

The Customs Journal

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FORTNIGHTLY.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
Correspondence	201	Neighbourly Nippits, by Nod	209
Excerpts from "Customs Journal," 27/8/1904	202	Watch House Yarns	209
O Wad the Power	203	Changes in the Staff	209
Our Journal	203-4-5	The History of Bonded Warehouses	210
Merseyside Meeting	205	For Your Note-Book	211
Correspondence	206	Imperial Service Medal	211
Cameo of Baltasound, Shetland Islands ...	206	Southampton Presentation	211
Cameo of Barra, Outer Hebrides	207	Preventive Service Sports Club—Chess Section	212
Do You Know—	207	Hull News—Cricket	212
Oh to be in England with my Baggage chalked	208	Merseyside Football	212
Impossible Sayings	208	Southampton Prosecution	212

Letters to the Editor, and articles and correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor, "The Customs Journal," 93, Fairfax Road, Hornsey, London, N.8.

It is essential that all matter for insertion in the forthcoming issue should reach the Editor on or before the Monday preceding day of publication.



MR. A. E. Farmer's numerous friends in the Service will be pleased to learn that he is making splendid progress after his accident and should soon be in full harness once again. This fact, coupled with the return of the remainder of the Headquarters staff after a brief but welcomed holiday, will ensure that normal working will shortly be resumed at Beer Lane.

* * *

A significant feature of the recent rise in the cost-of-living index figure to 55 is that it is mainly due to the increasing food prices. It is generally forecast, and even welcomed in some quarters, that other commodities will follow suit and so force the cost-of-living figure still higher. Up to the present we have gained considerably by the consolidation of salary and bonus based on a cost-of-living figure of 55, but we are now faced with a situation where the reverse is likely to be the case. It is early yet to attempt any suggestion—much will depend on whether this rise is temporary or permanent in character—but certainly the situation will have to be closely watched in the Civil Service.

* * *

In the usual outburst of "silly season" topics in the Popular Press at this time of the year the Department seems to be singled out for particular attention. You have probably laughed at the account of the alleged increase in diamond smuggling, which blandly ignores the fact that

diamonds, when unset, are exempt from duty. The news that 10,000 men are engaged in a "big push" against smugglers, and that leave is being postponed and retirements held up, will come as a surprise to those most intimately concerned. To take a charitable view we must assume that these articles are written in good faith and that some guileless reporter has had his leg gently pulled.

Nevertheless, one does sometimes wonder how far public opinion is guided—or perhaps misguided is a better term—by similarly inaccurate reports on matters of much greater importance. Modern journalism seems to show a decided preference for sensationalism, even at the sacrifice of truth.

* * *

We risk the accusation of tiresome repetition in again drawing attention to the situation created by the New Pensions Act, but the matter is of so much importance that no apology is really needed. Many of us allowed the last opportunity to insure under all three heads (Widows' and Orphans' Pensions, Old Age Pensions and Health) to slip by in 1930, and have regretted it ever since. Those who are still eligible should act quickly.

Any person who has been an established Civil Servant for less than twelve months, or any established Civil Servant who has received official notification within the last twenty-one months that his salary and emoluments exceed

£250 per annum, may voluntarily insure for the purpose of Widows' and Orphans' Pensions, Old Age Pensions and Health, if he has not already done so, but this option must be exercised before the twelve months or twenty-one months periods, mentioned above, expire, or before 31st December, 1937, whichever is the earlier.

Other officers whose total emoluments are between £250 and £400 per annum may voluntarily insure for Widows' and Orphans' Pensions only; if application is made before 31st December, 1938, the weekly rate of contribution is 10d. per week to those under 55 years of age. After that date voluntary insurance may only be effected by those under 40 years of age, and the rate will vary between 10d. and 1s 7d. per week.

Normally the income for the year ended 5th April, 1937, is taken as a basis for deciding whether an applicant is eligible for insurance, but the Act does allow the Minister to make special provision for applicants whose yearly incomes fluctuate. This has special significance to officers whose total official emoluments during the year in question slightly exceeded £400, and enquiries are being made as to the method of deciding the yearly incomes in those cases. The result will be announced in a later issue.

* * *

The annual Exhibition of Arts and Crafts will be held by the C. & E. Arts Club in the Refreshment Club, Custom House, E.C.3., on the 23rd October, 1937, and will remain open for a fortnight.

Entries will be invited from all active or retired members of the Customs and Excise, and it is hoped that sufficient exhibits will be received to repeat the successes of the last two years. Improved facilities will be made this year for the display of photographs, and while conditions will be similar to the last Exhibition, full details will be issued at a later date.

Entry forms are available for the Holiday Snapshot Competition open to all members of the Customs and Excise, and particulars can be obtained from Mr. W. H. Owen, Hon. Sec., C. & E. Arts Club, Sugar Drawbacks, Adelaide House, E.C.4.

* * *

The letters appearing in the Correspondence columns regarding the make-up of the Journal have proved very interesting reading; but do not let us lose sight of the fact that the Editor is not a superman who writes the whole of the contents himself. He depends almost entirely on the enthusiasm and good will of his readers to keep him supplied with copy, and his choice of material is naturally restricted.

Excerpts from "The Customs Journal," 27th August, 1904.

To the Editor of the "Customs Journal."

Sir,

Whether it be Salary, Prospects, Sunday Pay or Uniforms, we must work—we must agitate, if we would obtain.

Object lessons are continually before our eyes, that there is good in it, although what we get is wrapped up in very small parcels, and sometimes of little value, but still we get it, and if we were only more united and more persistent, the greater in proportion would be the benefits we received, one trifle to illustrate this point. The serge jackets just issued to the Preventive Officers not a great deal in themselves (but very acceptable, and we are thankful for mercies, be they ever so small, which help to swell the sum total, like the "Little drops of water and grains of sand, which from the mighty ocean and the beautiful strand"), but we are certainly that much better off than before we received them. Had we, in place of combining and signing against what we thought was both unacceptable and unjust, had been content to accept the suggestion, of a serge jacket in lieu of an ordinary uniform jacket, every third year, where should we have been to-day, on the loosing side.

I could quote many more such cases, but should only be going over ground which is already well worn by others who have tried the spirits and fire of the minds of Waterguard Officers in the past, and to bring them to the front in real battle array.

My present purpose is to bring forward a subject, which may I describe as new ground, for us to till and I hope gather fruit from, viz:—The quality of the cloth of which our uniform trousers are made.

It perhaps would be news to the Honourable Board, and others who are in authority, to know that the trousers at present supplied to Preventive Officers and Boatmen, are far from giving satisfaction. One pair in eight months should be liberal enough to keep our lower parts from the public gaze, but I am sorry to say this is far from the case, the cloth is so stiff a material and the cut and make of them so bad, that there is a total collapse in from four to six months' wear, and officers to be decent are compelled to fall back on some of their private stock.

In wet weather if you turn up the bottoms for a few days, clear of the mud, they crack all round; my own had holes in them in less than a month, and since receiving them I can honestly say at no time have I gone more than three or

four days without the use of needle and thread to repair a pocket or mend a seam, and I believe it is no uncommon thing to see, on the dockside, a Preventive Officer, who in an unguarded moment has bent his body by stooping, or getting over a vessel's rail, rushing to the watch-house with both hands spread out behind to hide his nakedness, or, grasping some part of his trousers to keep them from falling, and, when he arrives at that, or some other place of seclusion, enlisting the services of his Boatman to remedy the defect, over which he himself has very little power, unless he undresses.

This state of things should not be, and could easily be altered by giving to the Waterguard trousers made from cloth similar to that which is at present supplied to the Assistants.

I would suggest through your valuable paper, that the Waterguard Officers' Association take this up at once, and prepare a petition for signature to forward to the Hon. Board, before the next issue of these garments.

Trusting that others will give their views.

I remain, Yours,

"One who has felt the cold blast."

O Wad the Power—

"We always pride ourselves on our hospitality to foreigners visiting this country, and here is a little story told me yesterday which just shows how courteous and helpful we can be to our friends from overseas.

A young Danish couple arrived here to spend their honeymoon.

The husband was a keen amateur photographer and brought with him his small camera.

On landing, he was told by a Customs official that he would not be allowed to take the camera with him unless he deposited in cash the amount it would cost in this country.

Having only a small sum of money with him, he explained that he would be left very short if he did this. The Customs official insisted, and the man went away with some disgust after paying the necessary amount.

Just as he was entering his car with his bride, another official who had overheard the conversation, rushed up to him and offered to lend him the amount for the deposit out of his own pocket.

He ascertained the date when the couple would be returning and arranged to meet them on their way back.

Much to their surprise, the Customs official ended up by extending an invitation to the couple to dine at his house the same night, and they gladly accepted." :—

Daily Sketch, August 17th, 1937.

Our "Journal."

Dear Sir,

It was very refreshing to me to read H. G. R.'s constructive criticism on the "C. J." He is helpful without being hateful, and evidently does not seek to destroy, but to repair and retouch our organ, and I would like him to regard my reply in the same light. In the first place I would point out that spacing is important in the appearance and dignity of a publication, and that probably the Editor would be glad to sacrifice a little of the appearance had he sufficient "copy" to make cramping necessary. In the correspondent's praise of various features, I am with him all the way, and I also agree that long and detailed reports of uninteresting matter relating solely to such bodies as Women Pension Officer and "S" Class Clerks might be safely left out without qualm. With regard to "Changes in the Staff," however, I must register a disagreement. H.G.R. probably does not realise the large number of readers who have no access to O.W.O.s but who like to follow the movements in the service they have spent the greater part of their life in—I refer to our retired Officers. I concur in his opinion of the chess problem, but since I am not a chess player I would not press this point too far. The correspondence column presents rather a difficulty, but I think that the Editor, whoever he is, should be left to exercise his prerogative in the matter. Whilst undue reiteration, slanging matches and personalities should be cut out, there are cases where a correspondent who means well, but perhaps does not say it so well, should be helped and not hindered. It would be bad policy to stop a possible source of good literary effort. To sum up, whilst I agree with the deletion of uninteresting subjects, the difficulty seems to lie in obtaining suitable matter to fill the space thus obtained. The Editor, I know, does his best and the onus of the rest is entirely on the individual reader. It requires very little effort to fill up a space in the "C.J." and I know that every encouragement is given to the contributor, new or old. Smuggling incidents, I am sure, are not reported frequently enough, and I would point out that an interesting case, even if it does not lead to a prosecution, would be welcome if it showed ingenuity of concealment or discovery. Numbers of our readers cross to the Continent for their holiday these days, surely they have something to report on their return, or could give helpful advice to others who may contemplate going abroad at some later date. My advice to would-be contributors is—don't hesitate as to whether your effort would be acceptable or not, but send it to the Editor, who will give you every assistance. To put things briefly, don't stand up and criticise, but sit down and write!

Yours, etc.,

R.W.B.

To the Editor, "Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

H. G. R.'s letter criticising the Journal is one of the most interesting I have read in our periodical. That is why I am taking this opportunity of accepting the Editor's invitation to submit my own views.

In the main I find little wrong with the Journal as it now is. Only one article do I consider a waste of space, and that is the Parliamentary Report of the Civil Service Confederation.

In its place I would like to see more reports of seizures, particularly those quoting the method of concealment and other particulars of how detection was made. I know modesty compels most of the staff from having their seizures inserted in the Journal, but, although we like to know who it is who shines, from a rummage viewpoint, it is the method of concealment and the particular circumstances of the detection which make the most interesting reading.

In recent years I have noticed W.S. circulars of particularly good concealments, but these are usually filed away in the guard book before anyone has a chance of reading them, and as you know, apart from the fact that lots of junior A.P.O.s do not know such a book exists, and also that it is easy to forget to look at the book, the contents of an official circular do not make anywhere near such interesting reading as when the same thing appears in our Journal.

During the last few years I have kept a record book of "shops," etc., which I may have found myself, heard of from other people, or read about in circulars, or the Journal. Although this information has proved fruitful on only two occasions, I consider it time well spent in collecting this material, and hope with the help of the staff, and through the medium of the Journal, to add considerably to my rummage "suspects" and "shop" book. E.H.

Dear Sir,

With reference to "H.G.R.'s" letter in the "Customs Journal" dated 14th instant, I observe that he can't see the need for "Changes in the Staff" to be inserted in the Journal.

In expressing this opinion he has evidently overlooked the fact that this item of news is very interesting to pensioned officers, who subscribe to the Journal, as it keeps them informed of the movements of former colleagues.

I hope, therefore, that you will continue to publish this information.

Yours faithfully,

J. P. HAUSEY.

Retired Waterguard Supt.

Sir,

The opportunity, given by the publication of H.G.R.'s letter in your last issue, to discuss the relative merits of the various features in the "Journal" should be welcome to your readers though, personally, I find little to criticise and consider your choice of material admirable in every way.

Particularly do I disagree with H.G.R. in his desire to exclude all matter not of purely Waterguard interest. The future of the Association, for good or ill, is closely bound up with that of the Civil Service as a whole; any improvement, or otherwise, in conditions in any Civil Service Department has an indirect bearing, varying in effect, on every other Department. Increased salary scales for one grade may possibly furnish grounds for a similar improvement for some other grade; our own claim for increased leave for A.P.O.s was based upon the prevailing leave scales of analogous grades, and so on indefinitely. No, Mr. H.G.R., it would be a sorry day for us if we decided to pursue a policy of "splendid isolation," and, in any case, under the present harmonious working of Departmental Whitleyism, such a course would be impossible.

With regard to the publication of "Changes in the Staff," it is true that the serving Waterguard Officer has this information in his weekly O.W.O., but this source is not available to the retired Waterguard Officer who looks to the "Journal" to keep him posted with the news of the progress of his former colleagues and probably finds this the most interesting feature.

ANON.

Dear Sir,

Among H. G. R.'s criticisms was one deploring the amount of space devoted to matters of a general Civil Service character, such as the Parliamentary Reports of the Civil Service Confederation, in the present form of the "Customs Journal." His concluding remark, "We don't want the troubles of the 'S' class clerks aired in our Journal," typifies, unhappily, the attitude of many in the Waterguard to-day. While in no way minimizing the importance of the pending claim for Re-organisation to the Waterguard, there is the possibility of an amelioration of salaries and conditions in the Department being brought about by a general improvement of conditions in the Civil Service as a whole. Unfortunately the smallness of our Association, about one-hundredth the size of the two or three largest Civil Service Associations, precludes us from playing a very important part in any movement of this nature. This alone should justify a greater interest being taken in the work of our gigantic brother Associations. To resent or even ignore the reports of their work is to adopt, as an Association, the attitude of Associa-

tion non-members, who benefit by improvements brought about by their fellow officers, achieved by Association activity, cheerfully accepting improved conditions for which their colleagues have strived. No, Mr. Editor, not less reports of these encouraging efforts by our brother Civil Servants, but more!

Yours truly,

S.J.D.

Dear Mr. H. G. R.,

May I tender my thanks for your letter. Its receipt is all the more appreciated by reason of the fact that it affords the opportunity of replying to a subject on which, no doubt, other readers hold similar views, but have not availed themselves of the chance to express them.

The fact that we are a comparatively large body, stationed the length and breadth of Great Britain, makes us naturally diverse in opinion, and in order to cater for the interest of all, our Journal must, of a necessity, be versatile. The task of making it so, is no mean one, having regard to the small amount of space and material that we have at our disposal.

The simile of the landlady in digs., is applicable, but that worthy cannot supply the meat unless she is given the rent. Only given the opportunity, and the quart pot you mentioned could take on the proportion of a barrel, but one cannot really expect the Editor to be the brewer as well.

With regard to spacing, but without going into technicalities, the actual "make-up," often causes a considerable amount of anxiety to publish a Journal that is presentable by having a certain degree of sequence. When taking into consideration the particular type of "copy" that is being dealt with, spacing that subsequently appears to be too great is often unavoidable, whereas cramping is rarely apparent. For instance, the caption of your letter had to be omitted to avoid this.

The inclusion of smuggling reports has a greater significance than may at first be apparent. Give the matter a little more consideration and you will agree. E.H. seems to get full value from the reading thereof.

Accounts of presentations give that personal touch to our publication, for is it not pleasurable to know that some of our colleagues have been given a "token of esteem," etc.? Jolly good luck to them!

Touching on the subject of Chess, it may come as a surprise to know of the large number of readers who display a great interest in the game and the fact that there is a Waterguard Cup in existence surely warrants the inclusion of chess matter as of Waterguard interest.

The question of "Changes in the Staff," is fully dealt with in the letter of Mr. J. P. Hausey, therefore, no further comment is necessary.

The letters by "Anon." and S.J.D., reflect our policy on the matter of Confederation Parliamentary Reports. Civil Service matters, as a whole, are of as great interest to some as Waterguard Golf is to others. Hence the inclusion.

In his interesting letter, R.W.B. strikes the right note, for it is often the lack of "copy" that forces the appearance of a column of lesser importance. Without doubt, you are aware that we can produce either an eight-page or a twelve-page Journal, but there is no happy medium unless expense is to be no object. To illustrate the point, assume for one moment, that we have much more "copy" than is required for an eight-page issue but barely sufficient for a twelve. Are we to produce an eight-page pamphlet or a twelve-page journal? By far the vast majority would require the latter in spite of the addition of a column they perhaps are not individually interested. We imagine you thinking of the quart pot again, but we shall continue to add that little froth to fill it, for even the froth is expensive!

However, the interest that you have shown is to be admired, and I must thank you for your support, for it should be the means of other fellows also putting their shoulders to the wheel.

To sum the whole up, Shakespeare, in Julius Cæsar, aptly writes, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves."

Yours sincerely,

The Editor.



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Merseyside Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the P.S.A. (Liverpool Branch) will be held at the Bradford Hotel, Tithebarn Street, Liverpool, on Tuesday 7th September next, at 7.30 p.m. promptly. All members are requested to be present to elect officers for the ensuing year.

Correspondence.

To the Editor, "Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

I was fortunate enough to obtain an interview, under O.W.O. 8/37, for promotion to the Officer Grade, but am one of the unfortunate A.P.O.s who did not get promoted.

When O.W.O. 8/37 first appeared, I had no intention of applying for promotion. So many similar notices had appeared without my making an application, that I gave this one no further thought, until the last day available for submitting the application. Then I happened to be in the office when quite a dozen young A.P.O.s were making out their applications that I suddenly decided to send one in myself.

As I have said, I had never sent one in before, and as this would probably be my last chance of doing so, I decided it would be for the best, for I would have no after-regrets wishing I had applied and perhaps kidding myself I would have been successful.

Immediately I left the interview, I had a feeling I had flopped, and felt I had badly let down the head of the Department who had given me a good recommendation to get an interview.

When asked by the staff how I had fared, I told them of the questions and the answers that I had given. They seemed to think I had succeeded. Only to one individual did I tell what I had felt as I left the interview, and he very consolingly said it was not the head of the Department I had let down, but myself. That eased my mind a lot, for if anyone places faith in me, I try hard to see they are not misplacing that faith.

Promotion to the Officer Grade was well worth while with a maximum salary higher than a C.P.O.'s a forty-four hour week and annual leave equivalent to an Inspector.

Within a few years I will be sitting for the P.O.'s examination. I may fail, and the dreadful thought of being a failed A.P.O. for thirty years is like a nightmare. What if I make such a hopeless mess of that exam. as I did this one? I see in this port many brilliant A.P.O.s who have failed to qualify for promotion, and I sympathise with them, for theirs must be an unhappy lot.

If I get P.O.ship, I will be pleased I did not become an Officer, for I have been in this Department long enough to really enjoy the work, and I am afraid I would be unhappy cooped up in an office, in a distillery, or bonded warehouse, where perhaps the daylight seldom enters.

I have found thus far in my life that everything happens for the best.

So here's hoping.

"NOT YET A 'HAVE BEEN.'"

Cameo of Baltasound, Shetland Islands.

It falls to the lot of a London A.P.O. to officiate at the most northerly Customs station in the British Isles. He operates there during the fishing season which extends from the beginning of May to the middle of August.

Baltasound is the largest settlement in the island of Unst, which is the most northerly island in the British Isles, and has about 1,200 inhabitants who are largely of Norse descent. The people live on small crofts, i.e., farms; and rely upon the scanty agricultural produce, and on the woollen industry, to eke out a rather meagre existence.

Baltasound Voe is a fine natural harbour and affords a safe shelter for shipping in these stormy seas. The arrivals consist almost entirely of Norwegian and Swedish line-fishing boats which put into the port for provisions and water, and for shelter during stormy weather. As the Scandinavian fisherman staunchly refuses to fish on a Sunday there are a large number of arrivals at week-ends.

The duties of the A.P.O. are to board and rummage the fishing vessels, and to prevent the illegal landing of foreign-caught fish.

Attendances are for 7 hours a day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. and two night visits a month. The officer visits the station one Sunday in three, otherwise he is always on call.

Leisure may be employed in various ways. There are no social recreations, but there is plenty to attract the lover of outdoor life. There is very fine sea-fishing and haddock, saithe and mackerel abound in the voes. There is also plenty of scope for the trout-fishing enthusiast, there being an inland loch 3 miles long which is said to contain much trout, and also good sea-trout fishing near the coast.

The bird lover has an unlimited source of enjoyment. Sea birds of the common kinds, such as gulls, gannets, kittiwakes, eider-ducks and cormorants, are to be seen in great numbers. In addition rare birds such as Bonzie and the Arctic Skua make a visit to the cliffs most interesting. Whales, basking sharks, seals and porpoises are a common sight quite close to the land. The timid Shetland ponies wander wild all over the island, and one is surprised to see sheep grazing on remote uninhabited little islands.

There are a number of historical remains, such as Pictish brochs, stone circles, and an old ruined castle, which add to the picturesqueness of an otherwise bare and treeless landscape. The only trees on the island were imported and consist of one solitary copse.

A few months in this land of the midnight sun is an interesting and desirable experience, but a longer stay would very likely become monotonous even to the most ardent lover of solitude.

F.A.C.

Cameo of Barra, Outer Hebrides.

Castlebay, Barra, the stronghold of the McNeill clan, is an island in the outer Hebrides; the population are Gaelic speaking, and number about 2,000.

It is only during the fishing season, May to September, that an officer is stationed on the island, and during that time there are a good number of visitors, mostly of the tourist type, who appear to enjoy the segregation from civilised mankind that the place offers.

In itself Barra has an attractive beauty that can hardly be defined. It is rugged, and when the weather is bad, as is often the case during the period that we are becoming to allege as summer, the place offers no hospitality. Given fine weather there are many things of interest to do, such as line fishing, bathing or boat sailing.

The west side of the island looks out across the Atlantic, and the nearest land from there is the coast of Labrador. One can imagine how peaceful it is with a sandy beach all to oneself (the Islander has not reached the state of culture that it demands the washing of the body too often), bathing or sun bathing, as one desires, in, or alongside, waters that are bluer than those of the Mediterranean. During the period from mid-June to the end of July there is only about one hour of darkness, and it is possible to read in the open at midnight.

There is no industry beyond the herring fishing in the season. This is conducted by curers from the mainland, and the locals' interest in this industry is casual. Of course, the fishing brings a good number to the island and the locals concentrate on making them happy and comfortable at a price that would be more appropriate to a West End Hotel. It can be concluded that the chief object of the Islanders is robbing the visitors.

There are no places of amusement, although William Younger of Scotch Ale fame has an outpost here, which offers liquid refreshment during the approved hours. Yes! We even have a Policeman. Weddings or Funerals are days of rejoicing to the Islanders, and when one of the latter arises, all the male population fall in to make sure that the dear departed is duly disposed of. Some stuff called whisky is then passed around to all the mourners, and when the supply is exhausted it is the signal to repair to the local hostelry, where the festivities are concluded at the call of time. Things are slack this year, we have only had two funerals.

An island wedding is a thing to remember, it usually lasts for two days, the pipes and the bottles are in great evidence, and it is generally

the second night after the ceremony that the bridegroom claims his bride and takes her away to the house or cottage which has already been built. They leave a lot to chance, because custom demands that the prospective bridegroom shall ask the father of his future bride for her hand the night previous to the wedding. When the father is satisfied (after an external examination) with his future relation, a bottle is produced and the contract sealed.

The prices for most things here are 50 per cent. more than on the mainland. Freight will account for about 5 per cent. and the avarice of the shopkeepers the remaining 45. Postage stamps and newspapers are, in fact, the only things obtainable at the marked prices.

Mails and newspapers are delivered three times a week. Supplies, including beer, are delivered by cargo steamer twice a week. Often the mail boat is late and there is no delivery until the next day, but the locals say that the beer has never yet been behind schedule.

There is not much work for the officer to do. About 40 ships are dealt with from foreign during his reign, and as half of these are from the Irish Free State, in ballast, they cause little worry. The remainder are Swedish vessels which come for the purpose of mackerel curing. They stay until they are full, usually it takes them about eight weeks, they then clear for Norway. Some take a little bonded stores, otherwise they are straightforward jobs.

It is interesting to note that the officer is the only Government official on the island, and, as there is no harbour master, the officer is the only one who has the power (the Scottish Fishery Board give it to him in their circular) to decide whether ships are in the fairway. If they are lying at a pier causing obstruction, he is often called upon to request them to move.

Winter, which comes early to the Islands, accentuates the advent of nostalgia. Still, a session out on the edge of beyond its worth while, the only drawback being the return to the horrors of civilisation and the nausea of having to join in the rush of early morning buses, or tubes, so that one is sure of getting acquainted with the appearance sheet by eight a.m.

P.C.W.

Do You Know—

“At home, Preventive Officers and coast watchers have had leave suspended, and even retirement dates put forward, so that every available man can go into fight against smugglers.”
John Bull, August 7th, 1937.

Oh to be in England with my Baggage Chalked!

Reprinted from "PUNCH" by special permission of the Proprietors.

I come of a very fine smuggling family, although the written records go no further back than the time of my grandmother. In 1919, my mother successfully smuggled into this country an immense quantity of sugar in a tin bath to make toffee for her nephews and nieces, sweetless since 1916. There was at that time a very strict and doubtless excellent regulation against bringing sugar from Egypt, where there were huge quantities of it, into England, where there was none. I myself am often called upon to further our imperial greatness by going abroad for a period of four or five years. Upon entering our dominion or colony, I pay a stupendous duty on my English clothes. After two years these fall to pieces and I buy some dominion or colonial clothes, and, returning to England at the appointed moment two years later, ought to pay an even more monumental duty upon these now dilapidated rags. Naturally I prefer to smuggle my dominion garments. This is called Empire Preference.

Practice has made me perfect: in learning from me you are sitting at the feet of a master.

Method A.—Arrange to arrive in England with four or five children under six. This method, freely employed by my grandmother, is not always practical. It is, however, infallible. The kindly Customs officer, himself a married man, gives you a pitying glance and opens nothing.

Method B.—This needs careful preparation. Attire yourself before you approach the white cliffs of England in your dowdiest clothes and place a perfectly impossible hat at the most unfortunate angle upon your head. Remove all cosmetics from the face and polish it thoroughly with a nice piece of chamois-leather. Arrange, if possible, to have a streaming cold. Carry with you—*this is most important*:—

- (1). A hand-embroidered basket containing a vacuum-flask, a camera made not later than 1912, some knitting, the remains of some sandwiches, a novel by an Edwardian author, and a copy of the *Continental Daily Mail*.
- (2). A large clumsy handbag, preferably with a catch that won't work.
- (3). An umbrella.
- (4). A mackintosh.
- (5). A rug.
- (6). A coat.
- (7). Another coat.
- (8). If possible a pot-plant or roll of wallpaper. Any really good Paris shop will sell you either or both of these.

Have with you as many small pieces of luggage as possible. Eschew raw-hide luggage or the type of trunk in which one hangs things

up. Register a total lack of charm or sex-appeal, fix the Customs officer with a glassy eye and tell him the absolute truth, roughly as follows:—

"Oh, yes, I've got some silk, these stockings I'm wearing are pure silk; and of course some eau-de-Cologne—just a little bottle and it's nearly empty. And there's a film in my camera now that I bought abroad, though it wasn't the same kind I've always had and I don't feel certain it will come out." (Here some authorities think it advisable to open one suitcase and produce from it a couple of very cheap and vulgar silk handkerchiefs, to wave them in the official face and say that they are intended as presents for your little nieces, who do so love dressing up. It is not for me to give a definite ruling on this point. Smugglers must use their own judgment and initiative here). "Oh, and I had a coat re-lined and I think that's silk; the people in the shop said that it was real silk, but you can't trust them abroad, can you? Perhaps it's only artificial; anyway, I'll show you in case it's real. And there's a pair of gloves in that little case—no, I think it's that black gladstone bag over there; I've worn them three or four times. They came from Marseilles, and I've got the account in my bag, three francs they were, or four. I had it in my bag a moment ago . . ."

It is improbable that the Customs officer, who, after all, has his dinner to be at home for, like the rest of us, will have allowed you thus far. He will probably have chalked all your packages on sight, and is certain to have done so by the time you get to the bit about the lining of your coat. The enormous advantage of this method is that it is law-proof. Your defence is that you hadn't stopped declaring; the wretched man walked off and left you before you could tell him all the other things.

Here are a few rules to memorise:—

- (1). Always travel by the slower and less fashionable routes, i.e., Dieppe—Newhaven, Havre—Southampton.
- (2). Never attempt to smuggle at Dover or Croydon. These ports are reserved for professionals. Competition is too keen for an amateur to hope to survive.
- (3). Always have untidy hair.
- (4). *Never* say "I have nothing to declare."
- (5). If a man, always persuade a woman to do your smuggling for you. They give a far more convincing portrayal of imbecility than you can ever hope to do.

Observe these simple rules carefully and you will be surprised at the results.

Impossible Sayings (6).

"Now for a pleasant Sunday afternoon," said the officer, off duty, as he sat down to amend his Codes, etc.

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For Your Note-Book.

Rum (continued). With Jamaica rum the wash is fermented slowly and distillation is carried on in a pot-still, but with Demerara rum the fermentation is rapid and either the pot or the patent still is used for distilling the wash.

Imitation Rum.—In France a considerable quantity of "rum" is manufactured by the distillation of beet-sugar mollasses, to which burnt sugar is applied to imitate the dark colour of the West Indian rum. In Germany and other Continental countries imitation is made by flavouring with ethyl butyrate and essences and colouring patent-still alcohol produced from grain, beet or potatoes and adding to the dearer qualities a proportion of Jamaica rum essence.

Foreign Gin—known as "Geneva" (from genevre—a juniper), "Hollands," "Schiedam" and "Schnapps."

The great rivals to the British gin manufacturer are the Dutch distillers of Schiedam, Rotterdam and Weesoppe, who produce the world-famed "Geneva" or "Hollands." Dutch gin is obtainable by fermenting a mixed mash of malted bere (barley), unmalted rye and maize. The wort is fermented in the mash tun by the adding of the necessary quantity of yeast, and after standing for two or three days is run into a pot-still and distilled into low wines (mout-wine). Juniper berries, a little salt, and sometimes hops and sweet fennel are added, and the liquor is then slowly re-distilled. The distillate is then run off into underground cisterns lined with white tiles, where the spirit can be kept without colouring. Schnapps is the name applied to a kind of gin produced at Aalborg and other places in Denmark.

U. U. Spirits.—In this category the usual importations are what is known as Hamburg or Berlin plain spirits of strength of 60 overproof and upwards, imported chiefly for methylating purposes and for use by rectifying distillers for gin and compounds. It is also largely used by perfumery makers and druggists. Germany is the chief country of its production, and it is produced there mainly from potatoes. The potatoes after being crushed are mashed with water, and then treated with sulphuric acid, when the potato becomes transformed to a fermentable sugar. When so "inverted," yeast is added and in the resulting fermentation spirit is produced. The spirituous liquid is then distilled by means of a highly rectifying or continuous still until alcohol of a high strength is obtained. The usual strength at which this spirit is casked is about 68 overproof. Owing to the high rectification to which it is subjected it is deprived of all the bye-products common to other spirits and is almost perfectly pure, and neutral both as to odour and flavour.—*To be continued.*

Imperial Service Medal.

A. W. EDWARDS, ESQ., LONDON.

At 4 p.m. on the 16th instant a very pleasant gathering of London Waterguard Officers took place in the Superintendent's Office to witness the presentation of the Imperial Service Medal to Mr. A. W. (Bill) Edwards.

Mr. Purser, Waterguard Superintendent, said that in this matter Mr. Edwards had again demonstrated his usual promptness in dealing with Service matters. In response to the usual letter asking the recipient to "name the day," Bill suggested the 16th, which allowed very little time to arrange for a much larger gathering of the Staff.

Mr. Salmon, A.P.O., conveyed the good wishes and congratulations from numerous colleagues in District III who were unable to attend owing to official duties.

Messrs. Kay, Stamford, Thomson, Standring, Moloney, Stocker and several others recalled personal incidents in which Bill had featured, all of which proved the fine qualities possessed by our old colleague.

Mr. Purser read the letter from the Secretary of the Imperial Service Order and stated that in complying with the instructions to make this presentation, he derived considerable pleasure because of the personal friendship between the recipient of the Medal and himself.

Mr. Edwards responded by saying how much he appreciated the honour His Majesty had conferred upon him. He thanked his old colleagues for all the nice things that had been said, but felt that he had only performed his duty to the Service and to the Officers with whom it had been his pleasure to serve.

Southampton Presentation.

Activities in the watch house were suspended for a short time on the 18th inst., when a presentation was made to Mr. T. R. Snellgrove, who has been recently promoted to the rank of Preventive Officer from this port.

The presentation, which consisted of a suitably inscribed barometer, was made by Mr. T. H. Sherlock, C.P.O., who spoke of the high esteem in which Mr. Snellgrove was held by the staff and paid a high tribute by referring to him as a pattern for the A.P.O.s.

Messrs. Worner, Mathers, Northfield and Parsons also expressed their appreciation of Mr. Snellgrove's qualities both as a Customs Officer and as a colleague, wishing him every success in the future.

In his reply, Mr. Snellgrove said how much he appreciated the gift he had received and expressed his sincere thanks to everyone. Good luck, Tom!

