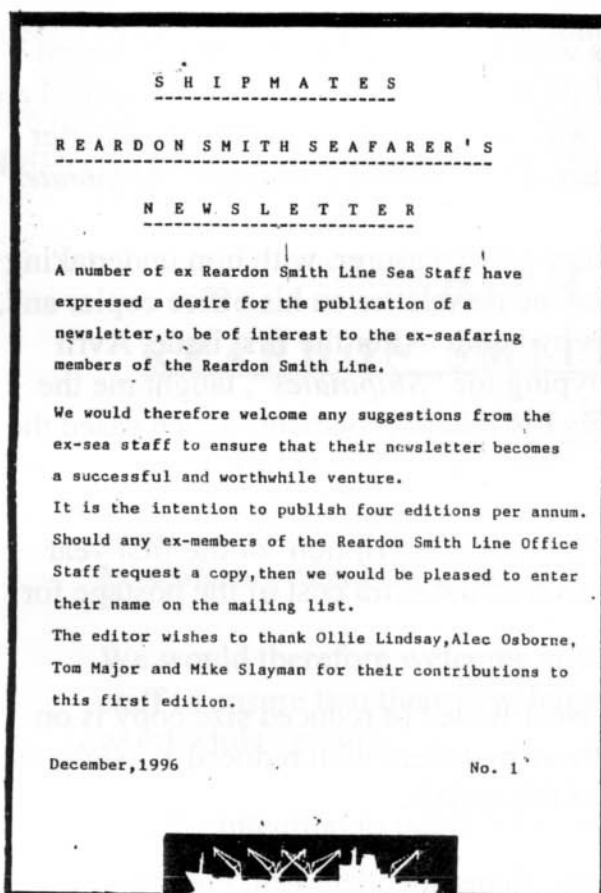




SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

Issue No.41 December 2006.



**"Shipmates"
10 Years Old
This December.**

**This newsletter Issue
No. 41 is to celebrate
the tenth anniversary
of "Shipmates"**

**On the left hand side
is a reduced copy of
the front page of
"Shipmates" first issue.**

see page No. 2.



**A Happy Christmas
and New year
to all readers
and their families**



“Shipmates” Tenth Anniversary

It all started more than ten years ago when Captain Oliver Lindsay and myself regularly visited Captain Tim Lawson at his office at Royale House, 2 Palmyra Place, Newport, to have a chat. During these chats the subject to start up a Reardon Smith Seafarers Newsletter was discussed many times.

We decided that something should be done about it and Mr Tom Major, Technical Director with RSL, was invited to meet up with us and his opinion on the matter obtained, whereupon it was finally agreed to start a newsletter

Tim contacted Paul Hunt, who was working at Cardiff Ship Management Office in Cardiff, to obtain a list of the Reardon Smith Line ex personnel and their addresses. The next decision was what would we call the newsletter and after many suggestions it was agreed to call the newsletter **“Shipmates”**.

Tim Lawson was appointed the Editor and Treasurer, with him undertaking all the typing work, photocopying of the newsletter on his office copier and, at first, addressing all the envelopes by hand. After the first issue, Avril Trehwella, who occasionally does typing for **“Shipmates”**, taught me the knack of typing address labels on my own word processor, which eased the work load on Tim, who also still had his own business to run.

At the outset 100 members joined, with the subscription for the first year being just £2 for everyone as Tim covered the extra cost of the postage for overseas members.

Tim designed the front page of the No.1 issued (a reduced size copy is on the front page of this issued). For those members with reduced eyesight the text on the front page is at the end of this article.

After the No.1 issue our kind member, Superintendent Eric Poingdestre, offered to design a front sheet for **“Shipmates”**, he also designed a special Christmas design for the December issue, these designs have continued for 10 years and Eric produces and sends me a year's supply at a time. I thank Eric very much for his kindness and help.

Unfortunately after three years of running **“Shipmates”** Captain Lawson died on 22nd January 1999 at the age of 55. This upset the system put in place but Oliver and myself managed to keep the newsletter going through the kindness of Tim's niece, Kim, who let us use his office and kindly use the office copier to copy and produce the No.10 issue. This issue was sent out in February 1999 and gave the sad news of Tim's death to members.

Shortly after this a meeting was held at the United Services Mess, Cardiff between Captain Oliver Lindsay, Mr Tom Major, John Reardon Smith and myself to discuss continuing the newsletter. We agreed it should be carried on. I was appointed Editor and Oliver Lindsay Treasurer. Outside printers had to be found to print the newsletters which put costs up. For the next year the subscription was risen to £3 to cover costs, and in 2003 they rose to £5 for UK members and £8 for overseas members to cover the rise in the cost of postage etc.

Today we have some 170 members on the mailing list and I thank you all for your support to keep "*Shipmates*" going through the last 10 years. A special thanks to those who have contributed stories and material to keep a 16 sheet "*Shipmates*" newsletter going. To continue the running of the newsletter and to make it interesting will members please send in their stories, my address is at the bottom of the front page.

Alec Osborne. Editor

SHIPMATES
REARDON SMITH SEAFARER'S
NEWSLETTER

A number of ex Reardon Smith Line Sea Staff have expressed a desire for the publication of a newsletter, to be of interest to the ex-seafaring members of the Reardon Smith Line.

We would therefore welcome any suggestions from the ex-sea staff to ensure that their newsletter becomes a successful and worthwhile venture.

It is the intention to publish four editions per annum.

Should any ex-members of the Reardon Smith Line Office Staff request a copy, then we would be pleased to enter their name on the mailing list.

The editor wishes to thank Ollie Lindsay, Alex Osborne, Tom Major and Mike Slayman for their contributions to this first edition.

December, 1996

No.1

Lunch In A Castle.

On Friday 20th October last quite a number of former Reardon Smith employees had lunch in a local castle—St. Donats Castle near Llantwit Major – home to that international education establishment we all know as “Atlantic College. The occasion was the Bristol Channel Group of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners holding their annual Master’s Lunch in the district. The Company of Master Mariners is one of the Livery Companies of the City of London, numbered 78 in the order of precedence and was formed during 1926 when HRH The Prince of Wales (later to become the uncrowned King Edward Eighth), then Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets, was elected the first Master of the Company. During the intervening three quarters of a century shipping has changed along with everything else, including the Master Mariners Company. Although centred in the City of London with its headquarters ship “Wellington” moored on Victoria Embankment, members of the Company live in various parts of the country, which has given rise to outport groups being formed in the principle shipping zones of the country, which includes the Bristol Channel group. Each year the Master of the Company visits each of the district groups, usually for lunch, to meet members, their ladies and guests on home ground, rather than in London on board “Wellington”,

With the proposed visit of the Master, local members sought a suitable venue, and approaches to the Principal of Atlantic College bore fruit and he kindly gave permission for us to meet at the College. In return representatives of the College joined us for the lunch. The present Master of the Honourable Company is Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, so it was with some care that the venue had been selected. The Princess Royal joined the Honourable Company during May 1990 and was elected Master during 2005, a position Her Royal Highness still holds. For the visit HRH was accompanied by her Deputy Master, Captain Keith Hart, who lives in Devon, served his apprenticeship with Reardon Smith Line, and is of course a regular reader of “Shipmates”.

During the reception period prior to lunch the Princess circulated amongst the members and their guests, about three quarters of the menfolk having connections with either or both Smiths of Cardiff (as the firm is known amongst sailors) and the Reardon Smith Nautical School. Interesting early links of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners and the company of Sir William Reardon Smith and Sons were quite strong although not particularly well known today. Sir William himself was a founder member of the Master Mariners Company. On board the “Wellington” in the Court Room there is a large painting of the First Court Meeting, and Sir William appears prominently in the foreground, ninth from the left, and clearly recognisable. Another link is that the Master Mariners awarded annually a silver medal to a leading cadet at the Reardon Smith Nautical School.

All this, however, gets away from the title—Lunch In A Castle. No there were no ghosts seen. Yes the whole luncheon went off nicely, the food and wine just what each of us might expect, and the speeches after the lunch, not surprisingly, made many references to the immortal “Smiths of Cardiff”. Sadly good things come to an end so quickly however, and all too soon the Princess had to return to work and made off in her helicopter, leaving us mariners to talk over the lunch and the speeches before heading off to our respective homes.

All in all, an enjoyable and memorable luncheon.

Ray Newbury.

"SPECIAL ' MEMORIES (3)

ALAN REARDON SMITH

Born 1913 the second son of the 2nd Baronet. Joined the Company in 1931, served as an Officer with the Royal Artillery during WWII - a POW in Japanese hands 1942-1945 - and on his return to office made a Director 1946. Became Vice Chairman in 1955 and on the death of his uncle Douglas Smith was appointed Chairman in 1961. Passed away on June 7th 1970 at the age of 56 years. A devoted husband and father. Admired and respected by so many and sadly missed by all who knew him.

His early demise was a great loss to his wife, John and Richard, to the company, to his friends, and to those he helped in a quiet, private and unassuming manner. He was a man, who over the years, I came to regard with great respect and dare I say it, some affection. There was always a line of familiarity which one crossed only on the very rare occasion, but there were times when he would lower the barrier and talk openly about the office, certain people, and current events. He would listen to my point of view which sometimes varied from his.

I first met him in 1948 when I returned to the company and I must admit he and his elder brother Bill, were a formidable pair. Bill was a mountain of a man - charismatic, demanding attention wherever he went, and a man-about-town. His turn of phrase could burn your ears although on other occasions he had the ability to charm the birds from the trees. Alan was equally full of himself and as charismatic as his brother, but in a different way. I was wary of them both !!

Mr. Alan (as he was always addressed) was to me a character who seemed to have a spirit of devilment just waiting to get out. Adventurous and willing to try anything ONCE, regardless. He was a creature of habit; a stickler for time; always in a hurry as if there was a purpose to fulfil, a disciplinarian (John and Richard can vouch for that) and being associated with him on a personal basis one often found oneself in a 'catch-up' situation. The majority of staff had little or nothing to do with him - they may see him arrive and leave the office - see him when he would take it in his head to do a "walk-about" usually with some ulterior motive in mind, or perhaps when he would have a crackdown on late-comers. He disliked anyone trying to score 'brownie points'. When someone was unwise enough to ask of him, if something they had done was satisfactory, he would , in a loud voice reply - "I would have bloody told you so, if it were not ".

I do not wish to give the impression he was a loose cannon - he was far from that ! He was very shrewd and could sum up people very quickly. He had clear likes and dislikes and if you fell into the latter category, then don't push your luck !. He could mix it with most men, but always a considerate and respectful gentleman with the ladies.

Of his years in captivity he seldom spoke. His Royal Artillery Unit based locally for a while, comprised of men born and brought up in the area - sportsmen, young business men, tradesmen, legal beavers, and the like. . The Unit were sent to the Far East to reinforce garrisons at Singapore but its fall on February 15th 1942 meant that they were sitting ducks and on arrival in Java immediately taken into captivity. The artillery defences of Singapore were untested by an assault from the sea, and over 80,000 troops became POWs - it was regarded as Britain's greatest defeat and the fate of so many young men was sealed.. I have spent some time researching the background to their plight and it does not make for good reading. The infamous Changi Jail has been documented by many who lived to tell the tale. Of POWs held in captivity it has been said only 49% survived.

Perhaps it was against this background, only known and experienced by those who survived, I felt he approached every day as if a bonus and set out to make the most of it.

I recall the day that Spencer Kemp took delivery of his three-wheeled invalid buggy. Not to be compared with the modern day disabled transport which many of us would welcome from time to time. It was a monstrosity with its single front wheel steering capability, Mr.A watched Spencer demonstrate his new skills and found the

urge to have a go too strong for him. Out went Spencer, in went himself, and off around the square he sped watched by a number of amused bystanders. Two laps but not before he practically turned the thing over on a corner. He eventually came alongside looking like a boy with a new toy and made the remark " a couple of miles in that b..... thing, and we'd all be invalids".

During petrol rationing and with the odd back-door gallon getting harder to negotiate, he decided to get something a little less heavy on fuel and get more miles to the gallon. From someone or somewhere he bought a three-wheeled roadster (two wheels front one rear) - a two seater and for the most time open topped. You could hear him arrive in the Square with a noisy engine bringing him to the attention of all. He dressed like Biggles - leather head gear, goggles and scarf. His toy lasted about a week - brought to an undignified end when he failed to overtake a horse-drawn cart and became embedded in the tail end of the cart, much to the surprise of man and horse. The horse suffered a shaft up its rear quarters and I understand didn't survive the encounter. The whole episode cost Mr.A a couple of hundred pounds in hush money.

Over the years as deputy to Harry Caswell I was slowly introduced to the more personal side of the family - so it was a gradual process of acceptance. Trust and confidence are not earned overnight. When working for a "family" concern, there is what I would term a "presumption of ownership". If your presence or talents are required out-of-hours then you are expected to respond however inconvenient it might be to your domestic life. This can cause problems, and in my case it did. I was constantly being reminded that I should look for a "proper job" and the "situations vacant" page was frequently left in a prominent place. It is said - " if you can't stand the heat of the kitchen - get out" - but with a mortgage, mouths to feed , the options are fairly limited.

I learned very early on that it was no good moaning about it, just get on with it, do your best, and don't expect too much appreciation. The inconveniences come with the territory !
My job survived but in the course of time, my marriage didn't, but there were ofcourse other factors involved.

To illustrate this "presumption of ownership" I relate one story -.

Around 2 a.m. one morning my telephone rang. A rather hoarse voice said he had broken down on a main road through a suburb of Cardiff not too far from where I lived. " How long will it take you to get here ? " "Fifteen to twenty minutes," I said, " once I get a pair of pants on and my car out " - "See you then" was the reply. The "proper job" retort came from somewhere between the sheets. I got to him in the time and there he was with his 2.4 Jaguar (in British Racing Green) apparently refusing to take its somewhat 'socially happy' driver home. A similar breakdown had been experienced on two occasions over the previous months, but was said to have been cured by the main dealer. "His Lordship" asked where the keys to my car were and on opening my hand took them and with the parting words - "see you in the office", off he sped in my relatively new Ford Popular (new style and my pride and joy). My thoughts at that moment certainly favoured a closer look at the "situations vacant" column. 2.30 a.m. and here I was with a prestige car which for whatever reason had packed up, and my car being driven by a frustrated racing driver who had enjoyed a late night at the County Club. The prospects were not good !

At this moment of indecision the cavalry arrived in the form of a police Panda car (Morris 1000). First outstepped the passenger accompanied by the words "Having trouble, Sir ? " "You can say that again, Officer" The driver appeared behind me ! His words were like music to my ears - " You must be doing alright, Roy, having a motor like this". He turned out to be a former air cadet I knew, who had taken his wings and flew in Lancasters, and on demob joined the police force, The situation was explained and I could feel their sympathy for my plight. I decided to turn the engine over, and to our surprise it sprang into life. Further discussion took place and under the watchful gaze of the PC's, I turned the car for home, hopeful that quietly I could make

a garage run my a golfing pal of AJRS, and close to my home. My police escort followed me and saw me safely to my destination. I left it on the garage forecourt and walked home, spending the rest of the night in an armchair. Early I returned to the garage, the mechanic put the car on the ramp, found a earthing strap adrift beneath the engine and chassis, which created a "make and break contact" resulting in the engine cutting out. A torque wrench secured the contact and after road testing I was convinced all was well. Back home for breakfast and a somewhat deliberately delayed arrival at the office. A brief examination of my car in the basement carpark revealed no structural damage, but no doubt the engine had certainly had more than a "wake-up" call. I proceeded to the Chairman's office, explained the actions taken, and told him his golfing pal-cum-little wizard expected a couple of whiskies in due course in payment. I was about to leave his office, when he tossed me the keys to my car - and remarked - "don't think much of your bloody car". The ungratfeul so-and-so (or similar words) came to mind. but my immediate reply was to tell him it was the best I could afford on what I was being paid

I did not tell him that the next time (God forbid) my phone rang at 2.a.m. or any other time I was in bed, it would not be answered. Later that morning Mrs. Alan rang to add something to a list of "wants" he had not given me , and enquired as to the events of the night. Briefly explaining, I added that my wife wanted me to scan the "situations vacant" and get a proper job. She laughed and said "don't do that, we'd miss you ". Obviously a very understanding lady..

My involvement with Mr.A and his family covered a multitude of different avenues. Life went on regarding the job I was employed to do - the fleet took priority over all else, but private matters had to be fitted in, either during office time or private time. My office cabinet bore the words - " The impossible we can do immediately - miracles take five minutes longer "- and that about sums it up.

Occasionally. several of us would be roped in to do a DIY job at the Golf Club. Myself, George our driver, and Mr. A. would join forces to do something to save the club money - and we would spend a day replacing the old flooring in the billiard room or the men's bar. It usually ended with a few beers and the odd game of snooker. All pals together, enjoying the day out of the office and quite theraputic. At his home Mr.A had a workshop equipped with every woodworking appliance and tool any self-respecting DIY enthusiast would die for - but my own assessment of his talents was that he was happiest with a hammer and a six inch nail.

His holiday cottage at Coverack, gave me experience I would not have otherwise had. Its purchase, restoration and refurbishment gave me the opportunity to spend many hours over the years in that beautiful part of Cornwall. When I remarried in 1967 my wife and I spent our honeymoon at the Headland Hotel, Coverack. Mr. & Mrs. Alan were at "Mill House" and invited us for drinks on the Saturday morning. Drinking time did not commence until 11 a.m. The tittle of the house was a "Mill House Special " - Recipe :- Take a rummer glass fill it with ice, pour a triple Gordons Export Gin over the ice and top the glass up with Lemon Quosh. Wait a few moments and then sip gently the extremely cold liquid. Very refreshing but don't drink and drive. We had three of these. !! Mr. A. and I went conger eel fishing with the boatman, whilst my wife went back to the hotel and bed.

So to - "Waterwitch" a 30ft. cabin cruiser built by Fords of Appledore was another interesting project. Taken to Coverack by road (Bill Lawday, Arthur Thompson, & Frank Sully chickened out when it was suggested they take her round the coast to Falmouth). Eventually getting everything ready for the summer season was an experience in itself. Each year she would be laid up at St. Anthony on the Helford River, mothballed and protected until Spring when the whole procedure would start again and she would be put on her moorings at Coverack to await the arrival of her skipper.. Over the years Arthur Thompson and I spent many days getting things organised. The Editor also has some poignant memories of his involvement with a couple of diesel engines..

A 16ft Glastron Fibreglass Speedboat powered by a 100hp. Mercury Engine was brought over from the States . Taken to Coverack for the holiday period and then brought back to his home for use around the bay and coastline close to "White House" which overlooked the Bristol Channel. No doubt after checking the weather and tide tables, Mr. A. would ring me and make arrangements to launch the boat on a Saturday morning at nearby Jacksons Bay. It was quite a performance . The beach was heavily pebbled and in parts fell away steeply without indication. It was the practice to launch over the stones using manageable lengths of rubber

link matting as a makeshift runway until we could get waterborne - the driver would control the winch on the Landrover and Mr.A. and I would do the rest eventually getting sufficient water to float .. This achieved, off he and I would go and enjoy an hour or so at varying speeds along the coast. On one such occasion on our return run the engine failed. A brief examination revealed we had picked up some rope completely fouling the propellor.

I warned Mr.A. several times to keep his hands away from the ignition whilst I tilted the engine and tried to ease the rope free. Perched precariously and holding on to the engine I slowly got the rope away with my right hand. I kept reminding him to keep his hands away from anything and everything until I told him, but and I repeat but, as he saw the tail end of the rope come inboard, he turned the ignition and the engine burst into life.

My head was about nine inches from the propellor and my fingers only a few inches. A 100 hp engine in full power in the tilt position inches away from your flesh is a frightening experience and a change of trousers was a distinct prospect. How I didn't lose my fingers I'll never know, but it was a close call !!

I called him everything I could lay my tongue to and went as far as to suggest he had been born out of wedlock. He sat quietly and without a word turned for home.. The driver had the trailer as far down the beach as was practical and Mr.A. then found a few words of instruction - he would go over the bow, position the craft on the "Y" bracket and I should go over the after end and hold the boat straight on to the side supports. Normally, I would be in water up to my knees, but on this occasion I disappeared - we were obviously right on the edge of the stones as the rest fell sharply away, and I had nothing under my feet. Resurfacing, I managed to position the boat and the driver hauled it up the beach with me on the end of it. Not a word was said as if this was business as usual. We got the outfit back to the garage forecourt and fella-me-lad, as was the norm, left us to wash the engine through, clean the boat up and put it to bed.

I was due to play in the finals of a tennis tournament that afternoon and having my kit in the car changing into it was the only way I was going to get out of wet clothes. Having done all we could and dried myself off we made our way back to our cars, when Mr.Alan called us indoors for a drink - a rather unusual invitation. We took our drink and departed without any reference to the 'rope trick' or my tennis gear.

Despite everything I had a successful afternoon although every tennis ball I hit resembled a certain light fingered speedboat driver.

Monday morning I thought I might be in for a bit of a rollicking regarding my language - but none of it. After his usual instructions, turning to leave his room, when he said " By the way, I checked on the weekend - you'll be disappointed to know my parents were married ". Good for you, I thought !!

During the two years of his cancer journey I witnessed courage, tenacity, and the will to live, which confirmed he was a very special person. Cancer treatment in those days was very much experimental with a very poor success rate. One such treatment was cobalt needles inserted in his tongue making him radio-active. This was borne with great dignity and forbearance, but not without humour. Chris John, his PA. and I used to visit him daily whilst in hospital and throughout those two years shared the "highs" and the "lows" with him and to some extent Mrs. Alan.

If I might add one story just to illustrate the start of that journey and show the type of man he was .. In November '67 he rang me on a Friday afternoon and asked what I was doing the following morning. Nothing I could not put off, was my reply. It was then arranged for us to meet at 8 a.m. and for me to accompany him to the Cardiff Royal Infirmary where he was to have a tooth extracted and afterwards to take him home because he did not wish to drive himself from the hospital.. We met and chatted on the way . I parked the Rolls in the consultants car park area and waited. Two hours later he emerged holding a large wad of white cloth to his mouth. I drove him home - he was unable to speak - and when Mrs. Alan came out to meet us, she told me he had had all his teeth out - twentythree of them. His mouth must have been like raw meat.

I took the Rolls home and returned at 8.30 a.m. Monday morning and took him to the office as usual.. This was the start of the cancer journey - no treatment could commence until all his teeth had been extracted and his mouth healed.

Over the period treatment appeared to be taking effect and at one stage there was a time of remission. But it was to be a false dawn ! Twelve months into the treatment he was well enough to show his appreciation to the doctors and nurses who had looked after him. The premier of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang " was showing in Cardiff and he organised tickets for some twentyeight medics with drinks and a supper buffet in Devonshire House after the show. I organised things and brought in Bob Finlay and Norman Parselle to assist our catering ladies. Mr. A. introduced my wife, Marjorie, to Glenfiddich Whisky and whenever we see or taste that superb Malt we always think of him. The medical people spoke of Mr. A. with admiration and affection. He had endeared himself to them through the manner of his bearing and dignity.

Chris John and I spent a short while with him on the morning of June 7th - he died later that day. To us we felt it was an end to an era, which ofcourse it was. We like many others mourned his passing because of who he was as a person, for his wife and family who had lost their pillar and their strength, and for the company. Had he lived our eventual collapse may have been inevitable due to the decline of British Shipping, market forces and other influences, but of one thing I am sure, our journey to the end would have been very different.

Mrs. Alan after her husband's death, presented me with a silver cigarette box which had been given to him on his 21st Birthday . Inside was his half-rimmed glasses which used to be perched on the end of his nose . His eyes would look straight at you over the top gold rims.. She said she felt that I more than anyone else had seen those glasses in that position. I treasure the gift and the thought to this day !

He was generous to those who had like himself suffered during captivity. He was generous to me on a number of occasions with sound advice particularly when my first marriage failed and during the four and a half years of separation. He was genuine in as much that if he was in your corner he would not let you down. He appreciated loyalty, honesty, and trust. I was privileged to have known him and to have received his trust. For John and Richard one can only say, he was a father to be proud of - he was taken from them before they had time to consolidate their futures and one hopes his memory will always be for them , as for me, very special.

Pandora's Box is still full of memories, of good times and bad, and there is much I could still write , but I have no wish to bore the pants off you, so enough is enough from this "Office Wallah" .. .

With 2007 around the corner my Best Wishes and Good Health to all Ship & Shore Mates. .

Roy Burston.

Space allows me to add something for a laugh - we all need a laugh these days, don't we ?

Two old guys are pushing their trolleys around Tesco when they collide. The first guy says to the second guy - "Sorry about that. I'm looking for my wife and I guess I wasn't paying attention to where I was going " The second guy says, "That's OK. Its a coincidence. I'm looking for my wife too. I can't find her and I'm getting a little desperate "

The first guy says, "Well, maybe we can help each other. What does your wife look like ?

The second guy says, "Well, she is 27 years old , tall, wih red hair, blue eyes, long legs, big busted and is wearing short shorts. What does your wife look like ?"

The first guy says, " Doesn't matter - - let's look for yours "

MAKING FAST AT BOUGIE...1943

I have two favourite "is'nt this a small world?" stories.

The first concerns my brother George, the next boy up the two year age ladder from me. He had a pair of matching peculiarities even as a child; he thought he was always right and he would argue black was white.

My father was a reasonable man, but having been left with seven teen or near children to bring up, I think he felt he had to maintain a pretty high level of discipline in the household. He was strictly teetotal but smoked cigarettes, Players, when he could afford them.

Like a lot of family squabbles, nobody quite knew how it started. But Dad's firmness and Georges attitude finally caused a breach in their relationship and unsurprisingly, there was also a girl involved in some way.

The upshot was that George just walked out. He literally disappeared.

Now you have to remember that this was at the beginning of WW2. Our Mum had died suddenly, Dad had lost his beloved eldest son at sea, Southampton was being blitzed, Bill was off to join the RAF, I was preparing to go to sea, poor old Dad couldn't get a housekeeper to take on his brood, and he was working a twelve hour shift six days a week at the Shipyard.

I don't think anyone even reported the teen age George missing.

The family didn't hear anything from friends or relatives ... and he didn't write home.

Then we heard that he had joined the Royal Navy at the beginning of WW2.

The shore base for DEMS Gunners was at Ashurst in the New Forest, just outside Southampton, and a friend of Bills had run in to him there.

These were the servicemen who manned the rather rudimentary armament on merchant ships. The acronym stood for Defensively Equiped Merchant Ships.

I had commenced my Apprenticeship with a Welsh Tramp Steamer Company called Sir William Reardon Smith and Co.Ltd It was known worldwide as "Smiths of Cardiff" and all its vessels carried four Apprentices; cadets learning to be seamen and eventually qualify as Deck Officers.

We were making a second trip to the invasion ports on the North African coast.

Our decks were crowded with tanks, the holds full of food and ammo.

Hopefully this voyage would not be as traumatic as our previous visit to Bone. The landing forces had established an extensive bridgehead to the eastward, and our destination was Bougie, a small port well back from the front line.

The little convoy of just four supply vessels and two destroyer escorts lined up to enter the harbour.

Our ship was the last in the column.

Suddenly, we came under a fierce attack from the air. The aircrews used the same tactics as those at Bone. Keeping low behind the hills to the south of the town they would appear unexpectedly low down

, drop their bombs on the town and docks and
scream off out to sea

There were no dockside workers to be seen along
the quay. They had fled the bombs. The Old
Man nudged the ship gently alongside the dock.
The S.S. Fort MacArthur mooring ahead of us gave
us just enough room.

We were deep laden so I only had a short scramble
down a rope ladder to the quayside carrying the tail
end of a heaving line. One of the other boys payed
out the lightest ships rope we could find. It was
still a struggle to pull it along the wharf on my own
... towards the mooring bollard up by our bow.

A brown tanned figure in plimsoles and khaki shorts
had got to the bollard before me with a rope from
the stern of the Fort McArthur. A couple of bombs
landed on the sheds close by and we both fell to the
concrete grimly hanging on to our hawsers. As we
scambled to our feet I saw the the chap from the
other ship was my brother George.

It wasn't the time for longwinded greetings, we
didn't even shake hands. They were full of rope
anyway, and all we wanted to do was to make
each ship fast and get the hell out of there.

Mooring Ropes have 6 foot eyes spliced in the end
to go over bollards or go thro the ring on a bouy
. I had got my big rope's eye over the waist- high
fitting first and George was saying something
about what a crazy way to meet, and dropping the
eye of his rope on top of mine. Would you
believe ,he started to argue even as I lifted his
hawser off of mine , fed it up though my ropes eye
, then looped it over the bollard.

What I was doing was a wellknown seamans trick that would enable either ship to leave its berth before the other one, without disturbing the other vessels lines. Being an ex ships waiter and now a Gunner , George would not be aware of such niceties of shiphandling. It amused me tho, that he still had not lost his predeliction for making an argument...even in these rather dangerous circumstances.

We shouted our farewells over our shoulder as we ran back to our respective ships.

We never did meet again.

NB. I see that this port is now called Bejaia and Bone is now Annabas

Bob Britton

Stories Of The Past

(Reardon Smith Line Ltd. Newsletter June 1978)

Apropos of the recent disaster of the "Amoco Cadiz" brings to mind incident concerning an oil spill of lesser magnitude but no doubt caused a lot of Red faces.

A few years ago one of R.S.L fleet was loading in a delightful Adriatic port, on a coast well known for its summer grander. A leisurely loading of 500 tons per day was in progress when a public holiday was declared for a visit of the head of state, accompanied by a visiting head of state. The former is still with us but the latter is to a hero's grave has gone. These two gentlemen were visiting coastal towns in an ex king's yacht. (The said king was well known for his love of the "Dolic-Vita").

Vessels were duly dressed in the port, and we all turned out to see the spectacle. The yacht steamed slowly into the harbour, both gentlemen standing to attention on the bridge, followed by some fancy destroyers, which visitor's state had just received from "Big Brother" (for no doubt they are still paying.) Very sleek and sinister they look. In the midst cavorting, it was observed that one of them was pumping out thick oil, and I do mean pumping for about 10 minutes before it stopped, the pretty little harbour was covered with a thick coating of oil.

One imagines that it would have taken more than a kiss and garland of flowers delivered by a pretty young maiden on the landing stage to the visiting head of state to soothe his temper.

By the late Capt. W. G. Cross. Master.

A TALE OF TWO SHIPS?

Further to O.J.Ls contribution regarding the "Anglo" ships.

As a member of the Merchant Navy Association, I often log on to their website (www.mna.org.uk) a part of which is the Guestbook. This is used by people endeavouring to trace old shipmates or ships or just to "swing the lamp"!

One such request was from the relative of a 92 year old seafarer seeking information about ships that he had sailed in. What caught my eye was that he had sailed in the "Anglo Indian". I emailed him giving the details as contained in P.M.Heatons "History of a South Wales Shipping Company".

I was subsequently surprised to find that someone else had also replied with the following information.

"Anglo Indian" 5531grt. Nitrate Producers S.S.Co- later to W.R. Smith. Sold in 1937 and renamed "Baxtergate". 1947 to Panamanian Flag. 1955 to Greek Flag. 1959 Broken up Hong Kong

This, of course, is very much at odds with the true facts as can be verified by those of us who were around at the time the vessel traded with Reardon Smith Line. One wonders where this sort of misinformation originates.

Finally, just to say how much I enjoyed Roy Burston's memoirs- he should get it published- hope there will be more Office secrets revealed in future editions!!

Regards
John Cann

Many thanks to Roy Burston for his three fine stories to "Shipmates" Editor.

Obituary

John Francis Thorne of Cardiff crossed the bar on the 22nd November 2006 age 89. John served in the Reardon Smith Line, London, then came to work at the Head Office, Cardiff, he worked in the Personnel Department..

His funeral Service was held at St.Mellons Parish Church on Wednesday 1st.November 2006, and afterwards to Thornhill Crematorium, Cardiff. We extend our sympathy to John's family.

(Note:- To prevent any confusion to our members, two, John Thorne's worked for the Reardon Smith Line, the other John Thorne which many sea staff will remember him visiting vessels at the Tilbury Docks was employed in the Agency Department in the London Office.)

Sea Staff employed by Reardon Smith Line in 1979

I found a list of names of the sea staff serving on the ships and those on leave in January 1979. It is amazing the number of people employed on the ships at that time. I hope you can remember some of the names on the list.

VESSEL	CARDIFF CITY	DEVON CITY	EASTERN CITY	FRESNO CITY	NEW WESTMINSTER CITY
Master	W.D.Jones	D.L.Bell	J.Vaughan	J.C.Lee	J.J.Kalnins
Chief Officer	E.J.Dunk	W.D.Howell	R.V.Duncan	F.Scott	M.W.Slayman
Second "	D.H.Smith	N.Jerrum	C.Swindells	G.D.Evans	K.J.Cribbin
Third "	A.M.Tanner	G.P.Eyles	P.C.Harding	R.O'Shea	J.C. Neale
Radio "	D.S.H.Thomson	E.G.Bromham	R.S.Preece	P.Bradley	C.G.Macey
Chief Engineer	D.M.Parsons	R.J.Trigg	J.C.Cullen	J.J.Baghurst	D.J.Jennings
Second "	C.J.Burton	N.Nesbitt	G.J.Griffiths	P.J.Prendergast	M.Murrell
Third "	R.M.B.Jenkins	A.J.Budge	D.A.Roberts	C.C.French	I.S.Extton
Fourth "	M.Croxford	D.B.Evans	M.D.Staines	R.H.Moore	W.J.Lait
Junior "	K.J.O'Brien	E.L.Lloyd	G.G.Waters	R.A.Barrow	K.Wiltshire
Junior "	J.R.Sampson	G.R.Evans	B.L.Ahern	C.R.Brennan	
Electrician	R.Emms	P.J.Foale	B.Cawtherley	J.H.Roberts	P.D.Kyle
Catering Off.	P.J.Keogh	D.Kelly	R.G.White	J.A.Patrick	J.Bonner
Cadets	R.Hughes-Jenkins	M.S.Duke T.C.Landsell			M.R.Preece D.S.Sheppard

VESSEL	PORT ALBERNI CITY	PRINCE RUPERT CITY	TACOMA CITY	VANCOUVER CITY	VICTORIA CITY
Master	R.I. Crawford	O.J.T.Lindsay	A.D.Lightfoot	L.R.Staines	J.Cann
Chief Officer	K.Milburn	I.Woollard	I.C.Stutt	J.S.Pearsall	A.M.W.Mitchell
Second "	N.Davies	J.W.Gurton	P.P.Lewis	P.J.Godding	W.P.Barnes
Third "	D.Devenny	D.P.Kirley	N.R.Jackman	P.M.Bates	M.Sealey
Radio "	J.A. Heslop	R.G.Chugg	K.H.Sellar	M.Wilkinson	S.G.W.Whitmore
Chief Engineer	J.Cormack	J.Fitzsimmons	R.Ellison	J.Scott	G.J.H.McBride
Second "	A.Edwards	G.J.Morris	K.Durward	H.C.Convery	T.J.Newell
Third "	G.E.Stevenson	S.J.Davies	C.Hughes	A.McNally	D.M.Eley
Fourth "	W.A.Stone	M.J.Burt	P.John	D.C.Pulley	D.J.Coombes
Junior "	D.A.Hayden	W.N.Crossley	K.D.Hill	D.F.Barkess	R.Brown
Junior "		J.W.Cable	S.D.Barron	P.H.Munro	D.Wright
Electrician	P.G.Stoker	E.M.Bennington	I.Hughes	N.J.Doyle	J.F.Bowman
Catering Off.	D.C.M.Trinick	D.D.Hill	L.R.Seabrooke	D.McPhail	A.H.Fox
Cadets	M.Richards H.D.McLundie	J.M.Evans N.B.Wilson J.C.Brown C.S.Weeks	S.F.Lowry I.D.Bird G.J.McKenzie	M.S.Morgan J.M.Vincent J.D.Smith	J.A.Akhurst A.J.Ketchen

VESSEL	WELSH CITY	ATLANTIC	GELA	AMPARO	ELENA
Master	R.A.H.Vanner	D.B.Jack	K.B.Whitting	T.W.D.John	P.J.Boroughs
Chief Officer	G.T.Farker	R.P.Graham	D.H.Aubrey	T.Haxell	R.T.Alford
Second "	J.B.Pritchard	M.F.Marco	E.Bingley	T.A.Burley	A.K.Smith
Third "	W.E.Summers	H.D.Johnson		C.A.Prescott	P.A.Dorgan
Radio "	D.C.Short	W.P.Cameron	I.F.Bullock	V.F.Cullen	B.B.Everett
Chief Engineer	L.G.I.Taylor	G.N.Trott	R.M.Paddock	B.M.Draper	L.M.Williamson
Second "	D.P.Jones	D.P.Wood	E.M.Mallett	G.B.Stevenson	W.A.Bruce
Third "	A.G.Vincent	J.E.Spiller	W.M.Powell	J.H.Davies	A.C.Coombs
Fourth "	K.R.Warner	A.D.Cowling	H.W.Davies	A.M.Baxter	M.G.Smith
Junior "	R.M.Stead	P.N.McCormick	M.Morgan	C.J.Brown	G.Reynolds
Junior "	J.Rettalick	G.Tucker	D.G.Davies	M.G.Hardy	P.J.Cole
Junior "	S.H.Hocking				
Electrician	J.T.Loraine	T.Willoughby	E.R.Clark	J.P.Crawford	D.G.Grant
Catering Off.	S.P.Smith	K.J.Baines	L.Slawinski	R.G.Moylon	L.B.Surrey
Cadets	S.J.Laws M.R.Dunstall J.J.Hudson M.J.Cummins J.M.Coleman A.J.F.Tuck K.J.Ayres			P.R.Cook M.A.Evans	

VESSEL	JOSEFA	MARIA ELISA	SARA LUPE
Master	M.E.Jones	R.K.Stuart	W.J.Cross
Chief Officer	I.R.Boulton	D.J.A.Nicholl	A.P.Jaggers
Second "	J.P.Andrews	P.C.Roberts	S.P.Gorford
Third "	M.L.Frazer	J.J.Moore	A.C.Baxter
Radio "	R.H.Smith	J.M.A.Clark	G.P.S.Watts
Chief Engineer	W.J.Gill	H.L.Fletcher	G.M.Cuthbertson
Second "	T.Graham-Russell	J.King	M.J.Yates
Third "	A.Doubler	J.L.Magill	T.E.J.Sperrin
Fourth "	S.C.Ward	A.J.White	G.Gaywood
Junior "	S.R.W.Jenkins	R.Godsall	C.L.Taylor
Junior "		N.C.Williams	R.B.Hodgson
Electrician	C.C.Seaton	K.W.B.Hampton	B.R.Batey
Catering Off.	R.G.Pierce	G.J.Lyons	L.Hayward
Cadets		G.D.Randell	R.W.Davies
		T.D.Bennett	P.C.Weychan
		S.F.Broderick	A.M.Russell
		M.Cox	E.J.Naughton
		P.A.Vaughan	R.A.Holloway

Below are listed Officers at home on voyage leave as at 22.1.79. Every endeavour is made to ensure that the list is as accurate as possible at the time of printing.

Masters:	T.R.McNulty, R.Skinner, G.S.Garlick, D.L.G.Jones, J.Porteous, M.C.Hurst, A.L.G.Gosset, J.S.Murray, T.Lawson, J.J.Birrell, B.A.G.Boyer.
Chief Officers:	D.W.Ellis, R.E.Baker, P.M.Baverstock, E.W.Walmsley, W.G.Wood, D.C.Toon, M.J.Bellamy, T.J.Hunter, J.E.S.York, J.Sharpley, R.S.McKay.
Second Officers:	I.M.Stewart, K.T.O'Higgins, J.Henderson, A.Abel, B.T.Hernaman, G.Sizer, P.C.Coles, J.R.Thomas, J.Ross, I.A.Smith, R.G.Hayton.
Third Officers:	K.G.Whittingham, A.Tay, N.M.Howard, M.R.Lovibond, A.P.Morris, R.J.Elliott, D.J.Herring, I.C.Miller, T.J.Tudball, P.D.Codd, T.J.Ward.
Radio Officers:	A.J.L.Cottle, J.R.Mathews, D.P.Bidmead, R.G.Miller, W.P.Budden, B.J.Carter, E.A.Willocks, P.J.Barker, P.D.Hartwell, N.C.Sanders, D.R.Wilkinson.
Chief Engineers:	R.Chambers, N.B.Shilstone, E.R.Morgan, M.McQueen, D.Harrison, M.G.Seaman, D.N.Henry, D.N.Amey, M.E.Rayner, P.W.Evans, D.Archbold, D.R.Inglis.
Second Engineers:	R.U.Bell, G.D.Morgan, P.J.Walker, P.H.Evans, K.D.Morgan, M.J.Gabica, A.G.Hodgson, K.Rowney, A.Hobin, J.B.Hocking, R.E.Diamond, R.A.Rees.
Third Engineers:	D.C.Lewis, R.S.Allen, R.Taylor, M.B.Perrott, K.A.Velda, R.E.Russell, P.D.Slade, G.F.Smith, R.C.Butcher, D.E.Simons, R.Thomas.
Fourth Engineers:	C.Rees, S.J.Staines, M.G.Evans, K.W.Newton, G.E.Ashton, M.D.W.Evans, K.R.Negele, B.J.Pexton, W.R.Parkin, M.Causer, R.H.Reed, R.G.Wells, D.Caffyn, P.Price, R.I.Hall, M.J.Hugill.
Junior Engineers:	J.M.Cavanagh, P.Curran, P.M.Deschamps, K.J.Midwinter, R.P.Phillips, B.P.Morse, C.G.Fletcher, G.Biggin, K.R.Tonks, M.McKeone, D.T.Owen, A.Keast, P.Young, D.J.Jarvis, J.J.Jones, I.C.Pearce, S.G.Morris, M.Taylor.
Electricians:	J.A.Grainger, D.Osborne, M.G.Davies, J.McIver, P.Tyerman, J.P.O'Mahoney, P.Willmott, A.McRae, R.D.Parker, D.G.Jarvis.
Catering Officers:	R.A.Peach, D.R.Hartshorne, J.Buckmaster, D.Gowsell, P.P.Delaney, F.W.Lever, N.H.Frost, A.P.Hughes, G.R.Pasmore, C.J.Harry, A.A.Gouldie, P.F.Akers, P.D.Smith.

Officers on sick or study leave as at 22.1.79:- A.L.Bruce-Smith, J.R.Ashley, M.C.Ingram, I.Cowan, M.J.Clarke, J.M.Smith, T.H.Jowett, P.A.Bullard, A.A.Field, A.C.Prosser, J.C.Pagler, C.Jones, A.Thomson, S.R.Breedon, J.A.Doody, T.L.Lawrence, R.W.McInnes, M.W.Savory, J.Foots, J.N.Haugh, D.E.Horne, D.G.Wedlake, M.R.Green, P.J.Rigby, K.D.Aust, A.Price, J.D.Bateman, C.A.Price, W.H.Tucker, K.F.Bean, J.D.W.McLaren, G.Shaddock, P.R.Bryant.

Cadets at home on voyage leave, study leave or sick leave as at 22.1.79:- A.P.Brandram-Jones, J.K.Lee, T.A.Savage, D.J.Knox, C.J.Wren, C.G.Everett, C.E.Broad, P.Martin, R.J.Taylor, D.T.Shorthouse, M.R.Hart, B.F.Collings, A.P.Miller, R.W.Price, S.J.Voss, R.A.Hall, R.K.Villars, D.M.Kivell, P.Borley, R.E.Spriggins, A.Williamson, T.J.Fuller, G.R.J.Faulkener, G.R.Garland, V.R.Redman, A.R.Parker, J.C.Thomas, M.R.Penny, I.J.Morgan, D.R.James, M.G.Adams, W.E.Wilkins, D.B.C.Jones, A.J.Salter, P.Collins, D.R.Aldus, N.J.Millward, R.L.Manson, R.E.Parsons, J.A.Thomas, J.A.Brooks, A.M.Francis, L.P.Jasper, M.P.Henry, M.J.C.Lockwood, M.P.Owens, M.Williamson.