

THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL

EST. 1904

OFFICIAL JOURNAL CUSTOMS & EXCISE

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

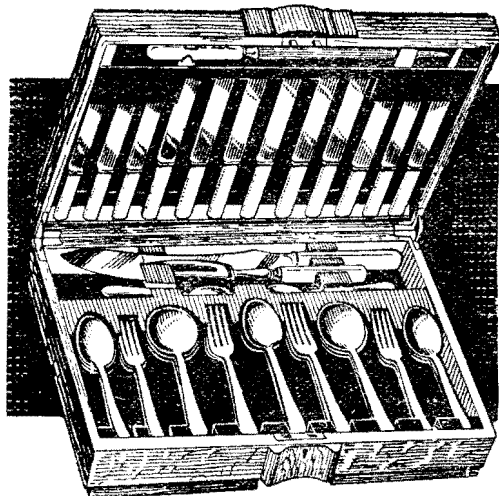
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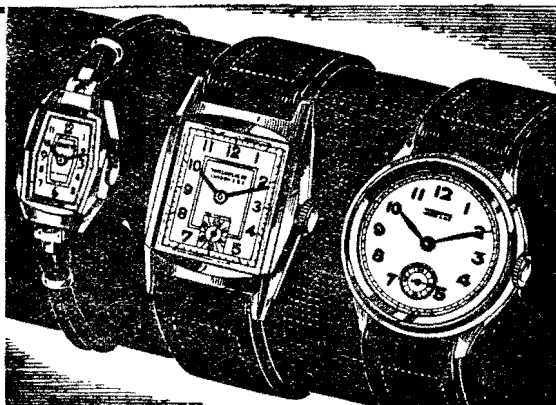
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CUSTOMS & EXCISE ORPHANS', WIDOWS' & WAR MEMORIAL FUND

The Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Committee was held on Monday, 5th January, 1942, in Room 17, Custom House, London, E.C.3, at 4 p.m., and the Chair was taken by the Vice-President, J. H. Newman, Esq., who presided over a well-attended meeting.

Minutes were passed, letters read, and the accounts for the quarter were approved.

A letter from C. M. Woodford, Esq., C.B.E., was read, in which he resigned the office of Vice-President of the Fund owing to pressure of official and private affairs. The Committee regretfully accepted the resignation, and a vote of thanks was passed expressing warm thanks for the valuable services rendered by our energetic and popular Vice-President.

Applications for membership (8) were considered, and all applicants were elected as members.

Renewals.

The Committee considered applications for renewal of grants under Rule 26 from 11 widows. Three grants of £20 each and seven grants of £15 each were voted. One case was referred back for fuller information.

New Applications.

Four applications from widows seeking assistance in the maintenance and education of children, under Rule 23, were dealt with, and grants were voted as follows:—

One family, with three children, £40 per annum; one family, with two children, £30 per annum; and two families, each with one child, £20 per annum in each case.

Four widows sought assistance under Rule 26. Two were voted £20 each, and one widow was voted £15. The fourth application was rejected in present circumstances.

The meeting concluded with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Newman for presiding.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

TO 9th FEBRUARY, 1941.

TRANSFERS.

PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Bowen, W., from special service at Liverpool to Liverpool.

Doherty, A., Liverpool to Fleetwood, Preston.

Evans, D.V., Glasgow to Liverpool.

DEATHS.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Clatworthy, L. G., Newport, Mon.

Geldart, W. C., Poole, Southampton.

OBITUARY

Mr. L. G. CLATWORTHY, A.P.O., Newport.

It was with deep shock that colleagues in the Cardiff Division heard of Clat's death, at the Benenden Sanatorium, after a short and tragic illness.

We saw him off to the Sanatorium with every prospect of welcoming him back in our midst, or somewhere in the Service, at no distant date. It was not to be.

He leaves a young widow, to whom our sympathies are extended.

The interment took place at St. Andrew's cemetery, Dinas Powis, on Wednesday, January 28th, 1942.

The funeral was well attended by colleagues, in uniform, from Newport, Cardiff, and Barry.

Cardiff officers acted as bearers at the house, and Newport and Barry officers shared the duties at the church and grave-side; the coffin was draped with the Customs Flag.

Also present in the cortege were Mr. C. W. Morgan, Waterguard Surveyor, Cardiff, Messrs. C. D. Shannon, C.P.O., Newport, and G. John, C.P.O., Cardiff.

The simple service at the church was made notable by the singing of "Abide with Me," sung without organ accompaniment.

Floral tributes were sent by Newport and Cardiff staffs.

It is proposed to place an inscribed marble vase on the grave at a later date.

L. G. Clatworthy died January 22nd, 1942; aged 28 years. Ever remembered by colleagues in H.M. Customs, Cardiff Division.

We would appreciate this opportunity of expressing our gratitude at the prompt and most generous treatment accorded us in this case by the Civil Service Sanatorium Society.

W. C. GELDART, A.P.O., POOLE.

Readers will regret to hear of the death of W. C. Geldart, A.P.O., who passed away on the 5th January, 1942, after a long and trying illness.

"Bill," as he was known to his friends, joined the Waterguard in 1905, and had seen service in several ports, but for the last 18 years had been stationed in Poole, becoming quite a landmark to the quayside and seafaring community, to whom Bill was a source of helpful advice. He will long be remembered for his courteous and cheerful disposition.

His funeral was attended by representatives of the Poole Landing Staff and of the Waterguard Staff at Southampton, his Poole colleagues in uniform, acting as pall-bearers.

Our sympathy is extended to his widow and family in their loss.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Mr. G. Abbot, P.O. wishes to convey his heartfelt thanks to the Waterguard Staff of London for their kind thought in his recent bereavement, by contributing to a wreath for the funeral of his wife.



CURRENT COMMENTS

Chief Inspector.

WE learned with sincere regret on the 10th February of the passing of Sir Edgar Thew, Chief Inspector.

Retirement and Promotion.

The following resolution was adopted by the Joint Committee (C. and E. Associations), and tabled for discussion on the Departmental Council:—

If an official elects (a) to retire (and is retained as a reserve official) or (b) to defer his retirement on reaching the normal retiring age, the post occupied by such official shall be deemed to have become vacant. The vacancy shall be filled and an official of the grade to which the promotee has been appointed shall, if not required for additional work arising in the grade, be listed as available for transfer to another department.

The list of Waterguard vacancies promised by the Official Side has been received and considered by the War Emergency Committee (P.S.A.). Notice of three motions has been given by the Association to the Joint Committee; these deal with redundancy, retention of retiring officials and promotion of A.P.O.s to P.O.s.

Subsistence—A.P.O. Grade.

Developments on the claim that the A.P.O. Grade should be transferred to Class "C" have reached the stage on the Departmental Council in which the Official Side have made a "without prejudice" offer of Class "D.1." This proposed new classification, whilst meeting some aspects of the claim, does not, in our opinion, go far enough. The W.E.C. (P.S.A.) have replied that Class "D.1" would be acceptable if the special reservations enjoyed by A.P.O.s under Class "F" could be incorporated in the new class.

Rank Distinctions.

It will be seen from the Report of the Departmental Council that the Official Side sought to adjourn this matter "sine die." The Staff Side, however, wanted time to consider this suggestion, and adjournment until the February meeting was agreed.

In the meantime the W.E.C. (P.S.A.) have looked carefully at the situation, and, whilst accepting the view that discussion month by month in present circumstances would be futile, they could not agree to adjournment "sine die." It was decided as an alternative to ask for a more limited adjournment of six months.

Uniform.

The Staff Side have been informed that, in common with those in outside industry, Civil Servants who are issued with, or are loaned, overall clothing will be expected to surrender clothing coupons in this respect. In response to our request, the Official Side have promised Staff Side consultation before issuing the O.W.O.

In a letter recently received we learn that the contractor is unable to supply buckles for uniform waistcoats, and that in order to avoid further delay in delivering uniform he has been told to forward these garments with the tabs lightly tacked together. It is expected that, in the meanwhile, members will transfer the buckles from the old waistcoats.

We have received several complaints on the general delay of issues of uniform, and it had been decided to raise this question again. There were no complaints from the staff against the coupon arrangement, but where no uniform has been received since the September, 1940, issue the officers, very naturally, look rather dubiously at the coupons they are now surrendering.

C.P.O. Extra Attendance.

The Association claim "that the hourly rate on which the allowance payable to C.P.O.s for Sunday and Public

Holiday attendance is based should be adjusted" was re-argued at the January meeting of the Departmental Council, but eventually disagreement was recorded.

The W.E.C. (P.S.A.) have considered the situation arising from this decision, and have agreed to defer further action pending developments on the Staff Side claim for remuneration of nonovertime earning grades.

Annual Leave, 1942/3.

As the old leave year draws to a close we receive more and more enquiries regarding the arrangements for the next leave year. Treasury Circular 556, which is issued as we go to press, implicates that leave in the Civil Service will continue to be limited to 12 days, and that the question as to whether this leave shall be taken in one spell or not will be left to Departmental arrangements.

Uncertificated Sick Leave.

From the "Whitley Bulletin" we learn that the Treasury have advised Departments that odd days of sick absence without medical certificate beyond the seven allowed in any year should be regarded as part of the restricted annual leave allowance **currently in force.** Where that allowance has been exhausted, any such absence is to be treated as sick leave without pay.

Recruitment and Temporary Personnel.

The following resolution has been adopted by the National Staff Side:—

That while recognising the necessity for some measure of outside recruitment to higher posts in the Civil Service during war-time, the National Staff Side feel it their duty to re-emphasise the need for limiting such recruitment to persons whose qualifications are beyond all doubt. They have, from time to time since the outbreak of war, noted with concern appointments which do not satisfy this standard, and they are disturbed by evidence of unsuitable appointments which continues to reach them. The National Staff Side are resolved to oppose such appointments by all means open to them as being seriously inimical to the war effort and productive of much unrest among staffs who observe at first-hand the worst effects of them.

Cost of Living.

The official cost-of-living index figure for 1st February was published at 100. This shows a drop of one point as compared with the December, 1941, figure.

War Emergency Committee (P.S.A.).

The February Meeting of the War Emergency Committee will be held on Friday, the 27th of the month, at Walter House, Strand.

Kennett Committee.

We learn that the findings of the Kennett Committee have been notified to the Department. The four Principals concerned are reserved without any specified date. In the Officers' Grade 74 members of the 26 age group are reserved until 12th June, 1942, and the remainder of this group, together with the 27, 28 and 29 age groups, are reserved without any specified date.

In the A.P.O. Grade the 26, 27, 28 and 29 age groups are reserved without any specified date. All these reservations are subject to the general military situation. The position of Conscientious Objectors is still under enquiry.

Ye Olde Riverites.

The 21st birthday party of the "Riverites" will take place on Saturday, 7th March, at the "Three Nuns," Aldgate. The Chair will be taken by Riverite No. 1, more generally known as Charlie Gilman, and "Old Sko" will propose his health.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and forty-seventh meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 28th January, 1942, the Chair being taken by Sir Wilfrid Eady, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

The Vice-Chairman, Mr. F. C. Perkins, expressed on behalf of the Staff Side, their congratulations to the Chairman of the Board on the honour conferred on him by His Majesty in the New Year's Honours List. Sir Wilfrid Eady expressed his thanks.

MAN-POWER.

(i) **G.O. 32/41—"Operative" Date.**—The Vice-Chairman stated that agreement had been reached since the last meeting of the Council as to the "operative" date for proposals under G.O. 32/41. The Staff Side then inquired whether the representatives who had been examining matters under the Man-Power General Order were to carry on such examination with plenary powers, and the Official Side replied that they had no objection provided that the negotiations continued in the same business-like manner, and that the problems arising were settled at that stage and without formal reports. The Staff Side said they were ready to deal with this matter in the most expeditious way possible.

(ii) **T.C. 10/41, paras. 2 (i) and (ii).**—The Staff Side said their inquiries regarding the elimination of less essential work were approaching completion. The Official Side said they had some suggestions ready; these were mainly minor matters. The Council agreed that it was desirable that they should be in a position to deal with this matter at their next meeting.

(iii) **Kennet Committee Report.**—The Official Side said that they had not received news of a decision on the application for deferment of call-up of staff of this Department.

(iv) **Release of Women.**—In reply to Staff Side inquiry, the Official Side said that the Department had offered to release about thirty-six per cent. of the women within the call-up field. Machine operators were not being reckoned within the field. They were not yet in a position to make any statement regarding the steps to be taken if sufficient volunteers were not forthcoming, and the position of Clerical Assistants, Grade 1 and 2, who operated machines would depend on how far machine operating constituted the bulk of their duties.

Remuneration and Allowance Questions.

The Staff Side expressed acceptance of the Official Side proposal to make an allowance of £15 to the senior **Established Paper Keeper at Blackpool.**

The question of **remuneration for non-overtime departmental grades** arising from the 51-hour week was re-adjourned for two months at Staff Side request.

A disagreement from the Waterguard Sectional Committee on a Staff Side proposal for an increase in the **allowance for attendance by Chief Preventive Officers** on Sundays and Public Holidays was re-argued. The Staff Side felt that some confusion had existed in the consideration of this proposal, viz: that it had been treated as analogous with overtime. The payment was an allowance, although based on an overtime rate, and there had previously been an overtime rate in the Waterguard exceeding five shillings an hour, e.g., the Chief Preventive Officers Upper Section rate. They considered an adjustment of the allowance in relation with the increased salary scale was justified. If a Chief Preventive Officer was on duty for six hours the rate of remuneration for the call-out period was equivalent to three shillings and fourpence an hour.

The Official Side said that the argument advanced by the Staff Side had not been overlooked in their consideration of the proposal. The Chief Preventive Officer Grade was a supervisory one, and any allowance of this kind was, to some degree, an anomaly. They felt that they could not justify an increase in the allowance, and were unable to see any useful purpose in continuing consideration of the matter.

The Council thereupon confirmed the disagreement.

Proposed Amalgamation of Portsmouth and Southampton Collections.

The Official Side confirmed, after further inquiry, their statement made at the last Council meeting that the estimated saving of staff figures were based on a 44-hour week calculation, and that the alleged identical figure resulting from G.O. 32/41 proposals was a pure coincidence. Further, they question whether the "saving" under the latter proposals did actually comprise one Departmental Higher Clerical Officer.

The Staff Side requested a further adjournment for re-examination, and the item was re-adjourned.

STANDARD SUBSISTENCE RATES. STAFF SIDE PROPOSAL THAT ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS BE PLACED IN CLASS C.

(Establishment Instructions, Volume 3, paragraph 54).

The Official Side stated that they were now able to offer Class D (1) rates throughout as shown in the Appendix to G.O. 49/41, but this offer could only be made on a "without prejudice" basis, and could not be quoted against them should it not be accepted. As regards the arguments previously advanced the Staff Side must not be under the misapprehension that the salary scale alone established entitlement to a particular subsistence rate.

The Staff Side requested further adjournment, and the item was accordingly re-adjourned.

PROMOTION, RECRUITMENT AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

(a) Two items under this head, namely, **Promotion to the Officer Grade and Filling of Vacancies and Recruitment of Temporary Staff**, were re-adjourned for two months at Staff Side request. The question of **filling of Waterguard vacancies** was also adjourned for the Staff Side.

(b) An agreement from the Outdoor Service Sectional Committee on the advertisement of all vacancies in **Women Pension Surveyor Districts** was ratified.

(c) In continuance of the discussion on the Staff Side proposal for a **Common Seniority List for Higher Clerical Officers in Headquarters Offices**, the Official Side said that while appreciating the desire of the Staff Side for a common seniority list, they felt unable to concede this, with all its logical implications. The work in the three Headquarters groups was considerably varied, and it was essential that an appointee to a Staff Officer post should have a good working knowledge of the office in which the vacant post existed. They did not, however, desire that every Higher Clerical Officer must be permanently fixed in the particular office to which he happened to be appointed, and would be prepared to consider requests for transfer from one office to another, but such transfers would have to be at discretion and not as of right. Once a transfer were made, the individual would be required to remain in the new office, and his future prospects would lie there. A transferee to another office, e.g., Statistical Office, might take some time to gain sufficient detailed knowledge of the work in that office, and as regards promotion to Staff Officer would have to take his chance on merits by comparison with other Higher Clerical Officer candidates in that Office for vacancies arising there. In reply to a question from the Staff Side, the Official Side added that they did not contemplate any qualification as to a period of service before an application for transfer could be considered. Applications could, of course, only be considered with relation to an actual vacancy to be filled.

The Staff Side requested adjournment for further consideration, and the item was re-adjourned accordingly.

(d) **Launch Service—retention beyond normal retiring age of Established personnel.**

Regarding the memoranda of conditions of employment, the Official Side observed that the Staff Side's proposed elaboration of the clause to indicate the reckoning of continuous unestablished service immediately preceding establishment might be misleading, and they would therefore prefer the amendment originally suggested in writing, viz:

"Normally an Unestablished Launchman over the age of fifty years cannot be promoted, but the age limit may be extended in certain special circumstances."

The Staff Side said that this seemed too vague in view of Section 3 of the Superannuation Act, 1935 (T.C. 20/35).

The Official Side said they would give further consideration to the matter, and informal discussion would be held before the next meeting.

Regarding the prospect of further appointments to established rank, the Official Side said there was no change from the position stated at the last Council meeting.

Regarding the specific case of the Unestablished Steersman, the Official Side repeated that the principle of notional promotion could not be applied; it was out of the question to make a promotion to a post which was not vacant.

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

The Staff Side made the following proposal:—

"If an official elects (a) to retire (and is retained as a reserve official) or (b) to defer his retirement on reaching the normal retiring age—the post occupied by such official shall be deemed to have become vacant.

"The vacancy shall be filled, and an official of the grade to which the promotee has been appointed shall, if not required for additional work arising in the grade, be listed as available for transfer to another Department."

They stated that the retention of certain people because their services were required had the effect of depriving others of anticipated promotion, and they considered that the incidence of such retained services should fall on the Crown and not be to the disadvantage of the personnel awaiting promotion. Moreover, they understood from national quarters that the Treasury were sympathetically disposed towards the adoption of measures to meet this position.

The item was adjourned for the Official Side.

(f) The Council considered, from the Outdoor Service Sectional Committee, a disagreement on Official Side proposals arising out of Ref. No. 204 (Eligibility of post-1926 entrants to the Officer Grade for promotion to the Surveyor Grade), as to the method of selection to be adopted in 1943 for recruiting to the Surveyor Grade.

The Staff Side referred to the prolonged discussion on this question and to the proposal made in 1938 for a change in the system. They felt that the Official Side's view that interviews would result in a better selection was a reflection on the Surveyor Grade. They were keen to retain the examination system, and considered that it gave confidence to the men undergoing it. With a widely scattered staff, the reports necessary to a selection system by interview were bound to lead to inequalities. In support of their argument, the Staff Side quoted the following from the evidence given by a former Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise before the Tomlin Commission in 1929:—

"On the other hand, any other method (i.e., than the examination system) would present very great difficulties; I mean, if we were to try to make promotions by the process of selection. These Officers are stationed all over the country, and are responsible to different Collectors, who would obviously be the persons who would have to report on their capacity and ability. It would be very difficult to get a uniform standard among all the different Collectors and other supervising officers, and from the point of view of the general morale of the Department, I think we feel that, while the examination method has its disadvantages, on the whole it is the method which is likely to give most confidence, and certainly more confidence than what might be regarded as a rather arbitrary method of selection."

The Staff Side averred that, however fair selection might be, no one believed it to be fair; the recent comb-over had caused much heart-burning. It was essential not merely that the system should be fair but that it should be accepted as fair, and the lack of confidence in a system would undermine that spirit of independence which was an asset to the Department, as witnessed by the commendation made on the inception of the Purchase Tax. The Official Side proposals at the last meeting of the Sectional Committee to hold a qualifying examination to be followed by interview envisaged the promotion of men below the existing required standard, and the hope that the new system would attract more candidates. If men were not attracted by the examination alone, it was unlikely that the additional step to be introduced by interview would add to the number

of prospective candidates. The Staff Side regarded the examination method as nearly as impartial as was possible. No favouritism was possible, but the interview factor would destroy confidence if only one or two rejections ensued. Although the object of the proposals was to meet the position of 1943, they observed that men might be allowed to sit for the examination with ten years' service, but fifteen years' service was required for attendance at the interview. The successes in the interviews were to cover 1943-1945, but it appeared that the examination field would extend to 1947. The Staff Side sincerely hoped for Official Side reconsideration of their attitude towards this important matter.

The Official Side commended the Staff Side on their able presentation of the argument; they realised the anxiety as to the possible consequences of an experimental change in the method. They had every intention of ensuring that the new method should be worked without any charges of favouritism, and for reasons which had already been stated they felt it was right to try the new procedure. Their conclusion therefore was that this disagreement must be confirmed.

The Staff Side expressed their keen disappointment and regret at the Official Side attitude and decision, and said they knew their feelings would be shared by the staff generally.

The Council then confirmed the disagreement.

The Staff Side said that in view of the decision reached, the Official Side should bear in mind the necessity for an early announcement as to the date of the 1943 examination and the qualifying date for eligibility to take that examination.

POSITION OF HOME GUARD PERSONNEL.

The Staff Side asked whether members of the Department serving in the Home Guard in other than Departmental Units would be released from official duties if that body were mobilised, and whether any discriminations would be made. They drew attention to a notification that Home Guards were being asked to say whether and when they would be available for duties with that force after the 16th February, and that replies were expected within a very short time. Early Departmental instructions appeared necessary on the question of priority or otherwise of official duties.

The Official Side said this matter would be common to the whole of the Civil Service, and that they would consult H.M. Treasury.

SPECIAL INQUIRY BRANCH.

In reply to a question from the Staff Side regarding applications for the new posts of Inquiry Officer, arising from O.W.O. 2/42, Part I, Section I, the Official Side said that absentee members of the present staff would be considered automatically; past members were considered on application, but the Official Side could not undertake to ensure that notification of the posts would reach former members of the Special Inquiry Staff who were on loan to other Departments or serving with His Majesty's Forces. Such cases were, however, few, and would be looked at.

The Official Side said the position of the Deputy Chief Inquiry Officer and questions arising therefrom were at present under consideration.

Regarding the proposed increase in the number of Officers seconded to the Branch, the Official Side said, in reply to Staff Side inquiry, that they had authority for ten additional posts, but they contemplated at present filling six only. In consequence, the number of Inquiry Officer appointments made would probably be four (c.f., three or four as stated at last Council meeting).

In reply to a Staff Side inquiry as to the notification of the additional seconded Officer posts, advertised in O.W.O. 2/42, Part I, Section II, the Official Side observed that it would be extremely difficult, if not impracticable, to circulate advertisements to all members of the grades regarded as eligible for secondment, i.e., Officers, Departmental Clerical Officers, Preventive Officers and Assistant Preventive Officers who might be serving in other Departments, but they were open to consider any practical suggestion the Staff Side had to offer. The Official Side promised to furnish information as to the applications already received.

UNIFORM RANK DISTINCTIONS FOR ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS.

On resumption of discussion of this item the Official Side remarked that apart from any other considerations the present time was inopportune for the practical consideration of further decorations on uniform clothing, and in the circumstances they suggested adjournment sine die.

The Staff Side requested, in the meanwhile, an adjournment for one month, which was agreed to.

STAFFING AND METHODS OF WORK.

(a) **Purchase Tax Verification.**—The Staff Side referred in this connection to General Order 40/41, and stated that the verification work appeared to have been segregated to a particular group of five Surveyors and approximately sixteen Officers, whereas the Order provided that the whole of the staff of the Purchase Tax Centre would be available for this work. The Official Side observed that any apparent segregation might result not from any question of principle but be more or less unavoidable in the preliminary stages of the work. They would, however, investigate the matter.

(b) **Old Age Pensions.**—The Council ratified an agreement from the O.S.S.C. on Staff Side proposals that—

(i) Reports to the Board under Old Age Pensions Instructions, paragraph 386, be dispensed with, except where false statements are involved; and

(ii) In cases of lost books, payment of orders out of date be made on the Surveyor's authority, without reference to the Board.

A disagreement from the same Committee on the Official Side proposal to extend the Plymouth W.P.O. Area to Saltash was discussed, the Staff Side stating that this matter had been under consideration for a long time on the Sectional Committee, and in supporting the disagreement they felt that as units of local Stations had declined, in one case below the 51-hour week level, it would be a better course to let the Officers of those Stations take the pensions work, rather than extend the Women Pension Officer area. The Official Side said they could not add to the arguments already put forward to the proposal for extension: the work was appropriate to the Women Pension Officer Grade, and in view of the forthcoming loss of Officers to His Majesty's Forces, any reserve available would be needed. They could, therefore, see no other course but to confirm the disagreement.

The Council confirmed the disagreement.

(c) **Local Decisions.**—The Staff Side re-argued a disagreement, reached in Greenock Local Committee, on a Staff Side proposal, that in view of the volume and complexity of the work of the Collector's Office, control and supervision of the Office should be laid to a Senior Chief Clerk assisted by a Chief Clerk. Strong support was given to the Local Staff Side case, and after being furnished with a detailed statement of the work the Official Side promised re-examination of the position.

Three staffing adjustments in Glasgow and Aberdeen Collections had been formally agreed locally, but the Council decided to refer them back as temporary war-time adjustments. The question of the staffing of Portsmouth sub-office was re-adjourned.

Two agreements from the Solicitors' Office Committee covering the typing staff, and the transference of work from Professional to Non-Professional staff were adjourned at Staff Side request, details of the work devolved and its allocation being asked for in the latter case.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 25th February, 1942.

Liverpool District Meeting

Held at the Landing Stage on Wednesday, January 14th, this meeting was one of the best attended and most successful for years. At least forty members were present, and under the able guidance of Mr. A. B. Henry, the chairman, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the proceedings. The District Secretary, Mr. T. J. Neill, commenced the reading of the minutes of the last meeting at 4.45 p.m., and business arising was discussed. The District Secretary, speaking re the Waterguard Superintendent's circular concerning Arrival and Sailing Sheets, said that he had been in touch with the Waterguard Superintendent with regard to the issue of the circular on this subject, and that after explaining the difficulties in working the arrangements, the Waterguard Superintendent had agreed to withdraw it and issue another circular. Mr. Neill asked the meeting that since the subsequent circular was now in operation, was there any objections from the staff. No objections were raised, and unanimous satisfaction was expressed.

A motion of urgency was the rent item, and after much debate, the matter was left in the capable hands of Mr. Neill to deal with as best he thought.

The next item on the agenda was a very interesting one, and appeared as a proposition by Mr. R. J. Lowe, who informed the meeting that it would be of great benefit to the staff if the method and day of overtime payment was altered. He outlined the scheme operative in London, and suggested that the same conditions should apply to Liverpool. The Waterguard Appointer, Mr. Dennetts, gave reasons why the scheme as outlined by Mr. Lowe could not operate in a port like Liverpool, and thereby held up the present system. After fair discussion, the following motion, proposed by Mr. Lowe, and seconded by Mr. Hyland, "That overtime be paid on Monday following the end of the period, by the abolition of the present system governing overtime payment." Mr. Clayton, seconded by Mr. McNutt, then moved an amendment "That the whole question be raised on Local Joint Committee." The amendment was duly carried.

Mr. C. F. Shaw then told the meeting of talks he had had with the Waterguard Superintendent in regard to agreements which had been reached between the Official and Staff Sides, and especially with regard to the agreement dealing with the pre-view of the station minute. It appeared, however, that these agreements had been made from time to time with different Waterguard Superintendents and different Association Officers, and that at no time had these arrangements been codified in any way. Mr. Neill, seconded by Mr. Shaw, proposed "that all existing agreements be codified by members of the Executive Committee, and, after submission to and approval of the Staff Side, to be submitted to the Official Side for their consideration and finally to be signed by both Official and Staff Sides." The motion was carried.

A welcome proposition "that the Annual Conferences of the P.S.A. be revived" came from Mr. Shaw, and was seconded by Mr. Porter. The motion was quickly and unanimously carried.

Mr. Henry received warm approval when he proposed the installation of heating apparatus in the Baggage Examination Shed at the Landing Stage. The motion was carried.

Mr. Dennetts then proposed the following: "That an objection should be raised against an officer having his overtime cut down where there is a period of waiting in an attendance exceeding eight hours." Mr. Dennetts explained the reason for his proposal. It was on account of officers being in attendance for nine hours and only being paid for eight and a half hours. The motion was seconded by Mr. F. Hope, and carried accordingly.

Mr. Clayton further proposed "That objection be raised to the fact that the A. and C.G. has been allowed to apply the Work and Wait rule to attendance for baggage at this port." The motion was carried.

This item brought the meeting to a close at 6.30 p.m., and with a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman, Mr. Henry, the members called it a day.

E.G.H.



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Southampton Notes

To-day our thoughts are of Arnold Bateman in far-away Singapore—to say that we wish him well is an understatement, and to Batey and his pals out there we sincerely echo His Majesty's message of "Good luck to you all." We know that London, Harwich and Burntisland will join us in these wishes.

From overseas we have had a cheery cablegram from Joe, together with Christmas and New Year greetings to you all. The photograph referred to in the December Notes is now circulating in the North-West, and we hope it will revive as many happy memories for you as it has done for those who have already seen it.

Davy Youdell has arrived safely in India, where we hope he may perchance meet Nic. We had a cable from the former in mid-January, and are now awaiting the sight of some snaps from South Africa, where Davy spent a few days in the company of British residents. We visualise times to come, such as: "Now, when I was in . . ." Great lads!

January brought news of Bill Sykes, then on leave in the Middle East H.Q., which he likes very much. He is glad of news of the boys, has met several Hants. lads in Egypt, and finds crib out there to be a different game to our version.

Those of you who know Bill Foot will get a kick out of the news of his hitting the headlines in the Detroit, U.S.A., Press late in 1941. As Bill appeared there, resplendent in R.N. attire, he was interviewed, photographed, and received with great respect. We only wish we had a copy of his War Commentary! En route for a spell of home leave, Bill collected a Soton P.O.'s autograph on a duty slip, and so joins Cliff Pearson as a member of the "D.P. Club." His homecoming was a real one, as he spent Christmas with Colin Mac and Jimmy Agnew, who are quickly qualifying as a first-class reception committee. As Holly says, "Trust Bill Foot to fall on his feet!" To cap this, Jimmy James arrived on leave in January, and so joined Bill and Holly ashore for a reunion. We also had a brief spell in Jimmy's company, which was greatly enjoyed. His experiences during 1941 were indeed thrilling to hear, ending with an eye-witness account of the "Ark Royal" boys' return to Gibraltar.

Ted Midlane is now with the Fleet Air Arm, and is liking the job immensely. He passed his course well enough, and is now an Air Fitter. He met Tom Carnell in January, just prior to the latter proceeding overseas. Commenting upon the correspondence in the "C.J." dealing with "Uniform Decoration," Ted writes that—"little notice is taken (in the Service) of a man these days, unless he has the shiny sleeve." He should know well enough.

Our initial news of Ernie Soane last month was followed by an interesting letter with details of his experiences in the Grenadier Guards, spent, up to date, within reasonable reach of his home. He has put in quite a lot of time as a Squad Instructor, but is now with a Service Battalion.

Johnnie Walker soon left the South, and his current letter comes from just over the Border. His address is a lengthy one, but he abbreviates it as "Corpse Camp," saying that it is the sort of place where Death might take a holiday, as the Devil, in the shape of the S/Major, is there already! Cheer up, Johnnie!

Joch Strachan is now in the Silloth area, and has been able to link up with our representatives there, much to their mutual pleasure.

Ron Greenhalgh was home on leave at the end of January, and we had a few hours together. He had a grand collection of snaps from South Africa, which are made more interesting by the yarns that accompany them. Ron is in A1 trim, and is having plenty of experience in action with the Coastal Command.

That completes our Forces news, and we are glad that all our boys are so fit and well.

The exiles follow suit, and several are now awaiting the call from civilian life. J. C. Smith is likely to be in the Royal Marines shortly, after two years of D.D. at Preston. Jack Welsh (yes, still at Maryport!) has at last been accepted, and for his original choice, the R.A.F.V.R. He

has been attested, and is now on deferred service for a while before taking up his Observer/Pilot course. He has to thank his own tenacity and a considerate Ministry of Labour manager for this result to months of "doodling," otherwise he would have been whipped into the Army in spite of his R.A.F. preference.

From Silloth we hear that our substantial friend, Ron H., is a "possible" for Maryport when Jack joins the Forces. Another North Western arrival is Jack Daly, who has commenced a spell of D.D. at Barrow, and we hear that Jack Langford is A1 at Holyhead. Doug. Joy was expecting to leave us early in 1942, but we have no news of any movement at the time of writing. Jimmy Agnew is now getting around in good style, and he sends pleasing news of our friends on Clydeside, also that Bert Howe (Liverpool) has been seen up there with the Merchant Navy.

No news from Swansea recently, next month maybe!

From Poole we hear that Bill Pugh has been accepted for flight duties, R.A.F.V.R. Looks as if an Initial Training Wing will soon have an A.P.O. section alone.

One exile ends up his letter, "I would like to see a few of the old familiar faces—I'm not so sure about yours, though." Nice chap! Write again!

Home news is quite pleasing, apart from the last paragraph of these notes. A recent leave visit with its personal contacts was a pleasure, and the boys you know so well are quite fit. You had the news of the December P.S.A. meeting in the last issue, to which I add the point that Ben will continue to get the "Journal" to you. The Manchester Secretary, Mr. N. Hadwen, has assisted materially during the past year with "Journal" distribution, and we are grateful for his ready help.

I am informed very politely that this column contains little or no news of our many P.O.s, and that news of them would be welcome, especially from an exile's viewpoint. Well, if we receive news, we pass it along, so it is up to those interested to get their pens moving. In case any of you are shy, look at this extract from a current exile letter and see if you can beat it: "I am living in a . . . great barn of a place which needs, without exaggeration, a good £200 spent on it in repairs. The doors let daylight and wind in, likewise the windows (round the edges, I mean), and every other conceivable place for a gale to enter does so. We balance paper a foot above the floor on a steady hurricane which comes up through the floorboards. And the fires! If the wind is the prevailing one the kitchen range belches soot, flames and ashes over all and sundry. It does that, minus flames, when there is no fire. Apart from that, and leaking roof, mice—thousands of 'em—and cistern which always overflows, I suppose we are lucky."

We close on a sad note, with the news that Leslie Thyer, of our Launch Service, was reported missing when the "Prince of Wales" was lost off Malaya. We hope that such tidings may be lightened by the possibility of his survival, even if in enemy territory.

We regret to learn of the passing of Mr. W. C. Geldart, A.P.O. (Poole), on 5.1.42, after many years' service in the Department; and of the passing of Mr. W. Banyon, our Launch Service Mate, who died from pneumonia just prior to going on foreign service with the Navy. To their relatives we extend our sympathy in their sad bereavement.

Cheerio, Forces!

L.B.

CIVIL SERVICE LIFE BOAT FUND

The results of a recent appeal on behalf of the above Fund to January 29th, 1942 are:—

Waterguard Division.	£	s.	d.
Dover	1	16	6
Glasgow	3	15	0
Liverpool	23	4	7
London	1	8	6
Plymouth	2	14	0
	£32	18	7

Tyne Tittle-Tattle

If I recorded nothing in the last issue, it was because there was nothing to record. It is to be hoped that my restraint will be an example.

Of our Forces members, Messrs. Ernie Elliott and Frank Cox had enough "pull" to be home over Christmas. Ernie was fit and happy, but the impression is abroad that his uniform lacked that indefinable quality essential to the well-dressed man. Sumfin wrong, bawws!

Frank called at our office and reproached me for including him in these notes so often. My excuses are that (a) we get tidings of him more frequently than of others, and (b) that things happen to him. As there seems to be nearly seven feet of him, it isn't remarkable. At any rate, the story of his boots is too good to remain untold.

It appears that Frank went to draw a pair of boots from the store. The Wren behind the counter looked, blinked, looked again, and drew from the shelf a pair which had been there so long that a file was actually in circulation at the time, headed "Proposal to convert Item 1346/R.N./O.S./25 (Boots) into Item 1723/R.N./62 (Invasion Barges)." Frank tried them and said briefly, "Too small, Miss." The lady almost said, "Ahrr! away wid yez," but, being a Wren, gave vent to "Indeed." She procured a bicycle and tape and set out to measure up. Four days later she forwarded the resultant acreage to the Admiralty, who requested, after conferences, assistance from the War Office. Plans for a second front went by the board, until a pair was produced. They fitted, but they had toecaps. The toecaps contravened some regulation or other, but the alternative was a bare-footed Frank. And that, children, is why Frank sports the only toecaps in the Navy.

Apart from all this, Frank has passed all exams, to date, as an Ord. Tel., and looks fine, after a tough time Gloucester way. He will re-appear in Scotland to co-star with the Loch Ness Monster.

Mr. Jimmy Reay was also in the locality over the holidays, and expresses satisfaction at Greenock—which must be a novelty for Greenock.

Mr. Jack Jordan has left us again, this time for the Leith area. He is at Bo'ness at the time of writing.

Mr. Tug Wilson has written. He complained that everything was rotten in his ship, and that the beer was warm and the flies venomous ashore. If Tug approves something at any time he'll need medical treatment.

There is indirect news that Mr. Jim Marsden has now commenced his duties with the R.A.F., and is in London. Good luck, Jim.

Mr. Bob Maxwell is still at Workington, but Mr. Fred Watson should be at Grangemouth by the time this appears. It will at least spare me the trouble of addressing letters (which await answers) to, Alloa, Clackmannanshire. What barbaric conglomeration of letters!

If there's anything else, I've forgotten it.

H. G. R.

○ Wad Some Power

"A genial customs officer let me through without inspection, and put the precious passing-out ticket on my luggage. I had visions of our own customs officers at Dover or Folkestone, none of whom have I ever been tempted to greet as 'Brother.' The New York customs officer first called me 'Brother,' and then 'Boy.'"—"Modern Columbus," by S. P. B. Mais.

Miscellaneous

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"Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

News is short this month of the Forces.

Charles Scarfe paid us a visit at the watch-house, his visit was very welcome. Charles looked remarkably fit and well. How about another cup of char, Charles? He is now with Battalion Headquarters. Atta boy! you can't keep a good man down.

By the time this is in print, Bill Sutton, P.O., will have had his interview for Special Inquiry Officer. We hope you have landed the fish, Bill, and I am sure the Forces join in wishing you "Good Luck."

Our Rummage Crew is being disbanded, and it appears that our esteemed colleagues, Messrs. Sutton, P.O., Lewer and Simmons, A.P.O.'s, are leaving us. Bill Sutton is for Longhope. We hope it won't be long for Bill. George Simmons fares better, being for Ardrossan. You're getting a good lad, Ardrossan, treat him well. The Bosun has not received his destination yet, we wish him well, and hope that fate will deal kindly to him. We also expect to lose one crew from the Launch Service. Rather drastic, but it's all in the war, lads.

News is now to hand of Peter Hodge, R.C.S., son of our esteemed Chief—he has arrived safely in India. Since last writing of our lads, Pete has shipped three stripes, and is for O.C.T.U. Good Luck, Pete; I hope you will get the desired Pip.

Ralph Miller, R.C.S., has also shipped a dog's leg. I was wondering when you were going to do so. Congratulations to you both. Jock Miller, R.A.F., is doing A.I. How about that L.A.C., Jock? Don't let Ralph put one over on you.

The old shack still stands, lads, and if you've lost my address, it's still 148, Cleveland Road. Hurry up those letters, and let's know how things are with you all.

Cheerio, Good Luck!

Over to you, Forces—over.

O.H.L.

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The Lads o' London

Last month I appealed for news of themselves from certain lads in the forces who have got behind in their correspondence, and arising from that one or two have replied and expressed their regrets for the delay in writing, but quite a number have apparently paid no heed to the appeal. Now this column is written largely for their benefit, and arrangements were made for them to receive regularly each month a copy of the "Journal," but if they are not willing to play their part, it is probable that quite a sum of postage will be saved in the near future. So hurry up, lads, and, if the cap fits, wear it.

Having got that threat off my chest, one can now proceed. Incidentally, two of the most prolific correspondents are Messrs. Berry and Bushell, and both have written again recently. Jack Berry is now a leading seaman and is coxswain on H.M.M.L. No. 469, and is the master-at-arms, sick bay attendant, caterer, and every other P.O. rolled into one. It is a new launch, and he had a hectic time receiving and checking all the new gear necessary for a new ship. He sent his kind regards to Mr. Cridland, P.O., who is at Ellesmere Port, and to Roger Withey and Jimmy Dunn.

Ernie Dewey wrote once more from Swindon, where he is stationed, and by the time this number appears he will be a proud parent. Congrats, Ernest, and I hope the wife and little one are O.K. He wished to be remembered to Lofty Banks.

Lieut. Stan Wandless, now in the 1st Parachute Battalion, told some thrilling tales of his jumps and that it is a grand sensation to float through the air the monarch of all you survey. He would like to stay in the battalion after the war, and is looking forward to descending from 20,000 feet. Look out for him, you lads on the "Harpy," he hopes to visit you there whilst he is at Bisley.

One of our prisoner of war colleagues—Ken Buttenshaw—was among the British prisoners of war who were to have been exchanged for German contemporaries in November last. Arriving as far as Rouen, he was, as you are all aware, sent back again, this time to a camp in Poland. I was privileged to see a letter from him regarding this unfortunate affair to his parents, written on Christmas eve, and it was most evident that, although he was grievously disappointed at the frustrated reunion with his loved ones, he has taken it in the right spirit and told his parents not to worry about him. All of us, I am sure, sincerely hope that Ken will not be too long coming home, and send him our best wishes. If anyone cares to write to him, his official address is:—

Private K. W. Buttenshaw,
British Prisoner of War. No. 12327,
Stalag XXI A, Germany.

In the January issue of the "C.J." there was an error in the price of the special prisoner of war letter card. The cost of same is 3d., not 8d., as previously printed. The address of the other London prisoner of war is:—

Driver E. W. Waters,
No. 1637
Stalag XXI D.II, Germany.

All three of them would appreciate letters from their friends in the department. Just imagine yourself in such a plight and it should hasten your decision to write to them.

Jimmy Sutton, writing to a colleague in London, has announced his intention of transferring to the Fleet Air Arm. We hope you are successful, Jim. That's all from the Forces this month, but I cannot conclude this part of the notes without a brief reference to that fine sportsman, our late Waterguard colleague, Colin Carthew, who told me of his approaching marriage in April next to a daughter of an Excise Officer in Maidstone. We all wish you the very best of happiness in your married life, Colin, and may you soon be home from the Navy to enjoy your future wife's company. A telegraphist on H.M.S. Lowestoft, his address is Mess 3, c/o G.P.O., London, E.C.1.

Mr. and Mrs. Buttenshaw, Ken's parents, have asked me to let it be known that if any Waterguard Officers who are in the Forces happen to be stationed in or visiting Sheerness and district care to call at their address, they keep an open house for this purpose, and would give a warm wel-

come to members of the staff on active service. Their address is:—

41, Marine Parade,
Sheerness, Kent.

and I urge you to go along should you happen to be that way. This offer applies not only to the London lads, but to others as well. It would be a grand gesture on the part of members of the staff and parents of officers in the Forces if they could make their homes available for visits by Forces friends who may happen to be in their particular part of the country, and who would be glad of the opportunity to pay them a call. Are there any offers, please? Let me know, and I shall then be able to publish a list of names and addresses in the "Journal" for the chaps concerned to note. This can be a good piece of extra work for many of us, and at the same time help our friends who, in turn, are helping us. Send the names and addresses, please, to R. J. Lowe, H.M. Customs and Excise, Landing Stage, Liverpool. Let us have "open houses" all around the coast-line.

It is good to learn of others who are interested, writing to our lads, and Wally Bishop is performing a grand job of work characteristic of him, in sending them books. How about some of you others in London doing the same! Freely you have received, freely give. I shall be pleased to supply any names and service addresses.

Mention, too, must be made of the cigarette fund for the prisoners of war, so ably administered by Mr. G. Camburn. He is always glad to receive donations towards this end, and the address is:—Pier Head, King George V Dock, London, E.16. Bouquets! Yes, but they are worth it.

My "old sparring partner," Mr. Jack Lindsay, P.O., has recovered from his illness and is now in Liverpool on detached duty. I met him recently, and he seemed to be looking very well, and one hopes his health is fully restored. 'Tis rumoured that some more London officers are likely to be sent on detached duty in the near future, and if any of them come here there will be many of us willing to help them to find digs, etc.

It was pleasing to read that the Hull staff have adopted the Liverpool detached officers' resolution re the question of return to their home ports, and if any district wishes to know the full reasons underlying the proposals they can have same upon application.

Let's hear from you, then.

Till the lights of London shine again.

R.J.L.

Merseyside News

The many friends of Bert Ralph will be glad to know that he is doing well and soon hopes to pass his tests for pilot. He was home on leave recently, and wished his colleagues to know he was thumbs up. Another spot of news comes from 2nd Lieut. H. Johns in the Signal Corps, who sends greetings and best wishes to his old playmates. But still no news from our other colleagues of the Garrison Theatre.

In my article for January, I remarked that the Woodside Rummage crew were reluctant to publish their successes, and I suggested that perhaps their modesty had something to do with their reluctance. Whether I was correct in my statement, or whether they regarded it as a challenge, I cannot say, but I have since received the following particulars of some of their activities from 7th July, 1941, to 3rd January, 1942:—

The Rummage crew consisted of Messrs. E. W. Kidman, P.O., and L. E. Kieran and J. M. Bakewell, A.P.O.s. The total number of seizures during the six months amounted to 147. The total quantity of tobacco (Cav.) seized was 47-12/16 lbs. The total quantity of cigarettes seized was 88,500 (No.). The total quantity of tobacco (O.S.) seized was 13½ lbs. Silk and artificial silk hose seized amounted to 136 pairs, and also varying quantities of spirits, cigars, mechanical lighters and goods liable to McKenna duties.

The total amount received in respect of penalties (excluding Police Court proceedings and reports to the Board in cases of Naval seizures and young persons being concerned) was £728 9s. 6d.

Well, that's the lot, folks, and I would be greatly interested to hear of a few similar rummage familiarities in other ports. Don't be backward in coming forward with the records; it all makes good reading and puckered brows.

E. G. H.

Correspondence

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

Revival of Annual Conferences and Reconsideration of P.S.A. Honoraria.

The letter from Mr. Robert Lowe on the above subject, in reply to Slippery Sam's, is an admirable defence against an attack which was never made. This vigorous and, of course, disinterested defence of the existing Secretariat does great credit to the Light o' London, and shows him in a far more creditable light than S.S., whose advocacy of the abolition of honoraria for the Secretaries clearly indicates his desire that he should have one of their jobs. But when Mr. Lowe ceases from bending to pick up people who have never been knocked down, when what the Logicians call "undistributed middles" are weeded out from his letter, when an old joke from "Punch" which provides an unfair clue to the whereabouts of Slippery Sam is passed over, and when the point about the stable-shutting act which led to the Association Offices being taken out into the country and all the other minor points are made and accepted, the fact remains:

The normal way to deal with the voting of cash in all such bodies as ours is such a representative gathering as the Annual Conference once provided. While we felt that such conferences were not practicable, we did not mind. They are now. Therefore, even if it were true that they are too expensive (which isn't so, for the Association must now be better off financially than ever) or unnecessary (with the dozens of unsettled old problems and the many new ones to discuss—Executive bodies only act, you know), that is irrelevant. Such a democrat as Mr. Lowe has shown himself to be in his "Journal" articles should not let the members' only way of advising, criticising, and, if thought desirable, rewarding the Secretariat die out so easily. I would have expected him rather to be as quick as Mr. Brown of London Town to see that our ancient liberties survive. On the point of reward, does he not do (maybe Slippery Sam does) a good deal of work without expecting any except, perhaps, a feeling of self-satisfaction or the approbation of one's superiors? Our General Secretary has done a jolly sight more. We do him no justice if we suggest that what he did was merely a "fair day's work," for which (despite the Work and Wait rule), a "fair day's pay" should follow. Once make honoraria thus dishonourable, and we will have to supply the secretariat with journals and time-sheets and give them their hand-out as soon as possible after the Saturday before the last Friday, etc. But S.S. merely said that perhaps the honoraria could be reduced because less work was now falling to the secretaries, and some of the original reasons for such payments no longer existed (the point about the O.T. was a misunderstanding on Mr. L.'s part, I fancy); or they could be abolished. That's not an attack on the Secretaries. I should imagine, rather, that now that Liverpool has sent a motion to the War Executive asking for the revival of the conferences, they would be in full support, provided that they were satisfied it was the general wish of the country. Well, what does the country wish? C.F.S.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Honoraria.

Sir,

Three or four years ago I had instructions from the Dover Branch to put a case against the manner in which the Headquarters staff were then handling the Association affairs.

Among the many severe criticisms made in our local meetings there was never a voice raised which declared that the secretaries were not giving value for money. We all recognised, and I re-affirm my own opinion, that such services could not be obtained elsewhere for the same modest sum. A moment's reflection will show that, in addition to the invaluable services received in improved conditions, we have enjoyed cash benefits far in excess of the honoraria. Instances are the reduction of the running costs of the Journal

as a result of the General Secretary's enterprise, the substantial increases of O.T. and of salary (at a most unpromising time), and the staving-off of Reward reduction during the 1930s.

I sincerely hope we shall hear no more of this criticism in questionable taste.

A. G. GEARY.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

Is it not a fact that, indirectly, the Waterguard staff pay for their uniforms? If so, why the pleading for a gold band and curl on A.P.O.'s uniform? As we pay for it, surely we are entitled to some voice in the matter—and in this case the voice seems unanimous.

Any puerile excuses re lack of gold braid should not be entertained.

How many "Wavy Navy" officers go bandless when obtaining their commission?

For every one of us there must be dozens of them.

If the official side are willing for this addition to the uniform, and have been told by the manufacturers that it is impossible owing to shortage of gold braid, let them give the officers concerned an allowance, so that they may buy them locally, and affix them personally.

J. L. Coulthard, in his letter, is quite correct. It *must* be a gold band and curl for A.P.O.'s, and another band for P.O.'s.

It seems that our uniform is patterned on the Navy's, ergo, as junior commissioned officers, A.P.O.'s should wear stripe and curl.

While on the topic—how about the uniform manufacturers making two slits at the bottom of the side seams, and also another buttonhole, in order that the top button does really button, and doesn't dangle after a few months. Perhaps the high cost of button holes and slits would make the cost prohibitive.

Finally, we definitely do *not* want any ridiculous alternatives, e.g. cap badges on sleeves, or bands or stripes of other colours and denominations. The effect of a cap badge on the sleeve should have the magnificent effect of making us look like C.S.M. in the Swiss Navy.

The sole desire behind this agitation for sleeve decoration, is to impress upon the layman (including laymen in the R.N.V.R.), that we are all officers holding a commission.

Obviously the best way to do that is the prescribed decoration for a commission—a gold band and curl.

H. W. C.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

G.B.D.'s letter on rank distinction in the January issue, with a suggestion to decorate one's sleeves with discarded cap badges, should be unhesitatingly rejected.

It must be remembered that the Waterguard Dept. exerts control, not only over the general public, but also over the fighting services and the merchant navy. Rank distinction in our Dept. differs from these, in that it must be understood by all those over whom we exert authority or control, while in the fighting services and merchant navy the distinguishing marks of rank are only required to be known by the members of those particular services. It may be said that the present rank distinctions in the Waterguard are of a kind readily understood by all; the Navy knows them, because their's are similar, while the Merchant Navy and the sea travelling public know them by reason of their continual contact with them. To change the type of distinction, therefore, would be tantamount in the eyes of these people to degrading.

If it is a fact that there is a shortage of gold braid, economy in conjunction with other services using it could be effected for the duration, by either reducing the width of the band, or by substitution of yellow cloth. In conclusion it may be said that the delay by the Board in granting the ring and curl to A.P.O.'s, and two rings and curl to P.O.'s, is giving rise to much anger in these grades.

J. L. Coulthard's letter in the same issue, sums up the general attitude to be adopted by each member of the Staff on this important question.

Yours truly,

EGROEG.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

I wish to endorse various correspondents' emphasis on the need for decoration on A.P.O.s' uniform. Naval rig having been adopted, one ring for the A.P.O. and two for the P.O. seems an obvious requirement. Not only would an A.P.O. then be distinguishable to the public, from a railway or baggage porter, but the P.O. would carry a decoration more in keeping with his responsibilities and more appropriate in his dealings with the ubiquitous Service officers. I entirely disapprove of A.B.D.'s "sergeant-major" suggestion and, as the Admiralty can provide gold braid for huge numbers, fail to see why this Department is unable to procure the relatively small quantity to meet this necessity.

With reference to the call-up, A.A.'s elementary mathematics do not form a very convincing argument. A.A. must have been fortunate indeed if he has not averaged a 51-hour week both now and prior to the war, as the vast majority of Waterguard officers certainly have done. Following his peregrinations, should the call-up actually extend to the 30's, I should not envy the remaining A.P.O.'s their 84-hour week.

Assuming this absurdity to be out of the question, the remaining A.P.O.'s could not possibly cope with the work normally applicable to the grade, and may just as well be called up. In my view, the attitude of the Board in volunteering the 25's, and that of the Association in urging further promotions, is mistaken. Whilst having every sympathy with those next in line for promotion, such circumstances could only lead to more over-staffing in the higher posts and a further depletion of one of the two grades who actually perform the work.

Yours truly,

A.D.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

With regard to the Liverpool proposals there is no doubt it would be of great benefit for many of our colleagues who have now spent nearly two years away from home, and in many cases have had to be content with second best lodgings in overcrowded towns, but if the Hull proposal becomes the rule, and Officers on D.D. were returned to their home ports after twelve months, and "without the option," I am of the opinion that in many cases definite hardship would be involved.

On the strength of the Board's statements as given on the necessary applications, many of us have given up our homes, stored furniture, and brought our wives and families to the war-time port, and no doubt in a few cases, furniture has been removed and a new home established. If we are to be automatically returned to our home ports, it will mean another upheaval and a fresh search for accommodation, which will only be obtained at an increased rent and with no assistance in the way of rent allowance as at present; in fact, the returned Officers will be financially penalised, for when they come to look for another home they will have lost the protection of the Rent Restriction Act, which would have covered them had they not been compelled to move in the first place, and in addition they will lose the benefits of many expenditures at the war-time port. It would be particularly hard on those in the same position as myself, who, having stored their furniture, have lost everything through enemy action, and a return to the home port would mean looking for furnished rooms at war-time rents, another repetition of the search we have become so familiar with. Add to this fact that children have become settled at school and uniform clothing and equipment provided for them, all of which would be practically useless in another place, and in many cases decorations and renovations have been undertaken on the understanding that the move was for the "duration," and in an endeavour to make things as homely as possible, and it will be appreciated that there is a definite prospect of a serious financial loss.

I know a return will have to be made at the end of the war, but that will be expected, and to a certain extent we shall be able to prepare for it, and in cases like my own

no doubt there will be better prospects of re-furnishing and of obtaining reasonable accommodation than at present, when a return would mean, from a domestic point, detached duty expenses at home and no compensating allowance to help things along. It has been no pleasure to try and make a new home at the other end of the country in war-time, and it hardly seems fair, when one has managed to become reasonably settled to be expected to repeat the performance at a moment's notice and at one's own expense.

If a detached Officer has an established home at his headquarters he should be entitled to apply to return, as a definite right, but I also think that those of us who have no home to return to should be entitled to remain at our war-time ports, where we have made some sort of a home, if we so desire.—I am, Sir,

D.D.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

The attitude taken by the Cardiff staff regarding D.D. officers is much the same as taken at other ports, but not published. We are told that it does not solve the problem to pass on the hardships to others, and that we must therefore carry on.

We quite appreciate the fact that other people have no more wish to be away from home than we have. We also consider that we "appreciated the situation" when we thought that all members of the Waterguard would be prepared to take their share of war conditions. People who should know tell us that the war is to be a long one. Under a twelve-monthly system it is therefore possible that we should have to do another spell away from home. We are quite prepared to do that, especially in view of the following:—

(1) When we left our homes the Germans were having things pretty much their own way, and, consequently, those homes were being subjected to intense raids. The intense worry of leaving wives and families under such conditions does not now exist. It may again? Oh, yes—but it does not and may not.

(2) We came away indefinitely. Perhaps some do not quite realise what that means. Believe me, the strain of being away indefinitely is out of all proportion to being away for twelve months.

(3). In Liverpool we are faced with having to meet all expenses over £1 1s. per week, whilst owing to increased staff having to share in the normal amount of O.T., our income is less than it was in our home ports. We still have to face up to the same expenses there. That can be managed for twelve months, but, in several instances, D.D. officers are wondering how long they can manage to face up to it indefinitely.

Most of us are buying our houses. We have tackled the problem in different ways. Some have been unable to bring their wives and families. Those wives are also feeling the strain of the indefinite. (Please do not remind us of those whose husbands are away fighting—we know. But we are not even in the Army now, and even if we were, whilst in this country we should be allowed home at least for one week in every three months). Some brought their wives and shut their homes. The ladies cannot stick being away from their homes any longer, and are commencing to return, to find their homes being ruined. A few let their houses, and now are wondering what they, and in some cases furniture, will be like after indefinite handling by other people.

Do you begin to see the hardship of this indefinite business as compared with a definite period of twelve months? Do you realise that this additional hardship is peculiar to a few under the present system?

To conclude. Those having the comfort of home are also receiving extra remuneration owing to diminished staff at that port. Have you worked out who is paying it?

Thanks for your sympathy, chaps!

Yours, etc.,

A.D.D.O.

On Anchors

"He climbed the rungs to captaincy,
From deckboy on a tanker
But sad he died in young old age,
When 'swallowing the anchor.'"

The docks here in Wenport are very open; so open in fact that grass and bracken still grow down to the water's edge. The area of water is large and a strong westerly wind in winter will often send wave crests up and over these natural verges. One small area receives, thus, much water in addition to our fair share of rain and becomes, early in winter, a quagmire. It was here some time ago I saw a large lorry sunk deeply in the mud. It was no unusual sight, but what attracted my attention was the fact that the lorry carried no freight except a small something under a large tarpaulin. I saw in passing that the something was a ship's anchor. Now most men would place anchors, and possibly many politicians, high in a speculative list of the world's densest things. Anchors are built to be heavy, and this particular specimen was emphasising its adherence to the rule. I left the driver with his charge firmly embedded. Really he could not complain, for that was the end to which the great iron hook had been made. He had left the hard surface of the road with his eyes wide open. Who could he blame now that, in the mud, the anchor had vindictively come into its own? The authorities, perhaps, for leaving remnants of fields in an important dock area. Maybe he was telling them something as he struggled with timber and sacks. I noticed that he was talking to the tires, but I pretended not to see.

It is surprising how often the daily press blunders when relating incidents which have to do with ships and the sea. Some years ago I knew a sailor who treasured a cutting from a quite reputable newspaper, which referred to a ship, adrift in mid-Atlantic, as having "dragged her anchor for days." "But perhaps they mean sea-anchors," I said, hardly believing in those days that a newspaper could be wrong. I can still remember the look of scorn which met this genuine effort to rescue the press. Another cutting which he treasured was one which stated that ships, at anchor and fog-bound in a nearby estuary, could be heard blowing their sirens. As he pointed out, the paper "came a real cropper there." What the imaginative reporter heard were bells, assuming, of course, that he did go to the mouth of the river during the fog. The siren of a ship indicates movement, actual or imminent. "Even when they get the anchorage right they make a mess of something else," commented my friend. There and then I saw the first crack in the most fickle of our false modern idols—the press. I have watched many pieces crumble away since, but I owe my first enlightenment to the sailor and the anchor.

There are, I hope, still many inns in this country trading under the proud name "Crown and Anchor," a name which can almost be read as a challenge. It is a fascinating name in many ways, even if the game, so called, is no longer played openly as in the days of a better England. The association of a crown and an anchor is at least reminiscent of a proud history. But inns and public houses nowadays seem to prefer the "Pig and Whistle" type of name. It would be better if the "public" minded public mind returned to crowns and anchors, rather than be surrounded with absurd pigs and whistles. If I should ever be able to read Italian, and if I should ever visit Italy, I feel sure that all the "palatzas de drinkas" would have names of the latter type. There must have been a better spirit in the men who, years ago in our own country, could call a public house "The Crown and Anchor," and another, only a few streets away, "The Church House Inn." But the drinking public is changing in our own country. Eve is intruding, and we might yet see "Heart-Break House," or "The Lost Lover." Maybe, then, sailors will stop drinking as a silent protest from the sea.

I have mentioned in a previous paper how the sailor has developed through the centuries a rather poetic manner of expressing certain phases of his work. The anchor appears in two excellent expressions—"swallowing the anchor," and "dropping the anchor"; the one to denote retirement from

the sea and the other, not so much a sojourn, as a rather determined decision not to be moved. And who can deny but that the similes are remarkably true? One can picture the sailor who has spent his life at sea deciding upon retirement. For years the anchor has played an important part in his life. The weighing, when outward bound, and the loud clatter of the chain as it has dropped down, months later, in home waters. The anchor has been the symbol of his goings and comings for years. Then, figuratively, he decides to swallow it. It is significant that he does not "lose it," "spurn it," or "gladly surrender it" He swallows it, and thereby proves his retained affection. Sometimes, of course, the swallowing act is not a complete success, and the old wanderlust returns; and even if the retirement proves a fair success severe bouts of indigestion are often recorded. I know a retired sailor who shouts and raves if the most inoffensive of children goes anywhere near a few boats which he keeps on the river. He is a big man, and sometimes I have looked at him and watched his efforts to offset the great iron shard, which I have felt must scrape his throat, to remind him of the sea. That may be the reason why his voice, when raised in anger, is so tremendously loud. It is a pity that the river, for which he has such a deep affection, no longer brings him ships. Therein, and not so much in the imaginary deprivations of the children, lies the cause of his discontentment ashore.

It came as a surprise to me some time ago to learn that an old anchor can play a nefarious part in the hands of an unscrupulous ship repairer. The story was told to me by the marine superintendent of an old-established Greek firm. He had been made a Superintendent at a very young age, and set out from London to supervise the repair of a ship which was to arrive at a nearby port the following day. He had listened well and read well, and was satisfied that he knew all the guiles of the repairer's trade. The ship was due to arrive at the dry-dock jetties on the evening tide, the dry-dock being tidal and situated on a fine broad river. But the eager new "super" arrived at the jetties at low water during the morning tide. He was standing looking down at the berth, when he realised that he had been joined by another man, who was looking at him as intently as he himself had been looking at the mud. Then the stranger introduced himself: "I am the manager of this dock, and you?" "Oh," replied the superintendent, "I am the representative of the owners of the 'Midroposis,' and I was just looking to make sure that there was not an old anchor for my ship to sit on to-night." The older, wiser superintendent then told me what happened to the "brand new super." It appears that he was chased off the jetties by a manager who, if he had caught him, would have gladly dropped him in the mud so that he might make sure about the anchor. "I suppose you no longer suspect anchors in the mud," I said. "I still see my berth," replied the experienced man, "But now I pretend a casual interest in the river and its reaches." "Have you ever found such an anchor?" I asked. "Not yet," he replied. I have passed many dry docks since, and it is much to the credit of my fellow men that I have never seen mud on any of the anchors lying about. It is quite likely that at some time or other a Greek ship sat on her own anchor. We can only wish the superintendent silent and happy hunting wherever he may be.

At this moment many ships are straining at anchor around the coasts of Britain. And the strain on their chains is the strain of the essentials of war. In the East a country fighting under the simple symbol of the sickle sees her fields ravaged, her wheat coveted and plundered, by a foe, who, following neither the sea nor the sickle, hates both. And not so many years ago there were those who said that John Bull could very well "swallow the anchor." We can only thank God that he didn't.

Wisdom from the Past (29)

THE NON-MEMBER.

"Look not mournfully into the past, it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present, it is thine."—Longfellow.