



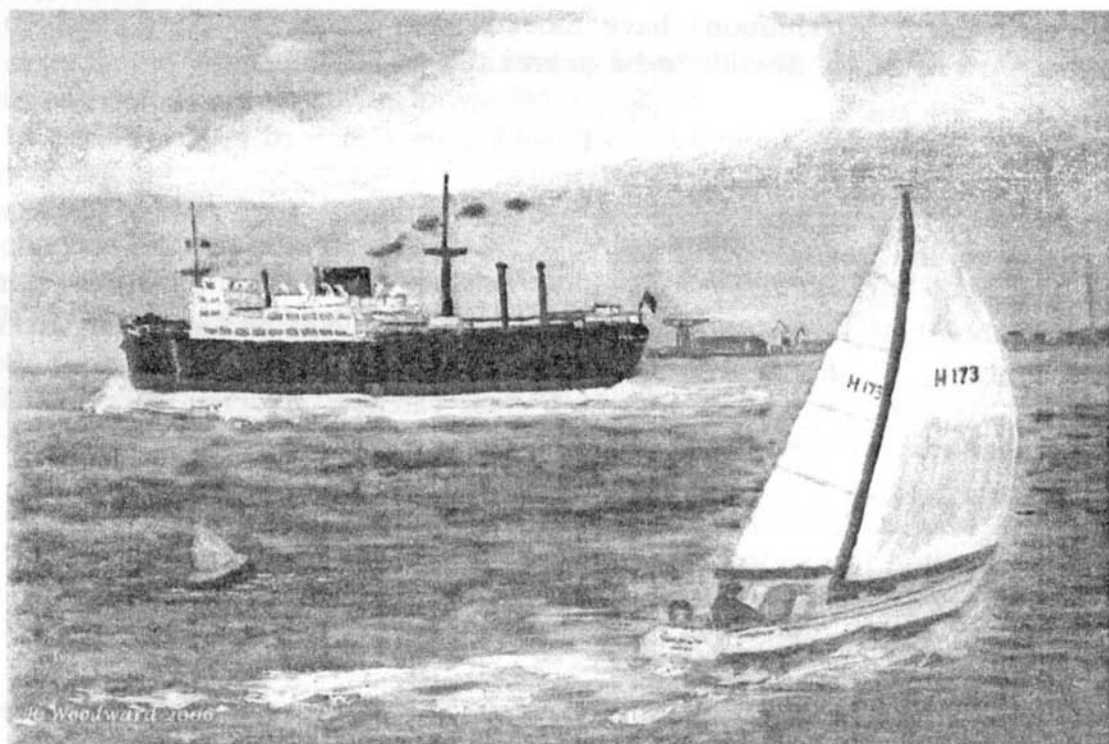
# SHIPMATES

Reardon Smith Seafarer's Newsletter

Issue No. 42 March 2007

**Our Artist member Ralph Woodward from Donvale, Victoria, Australia, sent me a Christmas Card with a coloured abstract painting he did in August 2006 of the "Queen City" with his yacht "Cavatina" sailing near by, with his fine effort I thought it should be published on the front page of our newsletter.**

## Happy Christmas



**The "Queen City" was the first ship to be built for the Reardon Smith Line Ltd. after World War 2. Built in 1950 at the William Doxford Shipyard, Sunderland. Her master was Captain William Harris (Ginger).**

The "Shipmates" team wish to thank members who sent them Christmas Cards and goodwill messages. Also to those who gave donations to produce the newsletter.

#### New Members

Mr.E.J.Fennell from Blackwater, Camberley, is now a member of "Shipmates". Mr. Fennell did his first trip on the "King City" joining at Leith as an Engineer Cadet September 1958 also onboard was John Reardon Smith sailing as a Deck Cadet. He also sailed on the "New Westminster City" as 3rd Engineer from March to September 1963 and then 2nd Engineer from October to September 1964.

#### News from Members

I have had news from Tony Crowther and Barbara who now lives in White Rock B.C. about an hours drive from Vancouver. They are both well, Tony says he is sorry there are no RSL calendars this year. He is still using the same Vancouver Post Box for his address.

Joe and Carol Fitzsimmons have moved from Largs, Scotland back to their home town of South Shields to be nearer the grand children.

Last year David and Juliet Litson moved from Coleford in the Forest of Dean to France, they have bought a cottage in the town of Bourbriac. David reports he has a lot of hard work ahead to get the cottage to their liking. There was no mention of any steelwork and welding to be done.

Paul Mabbett who was an estimator in RSL and CSM technical Department is now working in the U.S.A. for Palmer Johnson Yachts, Sturgeons Bay, as Project Manager designing large high class yachts. 2 yachts were launched in December and are now fitting out in Virginia, Paul is now supervising this work.

Reg and Marian Smith have sold their house in Llanblethan Nr. Cowbridge and are now settled in Clinton, on the South Island of New Zealand. They live on farm land with their son Bernard, they keep sheep, ducks and bantams. Reg is planning to build a bungalow there.

Joe and Ouge Wagner from Germany are well and enjoy receiving the newsletter.

Peter Bloomfield who lives in the U.S.A. was in the U.K. last year and visited the "Queens Head" in Ockbrook to see Leighton Seabrook.

Leighton Seabrook writes to say that he is still living at the "Queens Head" with Joan his wife daughter Sally and her husband Adan. Leighton says if any shipmate is passing to just pop in.

### A Tale of Two Ships ? (Continued)

With reference to the December 2006 issue of 'Shipmates', I read with interest John Cann's article entitled above.

I too, could not believe such a disparity of information and was prompted to investigate further.

It appears that both informants were correct - This is indeed a Tale of Two (very different) Ships !

I have taken the following from the definitive publication "British Tramps" by I. G. Stewart :-

The entry for the 'Anglo Indian', as acquired by Reardon Smith in 1943, gave details and particulars exactly as forwarded by J.C.

However the entry for 'Baxtergate', a much older vessel, revealed that her previous name was 'Anglo Indian' until 1937. Her particulars and subsequent flag changes were as promulgated by the other informant.

What is incorrect and the cause of some confusion, is the reference to W. R. Smith involvement in this vessel.

Considering that the initial request for the information was on behalf of a 92 year old ex-seafarer, it is quite possible that he sailed on either or both vessels !

As a matter of interest, the 'Anglo Indian' as sold to Reardon Smith Line in 1943 was quite innovative for her time.

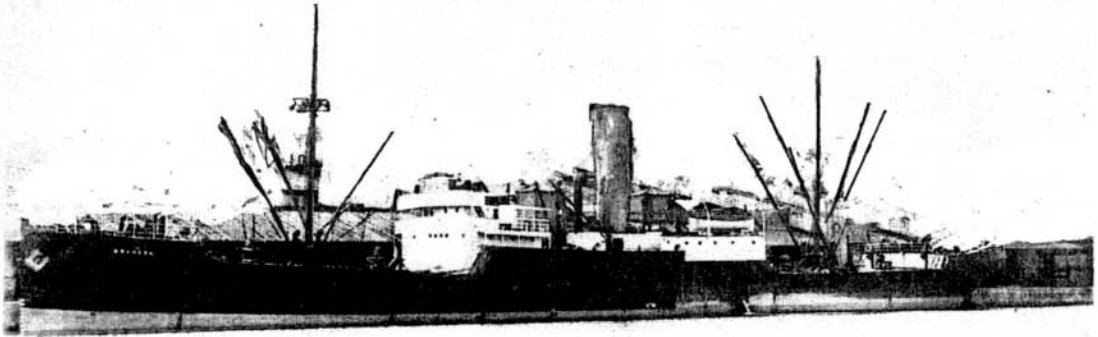
Her hull was of Arcform and her engine was fitted with a North East Marine Reheater system.

This allowed for more deadweight with fuel economy - very shipowner friendly !

Regards

Keith Whitting

## Letter to the Editor:-



Dear Alec,

### In Memory of the Bradfyne

Almost a year has past since I last communicated with you. At that time I was seeking help on various aspects of Reardon Smith ships/crews to help in the compilation of war deaths of this company. Since then the onerous task has continued and I now believe that I have completed the War Death Role.

However, the purpose of this communication is to draw to your attention a letter, dated 1933, which was put up for sale on the internet auction site eBay. It refers to 'Membership of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners' by Capt. R. Greville Vanner. Serving at the time on the *Welsh City*, Rupert Vanner was 30 years old.

Seven years later Capt. Vanner was master of the *Bradfyne* which was torpedoed and Sunk on 22 November 1940. He and 38 members of his crew lost their lives.

The *Bradfyne*, of 4,740 gross tons, was built by W. Gray & Co. Ltd, West Hartlepool in 1928, for the Leeds Shipping Company, a subsidiary of Reardon Smith Line. Her engines were supplied by the Central Marine Engineering Works, West Hartlepool, and she had a service speed on 11 knots. In 1939 *Bradfyne* was one of 34 ships which sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, in Convoy HX 8 carrying grain and timber for London. The convoy left Halifax on 10 November 1939 and arrived in Liverpool on 25 November. The *Bradfyne* is also listed on Convoy HX 25, carrying grain to Avonmouth, but is one of four ships struck out as not sailing. However, she does not appear on subsequent convoy lists and this entry must remain ambiguous; or she decided to sail alone. In the same convoy is another ship named *Barnhill*. This entry is also thought to be incorrect and is thought to be the *Barrhill*. On Convoy HX 62 *Bradfyne's* name appears again when it was one of 76 ships being escorted from Halifax to Liverpool with her destination Methil. The ship had appeared on the HX 61 convoy but was withdrawn for unknown reasons. During the early part of the HX 62 voyage dense fog was encountered after leaving Halifax and several ships became lost but otherwise the voyage was uneventful. The convoy departed Halifax on 31 July 1940 and arrived Liverpool 15 August. On 22 November 1940 the *Bradfyne* was 170 miles off the north Irish coast when she was torpedoed and sunk by *U-100* commanded by Joachim Schepke. The *Bradfyne* was part of convoy SC 11 comprising 33 ships at the time and was carrying nearly 8,000 tons of grain. U-boat records give the date of sinking as 23 November 1940 which is at variance

with British records. Thirty-eight members of the crew perished (some records wrongly list the casualties as 39) including the Master Rupert Greville Vanner. Four crew were rescued by the Norwegian ship *Norske King* and were landed at Belfast. The *Norse King* was subsequently sunk by *U-591* on 28 December 1942 as a straggler of convoy ONS 154.

Those lost on the *Bradfyne* were:

ADAN MOHAMED, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 ALI AHMED, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 BARKER, Jack. Fourth Engineer Officer.  
 BARNARD, Redvers. Ordinary Seaman.  
 BLOWER, John Kenneth. Able Seaman.  
 BUTCHER, Charles John. Second Officer.  
 DAVIES, Edward Harry. Steward.  
 DAWN, Joseph Walter. Sailor.  
 DAYNES, Henry Gordon. Apprentice.  
 DUALEH JAMA, Donkeyman.  
 DUGUID, Alistair John. First Radio Officer.  
 EVANS, Philip. Chief Officer.  
 FERRIS, Kenneth William. Deck Boy.  
 GOODHALL, Albert. Fireman and Trimmer.  
 HAFAZALULLAH UMBORULLAH, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 HUGHES, Raymond. Deck Boy.  
 KAHEN FARAH, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 KAHIN AHMED, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 LEWARNE, Stanley. Third Officer.  
 LEWIS, Evan William. Boatswain.  
 LING, Henry Miles. Ordinary Seaman.

LOVEN, Frederick. Able Seaman.  
 MOHAMED ABDUL, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 RICHARDSON, Thomas Henry. Steward.  
 ROBSON, John George. Second Engineer Officer.  
 ROGERS, Glyn Kendrick. Second Radio Officer.  
 SALEH MURSHED, Fireman and Trimmer.  
 SIEPEN, Cyril Louis. Sixth Engineer Officer.  
 TATTAM, John Marquis. Fifth Engineer Officer.  
 THOMSON, Peter. Chief Engineer Officer.  
 TONGS, Herbert Donald. Cook.  
 VANNER, Rupert Greville. Master.  
 WANUCACCHEY DIN MARIBULL, Fireman.  
 WHEELER, Maurice Walter. Third Engineer Officer.  
 WHITTY, Patrick. Carpenter.  
 WILLIAMS, Idwal Mason. Apprentice.  
 WILSON, Ronald. Assistant Cook.  
 WINES, Thomas Glyn. Cabin Boy.

What is surprising is the apparent small number of deck-hands aboard the *Bradfyne*.

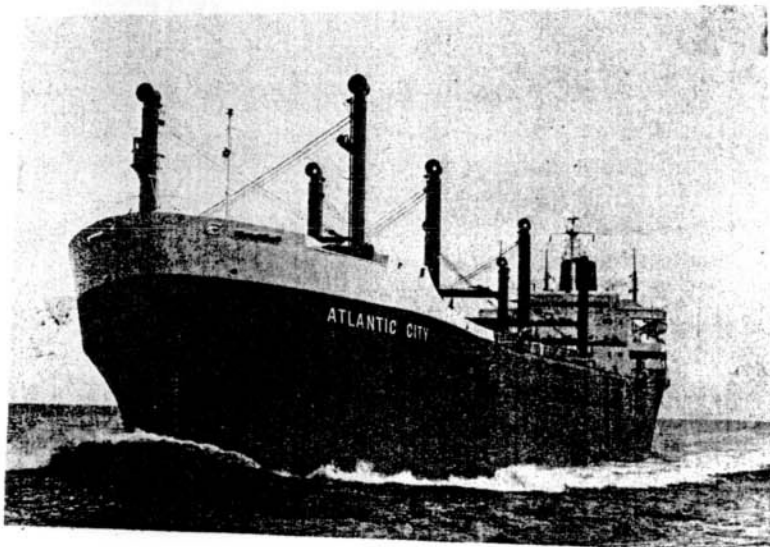
Next of kin and other small details have been omitted from the above for space reasons.

I welcome any information readers may wish to contribute to this listing or for that matter to any other war deaths which occurred on Reardon Smith ships. Similarly I can provide names of those casualties who lost their lives on Reardon Smith ships during the First and Second World Wars. Please contact Peter Bird on 0118 978 1922 or email: [peterbird@haslerpublishing.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:peterbird@haslerpublishing.fsnet.co.uk) Or write to 4 Luckley Wood, Wokingham, Berkshire. RG41 2EW. I would like to hear from Mr Christmas whom I believe I sailed with as an Apprentice between 1951-55.

Peter Bird

Peter Bird

## 40 Years Ago.

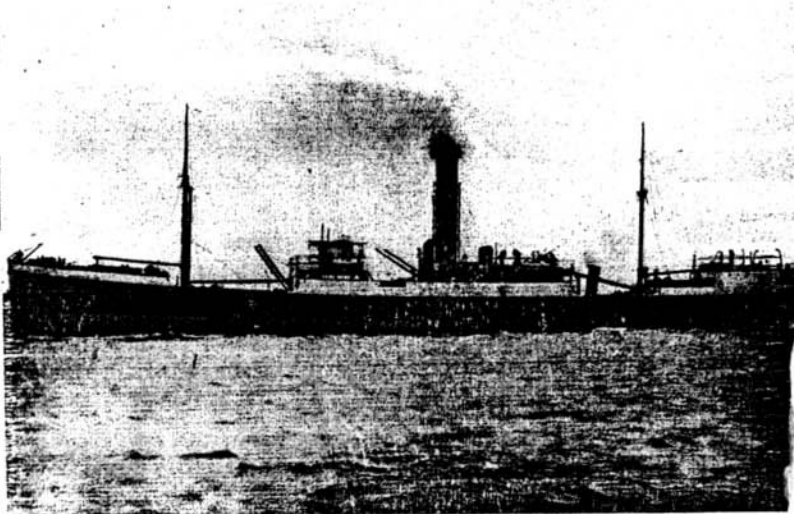


On 22nd March 1957 the "Atlantic City" sailed from the River Clyde on her maiden voyage. The Master was Capt. Danny Lloyd and the Ch. Engr. Mr. Tadeasz Sukienik. Built by Fairfield (Glasgow) Ltd., Glasgow 1976 she was sold to Aquaris Ltd. and renamed "Atlantic". In 1979 transferred to TMM renamed "Olmecca" and Managed by Reardon Smith.



**Our member, Sam Salter, writes about his first trip:**

## **MY FIRST SHIP**



A moment of remembrance at Tower Hill for SS Botavon & shipmates lost in 1942

As with most small boys in their childhood, I was often asked the question, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" My answer was invariably – so I've been told – "I want to be a sailor".

And so it was that, at the age of seventeen, I signed a four-year Indenture as a Deck Apprentice with a Cardiff tramp-ship company. The date was 20<sup>th</sup> October 1941 and I joined my first ship three days later, at King George Dock, Hull.

The 'Botavon' was 30 years old. Originally the Blue Funnel Line Steamer 'Eurypylus', she had been laid-up on the river Avon, awaiting her turn for the breakers yard but heavy losses of merchant vessels caused the BoT (Board of Trade) to commandeer her for further service under the management of the Reardon Smith Line, hence her new name.

To my inexperienced eye, she looked huge from the quayside, as did her mooring lines and wire ropes holding her to the dockside; her grey-painted, heavily-riveted hull was topped by a tall 'Woodbine' funnel rising almost to the level of her topmasts. On deck loading was in progress, using both shore cranes and ship's derricks – a scene of apparent chaos, with a variety of cargo being swung aboard, both from the quay and barges alongside and disappearing below into the holds – all to the accompanying racket of hissing and clattering steam winches.

Reporting my arrival to the Chief Office, I was told to get into my work gear and find the Bosun. Clutching my case and kitbag I set out to find the apprentices' accommodation, in which task I was helped by a scruffy young fellow holding a large oil can and a wad of cotton waste who accosted me, asking if I was the new apprentice and introducing himself as one of my future shipmates. He took me up to the lower boat deck and entered a cabin over the door of which a brass label proclaimed 'Midshipmen' – this being a leftover from the ship's Blue Funnel days. Seated at a table with mugs of tea and wreathed in cigarette smoke, were two other young men, just as scruffy dressed as my companion, in a variety of dirty dungarees, pullovers and headwear – they too, proved to be fellow apprentices. Within a week my working gear had been similarly christened and I no longer felt so conspicuous when out on deck!

On my first evening ashore with my new-found friends I was introduced to the 'Blue Heaven' public house – this being in direct contravention of our Indentures 'not to frequent Taverns or Alehouses, except on the Masters business'. Returning to the ship along the blacked-out dock road, happily eating fish and chips from a newspaper wrapping, life appeared to have been a series of new experiences in a very short span of time!

Loading ship continued for about a fortnight – lorries, tanks, crated planes, boxed ammunition, medical stores and so on – after which we left Hull for Methil and Loch Ewe, our departure point for Iceland and Archangel. Following a few days anchored off Reykjavik, whilst the full convoy assembled, New Year's Day saw us rounding the NW tip of Iceland and nearing the Arctic Circle. The coastline was very mountainous and impressive, covered in snow and ice as were our decks and railings, with biting cold winds and frequent snow squalls adding to the general gloom; it wasn't too long before our freshwater tanks froze up and remained so for a couple of days.

This was Convoy PQ7B, with 'Botavon' as Commodore ship. Passing Jan Mayen Island on 4<sup>th</sup> January and due to meet our ocean escort soon, the trawler escort left the convoy and returned to base. Speed was mainly around 8 knots in moderating sea, with an occasional ice floe or patches of icepack helping to keep temperatures low. Work on deck was confined mostly to chipping and scraping ice, whilst those on watch or at gun stations had an even harder time trying to keep warm. Daylight hours were reduced to about four a day, with darkness setting in by early afternoon. Bear Island, about 150 miles off the coast of Norway, was passed on 7<sup>th</sup> January, the convoy still not having met up with the ocean escort. With Murmansk already astern orders were received from England to divert to that port instead of continuing to Archangel, as vessels had been reported as getting iced-in in the White Sea. A bright spot on that day was when we finally made contact with our ocean escort, three British destroyers and the County-class cruiser 'Cumberland' – it was good to see them!

On one squally night of poor visibility 'Botavon' was struck by another vessel and had some stern plates buckled, fortunately well above waterline. She arrived off the Kola inlet on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> January, eventually anchoring off Murmansk port some twenty miles up the fiord, where she lay for two days before going alongside the quay.

Barely had our gangway touched shore, than a group of Russian officials came aboard and armed sentries placed at top and bottom to control access to and from the ship.

Unloading started with the removal of the deck cargo, including some tanks and planes in wooden crates, the work continuing during the next three weeks with occasional delays caused by air-raid warnings or failures of the ship's gear, which received rough treatment from the stevedores; we apprentices were always on the lookout for any abuse of the winches and ensured they were kept well oiled and greased so as to minimize the chance of stoppages. The stevedores were a poor, hungry-looking lot, a mixture of men and women (mostly elderly) dressed in drab padded jackets and trousers, fur caps and felt boots, which seemed barely adequate to keep out the cold – they were pathetically grateful for any small gifts such as cigarettes, slices of bread, cakes of soap – though they knew they would be in serious trouble from their own people if caught in possession of them.

Once shore passes had been issued it was possible to have a change of scene and see what Murmansk had to offer. In the event, this proved to be very little, a non-descript collection of shops with very little to sell, with a mixture of other buildings, many of them built of timber. To us young lads the most interesting places was the 'Stalinus' hall, where one could see films and occasional concerts and a very up-to-date museum of captured German and Finnish military equipment – at that time the Russo-Finnish front was not too distant and the rumble of gunfire was sometimes audible.

The films on offer were mainly Russian-made, generally of an heroic nature, designed, one imaged, to encourage patriotic fervor in defence of the Motherland – one such, for example, featured a detachment of German troops advancing across a frozen plain; in search of warmth and food they entered a peasant's hut and were greeted by an old woman who set about making some potato soup – into which she introduced a toxic brew. Some two hours later, having resumed their advance, the soldiers were all dead – so much for hospitality!! The concerts were usually more entertaining and, though one couldn't understand the dialogue, any singing seemed to be of a high standard. It was interesting to note that during any intervals the majority of the audience would leave their seats and gather in the foyer, where they would perambulate in a circular fashion, couples arm-in-arm, giving the men an opportunity to smoke their evil-smelling 'papeeros' cigarettes. On 20<sup>th</sup> January a torpedoed ship tied up astern of us, the 'Hamatras' of Harrison Line, from Convoy PQ8 which had been attacked by E-Boats outside the fiord entrance during the night. Sadly that day, we also heard that the Tribal Class destroyer 'Matabele' had been lost with nearly all hands.

Discharging continued in very cold conditions, a rather slow process but the day eventually came when the first hold was finally empty and we could start cleaning out the left-over dunnage, wire cargo lashings and other rubbish in preparation for sailing.

With several deck ratings off work with frostbite, jobs took longer to complete and both the Chief Officer and Bosun were not the happiest of men in consequence! We apprentices had a day to remember shortly after docking when a coal burning bogie was



fitted in our room and made our lives more tolerable – prior to that, although one never fully undressed before turning-in, especially at sea, the condensation of one's breath would cause the bedding to freeze to the bulkhead. We reckoned the benefits from the additional warmth out-weighed the disadvantages of coal fumes and having to hump fuel in a bucket from the galley bunker hatch.

Washing for us four was always a problem, with only a small washbasin in the cabin to share. We had no bathroom or shower and had to use our toilet as a substitute, with a bucket of hot water drawn either from the galley or engine room jammed into the pedestal for safety. With the toilet being located on the other side of the deck-housing and negotiating ladders with a full bucket, visiting the 'little room' was not a popular pastime, whether for 'bathing', dhobying one's clothes or the obvious – in really cold weather the place was like an ice box.

With holds and decks more or less cleared, the ship was moved downstream on 28<sup>th</sup> January and prepared to receive coalbunkers on the following day. This was carried out by the coal ship, 'Dartford', with whose apprentices we exchanged visits – not surprisingly they were even scruffier than us! Using ship's derricks it took some two days to transfer 300 tons of coal, following which, we remained at anchor a further twelve days. The time, for the four of us, was occupied by such mundane tasks as sweeping decks clear of snow, chipping ice, replacing stores in lifeboat locks, overhauling lights in the lamp locker and (everyone's favorite!) polishing the wheelhouse brass.

On 10<sup>th</sup> February another convoy came in and two days later we started off homeward, with 'Botavon' again as Commodore ship of Convoy QP7.

*To be continued in our next issue.*

The fore going account of "My First Ship" written, by Mr. M.H.Sam.Salter appeared in the Summer 2006 edition of "*Full Ahead*" the newsletter of **The Merchant Navy Association**. It is with his agreement that it is published in "*Shipmates*" of which he is a contributing member.

Mr. Sam Salter and I were to serve as apprentices on the S.S. "Botavon" a vessel managed by Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons. I note he refers to me in his story Quote "*as a scruffy young fellow holding a large oil can and a wad of cotton waste*" Unquote. I left the vessel shortly after Sam joined and rejoined her again in the March of 1942. We were together at the time of the sinking of the "Botavon" by enemy action, then as survivors billeted in a Russian Army camp at Vaenga near Murmansk. Afterwards we sailed together for two years, August 1942 to August 1944 on the M;V. "Houston City". Our paths crossed again in the March of 1946 in Alexandria, Egypt, Sam was 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer of the S.S. "Samhope" and I was 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer of the M.V. "Vancouver City". Sixty years later in the spring 2006 we were to meet again and we have kept in touch ever since.

O.J.T. Lindsay

## ATLANTIC CITY NO. (3)

### **A STORY ABOUT CAPTAIN BRICE D THOMAS, O.B.E.**

As one would expect, his years as Master were not without their exciting moments and probably the early days of his command of the m.v. *Atlantic City* which lasted from January 1941 to August 1947 is a period he would have remembered as well as any.

The vessel loaded a part cargo of coal in January 1941 with equipment and munitions stowed over the coal, and sailed from the Clyde in convoy.

The following day, the vessel was torpedoed off the north coast of Ireland. The torpedo entered the ship under the bridge in No.2 hold, burrowed itself in the coal and exploded. Severe damage was caused to the ship and she sank heavily by the head. That evening as darkness descended, the destroyer, which was standing by, deemed it unsafe for anyone to stay on board and Captain Thomas and his crew were taken off. When dawn broke the next day, the *Atlantic City* was still afloat.

The Allied merchant fleet was suffering severely at this time from submarine attacks. The *Atlantic City* was an inviting target for any stray "U" boat. Aid in the form of a tow was unlikely to materialize for some time if at all. The destroyer's Commander was in a quandary. He felt the only answer was to sink the *Atlantic City*, a floating hulk and a danger to any convoy passing that way, but Captain Thomas in his most indomitable manner persuaded the Commander, much against the latter's will to allow him a few volunteers to re-board the ship in the hope that she could be saved.

A quick check after re-boarding showed bulkheads intact and engine room dry. The engines were started very gently so as not to put undue strain onto bulkheads in way of the flooded compartments. Slowly she moved towards the Irish Coast and some twenty-four hours later she was beached in Buncrana Bay. The forward draft was more than forty-two feet and the water was washing in over the fore deck – not hard to imagine in a ship with a fully loaded draft of twenty-six feet!

A few weeks later the vessel was escorted to the Clyde and several months after that she sailed for the Middle East fully repaired and with Captain Thomas in command throughout.

For his devotion to duty and his bravery he was awarded the O.B.E., which was so richly deserved.

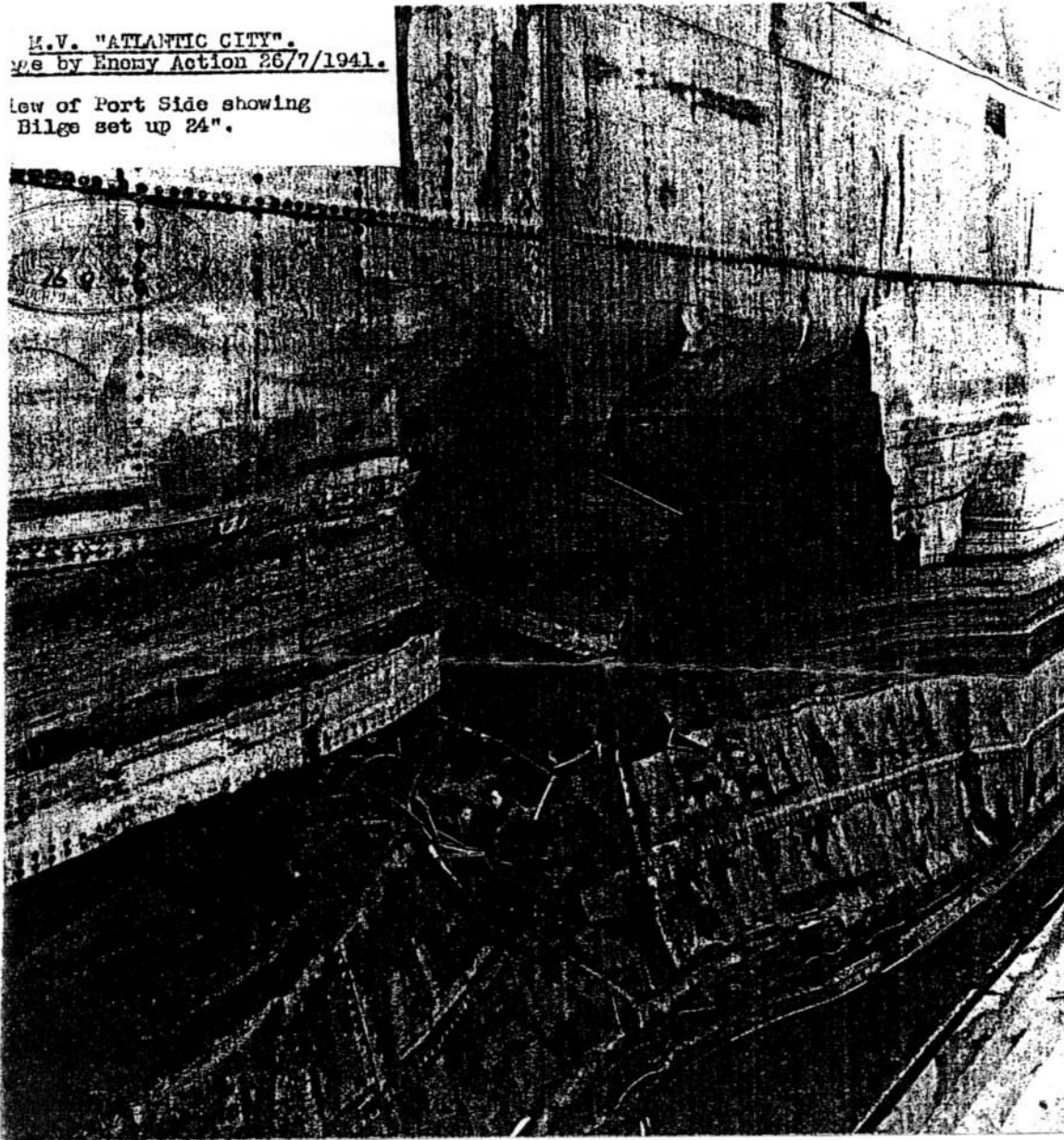
*From Reardon Smith Line Limited Newsletter April 1978.*

### "Atlantic City" (3)

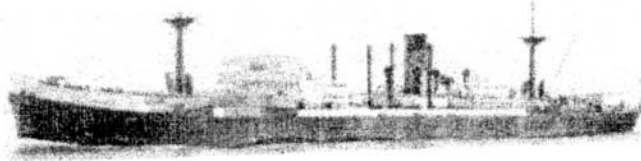
Photograph taken while in drydock showing damaged to the portside hull at No. 2 and 2A holds after being torpedoed in 1941. The ship was only delivered to R.S.L. that same year.

M.V. "ATLANTIC CITY".  
W/S by Enemy Action 26/7/1941.

Low of Port Side showing  
Bilge set up 24".



The following report was written on the back of the photograph :-  
"Atlantic City". Torpedoed July 26 1941 3.25 a.m. (01.25 G.M.T.) portside No.2 and 2A holds Lat 55.45N Long. 9.47W. Draught 42' 0 ford 23' 0" aft. 11.15 a.m. got main engine started got H.M.S. Walker standing by 5.00 p.m. Sloops Speedy and Harrier standing by keeping close to pick up crew in event of foundering 7.00 p.m. tug Zwarte arrived and assisted vessel put her big towing wire from our starboard side preventing vessel, making big cheers hence making better time. Sunday 27th July 1941 9.35 a.m. anchor in loch Sitiver finally bow on mud.

S.S. "DALLAS CITY"

The S.S. "Dallas City" 7,079 GRT built 1944 by William Grey & Co. Ltd., of West Hartlepool and fitted with a triple expansion steam engine of IHP 2500. When built she was a coal burner but in the late Forties converted to oil burning but retaining the advantage of being reversible if trading economies required. Unfortunately, for a ship of her size she was constructed without deep tanks.

In December of 1954, British deck ratings not wanting to spend Christmas at sea were unavailable, disappeared, consequently Germans from the Bremen area were recruited, however it soon became evident that they lacked experience, most of the so called AB's having being invalided out of the French Foreign Legion after serving in the Legion for a period immediately after the end of WW2 (Um!).

Under the command of Captain Robert Dodds with Chief Engineer Frank Griffiths she sailed from Nordenhem in ballast trim ( Draught: Ford. 8.0 feet Aft 16.0 feet ) at 0810 hours the 24<sup>th</sup> December 1954 for Norfolk, Virginia calling at Falmouth for spares and six months stores. The "Dallas" headed outwards into a strong NW'y Gale accompanied by typical North Sea winter conditions - rough sea and a short steep swell to which being in ballast trim she rolled and pitched heavily and occasionally pounded. She arrived the Falmouth Anchorage 2155 hours on the 27<sup>th</sup> December and berthed at 0850 hours 28<sup>th</sup> December 1954.

I was comfortably settled at home, in the middle of my leave, looking forward to the rare opportunity to enjoy Christmas with my wife in our new home when on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December my relaxation came to an abrupt end. I received instructions from Cardiff Office ( Superintendents Clerk Mr Bissett ) to proceed to Falmouth, leaving Barry on the 3 PM train Xmas day to relieve the Chief Officer of the "Dallas City". Mr Bissett was "very pleased" that I could have Christmas lunch at home. On Cardiff Station I met up with Captain Brice Thomas who was attending the vessel and he was accompanied by a junior engineer. On arrived Falmouth we booked into the Falmouth Bay Hotel where we were to remain frustrated until the ship berthed on the 28<sup>th</sup> December. Engineer Superintendent. Mr. T. Major with Stores Superintendent Captain Jack Smith having enjoyed their Christmas at home motored from Cardiff to Falmouth on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> to supervise engine repairs and ship the voyage spares and stores.

At 1600 hours 29<sup>th</sup>, a typical December day, heavily overcast with drizzle, the vessel sailed, heading out into a slight sea and a moderate swell. For the first six days of the passage conditions were moderate and vessel averaged 9 knots. On board some of the crew with little knowledge of the North Atlantic in winter were lulled into thinking that the Atlantic was going to be kind. A rude awakening awaited them.

However, on the sixth day the weather rapidly deteriorated. The Deck Log records that on the 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1955 the wind was WSW force 10. Barometer 28.99 inches, falling. There was a very rough high sea and a very heavy confused swell to which the ship rolled and pitched violently, laboured and pounded heavily. Engines racing and heavy vibrations throughout ship. Between 0800 and 1600 hours ship was unmanageable. Shipping heavy spray. Cloudy with moderate visibility. Noon position Lat.37.2° North ., Long. 42.1° West. Speed 3 Knots. That evening we were in VHF contact with and overtaken at a distance of 5 miles by M.V. "Devon City" also bound Norfolk, Va..

On the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1955 the weather conditions were appalling with wind SW force 10 gusting to 12, Hurricane conditions prevailing. Barometer 28.57 inches and falling Very rough high breaking sea with a very heavy swell. Rolling pitching very heavily. Engine racing. Pounding heavily. Heavy vibrations throughout the ship. Ship unmanageable at times. Poor visibility. Overcast with driving hail and rain. Course adjusted guided by Meteorological reports of the storm centre. Noon D.R. Position Lat.38.0° Nth. Long. 54.1° West. Barometer 28.56 inches.



The 15<sup>th</sup> January opened with the same conditions prevailing, at 0030 hours shipped a very heavy sea over the after deck and poop house, staving in the poop house door to the ratings accommodation and flooding the accommodation.

Storm to Hurricane conditions prevailed throughout the day.

Noon D.R. Posn. Lat 38° North., Long. 52° West, Bar. 28.43 inches steady.

The weather unchanged with hurricane conditions remaining unchanged for the period 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> January.

The morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> found the weather conditions with the wind West force 12 (hurricane force). The ship unmanageable and lying beam on to a mountainous sea and very heavy swell. Visibility poor, fierce rain squalls further reduced by heavy spray. At 0700 hours shipped a heavy sea over the boat deck causing damage and loss overside of Potato locker Shipping seas fore and aft. D.R Noon Posn Lat. 35.2°N. Long. 55.8°W. Bar. 28.78 inches, rising.

At 1536 hours vessel pooped by mountainous sea. Poop-House sustained damage. At 2300 hours the wind had veered to NW force 9

Weather conditions commenced to moderate on the morning watch of the 22<sup>nd</sup> January. At 0612 hrs. Posn. by stellar observation Lat. 34.2° North, Long. 55.3° West.

By 1600 hours the wind was NW force 4, with Barometer 30.04 inches rising rapidly.

Sea moderate with a very heavy swell. Engines racing Occasionally pounding heavily. Cloudy and clear

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> January weather conditions continued to improve. At 0800 hours the carpenter reported that when sounding No. 1 CDB ballast tank the sounding rod was covered with fuel oil. The tank was de-ballasted but it was necessary for the pump to be kept running. A manhole cover of the tank at the after end No. 1 Hold was removed to inspect the tank. Before entering the tank it could be seen that there was extensive contamination by emulsified fuel oil, also there was sound of seawater entering the tank from slack/loose or possibly missing rivets in the hull. Accompanied by the Ch. Engineer I entered the tank, and immediately we became well covered with fuel oil. In crawling through the bays of the tank we sighted numerous jets of seawater and could hear more further forward. Apart from the emulsified oil and strong fumes there-from, inspection was made more uncomfortable by the ship pounding heavily, especially when one was caught passing through the lightening holes in the floors. So we decided that we had seen sufficient and could do no more and that it would be prudent to make our exit. After which the tanktop manhole was replaced.

We had entered the tank wearing only brief clothing, on exiting we faced each other with grim smiles and burning eyes, both retching from the oil and being covered from head to toe with emulsified oil. Standing on the tanktop it took buckets of paraffin to clean our selves of the oily mess.

Our findings were reported to the Master, apart from the damage to the hull riveting caused by the heavy pounding there was very probably a fracture in No. 1 DB ballast line where it passed through a Double Bottom fuel oil tank. Repairs to which would have to be attended to on arrival our Norfolk, Va.

The 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January the conditions were Moderate to Fresh Westerly winds with a rough sea and a confused heavy swell. Ship pounding, rolling and pitching heavily and engine racing.

The weather conditions finally relented on the 27<sup>th</sup> and on the 28<sup>th</sup> January we enjoyed a gentle breeze with a slight sea and moderating swell.

At 0650 hours 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1955 with a light breeze and rippled sea the Chesapeake pilot boarded off Cape Henry and vessel proceeded inwards, anchoring off Norfolk at 1024 to await instructions. 31 days out of Falmouth.

When the "Dallas City" entered dry-dock for the essential repairs we found the M.V. "Devon City" in an adjacent dry-dock having suffered a fractured stern frame in the extreme weather conditions experienced.

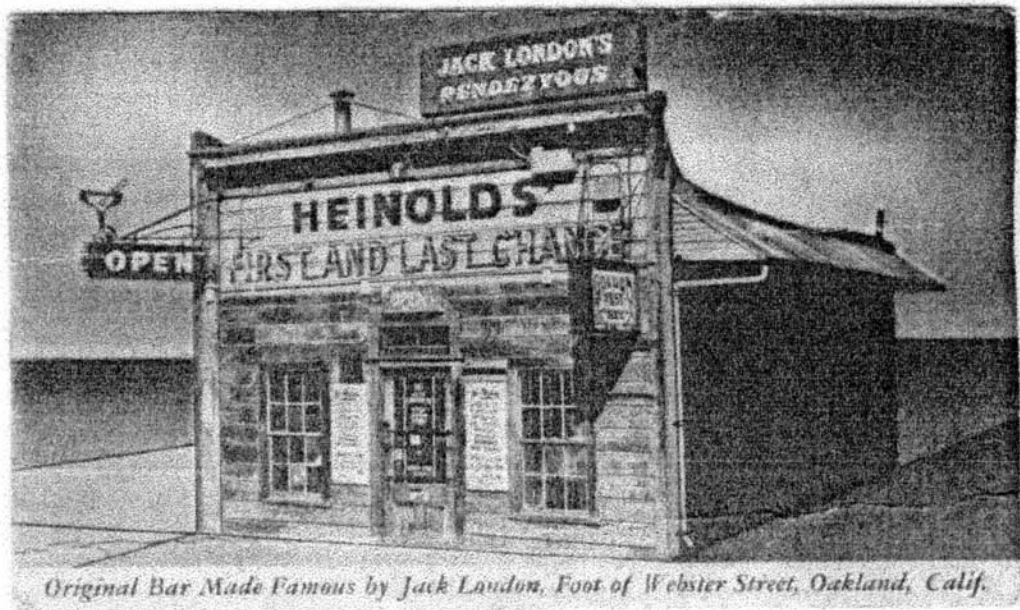
The "Dallas City" heavy weather repairs to hull in way of No. 1 double bottom and the poop house etc were performed in unusually freezing weather conditions and took nearly a week. Unfortunately, it was to become obvious later in the voyage, that the anti fouling applied in drydock at Bremen in December had been killed off by the drydocking in Norfolk.

On leaving the Drydock vessel proceeded to the Coal Loading installation and loaded a cargo of coal for Mizushima. But that is another part of the *saga*. (O.J.L.).

## JACK LONDON'S FAMOUS RENDEZVOUS

Situated on Oakland's waterfront is this well known and popular bar. Built well over a hundred years ago from the remains of an old whaling ship and first used as a bunk house for the men working the oyster beds. Purchased by a young seaman by the name of John Heinold in 1876 for a \$100.00, he converted the shack in 1883 to a saloon and named it "The First And Last Chance", it was here that John Heinold held forth for 49 years and made the seafaring community most welcome. It is one of Oakland's oldest landmarks, a small one story shack of a building unique in construction and famous for memories of such men as Jack London and Robert Louis Stevenson.

The notable San-Francisco earthquake of 1906 which caused the death of 3,000 people and great damage to property, left its mark on the "First and Last Chance". The floor of the "shack" is now still as it was left by the Earthquake, inclined at about twenty degrees (and that is before one samples their drinks ) on first entering the door you realize that the patrons with one leg shorter than the other have a great advantage in getting to the bar. The walls and the ceiling are covered with thousands of visiting cards pinned up over generations by those who have raised their glasses in this historic spot.



*Original Bar Made Famous by Jack London, Foot of Webster Street, Oakland, Calif.*

Many Shipmates" when serving on the car carriers or ships engaged on the West Coast USA/Canada berth service doubtless will have visited it, perhaps as I did accompanied by Captain John Flanagan, West Coast cargo superintendent for Irish Shipping. However, if one can spare the time to browse through the visiting cards pinned to the walls one may come across names of R.S.L. sea-staff from the now far away years of the twenties and thirties.

O.J.Lindsay.

# THE BLUE RIBAND RECORD ATLANTIC CROSSINGS BY STEAM SHIPS SINCE 1900

## WESTWARD TO NEW YORK

Date	SHIP	European Port	Time			Speed knots	Sea Miles
			days	hrs	mins		
1900-1	Deutschland (G)	Southampton	5	11	54	23.15	3,044
1907	Lusitania (B)	Queenstown				24.00	
1910	Lusitania (B)	Queenstown	4	11	40	25.88	
1908	Mauretania (B)	Queenstown	4	10	41	26.06	
1911	Mauretania (B)	Queenstown	4	10	41	26.06	
1929	Mauretania (B)	Cherbourg	4	21	44	26.90	3,162
1929	Bremen (G)	Cherbourg	4	17	42	27.83	
1930	Europa (G)	Cherbourg	4	17	06	27.91	3,157
1933	Rex (It)	Gibraltar	4	13	58	28.98	3,181
1935	Normandia (F)	Bishop's Rock	4	3	02	29.98	3,015
1936	Queen Mary (B)	Bishop's Rock	4	0	27	30.14	2,939
1938	Queen Mary (B)	Bishop's Rock	3	21	48	30.99	2,907
1952	United States (USA)	Bishop's Rock	3	12	12	34.51	2,906

## EASTWARD FROM NEW YORK

1900-1	Deutschland (G)	Eddystone Light	5	7	38	23.51	3,082
1904	Kaiser Wilhelm (G)	Eddystone Light	5	8	16	23.58	
1907	Lusitania (B)	Queenstown				23.61	
1908	Mauretania (B)	Queenstown	4	13	41	25.89	
1910	Lusitania (B)	Queenstown	4	15	50	25.57	
1911	Lusitania (B)	Queenstown	4	15	50	25.57	
1924	Mauretania (B)	Cherbourg	5	1	49	26.25	3,198
1929	Mauretania (B)	Plymouth	4	17	50	27.22	3,098
1929	Bremen (G)	Cherbourg	4	14	30	27.91	3,084
1933	Bremen (G)	Cherbourg	4	17	43	28.14	
1933	Bremen (G)	Cherbourg	4	16	15	28.51	3,199
1935	Normandia (F)	Bishop's Rock	4	3	25	30.35	
1936	Queen Mary (B)	Bishop's Rock	3	23	57	30.063	
1937	Normandia (F)	Bishop's Rock	4	0	05	30.99	2978
1938	Queen Mary (B)	Bishop's Rock	3	20	42	31.69	2,938
1952	United States (USA)	Bishop's Rock	3	10	40	35.59	3,144

R=Britain F=France G=Germany It=Italy USA=United States Of America

### Obituary

I have had the sad news that Nick Saunders from Bath crossed the bar in January, after a short illness. Nick was a Radio Officer with the Reardon Smith Line, these are some of the ships he sailed on "Devon City" (1976 & 1978), "Welsh City" (1979 & 1981), "Fresno City" (1980), "New Westminster City" (1981 & 1982), "Olmeca" (1983). Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife Christine and her family.

**IN ISSUE NO.41 A LIST OF THE NAMES OF SEA STAFF EMPLOYED IN 1979  
WAS PUBLISHED. BELOW IS A LIST OF THE NAMES OF OFFICE STAFF  
EMPLOYED IN BOTH THE CARDIFF AND LONDON OFFICES IN 1980.**

Mr C R Chatterton (Chairman)

Mr R S Burston	Mr A J Crockett	Mr N R Cunningham
Capt. J B Lemon	Mr D M Llewellyn	Mr T W Major
Mr J P Reardon Smith	Mr R W A Reardon Smith	Mr W A J Reardon Smith
Mr A F Westall	Mr L S Williams	

**Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons (Sale & Purchase) Limited.**

Mr J H G Norman

**Reardon Smith Chartering Limited**

Mr J R Dann	Mr T D Hancock	Mr A G Steed
Mr J J Webster		

**CARDIFF OFFICE**

Mr V T Adney  
 " L P Allerton  
 " D Annetts  
 " M P Beattie  
 " R Beere  
 " J Bendon  
 " F Bolter  
 " T Bowden  
 " P W Brown  
 " W J Burge  
 " M Chiplin  
 " A Collett  
 " P Colwill  
 " G Crabbe  
 " H K Crocker  
 " M E Cross  
 " W Davidson  
 " S W Donovan  
 " E J Dunk  
 " F Dunne  
 Capt K Fulker  
 Mr A W Gardiner  
 " J Gardener  
 " D Gibbs  
 Capt D C J Griffith-Jones  
 Mr G D Griffiths  
 " M Grubb  
 " B E Gully  
 " P Harding  
 " J A Harrison

Mr G Hayes  
 " R A Hudson  
 " P E S Hunt  
 " I Jones  
 " J R Jones  
 " O R John  
 " G H Johnson  
 " N J Knight  
 Capt T Lawson  
 " F Leavers  
 " J Lewis  
 " R G Lewis  
 " D W Litson  
 " J W Louden  
 " J MacNeil  
 " D J Matthews  
 " J R Mayes  
 " C S Moore  
 " A Morgan  
 " C Mundell  
 " C W Olsen  
 " A F Osborne  
 " R Parker  
 " D Phillips  
 " E W Poingdestre  
 " M Purnell  
 " J F Radcliffe  
 " K E Roberts  
 " W J Roberts  
 " T A Rosser

Mr L K Sotero  
 " J F Stanton  
 " C Stockdale  
 " R D Sweetland  
 " G S Taylor  
 " B W Thomas  
 " F W Thomas  
 Capt M G B Thomas  
 Mr R K Thomas  
 " W G Thomas  
 " G T Walker  
 Mrs F M Bellenie  
 " J M Bramhall  
 " M J Clifford  
 " M P Cottrell  
 Miss S Evans  
 Mrs D Everest  
 " S Green  
 " M P Goodridge  
 Miss G Hague  
 " C Hickman  
 " H James  
 Mrs J Kettle  
 Miss A Lansdowne  
 " D Lewis  
 " A J Lidstone  
 Mrs J Long  
 " S M Newton  
 " R J Pegler

Mrs L L Pires  
 Miss J A Proctor  
 Mrs K Purbrick  
 Mrs M Rockett  
 Miss S M Solomon  
 " N Takle  
 " P Ward  
 " S Wilson

**LONDON OFFICE**

Mr R Bruce  
 " P R Buckland  
 " J V Chadwick  
 " D B Haines  
 " C Harris  
 " J H G Hawkes  
 " G J Ingrey  
 " J S Murphy  
 " J S Owen  
 " W A Payne  
 " A M B Rowley  
 " J A Thorne  
 " C W Webster  
 " P J N Williams  
 Mrs J M Allman  
 " C Dixon  
 " P R I Humphreys  
 " G E Johnson  
 " D A Robertson  
 " I I Ruff  
 " I A Sands