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PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

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AUGUST, 1942.

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CHANGES IN THE STAFF

TO 24th AUGUST, 1942.

TRANSFER.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Hunt, J., Holyhead, Chester to Silloth, Preston.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE.

DEATHS.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Jones, W., Manchester.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER.

Stannard, F. T., Harwich, Ipswich.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNATED OFFICERS.

Natt, J., Preventive Officer.

Williams, H., Assistant Preventive Officer.

PERSONAL

Preventive Officer, London, requests correspondence from another P.O. desiring exchange. Letters c/o Editor, please.

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

DUTTON ONE-WEEK SHORTHAND is learnt in twelve 2-hour postal lessons. Send 3d. in stamps for first lesson to C. J., 92, Gt. Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

OBITUARY

FLYING OFFICER A. GERRIE, R.A.F.V.R.

It is with the greatest regret that I have to announce to his London colleagues the death in action of Flying Officer Alec Gerrie, R.A.F.V.R., during the daylight raid over Augsburg on April 17th last.

At first he was posted as missing, since his 'plane failed to return, and hopes were entertained of his safety; but now his father has written to say that the Red Cross have received information from the German authorities that Alec has made the supreme sacrifice.

Otto—many of us knew him by this name—entered the Waterguard service in 1938, and quickly "made his name" as a chap who was keen on his job, interested in the social side of things, and, above all, one who could be relied upon to do a good turn for any of his colleagues.

The Superintendent (Mr. Purser), writing of Alec said: "He was one of the recent entrants for whom I mentally prophesied great success in the Department. He had ability and character, and I found a readiness to render voluntary service to his colleagues. Reward, recompense, or even recognition of such service, I feel sure, would be furthestmost from his thoughts."

Alec's parents have desired me to express their thanks to all his colleagues for their kind expressions of sympathy. Our thoughts are, I am sure, with them during this trying time.

He leapt from earth on lightning wings.

And soaring, swept the midnight sky.

Alone, aloof from mundane things,

To do his task—and die.

He jettisoned his unspent youth—

A princely price to give—

And died—oh, strange and humbling truth!—

That such as I might live.

(With acknowledgments to A.B.G.)

R.J.L.

MR. F. T. STANNARD, A.P.O., Harwich.

It is with regret that we have to report the death, on 31st July, 1942, of Mr. Francis Thomas Stannard, A.P.O., of Harwich, after a long illness, at the age of 47.

Frank Stannard served in the R.N. in the last war, being attached to the minesweeping service. He joined this department in 1924 at Grimsby, and was transferred to Harwich in 1930. He was a native of Southwold.

At Harwich he proved to be a very keen and willing officer, and was liked by all. He was very popular in the district, where he soon became interested in many social activities.

Colleagues from the Waterguard and many prominent people, including the Mayor of Harwich, attended the funeral at Dovercourt Churchyard on August 5th.

He leaves a widow and three sons, two of whom are serving with H.M. Forces. To these we extend our deepest sympathy.

Mrs. P. V. HEPPEL.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Mr. Percy Heppel, P.O., formerly of Harwich, and now on detached duty in Scotland, on the loss of his wife.

Mrs. Heppel died in Dundee on Wednesday, 15th July, following an operation, and was interred at Upper Dovercourt Churchyard, Harwich. Many friends were present at the ceremony, including a representative gathering of members of the staff, among them Mr. Kerr, Deputy Inspector-General.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We have received a letter from Mr. P. V. Heppel asking us to convey to his numerous friends in the Service his deep appreciation of their expressions of sympathy in his recent bereavement. Mr. Heppel apologises for the absence of individual acknowledgments, and we are sure that his feelings in the matter will be well understood.



CURRENT COMMENTS

Departmental Council.

THE July meeting of the Council must be unique in that it opened with a speech of welcome to the new Vice-Chairman and ended with a message of farewell to the present Chairman.

In succession to Mr. A. J. Cowherd, the Staff Side elected Mr. F. G. Perkins to the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council. Mr. Perkins has served for many years as Deputy Vice-Chairman. We assure Mr. Perkins of our very loyal support.

The farewell to Sir Wilfrid Eady on his departure to the Treasury was, in spite of the suggestion in the "Times" announcement that his stay there would be limited, something more than just "au revoir." We admit that the needs of a department must at all times be subordinated to the interests of the nation, but nevertheless we feel that this Department can ill afford at this particular stage to part with Sir Wilfrid. He carries with him sincere wishes for the Waterguard for success in his new post.

P.S.A. Conference.

The 1942 Council meeting (the first full meeting since October, 1938) is over, and a period of intensive activity lies before us. Embodied in some seventy resolutions, the new instructions and policy relate to a few "hardy annuals," but in the main the Conference made a very comprehensive survey and arrived at wise decisions.

It had been hoped that a report of proceedings would have been available for publication in this issue, but the task proved too big. An interim report will be supplied to Councillors and District Officers shortly, and a full report of decisions will be published in the next issue.

The first meeting of the new Executive Committee has been arranged (provisionally) for the 29th and 30th September.

From one or two quarters in London we have had complaints that colleagues from the provinces did not contact London friends during their stay in Town. In defence of our Councillors, it must be explained that the amount of business left little or no time for social calls. The first day's session ended at 6.20 p.m., the second day at 7.35 p.m., and on the last day the Council worked through to finish at 2.20, leaving barely sufficient time for a quick lunch before the rush for trains.

Our Membership Drive.

With post-war reconstruction now in the forefront of Association aims, the need for the much desired 100 per cent. membership is more than ever apparent. It was inspiring to hear from the Organising Secretary of districts where this ideal had been achieved or was within easy reach. But on the other hand, the position in some other districts made it obvious that something had to be done to ensure that the Waterguard stood four-square behind the Association's post-war programme.

A "Membership Drive" is something in which we can all take a hand, but we were particularly pleased to learn that the Executive Committee has been instructed to invite Messrs. Battersby and Shaw to act in the lead.

Redundancy in the Waterguard.

The first effort of the Board to find suitable jobs for redundant staff in the Waterguard has resulted in the transfer of one A.P.O. to the Ministry of Food, Southampton—the remaining five applicants turned the jobs down for one reason or another. For our part we were not a bit sorry that this particular effort failed. We know that there are plenty of jobs within the Waterguard sphere of operations, and, what is most important, that the wide experience of our staff makes us admirably fitted to fill them. We have not yet lost hope that someone in authority will agree with this and act upon it.

Man-Power.

Under this head reference was made in the June issue to the problem facing the Board in the anticipated shortage in the Officer Grade, and the proposals to meet this situation included the recall of retired Officers, the promotion of D.C.O.s, and the recruitment of "Temporary Assistants."

In this issue the Departmental Council Report gives detailed information on this subject. It will be noted that Association action has resulted in the inclusion of Waterguard officers in the promotion clause of the Staff Side proposals.

Reading on through this Report, members will learn of the Government's intention to transfer a large block of Old Age Pension work to the Assistance Board. On the bare facts of the situation it would seem that with this expected redundancy of between fifty and sixty Officers, the anticipated shortage of 144 Officers could easily be met without resorting to recruitment of "temps."

C.S. Sanatorium Society.

It has been our policy always to boost this Society as deserving the attention of every member. We have used many arguments to prove our point, but to-day we find ourselves with even stronger points in favour of full membership. By a decision recently made, the rules have been amended to enable the wives of members to be admitted to the benefits of the Society. For a subscription of 9s. a year it will be possible for a salaried official to cover sanatorium treatment for himself and his wife, in addition to which assistance is also given to members suffering from tuberculosis who may be in necessitous circumstances.

The best advice, in fact, the only advice, we can offer is "join the Society now." If you have any difficulty drop a line to the Association General Secretary.

The Deputy Chairman.

It is with very sincere regret that we have to report that Sir John Sutton has met with an accident that will necessitate his absence from official duties for some weeks. We understand that Sir John has fractured two bones in his ankle.

Staff Side Secretary.

We started these notes with a reference to some notable changes on the Departmental Council—we end with a change equally notable. Mr. G. T. Bussey, the Staff Side Secretary, has resigned on transfer on promotion to the post of Principal (Establishments) in the Ministry of Fuel. We extend our hearty congratulations to him on this well-merited promotion.

The task of finding a successor in the important posts vacated by Bussey was made easier by the happy chance that made Mr. H. A. Mather both available and willing to take over the exacting duties of the offices.

Cost-of-Living Index Figure.

	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
1940/41 ..	93	96	97	97	98	100	100	99
1941/42 ..	101	100	100	100	99	100	99	100

STOP PRESS

News is just to hand that Sir John S. Sutton, K.B.E., C.B., Deputy Chairman of the Board, died at his home at Orpington on the morning of Sunday, 30th August.

Time and space do not allow us to pay full tribute to his memory or to express in adequate terms deep feelings at his passing.

The Department as a whole will share with Lady Sutton and the family the sorrow of this sudden bereavement.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and fifty-third meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 29th July, 1942, the Chair being taken by Sir Wilfrid Eady, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

Prior to the commencement of normal business, the Chairman extended, on behalf of the Official Side, a welcome to Mr. F. G. Perkins, who had been appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council. The Official Side felt sure that the high traditions of the Council would be maintained during Mr. Perkins' tenure of the post.

Mr. Perkins, in thanking the Chairman, said that, with the continued co-operation of the Official Side, he had no doubt that the Council would maintain the reputation of which it was very proud.

The Staff Side announced the appointment of Mr. P. T. Squibb as a member of the Staff Side in place of Mr. A. J. Cowherd.

MAN-POWER.

(a) G.O. 32/1941.

The Official Side intimated that all the Departmental Clerical Officers and Departmental Higher Clerical Officers reported as available for transfer had now been taken, and the position was unchanged regarding the four Chief Clerks.

(b) T.O. 10/1941—Report of the Elimination of Less Essential Work Committee.

The Chairman reiterated the remarks made at the May Council meeting regarding the satisfactory results of this Committee's work, and the Council adopted the Report of the Committee, copy of which had been circulated with the agenda.

(c) Kennet Committee Report.

In reply to a Staff Side question, the Official Side said that directions had been given for the release of twenty-five men selected for technical posts, and twelve of these had already left this Department. The call-up of men for technical commissions had not been so rapid, only three notifications having been made for Royal Air Force commissions, but the position as regards the remainder was being closely watched.

In reply to an inquiry as to the effect on the 74 men for whom indefinite deferment was being asked, the Official Side said that this question was being pursued in consultation with the Ministry of Labour.

The item was re-adjourned.

(d) Release of Women.

In reply to the Staff Side's request for the latest information on this subject, the Official Side said the call-up was proceeding very slowly; of the 1920-21 group, seventy-nine were still waiting, and of the 1918-19, sixty. Ten volunteers in the latter group had already gone.

(e) Officer Grade Complement.

The Staff Side having received the revised figures representing the staffing position as at 1st July, 1942 (promised at the last Council meeting), asked how the wastage figure of 80 was assessed. The Official Side said that an estimate of the number of final retirements, of loans and of deaths had been made, but the figure of 80 might be somewhat on the high side. There would be a substantial net wastage, but the estimate did not assume that the number of retirements would be as in normal conditions. Since 1st January, 1940, 126 men had been retained or re-employed and 118 had left the Department finally.

The number of men originally on the register of the reserve at 31st December, 1939, was 112. Since then the number of deaths, withdrawals, and men reaching the age of 64 totalled 83, leaving 29 to whom inquiry as to their willingness for re-employment had been issued. Up to date 14 replies had been received, viz: seven acceptances, five refusals, and two had deferred their decision. All the acceptances were qualified as to the locality or the nature of employment.

The Staff Side asked how many men had been allowed to retire and had not received an inquiry as to their willing-

ness to go on the reserve. The Official Side said the figures were not at present to hand, but they would furnish them.

The Staff Side inquired how many Officers who had retired during the last two years had been asked to join the reserve. The Official Side said that 61 retired men had been re-employed between 1st January, 1940, and 1st June, 1942; 32 men had declined re-employment. The Staff Side said that they were sure that some men who had declined immediate re-employment would be prepared to serve to avoid a shortage in the grade, and the Official Side promised inquiry.

The Staff Side referred to the Official Side proposals for meeting the possible shortage in the Officer Grade intimated in their letter of 8th June, which were as follows:—

- (a) Firstly, to recall, after further investigation as to fitness and suitability, those Officers in the Departmental Reserve of Superannuated Officers not more than 64 years of age, who are still willing to be re-employed;
- (b) secondly, to promote suitable candidates from the (male) Departmental Clerical Grade between the age groups of 35 and 45. These promotees would be subject to 12 months' probation, and it will be clearly stated in an O.W.O. inviting applications that the appointments would be on an acting basis and only for the duration of the war. At the termination of the war, the promotees would be considered for permanent employment in the Officer Grade along with men of their present grade now serving with Forces or loaned to other Departments, and their temporary promotion to the grade would carry no seniority right;
- (c) thirdly, to dilute the Officer grade by the engagement of "Temporary Assistants," recruited from the Ministry of Labour and National Service, who would be employed on the duties as specified in an enclosed draft General Order.

As counter proposals, the Staff Side submitted the following:—

- (1) Retention of Officers beyond retiring age.
- (2) Re-employment of retired Officers listed for employment. (Covering Official Side proposal (a)).
- (3) Extension of employment of W.P.O.s on O.A.P. work in urban areas.
- (4) Promotion of suitable candidates from the (male) Departmental Clerical Officer Grade and Waterguard grades up to the age of 45. These promotees would be subject to 12 months' probation, and it will be clearly stated in an O.W.O. inviting applications that the appointments would be on an acting basis and only for the duration of the war. At the termination of the war the promotees would be considered for permanent employment in the Officer Grade along with men of their present grades now serving with the Forces or loaned to other Departments, and their temporary promotion to the grade would carry no seniority right.

(This proposal extended to the Waterguard grades the scope of Official Side proposal (b)).

The Staff Side said they rejected Official Side proposal (c). The Official Side said they would examine these proposals, and the item was re-adjourned.

(f) Old Age Pensions Work.

In reply to an inquiry from the Staff Side as to the origin and scope of a contemplated change regarding the Old Age Pensions Work performed by officials of the Customs and Excise Department, the Official Side observed that the question of the future policy as to the development of the Social Services was being considered by the Beveridge Committee, and the Assistance Board had suggested, with support from the Treasury, that non-contributory Old Age Pensioners who were in receipt of supplementary grants from the Assistance Board should be transferred to their jurisdiction while those supplementary grants continued. Entitlement to the supplementary grants was conditional on more varied circumstances than the entitlement to non-contributory old age pensions, and a much more frequent investigation of entitlement was essential. The continuance of dual investigation by different Departments could not be justified, and while new claimants to non-contributory pensions would be dealt with by Pension Officers of this Department under a statutory requirement, the contemplated transfer would

affect the administration of a large number of pensioners until the supplementary grants ceased, when it was intended that they should return to the control of this Department.

The transfer would raise staffing questions within this Department, and it was estimated that about one hundred Women Pension Officers and from fifty to sixty members of the Officer Grade would become redundant.

The Staff Side thought the effecting of the proposed scheme would prove cumbersome, and asked whether the supplementary grant work could not have been transferred to this Department. If it meant absorbing surplus staff in the Assistance Board and creating a surplus in this Department it did not appear desirable. The Official Side replied that discussions with the Treasury were proceeding with a view to safeguarding the interests of the redundant Women Pension Officers. In reply to the Staff Side, the Official Side said that before estimating the redundancy they had taken into account an extension of Woman Pension Officer areas, which had a bearing on the point raised by the Staff Side under item (e) above.

The scheme would not be operated in any case prior to 1st January, 1943. The immediate problem to the Official Side was that relative to the Woman Pension Officer Grade, and they could assure the Staff Side that they would continue to safeguard the interests of that Grade.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

(a) Retirement: Effect on Promotion of Re-employment or Deferment.

In reply to a Staff Side inquiry, the Official Side said their policy as stated at the last meeting of the Council applied to all grades, and was being progressively applied. They suggested that a report on the position at the end of 1942 would be more suitable than frequent periodic reports. The Staff Side said that as the next Council meeting would normally be held in September, they would prefer adjournment till that meeting rather than to a later date.

Referring to the case of a Principal Warehouseman, the Official Side said that this official had been temporarily retained for a particular job, and that this would be finished in a couple of months' time.

The Council adjourned the item accordingly.

(b) Vacancies in the Waterguard.

The Official Side said that six Chief Preventive Officers had been interviewed for the Ministry of Food posts referred to at the previous Council meeting. Only one of the anticipated posts at the places mentioned at the last meeting had actually been available, viz. at Southampton, and that post had been taken by the Chief Preventive Officer interviewed therefor. Two of the volunteers had withdrawn their candidature, and three others had for various reasons not been selected or had not accepted the posts. Further developments would be awaited, and the Council re-adjourned the item.

(c) Upgrading of Temporary Clerks, Grade III (T.C. 11/1941 and E.O.C. 534/1941).

The Official Side intimated that an informal consultation on this matter had now been arranged, and the Council re-adjourned the item.

(d) Position of Watchers surplus to requirements.

In reply to the Staff Side's inquiry made at the last meeting of the Council, the Official Side said they had examined the position regarding these Watchers, and gave the following information, viz: As regards London Port, the notices already given to two men had been cancelled, five had been loaned to the Office Keeper's staff, and seven or eight were being retained in London as a reserve. Outside London, one had been retained at Plymouth, another at Southampton, and regarding nine others at various Ports to whom preliminary notice had already been given, the question of their retention was at present being considered.

(e) Surveyors' Examination, 1943.

The Staff Side asked for more definite information as to the data on which the need for an examination for the Surveyor Grade in 1943 had been determined. The Official Side said it was not possible to give exact figures, but there would be certainly vacancies in the Surveyor Grade in excess of the number of men already successful at written examinations, and they must have the means of filling such vacancies. To give figures which would of necessity have a margin of error would not be of much use. The Staff Side

referred to the fact that there were still thirty-three men ready for appointment. They desired to understand the need for the examination rather than to criticise the holding of it. The Official Side said that at the best any figures they might give would, to some extent, be guess-work, but they felt sure that by 1944, when the 1943 examination successful candidates would become available, there would be about twenty vacancies otherwise unfillable. The Official Side said that the decision to hold an examination in 1943 was inevitable, because candidates had to be chosen, and the examination was part of the existing method of choice. This being so, it was necessary, in fairness to prospective candidates, that the decision should be announced in good time.

(f) Promotion to the Officer Grade, and (g) Filling of Vacancies and Employment of Temporary Staff.

These two items were withdrawn from the agenda at Staff Side request, subject to their restoration at a later date, if necessary.

PETROL: POSITION OF AUTHORISED CAR USERS ON AND AFTER 1st JULY, 1942.

The Official Side intimated that of the nine cases of proposed discontinuance, six officials had maintained their decision to give up the use of their cars, two had signified their willingness to continue, and authorities had been issued. One other had expressed his willingness to continue, but in his case the authority was not now considered necessary. A further informal consultation was about to take place on the remaining cases where it was proposed to refuse car authorities.

Regarding the supply of petrol for home to office journeys, the Official Side stated that the question of the interpretation of Treasury Circular was a National matter and not confined to this Department. The Treasury and the Petroleum Department had been consulted, and they had both agreed that proper interpretation was that where an individual obtained petrol from the Divisional Petroleum Officer for daily journeys from home to his office, he must also obtain it from that Officer for such journeys on those days when he used his car on official journeys from the office.

RE-SCHEMING AND METHODS OF WORK.

(a) Purchase Tax—G.O. 40/41.

The Official Side said that the rotation of Officers on the special verification work in the London Central Purchase Tax Centre was proceeding and would be continued. They suggested that this item might now be withdrawn from the agenda, and the Staff Side concurring, the Council decided accordingly.

(b) Purchase Tax Centres (G.O. 51/1941).

The Official Side said that a new draft order on Purchase Tax Centres was in preparation, and a meeting of the special informal committees would be arranged without delay as soon as the draft was completed, and this was expected very shortly.

(c) Local Staffing decisions.

The re-scheming of Woman Pension Officer Stations in Hull and of two Alloa Stations was approved, but the assessment of units of two Distillery Stations was adjourned for enquiry, whilst a further local staffing agreement was referred back for treatment under G.O. 32/41.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The question of remuneration for extra work performed by C. and E. Departmental grades was re-adjourned for the Staff Side, and the Council ratified an agreement from the Officer Grade Committee governing the basis of control of the removal of an Unattached Officer.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 23rd September, 1942, but it was agreed that if necessity arose arrangements would be made for an earlier meeting.

SIR WILFRID EADY, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.M.G.

At the conclusion of the business of the Council the Chairman referred to his forthcoming departure from the Board of Customs and Excise to take up an appointment at the Treasury. Although he had been in the Department a comparatively short time, he had enjoyed much friendship and help from all of his colleagues and had learned why successive Chairmen regarded the Department with so much affection; he had even been led to extend his affection to the Departmental Whitley Council. He was proud of his

association with the Department, both because of the good spirit in it and because of its obvious competence. A widespread Government machine of this kind, which had proved its competence both in peace-time and when facing new jobs in war-time, would always form an important part of the Government machinery. The Department was fortunate in combining long and historic traditions with the practical and modern outlook on its work. The Departmental Council reflected the underlying qualities of the Department. His remarks were not a formal valediction; they were made in all sincerity, and he would always retain a close personal interest in the fortunes of the Department.

The Vice-Chairman (Mr. Perkins) expressed the Staff Side's regret at Sir Wilfrid's leaving; they had hoped for his leadership for a much longer period. Sir Wilfrid's words of appreciation were most acceptable and were greatly valued. The Staff Side held him in high esteem and wished him the greatest success in his new sphere.

CUSTOMS & EXCISE ORPHANS', WIDOWS' AND WAR MEMORIAL FUND

The quarterly meeting of the Executive Committee was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, London, E.C.3, on Monday, 6th July, 1942, at 4 p.m. (Chairman, Mr. D. J. G. Moffatt).

Minutes were adopted, letters read, and the Hon. Secretary's Financial Statement was approved.

There were fifteen applications for membership of the Fund. All were elected. They comprised—one Staff Officer, eight Officers, one U.O., two D.C.O.s, one C.O., and two A.P.O.s.

RENEWALS (Widows)—Rule 26.

Nine grants of £20 each, and seven grants of £15 each were voted. Three applications for renewal of grants were deferred for further information.

NEW APPLICATIONS (Maintenance and Education of Children)—Rule 23.

The Committee admitted to full benefit four children (two per family) at a cost of £36 each family per annum; two children (one per family) at a cost of £24 each per annum.

HON. TREASURER.

Mr. A. G. May was re-elected.

VISITING COMMITTEE.

Messrs. S. H. Atkins, J. Bush, G. A. Lewis, H. S. Pallant, W. Pratt, C. R. Purser, W. J. Ralph, J. Wells, B. T. G. Wheeler were re-elected.

REFERENCES—from Annual General Meeting.

- (1) Report on the relations of the "Orphanage" and the Civil Service War Distress Fund.
 - (2) Increase of the grants under Rule 23.
 - (3) Covenanted Gifts to Charities.
- Necessary action was decided upon.

LOANED OFFICIALS.

The Committee will be grateful, in the interests of economy, if loaned officials who have not already done so, will forward their subscriptions for 1942-3 to the Hon. Treasurer in one payment. The subscriptions may be remitted either by a cheque or a postal order. Alternatively, a banker's order may be arranged, and the Fund's Bank is the Midland Bank, Ltd., Eastcheap Branch, E.C.3.

The Lads o' London

I happened to be at home for the August Bank Holiday and spent the afternoon watching the events held on the river for the revived Greenwich regatta. It was a lovely afternoon, and I fell to soliloquising. The river at that particular stretch—from Limehouse Reach to Blackwall Point—holds many happy memories for me and indeed for many of us. One's thoughts went back to the days of the "Monte Pascoal," the "Kosciuski" and other tourist ships which brought their thousands to London in peace time, the sugar ships at Greenwich Buoys, and the tugs with their strings of barges in tow heading up or down stream. All such scenes as these had now unfortunately departed owing to the war, but there will undoubtedly come the day when London will come back into its own as the world's premier port, and the docks be as busy as they formerly were, and once again shall be heard the hoarse shouts of lightermen, aye, and even the well-known cry of "ooh-oi" as we summon the launches to us. But until that glad day

"Old Father Thames keeps rolling along
Down to the mighty sea."

By the time this number of the "C.J." is issued, another Conference will have come and gone, and perhaps there will be an account of its proceedings in this number, but it is hoped that it will have been worth while. The wisdom of granting to the C.P.O. Grade equal representation with the other grades on the Council is severely questioned. They have never yet obtained their eight representatives, and if they are to continue to have such equality of representation, then perhaps an unattached C.P.O. can be given the opportunity of attending further Conferences.

A colleague in the Forces recently enquired whether the directors of the Customs Fund are prepared to advance money for the purchase of house property whilst he is on active service. Accordingly I wrote to Mr. Harris, the Secretary of the Fund, and his reply was to the effect that, whilst the Directors are not anxious to advance money for that purpose—solely out of consideration for the chaps themselves—they are, nevertheless, prepared to help any member of the staff if they can. All communications as touching this point should therefore be addressed to Mr. F. T. G. Harris, the Secretary, at City Gate House, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2, who will reply to any such enquiries.

The Board should be approached by the Staff Side of the Departmental Whitley Council—perhaps it has done so already—re the travelling time that the Treasury allow for evacuated staffs. As was written in last month's "Current Comments," the department has not been unduly generous in this matter, and such an allowance, if granted, would be a blessing to many who are at least a day's journey from their home ports.

At the next meeting of the Departmental Whitley Council the item, "Uniform Rank Distinction for A.P.O.'s," should appear on the agenda after an adjournment of several months. A satisfactory solution to the problem is awaited.

The confirmation of the news of the passing of Alec Gerrie (referred to elsewhere) has come as a profound shock to all of his friends in the department, and from letters that have reached me one can gather that "Otto" was held in high esteem by all who knew him. His memory will live on, and for several of us the year 1939 spent at Surrey Docks with him and Ken Watson, and others who are yet with us, will remain as one of the happiest years spent in the Water-guard.

There has been quite a lot of news from the lads this month, and it was pleasing to note that some have written who have not done so for many months. All had good excuses for their belated letters, but apart from that it is grand to hear from them again. Dick Jones and Ben Battle were among these gentlemen, and Dick has been wandering all over the north-west for the last five months and is now in Kirkwall, and naturally called to see the staff there, where they make visitors leave their finger-prints and signatures on a sheet of fool'scap. He said he got quite a thrill being back in a watch-house again, and that the old hunting instinct was aroused. Ben is in Leeds, and for the greater part of the past two years has been studying physiotherapy and occupational therapy. He hopes—when he resumes the 4/11 watch—to have many excellent opportunities of doing



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a little "quacking" on some of the inmates of the office. Cyril Warner has left this country for overseas, and looked in at the Mavisbank Depot, Glasgow, prior to embarking, but unfortunately George Barker was out. He has gone, he said, on a ship well known to many of us in London, but not in its present sardine-tin-like form, and is looking forward to some shore leave soon. Denis Maguire is in Salop, in the R.A.F., after having been on detached duty in Barrow for nearly two years. Whilst he was in Regent's Park soon after entering the R.A.F. he made a trip to Room 11, but apparently was not well-known enough to cause a sensation. Alan Bee still writes a cheerful letter, and wishes to be remembered to all his friends.

Bill Farmer has told me that Jimmy Ayton has been home enjoying some leave, and looked very fit and well. In fact, Bill seems to come in contact with quite a number of the boys in Londonderry, and his assistant there—Bob Catnach—has just been married. Hearty congratulations, Bob, and may you and your good lady enjoy the best of health and a happy married life.

A number of the chaps have expressed their joy at the news of Joe Thompson's safety, and have desired me to convey to Joe and to his mother their best wishes. At last George McFetrich has reached his destination—which is India—and it was good to get an airgraph from him. He is hoping to meet Joe out there soon. The monsoons have just started and he has moved from his canvas quarters to a large modern house. The airgraph system of communication is one of the wonders of the age, and one is always pleased to receive them. A recent one from Jimmy Dunn gave news of his safety in the Middle East, and also of his promotion to the rank of Sergeant. He has with him out there a Waterguard colleague, Eric Little, of Thameshaven, and they share the "C.J." Another recent promotion was that of wee Alec Wheatley's from Private to L/Corporal, and although he is still in Brentwood he is as fine and dandy as ever, and visited the Surrey Dock office a fortnight ago. The postman has just brought in another airgraph, this time from Lieut. John Lambie, announcing his safe arrival in the Middle East and his first trip to Cairo.

The latest news of Wally Blake is that he is working on the railway near the prison camp in which he is interned. His mother said that he is in the best of health, and sent a photograph of him taken with a group of fellow-prisoners. Mr. and Mrs. Blake have kindly placed their house at the disposal of any of the lads passing through Glasgow, and the address is 27, Lyndhurst Gardens, Glasgow, N.W. The best thanks of the lads and myself are extended to Mr. and Mrs. Blake for their kind offer. There are a number of such "open houses" now around the country, and I should be glad if you chaps would make use of the hospitality which has been offered. As mentioned in last month's "C.J.," a new and revised list will be published shortly.

There is not much home news except to say that the "Harpy" recently made a trip down the river to have her bottom scraped. The staff were, for the time being, housed in Room 14! the "Super" now being next door in Room 12 where the M.O. formerly had his surgery.

Let's hear from you then,
Till the lights of London shine again.

R.J.L.

Southampton Notes

At least the postman has no complaints this month, even if we have, but, be it prolific or not, we are glad to have good news again of the boys who have written. J. C. Smith is our latest departure to the Forces, and he is now undergoing training with the Royal Marines somewhere in the West Country. His first impressions are pleasing, and we wish him well in the new life, after his congenial spell of D.D. at Preston since 1940.

A late 'phone call at the end of July provided the pleasant surprise of a yarn with Doug. Joy, followed by a letter with news of his progress with the Intelligence Corps. He

is now well South, and is hoping to contact the boys at home when off duty time permits, although his course is exacting upon "free" time. In the same crowd as Doug. there is an A.P.O. from Ipswich, and I guess the friends of D. R. Hobbs will be pleased to know of his well-being and the possibility of his return to familiar ground in the near future. Doug., together with the other boys who have remembered us this month, sends good wishes to you all.

A second and equally pleasant surprise was a long letter from Bob Jenkinson, of whom we have had no news for two years. He is very well, busy, and now with the R.A.O.C., after serving with the Hampshire Regt. until April of this year. At present he is somewhere in Wiltshire and is finding the job tolerable, but is keenly anticipating his return to our ranks.

Bob left the bachelors some time back, but although late with the news, we send our belated congratulations and good wishes for the days ahead. His letter closes with a few lines of greetings to the Soton boys, in particular to Jimmy James and Ron Greenhalgh, and his former colleagues at Gravesend, plus bouquets for Ben ("C. J." distribution) and the "C. J." itself. (Editor please note). We thank you, Jenk., for a grand letter.

Ernie Soane was in the Watch House recently, and they tell me he is bigger and better than ever, if that is possible. Still with the Grenadiers, and getting tougher every day. Good luck, Ernie boy; and to another of our strong men, Arthur Cheney, also a recent visitor to 29 Berth, after varied wanderings up and down Great Britain. Arthur is very fit, and he conveys news of Stan Roberts (the first for twelve months!—it is your "service," Robbie!)—who is following the same adventurous life as Arthur himself, including the commission quest. All the best, Robbie, and may you soon be Sub-Lieut. Roberts, R.N.V.R.

By the way, Bill Sykes is now Sergeant Sykes. He didn't tell us, but we hasten to congratulate him, and wish him well in distant Egypt.

Once again, cheery mail from Cliff and Joe, the latter stepping ashore at the end of May in eastern climes. Cliff is no longer shipmates with Bill Hopkins (Swansea), as the latter has been drafted elsewhere. Mail is still the big desire of our Navy boys, so far away. It isn't too late to start, and they cannot receive too many letters. Thanks a lot, Cliff and Joe, for such regular contact.

I close our Forces news with a reminder that it is this month of August which promises news of our Far East boys, although we have no news at the time of writing, and thoughts of Davy Yondell and Arnold Bateman predominate.

Home news remains good, although our old enemy, Work and Wait, has found the boys a new interest in life (officially, that is), after its long absence from the port.

Mr. A. T. Tarrant, C.P.O., has accepted a position as Salvage Officer, Southampton, with the Ministry of Food, for, we understand, the duration, and we take this opportunity of wishing him well in the new job.

The Soton "Echo" very recently published a prisoners-of-war photograph, and the staff were glad to know, by this, of the safe-keeping of Ralph Clarke, son of Mr. B. R. Clarke, P.O., our Councillor at the recent Conference.

All pre-1935 Sotonians will be interested in the knowledge of the progress made in the P.A.B. by their old colleague, Charlie Martin, who left us in 1935 for the former U.A.B. He recently attained executive status and was promoted to London, but now he is undergoing vocational training following his Army calling up. Charlie is just one more example of what men of this Department can do, given the opportunity.

We regret to learn of the continued sick leave of Mr. B. A. Bacon, P.O., and to know that Mr. J. Burrows, P.O., may have to undergo a further operation. From Pompey we learn with pleasure of the return to duty of Ted Barron. We hope he will continue to keep well. Finally, our good wishes to Mr. H. A. Foley, P.O., for a congenial spell of service at Leith. Cheerio, Forces!
L.B.

THE CONFERENCE, 1942

Had the writer of "Cobbled Streets," published in the last issue of this journal, postponed his effort until this, he certainly would have included the Strand, London, in his review. Surely this notable thoroughfare, although not cobbled nor paved with gold, warranted an inclusion, for were not, on the 18th, 19th and 20th August, amongst the cosmopolitan populace parading the pavements, no less than 25 selected members of the Waterguard present? Walter House, the home of the C. and E. Federation, was the venue of this select and august body gathered together for serious conclave at this war-time Conference.

It appears that considerable difficulty had been experienced in securing hotel accommodation for our provincial Councillors, but the Winston Hotel, Jermyn Street, and the Strand Palace Hotel eventually provided two rival camps, so to speak, for whoever was responsible for allocating the division certainly saw to it that the Clans were not divided.

The morning of the 18th was very bright and sunny, and it suggested an omen of happier things to come. At these gatherings heretofore, the writer has invariably experienced a difficulty in obtaining an "atmosphere." This year, however, it was extremely manifest, for after the preliminary "How do you do's?" "What cheers?" and the usual pleasantries regarding the weather had been expounded, a distinct feeling of intentness could be felt. We were pleased to renew the acquaintance of many old faces, welcomed the new, and hoped that new voices would be heard with no small import. Of the old stalwarts of Association activities, we were pleased to see Mr. R. M. Murrey, now C.P.O. Councillor for Scotland. We could rest assured that his quiet and unassuming voice would pronounce wise and sage reasoning. No Council would be complete without Mr. J. T. Sutton, and we wondered if sesquipedalian verbiage would be his forte, in view of the phantasmagoria of events since the last Conference. We were pleased to welcome Mr. C. F. Shaw, of Liverpool—great things were expected, and subsequent conclave proved that he had been wisely elected. We were sorry not to see Mr. Lewis, of South Wales, but his successor, Mr. J. Grice, had, no doubt, been well primed and well chosen for his mission. Another newcomer, Mr. H. E. P. Bevan (of Green Book fame), was present, and we were certain that his encyclopaedic adaptability would stand him in good stead in tabulating to his South Wales colleagues the Conference findings. Mr. N. Ramsey should be mentioned, too. His enunciation and intentness suggested that he had a long Association career before him.

In time-honoured fashion the Conference was opened by our I.G.W., Mr. C. M. Woodford, C.B.E., and right glad we were to see him, and it was with more than passing interest that we attended to his words. He opened by saying how grateful he was to be asked to attend and perform the opening ceremony. In 1938, he said, he did not expect to attend again in 1942, but fate had otherwise directed. Of late he had felt depressed and unhappy, but thanked the Waterguard for their great help to him in these difficult times. Nevertheless, he had derived comfort and consolation to know that with so little grumbling we had gone through the great upheaval of transfers and being exiled from home, and he was grateful to us in consequence. He, too, had lost his home, and he had sympathy with those in a similar position. In spite of what we might think, he said, we do not realise the endless compliments and praise that the Waterguard receives from other Government Departments. He believed that in future we would be better understood by the Treasury now that our late Chairman of the Board had entered that Department. He felt sure that Sir Wilfred Eady had a warm spot for the Waterguard, and that, in the course of time, we would get a proper reward for our services.

On a sombre note, Mr. Woodford asked us to stand in tribute to those Waterguard Officers who had departed from us. He read the names of seven killed, five missing, seven missing and believed killed, five killed by civil action and three prisoners of war. He said that these figures displayed the spirit of the Waterguard, and we were indebted to those for whom we stood.

Speaking on promotion, he said the difficulty was now more than ever before and how he resisted the dilution of our fine Service by temporaries. He gave thanks for the patience and loyalty we had shown him in these past years, and spoke of the great pleasure he would have in rendering us any assistance. We could rely upon him to do his utmost in this respect. Mr. Woodford terminated by expressing his thanks for being asked to attend, and trusted that we would have a happy and fruitful Conference.

Mr. Powell moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Woodford in a brief but pleasant speech, and in reply the I.G.W. said that it was a compliment to him to be asked to attend. With a few more words and a "Good-bye and God bless you," he was gone.

A slight lull ensued, and then Mr. Standing, the Chairman, made his opening remarks. He said that as this was the first full Council meeting since 1938, he had no doubt quite a lot of steam had accumulated and had to be blown off. In drawing attention to the notable changes in the Council's constitution, he welcomed by name those newcomers already mentioned, in particular Mr. Sharrock, the first Councillor to sit with us possessing a M.B.E. decoration. Commenting on the presence of Mr. K. Sutherland, he suggested that it appeared to be a gathering of the Clans, a procedure that the Clarks had introduced. The sad loss of Mr. Bradley was a loss to the Conference, and we would miss him considerably. He said how grateful we were to the Federation for the use of their office, and closed his remarks by saying that a letter had been received from Mr. C. R. Purser, W. Superintendent, London, conveying to the Conference every good wish. And so down to business at eleven o'clock precisely.

Very early in the proceedings a vote was taken on the question of a detached officer being co-opted to represent that body at the Conference, but the motion was defeated. An excellent proposition was made by Mr. Clayton that duplicate copies of all important Association documents should be stored in some safe district in the provinces. This was agreed.

Then arose the subject of uniform, and some of the old hardy annuals were again brought to light. Indeed, the fitting was so bad in some cases that one would imagine that the cloth was cut out with an axe!

Mr. C. P. Titherley, Chief Preventive Officer, Liverpool, advocated the total abolition of uniforms for C.P.O.s, and went to some considerable trouble and spent no mean amount of time in expounding the views for this movement, but Mr. Sutton, in some brief and concise remarks, clearly indicated his contrary views. Such were the findings of the Conference.

Clothing coupons, style and gold rings came in for a great deal of discussion. Whilst on the subject of gold rings, an interesting and possibly overlooked fact came to light. It was to the effect that the executive curl worn by P.O.s and C.P.O.s was not naval in the true sense of the word. It was pointed out that the naval curl was in a clockwise or "go-ahead" direction, whilst ours was opposite, or "go astern." We must admit that the word "symbolical" was heard in a distant part of the room. Other points on uniform of equal importance were discussed, and really the observer was surprised at the variety of suggestions put forward. It was glaringly apparent that the uniform question in the Waterguard was a very live one, and that some very requisite and necessary alterations should be made in order to keep a contented staff. The discussion on the subject, although extremely important, appeared to become a little too protracted, and it was with some relief when it was terminated and other items became of interest. Nevertheless, uniform and its many questions had a due hearing, and it was with some surprise that we realised that it had occupied the best part of the morning's discussion. However, uniform, no matter how ill-fitting, would be in a worse plight if the inner man was not attended to regularly, and so to lunch.

Mr. Sutton, re-opening, spoke at some length of the promotion problem, and said it had a reflection all through the Waterguard Service. He spoke in an excellent manner, and suggested that there was more room for A.P.O.s doing P.O.s work and of the problems that should quite properly be discussed on the Sectional Committee. Deficiency of promotion was one of the most serious problems at present in

the Waterguard. Mr. Powell continued a little later, and, if anything, elaborated on the point. Speaking on redundant officers, the General Secretary put forward an excellent proposition that was quickly agreed to. It was in effect, "That this Council views with grave concern the retention in this Department of surplus or redundant officers of wide experience and ability, and claims that in the furtherance of the war effort the services of these officers should be made available to other Departments."

Mr. Powell, speaking of the filling of the post of I.G.W., said that, all things being equal, we could assume that a departure of the general rule was a possibility, and that a Waterguard man would fill the office. This was received with hearty approbation. On the subject of the examination system and 100 per cent. passes, he said he hoped to see this artificial barrier abolished, and that it was one of the main planks of the P.S.A. policy. Further discussion ensued on promotion, and it was agreed that the matter should be in abeyance until after the war, as there were so many of our members in the Forces. On Free Goods in Bulk and work proper to the Waterguard, Mr. Powell gave a very rosy view of the possibility and the prospects after the war.

Time was proceeding, so eventually the Chairman interrupted the proceedings by stating that as the agenda was so long it was apparent that the whole scope could not be covered in two days.

Amongst other things that came up for discussion were Service Respirators, C.P.O.s' overtime and salary, and whilst on the latter Mr. Sutton expressed his thanks for the excellent and complete way in which the minutes of the Waterguard Sectional Committee, held in May, 1939, covered the position whereby the superior grades were compelled to accept lower salary scales.

The first day's meeting terminated at 6.20 p.m.

One cannot really hold any Association official responsible for the place of venue for the usual first evening's entertainment, for the Palladium, in time-honoured fashion, seems to have become a vested right, but it certainly seems more than a coincidence that "Gangway," of all the shows in London, had more than a passing attraction associated with our calling. If, indeed, a title would have any bearing, the writer, with due modesty, would have suggested "Salt of the Earth," at the Vaudeville! However, there were 30 members of the Waterguard who attended the show, including Mrs. Boalch, wife of our Assistant Secretary. We could really include that worthy lady as a member of the Association, for we have no doubt that she takes an active part in keeping in some sort of order the large correspondence and the multifarious impedimenta of our temporary office that must clutter up their home. It was a fine sight to see a whole row of the stalls occupied by familiar faces undoubtedly enjoying themselves. We were no end pleased to see Mr. J. Merron, Inspector, with us. The writer is of opinion that the music, singing and lighting effects were excellent. Still, we cannot pass the occasion without saying that a number of our young Councillors would possibly enjoy the Work and Wait rule at the top of that stage gangway!

And so to the morning of the second day.

It must be said that of all the serious problems that had to be attended to during the Conference none received more attention than that of Detached Duty. Mr. Powell outlined the case and spoke of the Official Side's attitude at the commencement of these transfers of maintaining the old Civil Service tag of Special Service that was part and parcel of the Waterguard duty. He continued, and spoke of the extensive endeavours the Association had made to obtain some definite policy from officers who had long spells away from their home port. Still the Official Side took a strong line that this was common to the Waterguard, and that they were unable to sort out our position for special treatment. In spite of this, however, he had been successful in getting the Official Side to look into special cases. Mr. Shaw was a strong speaker on the matter, and here and there showed some sparkling wit in an endeavour to thrash things out in order to obtain some suitable solution. Mr. Grant, too, spoke very well on the subject, as did Mr. Sutton. The motion was put forward that each district should form a committee solely to be

engaged in devising something. Mr. Powell suggested that unless some new line of thought was present the committees would only report back on lines similar to conclusions already arrived at. The committees being agreed upon, Mr. Murrey suggested that the Association officials should give a lead to these bodies on the lines to be pursued. Many suggestions were put forward and motions carried, while the utmost attention was paid to safeguarding such privileges as the Detached Officers do now possess. By far the greater part of the morning had been taken up by this all-important matter, and it was nearing lunch time when the subject of seizure rewards commenced.

At the resumption news had just come to hand of the raid on the Continent, and to suit the occasion the Chairman said that **Expedition** should be the order of the day. Seizure rewards came on the table again, and it was soon evident the country's feeling on the payment of reward. Mr. Rielly and Mr. Ramsey had some decisive opinions on the matter.

The "Customs Journal" then came up for review, and Mr. D. T. Sutherland, the Editor, spoke of the radical alterations that had taken place in our journal since the last Conference. He said that, contrary to what one would think, it was not so much the paper shortage that had occasioned these alterations, but rather that of rising costs. Without going into technical details regarding the size of type, he explained that, with the smaller type and larger paper, we were getting nearly as much reading material in the monthly issues as we did in the combined fortnightly editions.

The employment of C.P.M.s was explained at some considerable length, and the discussion that followed made it evident that the matter had no small amount of interest and consideration. The stationing of Waterguard staff at places where not only smuggling was concerned but from a security point of view was discussed to some extent.

On the subject of the retirement of officers reaching the age of 60 a proposition was put forward that those reaching that age should be declared redundant, the effect being that in the event of "outside" jobs on the man-power question could be filled from such redundant staff.

Many other items were disposed of, amongst them being a resolution that all aerodromes should be staffed by the Preventive grades. Sincere congratulations were conveyed to the Secretaries for the successful conclusion of the Pedder case.

So heavy was the agenda, that in order to pick up a little leeway proceedings continued until 7.35 p.m. And so to the morning of the third day.

Having regard to the fact that the previous day had been so strenuous, it would quite be within the realms of possibility that a shade of jadedness would be apparent, but this was not so. All present seemed as equally alert and fresh as at the commencement of the Conference.

One or two items in the resolutions received subsequent to the issue of the Annual Report did not take long to dispose of, and then came the all-important subject of finance.

Mr. Farmer is to be congratulated on the clear and concise manner in which he explained our financial position. He commenced by drawing our attention to the lower income of the Association, brought about by the loss of something like £300 by reason of so many of our members being in the Forces, together with the loss of subscriptions occasioned through the upheaval of removals or transfer. The loss of the advertising contract contributed to this factor, too. On the saving side, he said, the loss of Beer Lane had a deciding effect in the saving of rent, lighting, etc., while affiliation fees to the C. and E. Group and the Civil Service Federation had a definite saving of between £70-£80. A review of the last three years showed there had been a fair balance of income over expenditure, and one could say that the Association to-day was in a strong financial position, so much so that we were able to directly contribute to the war effort by investing in a £500 defence bond, with the possibility of increasing that amount at a later date. We were pleased to observe that in the discussion that followed minor items, such as the number of tablets of soap used by H.Q. and other old annuals, were not raised. Several interesting queries were put forward.

however; by Mr. Grice and others, and they were most satisfactorily answered.

Nominations and elections of Association Officers took a longer time than in former years.

In the writer's opinion a very splendid gesture was made by the voting of £10 to Mrs. Boalch as a little recompense for the inconvenience she had suffered through the home being utilised as our temporary office.

The Conference was now drawing to its conclusion, and in his closing remarks the Chairman drew attention to the fact that this would be the last time we would see Mr. P. W. Howard as a Councillor, for that gentleman will shortly attain his allotted spell of Waterguard service. Appreciation was expressed by many to Mr. Howard for his long and active participation in Association matters.

The writer will terminate with his usual phraseology that this is intended to be but an observer's impression of the 1942 Conference, and it is to be hoped that the Interim Report will be available for the next issue of this journal.

One final word, however. It must be recorded here that every Councillor present spoke at the meeting and aired the views of his constituents, coupled with observations of personal experience. Practically without exception, the speeches were good, suggesting that their election had been wisely chosen.

STOKER

She's a ship I'd like to pension:
Just a war-time, conscript rover;
And her better days were over
Years ago.

She's an old and greedy lady,
And she gobbles every shovel,
And she pants for feeds of fuel
Without stop.

So we feed her and we feed her
Till she licks her lips with pleasure,
And her heart beats to a measure
Full and round.

She has lost her fight in tempest,
And her plates are strained and leaking,
And the silent sea is sneaking
Through her bones.

She is ever wasting water,
And she loiters in her labours
'Til the ships which are our neighbours
Signal "Haste."

So we worked like hell to help her,
And we kept her pulses pumping,
And we kept her blades a-thumping
Night and day.

But we lost her faster sisters,
And we scowled and then we cursed her,
And we toiled, and, toiling, nursed her
Slowly home.

Ay, we fed her 'til she dribbled,
'Til she shook herself to vigour,
And we stood the sweat and rigour
And the jibes.

And, mate, it's all we're asking—
Just a break of decent weather
Now she's lying to her tether
And we're home.

But there's bleak and solemn faces
And a thousand rules and questions
And a rap for him who mentions
How we came,

But it's war and no complaining,
And to hell with talk's damnation,
There is treasure for the nation
In her holds.

J. K.

Liverpool District Meeting

This meeting was held at the Landing Stage on Thursday, July 30th. Owing to the absence of the Chairman, Mr. A. B. Henry, who had been delayed en route to the meeting, Mr. W. C. Hughes was elected Chairman in his place. The proceedings commenced at 4.30 p.m., and a statement was issued informing the members present, on behalf of Mr. Henry, that he had received a letter addressed to him as Chairman of the Liverpool Branch of the P.S.A., by Mr. T. J. Neill, who wished to tender his resignation as District Secretary. The statement also offered the information that Mr. Henry had accordingly communicated this news to Mr. W. B. Clayson, the P.O. representative to the Annual Conference, and an ex-District Secretary, who had agreed to deputise in the capacity of Secretary temporarily until suitable arrangements could be made subsequently.

The meeting approved the action of Mr. Henry in the difficult and unexpected circumstances. Mr. Clayson agreed to a suggestion that he should continue to act as District Secretary until the Annual General Meeting, and upon a proposal to this effect from the Chairman, Mr. W. C. Hughes, Mr. Clayson was unanimously elected.

Expressions of regret regarding the resignation of Mr. Neill were forthcoming, as was also a vote of appreciation of his services, coupled with an expression of thanks to Mr. Clayson for accepting office under the circumstances.

The meeting then proceeded to discuss the lengthy agenda for the Annual Conference, item by item. The two grade representatives, Mr. Clayson, P.O., and Mr. Shaw, A.P.O., were given precise instructions in respect of certain items, whilst in most cases otherwise they were both granted freedom of action to vote as they thought necessary whilst bearing in mind the substances of the views expressed at this meeting.

Many useful and original suggestions were put forward by the various speakers prominent amongst whom were Messrs. R. J. Lowe, L. E. Kieran, R. L. Jones, W. F. Grosart and E. J. Pollock. It is certain that our two representatives received much helpful guidance. At this stage of the meeting Mr. Henry arrived and took part in the later discussions.

Following the debate on the Conference agenda some items of local interest were brought forward. Mr. Lowe raised the point of the non-attendance of certain representatives at two Local Joint Whitley Meetings. The meeting regarded as being unsatisfactory the explanations offered on behalf of the absentees, and agreed to the suggestion that a small panel of local deputies should be elected at the next Annual General Meeting in order to obviate future occurrences of this nature.

A scheme put forward by officers at present stationed on the Alexandra and Langton Stations suggesting an alteration in the rota of duties was discussed. It was felt, however, that any such change was a matter concerning all the north end staff likely to be minuted on these stations, and the matter was deferred for fuller investigation on the part of all north district officers concerned.

The question of delay in carrying out urgent repairs to offices was then raised, and the Landing Stage and Canada offices were quoted as instances of deficiencies in this respect. Staff representatives were instructed to press for speedier action in this matter.

This item concluded the business for the evening and the meeting closed at 6.50 p.m. with the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman.

E.G.H.

"Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

I received an airgraph from Charlie Scarfe from South Africa dated 17th June. He reports that all was well with him, and he was enjoying a stretch ashore. His journey that far was pleasant though somewhat boring towards the end. As he was bound further afield, he had further tedious periods to face. He sends his regards to the blokes at home and hopes to see you all again soon. Many thanks, Charles, keep smiling, and good luck.

Jack Gaston also reports once more. He is in Gloucestershire, and not Oxfordshire, and is on a conversion course to twins, after which he is to undertake an intensive course for a few weeks, and, much to his disgust, he is booked for

an Instructor's billet. I hear he has been up to a few of his mad Irish tricks. Take care, Jack, we want you back. "Happy landings"! Jack, and plenty of ceiling always. Incidentally, he would be pleased to hear from you fellows, so drop him a line. You can have his address from me.

Brian Horn reports all well with him. He is moving nearer home shortly and will be calling on us again. His letter was interesting, and he expects some action shortly. An important piece of information from him is the fact that he will be shortly married. Well, there's no'wt like it, Brian. We wish you both the very best of luck, happiness and prosperity.

I am pleased to be able to report, via Mrs. Gill, that Stan is safe, though he is or was in hospital at Alexandria. Mrs. Gill was unable to inform me if Stan was on board when his vessel went down or not, or from what he is suffering. The main point is, he is safe, and a very welcome relief it was to learn that fact. Keep smiling, Stan.

The Big Boy has not reported yet. I learn from his wife that he is fit and well, and is now with mine-sweepers and based further north. Well, Big Boy, an old friend of yours is up in the Islands, and a hearty welcome awaits you if you chance to drop in. I'm still awaiting that letter, so hurry up.

Alf Phipps reports all well with him. He is enjoying both the change of scenery and work. He hopes to be able to pay us a visit when he comes on leave this month. Good luck, Alf.

Jack Crosby has reported again. He is still busy house-hunting, and has some caustic remarks to make 'bout accommodation, etc. Cheer up, Jack, it will all come out in the wash. I'll find time to answer you, never fear. There is plenty of lub. oil in stock, so the old machine won't run a bearing over it. Cheerio!

Tom Lewer has not reported this month. Come along with a letter, Bo'sun. He expects to drop in on us this month whilst on leave.

Billly McKeith has not reported yet either. I fancy Bill is settling down yet awhile. Hurry up a letter with the news, Bill.

George Simmons reported personally this week. All's well with him, and he is still house-hunting. It seems to be the rage among our exiles to go house-hunting.

Bill Sutton also reported personally. He was looking remarkably fit and well. I think the change has done him good as regards his health, but, and it's a BIG but, conditions are really bad up there for work. I had an evening with him, and learn quite a lot about the conditions, etc. He was not looking forward to his return either.

Never mind, Bill, it's all for the cause. Dumpling was asking for you, and went to the station to see you off; but, alas! I learnt too late of the change of stations, so he missed you once more. Thanks a lot, Bill, for a very pleasant evening. I wish it could have been longer.

All's well with the old shack, our flag is mast high, and the old lady is as hot as ever.

So Cheerio, Forces! Over to you—over. O.H.L.

Tyne Topics

P.S.A.—A district meeting was held in North Shields on the evening of 31st July. The attendance reminded me of the pitman's wife. "My man," she said, "gets good money. Not much, mind you, but it's good." Adopting her viewpoint, the muster was good. There was a fairly lengthy agenda, including various local matters and discussions on the forthcoming Conference agenda. Owing to the transfer of our popular District Secretary, Ted Wilkinson, the office became vacant. It was filled by the unanimous election of Mr. E. Elliott, A.P.O., of the Newcastle staff. Will local secretaries please note? The District Organiser, Mr. R. West, A.P.O., is also unfortunately in a position which may mean a move for him, and a successor must be appointed shortly. A budding Chancellor of the Exchequer could get a little practice in. Any volunteer?

Special Service.—The Tyne staff has suffered further depletion by the departures of Mr. James Knox, P.O., who has gone to Larne, and Mr. E. Wilkinson, A.P.O., to Thurso. Well, c'est la guerre. We shall miss you, Jimmie and Ted. Good luck to you both in your new environment and a speedy return to normal.

Retirement.—His many friends will be interested to learn that Mr. W. Allison, P.O., now stationed at Dunston, is due to retire on the 22nd August. Mr. Allison has served all his time, I believe, on the River Tyne. There is to be a presentation from his colleagues. The Treasurer of the fund is Mr. Marley, P.O., Waterguard Office, Ouseburn, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Seizures.—On his way to duty on a Saturday in July, Mr. G. J. Hyde, P.O., overheard some fragments of conversation on a ferry steamer. Very interesting little pieces apparently, and not about football pools! He imparted his deductions to superior officers, and action was taken the same day, initiated by Mr. Hyde and crew. The ship concerned (a large auxiliary under the White Ensign) was eventually subjected to examination. The seizures totalled 57 in number, of which 28 were unowned. The goods seized included 36,090 (No.) cigarettes and 201½ lbs. tobacco. As I remarked in last issue, the two rummage crews concerned were Ticklered to death. What was that about careless talk?
L.N.C.

Merseyside News

Everyone will be sorry to hear of the resignation for official reasons of Mr. T. J. Neill, District Secretary for the Liverpool area. During his secretaryship he acquitted himself most favourably on matters requiring skilful and diplomatic association procedure, and all members will feel that a strong staff representative and one who was not loath to forward any of their suggestions to the official side for proper discussion, has been lost to them. Mr. Neill can look back upon his sojourn of office as District Secretary with much satisfaction and with feelings of confidence on all that he has tried to do and done.

We have news of two of our members in the Forces. Albert Gamlin, now a Guardsman in the Irish Guards (2nd Armoured Batt.), stationed in the Home Counties, writes to say that he is well, would like to be back in the old Waterguard ranks again, and would dearly like to hear from his pals, Don Fraser, Cyril Hubbard or Jack Abbott. Now, you three, what about it?

I saw young Ian Lamberton recently, clad in plus fours, heavily sunburnt, and quite well and happy. He is still in the Signals, stationed in East Anglia, and he almost admitted that he was hankering after a commission. Anyhow, I didn't give him mine, so he will have to keep on trying.

We are looking forward to the return of Messrs. Clayson and Shaw from the Annual Conference, and when they make their report there should be a bumper attendance at the meeting. They tackle many big and difficult problems, the results of which will undoubtedly leave marks both good and bad upon the future of the whole Waterguard service.
E.G.H.

Correspondence

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

During recent months your excellent journal has contained varying opinions upon the topical question of seizure rewards, and since 1939 many of your correspondents have displayed a keen interest in the welfare of our Forces contingent; therefore I beg to make a suggestion affecting seizure rewards and also our gallant lads with the Colours. In passing, I may say that I have previously moved a resolution at a P.S.A. meeting for complete abolition, but after reading the Conference agenda I find myself doubting that abolition will be achieved, hence the following opinion as a subject for discussion, and which has already been submitted to the A.P.O. Councillor for this particular area.

I suggest that from now until the cessation of hostilities all seizure rewards be paid into a fund, operated by the P.S.A. for the post-war benefit, in cash, of either (a) all our Forces boys, or (b) for the dependents of any of our boys who find themselves in need through personal loss or disability.

The rewards to be paid directly to the P.S.A. Treasurer from the A. and C.G.'s Office.

This suggestion will put to the test all supporters of abolition, and will prove, practically, our avowed appreciation of the boys who have forsaken all personal liberty in the common cause.—Yours faithfully,
SOTONIAN.

Greenock News

Retirement of Mr. W. ROBINSON, Engineer Mech.I.

The news that "Robby," as he was affectionately known to all, was about to retire came as a surprise to most of us, for the years lie lightly on his shoulders.

Owing to the short notice received it was not possible to present him on the day with the handsome striking clock, suitably engraved with a token of appreciation from his colleagues, to which the Greenock staff have subscribed. There was, however, a representative gathering in the Watch House at Princes Pier on July 18th to bid him farewell, with Mr. Griffiths, Waterguard Surveyor, ably taking the chair.

Opening the proceedings, the Chairman said how pleased he and his colleagues were to see Mr. Robinson here on this happy occasion looking so hale and hearty, and hoped he would continue so for many years to come. He went on to recall their early days in London together before their

paths took different courses, and had been pleased to find during the brief renewal of their acquaintance in Greenock that "Robby" was still his same cheerful and willing self.

Mr. Griffiths regretted that it was not possible to present him with the clock straight away, but assured him that, nevertheless, he took with him the good wishes of all his late colleagues, and hoped that it would soon begin a long spell of striking happy hours of retirement through the many years he hoped both Mr. and Mrs. Robinson would enjoy, and that before long they would hear it strike the hour of Victory and Peace.

Mr. Robinson replied, saying how touched he was to see so many of his friends gathered to wish him Godspeed, and expressed his warm thanks for the handsome parting gift which he was about to receive, and also for the nice things that had been said about him. He told some amusing anecdotes of his long service, and recalled the early days of the Launch Service, and how both boats and conditions of service had improved.

Mr. Green, P.O., Mr. Howard, A.P.O., and Mr. James, M.i/C., conveyed the good wishes of their respective grades, and several other members of the staff spoke in appreciation of a popular colleague to whom they all wished long life, peace and happiness.

Mr. Robinson entered the Launch Service in London in February, 1908, and served many years in Weymouth before being transferred on detached duty first to Gravesend and finally to Greenock, in 1941. Although retired, he retains a link with the Service through his son, who is a P.O.

THE SWAN

Where the water laps a little clearer,
And ragwort grows, and the grass is greener;
On the settling bones of an ancient schooner
She sits and broods all day.
In white she came, but her pride is stolen;
Her graceful breast, bedraggled, swollen,
Is streaked with evil grey.

Out by the ships she would cruise and wonder,
And her every move she seemed to ponder:—
Under the walls, where the tall tips thunder,
And man imperils man.
Then a great ship spewed on the dancing water,
And its oily bile, outspreading, caught her,
A poor, confounded swan.

Far out on the fields the reeds are sighing,
And down by the sea the gulls are crying,
While she, poor bird, exhausted, dying,
Toils till her feathers break.
And anon she stops in her piteous cleaning,
As though perplexed, and with black eyes gleaming,
Drinks from her tragic lake.

JOHN KENNEDY.

THE HOSPITAL SATURDAY FUND

The Fund, of which His Majesty is Patron, is associated with all the Voluntary Hospitals in London and a great number in the Home Counties and Provincial area, and also with County Council Hospitals in the Home Counties.

Many thousands of Government employees are members of the Fund, and our relationship with the Civil Service generally is cordial and mutually helpful.

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Dental Treatment (for contributor and wife only).

Hospital Service is extremely expensive; membership of this Fund provides without question this essential need in time of acute illness.

In order to obtain this help, join the Hospital Saturday Fund by obtaining a salary or

wage deduction form from your Branch Secretary or Representative, or write to the Secretary, the Hospital Saturday Fund, 126, Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey. The Fund is anxious to appoint representatives in every Government Department, and if any member will consent to act in this capacity, will he or she kindly get into touch with the Secretary of the Fund.

There is no waiting period for members whose contributions are deducted through the pay-roll.

Many thousands of members have cause to be grateful for the treatment given at hospitals associated with the Fund. They have found the H.S.F. of the greatest possible assistance.

You are helping the hospitals, yourself and your family by enrolling in this well-known Hospital Fund of seventy years' standing.

GRATIS

A hearty invitation is extended to non-members of the Association to peruse the next issue of the Journal. They will read something to their advantage.

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